

SECRETARIAL PROFESSION AND THE DYNAMIC NIGERIAN LABOUR MARKET

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Abstract

This paper on Secretarial Profession and the dynamic Nigerian labour market examines the services of the Secretarial Profession considering some major intricacies associated therein. It defined and explained the Secretarial Profession, spelt out its relevance to organizations, the business world and to the entire economic societal environment as relating to labour need. Labour market in the Nigerian perspective was also examined. Perhaps the most crucial and interesting aspect of this work is the detailed explanation it offers the general picture and perception of who a secretary should be, what such a worker should be doing and how such services are required and seen as a necessity to organization and business existence in the general labour market. Observations were made and suggestion proffered.

Preceding Questions

1. Who is a Secretary? and What are the functions?
2. What is Labour Market? Is it dynamic?
3. If yes in question 2, How does the dynamic labour market affect the Secretarial Profession and/ or Nigerian Society?
4. What then, should be done?

Vital Terms as Used: Professional, Abstract, Secretary, Dynamic, Labour Market, and Labour-relation

Professional: An adjective relating to Profession as one of limited number of Vocation or occupation involving special learning and carrying a certain special prestige.

Abstract: Idealised – considered apart from perception or any concrete object or summary from a piece of writing or take out removed.

Secretary: A person responsible for dealing with the correspondence and records of an organization or an individual, - a minister in charge of a government department. Secretary-general – the principal administrative officer of a state.

Dynamic – Pertaining to dynamics ie- active, forceful energetic, capable of giving a

sense of power and transmitting energy. A dynamic personality to do with the function of an organ rather than its structure. A moving or driving force: Labour prolonged hardwork; task demanding great effort as economic or political force Labour, Manual workers, Manual exertion; a factor of production Market. A place where many sellers display and sell their goods. The demanded for commodity.

Labour Market: The demand for hard work or effort of economic or political force or the demand for commensurable economic effort or force.

Labour Relations: Term ordinarily used to denote all matters arising out of the Employer-employee relationship which involve collective actions on the part of the employees; most intimately associated with collective bargaining and concerted activities.

Introduction

Labour market always has a base on things demanded as needs and acceptable norms of the society, Nigeria not exempted. Okeke in Akpan (2011) stated “educational background is a crucial determinant of the quality of labour”. That is to say that the type of education given to the people of a nation at a particular time must meet the needs and prevalent conditions of the nation at that periods. Osuala in Akpan (2011) reminded us that “the type of education provided by the colonial masters was able to meet the needs of the people at that time”. In other words, education at that time was able to produce the quality of labour needed in Nigeria. The colonial education system then left a very good educational foundation for advancement in science and technology, secretarial services inclusive.

The issue now and here is that Nigerians find it difficult to build the required technology into the dynamic labour market and improve upon them in the necessary vocational/profession categories. Denga (2001) remarked that vocational education as that form of education that specifically prepares an individual as to perform well in a chosen occupation. He went further to say that vocational education is designed to teach skills, develop attitudes and competences that are requisite to success in a given occupation. Osuala (2001) added that it includes preparation for employment for which there is societal need. Secretarial profession falls into this consideration and Nigeria labour market has this need, considering the dynamic Nigerian labour market the issue at stake has to be considered along

- The standard of professional education.
- The type and quality of labour equipment.
- Management and control i.e. the judicious utilization of the available labour resources tools in both human and material.

How these professionals are enhanced or hampered is the focus of this work. Let us start with understanding the professional cadre of the secretary by first considering

what it takes to be branded as such.

The Secretarial Cadre

Secretarial Classifications

The definition of a secretary epitomises the duties. In fact, the discipline qualifies such a person that possesses it as a branch skill of management. On a more general plain, such a person is often described as “the silent power behind the throne”. A crucial member of the management team in every sphere of an organisation, business, industry, religion, health and or educational institutions as well as to government and international bodies. In the professional world, secretaries often adequately inform management, render proficient advises, cope successfully well in management of crises, organise and run the offices smoothly hence the name - Office Technologist becomes more appropriate. There is no doubt that secretaries are indispensable labour market personnel but there is doubt as to whether the secretaries in Nigerian labour market are prepared adequately to cope with the changes, challenges and demand to emerging technologies.

How plausible are these, is an undoubtable question. It should, therefore, be borne in mind that in establishment of any organisation as institution, the service of such persons as secretaries are unquestionably required. It is pertinent to recognize that labour market generally is becoming increasingly complex and that increasing knowledge and skills vis-à-vis modern technologies requires one get prepared to face the realities of labour market demand. The place of these is of paramount importance in preparing the secretary for labour market. Such institutional or otherwise preparatory arrangement would, for all practical purposes evolve in an office. Here, volumes of paper work and a sound knowledge of utilizing and managing them for goal achievement is desirable and rest squarely on the secretary. - “Office Technologist”. According to Obayi (2011), the outdated 1990 secretarial studies programme for Nigeria's Polytechnics was replaced in 2004 with a new one- ICT-based with changes in nomenclature to Office Technology and management in 2012 minimum standard of NCE. It was from Secretarial Education to Office Technology and Management Education (OTME). According to Amaewhule (2004) in Obayi (2011), good business education programme should be such that takes into cognizant trends in the market place; the economy and occupational situations. Obayi (2011) noted that the world has graduated from the industrial to new world economic order, one whose major driver is globalization empowered by information and communications technologies. Preparation of needed human resources should be in consonance with the secretarial demand as to make graduates relevant in the contemporary socio-economical labour market.

Communication of every magnitude, regardless of the magnitude of such message and size of the organisation, as the live wire of the establishment, must of necessity be

executed. Customers, in the actual business world, are vigorously sought and image of the concern protected. The Secretary like a mother witnesses outright the birth of an organisation, nurses it through infancy and adolescences down to expansion and adulthood.

Otobo and Makeri-Yahaya, attached that the secretary is an indispensable figure in every aspect of an organization who must be equipped with requisite technological competences and proficiencies to makeup with tremendous surge and demand of the ever changing Nigerian labour market.

Classes and Diversification

Secretary's in spite of their unique office technological skills differ in categories and responsibilities. The career ladder of secretarial profession runs as follows:

-	Typist	-	25 words per minute and above
-	Secretary/Typist	-	80/100 WPM
-	Stenographer	-	80/100 WPM
-	Confidential Secretary II	-	100/120
-	Confidential Secretary I	-	100/120
-	Personal Secretary II	-	100/120 long service
-	Personal Secretary I	-	100/120 long service
-	Executive Secretary	-	120/140 WPM

*** Special**

-	Legal/Medical Secretary	-	120/140 WPM
-	Court reporter	-	200/250 WPM

(Adopted from the Business Office by C. Morrison (Ph. D.))(In Lomea Mbagu, 1983).

Possessing appropriate occupation and developing the required skills for the job of the secretary are functions of the quality of standard maintained in the process of acquisition. Thorough impartation with the required instructional materials as well as what educationist call pedagogical strategies are task that the professional secretaries go through in career development. These processes enhance the quality of the skill, knowledge imparted into the secretary and assist him/her be aware of the intrigues of the professional capabilities in relation to the occupational services. Akpan and Akpan (2011) to this regard wrote “ Right choice of occupation and the development of the prerequisite skills for jobs in an occupation reduces unemployment to the barest level That youth's unemployment was or is due to lack of skills and satisfactory career choice”. It as well required some basic educational requirement.

Becoming a Secretary

To train as a professional Secretary, one must possess 5 or 4 credit passes including English language in O' Level for admission into any of the tertiary institutions for the

award of NCE in Secretarial Education (now OTME). It is a three year programme that embedded a 12 week industrial training and six months teaching practice that spares no long vacation. For higher National Diploma, (HND), the Polytechnics makes it a three years classroom work and a one year supervised Industrial Work Experience (SIWES). The Universities now runs a five-year programme that includes industrial work experience. In some cases, OND courses lasting for two and half years are offered by some institutions especially the Polytechnics and Universities. This offers the University Degree (UD) or National Diploma (ND) where the 6 months are used for industrial training.

It should be understood that the syllabus or course-outline of the various secretarial programmes varies in content duration. Polytechnics, in their course designation include such courses as English language and Literature, Economics, Shorthand, Typewriting, Business Administration, Secretarial Studies, Law and practice of meetings etc. Some Universities have courses as Mathematics, Principles of Law, History of Science and Technology, African studies, Man and society, Philosophy, Organisational behaviour and Project. This is to say that at the Bachelor's level, courses are more than the HND level.

In Colleges of Education for the NCE that provide candidate double or triple professional major opportunity, the courses studied include: Shorthand, Typewriting/Word Processing, Principles of Accounts, Commerce, Economics, Principles of management, Secretarial Duties, Office Technology & Management, Business Communications and all other educational and general study courses.

While the NCE or B. Ed. on graduation functions as Business Educators, Office Technologist or Managerial staff, the HND and B. Sc. graduates function initially as Personal Assistants II, salary depending on the size and type of the organization. Mbaga (1983) also affirmed that persons holding HND or B. Sc. in Secretaryship would reassuringly branch off into any of the following professional areas: court reporting, medical secretaryship, legal secretaryship, executive secretaryship and or as may be demanded by the prevailing labour market.

To qualify as a court reporter whom from all intents and purpose, produces verbatim reports a maximum of 200 – 240 words per minute in shorthand must be attained. This enables such a person to cover even parliamentary and tribunal proceedings making such a person to have vast prospect.

Likewise, medical secretaryship refers to secretary that works with Chief Medical Officers or other top-ranking medical personnel. The dynamic labour market may as well demand special secretaries in areas such as political – parliamentary House proceedings, as well as unions and associations of any sort.

Success in either of these specialist areas confers on such a secretary, the necessity of mastering a number of professional related jargons. Special areas goes with specialist related experts and for the secretary to flow along, he/she must be wholly conversant with the related terms or jargons.

Executive Secretaryship is the most senior cadre of the profession in the labour service while the academic allows one up to the Ph.D. level for any academic position. Attainment of these levels indicates that one had up to ten to twenty years on-the-job experience service in different top secretarial capacities. At the most senior secretarial strata, aspirants for executive secretaryship must pass the presented examination of the Institute of Chattered Secretaries and Administration (ACIS).

With a B. Sc./HND Secretarial studies, it is invariably possible to rise up to the position of an office Manager after a period of eight to ten years provided such person has demonstrated sufficient knowledge of the office technicalities acquired in training and the entire operations of the organization including the managerial skills and principles.

Mbaga went further to state that “the basic requirement for such a high secretarial office is generally amplified in the philosophy of the department of secretarial studies programmes by the combination of broad academic education with a thorough development of superior business and secretarial skills. This combination produces an academically well-educated, skill-oriented graduate qualified to succeed on a choice of career in many fields rather than the limited prospective of a narrowly trained technical specialist..... the programme is designed to provide an excellent background for students wishing to enter the teaching profession in secretarial subjects and for those seeking positions as office managers and senior administrative assistants”. Today a Ph.D. holder relating to educational institution can rise to any of the related highest level, should the opportunity avail from head of a unit, department, school, director, deputy to even Provost, Rector or Vice chancellor. Waooooooo what a golden wide-range opportunities.

It becomes imperative to recall the words of Oduye addressing the students in Mbaga (1983) “you have chosen one of the most lucrative careers known the world over. As well trained and qualified secretary you are one-hundred percent sure of getting well-paid jobs in this country and overseas. Strive for the best, find yourself in the best and endeavour to be among those that are counted into the labour market with the widest opportunities ever.”

At this juncture, it is proper for this presenter to inform specifically that there are a lot of misconception by people especially those outside the domain of this profession that computer operators, typists and even stenographers are not secretaries. With whatever certificate and experience a computer operator or typist is by and large, one with first

leaving certificates and a typing speed of 25 words per minute (25 WPM) or more. A stenographer must have eighty and hundred words per minute (80/100 WPM) for shorthand and typewriting respectively as addition to the first leaving certificate. A secretary/typist may attain the latter height and combines same with typewriting and transcription from shorthand passages.

For further stages, the officer can only be considered to have taken further studies on office practice, secretarial duties, English language, book-keeping etc. These grade of officer cannot by any stretch of their imagination perform at a higher level as personal secretary and above but for those who may have elevated their career. Let it also be pointed out here that those addressed as permanent secretary in the government ministries are not all professional secretary – political.

Some people who have an aid that assists them remember the name and date of visitors and appointments, from addressing them as personal assistants migrates to calling such personal secretary which they are not. In some cases, even receptionist are at time addressed or address themselves as secretaries, which they are not.

Following the analytical grades and qualification skills considered for secretarial functions. It is glaringly clear that there are professional elements that make one to be so addressed if required.

This discussion will not be very effective if a distinction is not drawn for some specific references. While those credentially recognised are addressed here as professional secretary. It is also the opinion of this presenter to name and address those assumed to be working or serving relatively to the function as *ABSTRACT SECRETARIES*

Abstract according to the Webster's dictionary in English has three explanations:

1. Considered apart from perception or any concrete object, idealised.
2. Summary from a piece of writing
3. Take-out or removed

Of the above, the first one is highly related to the idea in discussion. Those non possessors of the element that credited them to offer that name should therefore be addressed as Abstract Secretaries. The discussion here eludes them in parts.

In view of this, it is, therefore, improper for an educated person whose professional area may be different to ridicule a career student secretary as a typist or even address a typist or mere computer operator as a secretary. This in fact unfolds a fellow that makes such alteration as an ignoramus. Qualified secretarial graduates should earn this desired respect both in office and the entire society. The dynamic labour market should by operation and allocation take cognisance of this fact.

Related Secretarial Services

Real qualified professionals in this field - Confidential II & I Personal II & I Executive and Special Secretaries perform a variety of responsibilities such as covering of meetings, exercise duties as may be delegated by the boss or initiated such as compilation of reports, supplying of data based on kept records, ensuring good document filing system that will ensure safety and availability when needed. Booking services, transportation, lodges for executives and meetings, control petty cash inflow and out flow all in an effort to facilitate the smothering of the organization's business. Reception and keeping diaries and arranging appointment are also essential service duty rendered by the secretary. These are, therefore, personal assistants and senior administrative duties. Those that find themselves in the education industry also perform teaching services as relating to such.

Professional Qualities of Secretaries

According to Mbaga (1983), to attain this enviable status, certain qualities must be possessed. Among these, is that such a person must always be neat and well-dressed. It should be realised that the general outlook of the secretary is that of the picture of the organization and so putting on a neat and befitting office outfit counts.

Another quality worthy of mentioning concerning secretaries is "initiative". A competent secretary is able to execute responsibilities without much directives from the boss. Diplomacy in dealing with the boss, customers and other workers also present the professional secretary as an image-maker of the organisation. As he/she has to be truly conscious of the job, aiming at perfection and showing dedication without expecting gratification.

Services as secretary encapsulates the willingness to work and discretion must be prioritized by exercising judgement in circumstances demanding prudence. The success of organisation rest on the ability of the secretary as this will not only insure comfortability in duties execution but also awakens the spirit of hard work belongingness and devotion in other workers. These qualities portray one in such packaged commodity as a lot take in the ideal labour market. Labour market in the entire globe is dynamic and Nigeria is not an exception.

The Dynamic Nigerian Labour Market

Nigerian labour market can be associated to what Okoro and Asogwa (2011) referred to as Nigerian business environment which they stated is characterized by falling volume and declining productivities. The story in the financial sector of the economy has been particularly alarming. Public confidence in certain area of the labour market is generally poor Fayemi (2001) in Okoro and Asogwa (2001) stated is barely twenty-five percent. They further stated that incidents of corporate failure involving the entire assortment of business in organizations in Nigerian entire labour market implies that there is collapse, malfunction and or breakdown of all facts of labour, secretaries

inclusive. This anomalous situation calls for the development of survival tactics and strategies if the labour market is to stand a chance of recovery. In a bid to find solution to the identified problems lots of reforms to enhance productivity and assuage the failures as to sustaining labour stability and appropriate unitization of manpower, professional secretaries skills inclusive.

Skill according to Maxsie (1997) in Okoro and Asogwa (2001) is a present observable competences to perform a learned behaviour regarding the relationship between mental activity and bodily movement. Overtown (2000) viewed work skills as transferable core skill that represent essential functional and enabling knowledge, skill, and attitudes required by the twenty-first century workers in work place (labour market) necessary for career success at all levels of education:

Bringing in the words of Chuma (1983) “I am much more depressed to realistically state that Nigeria the assumed 'God Father' of African Continent may one day crumble like igneous rock exposed to heat and cold. Chuma (1983) discussed the dynamic Nigeria in three perspectives – Politics, Education and Religion, this presentation on a wider perspective articulated also insecurity, socio-economic as well as technological these formed the basis of our discussion.

Politically, Nigerian politics according to Chuma (1983) is as old as the country itself. It started even before the country had her independence. Nigerian politics is highly associated with leadership. This was once done in history participated jointly with ungrateful colonial masters who in-turn infused the ungratefulness into Nigerians. The result being that Nigeria administrations were being turned and tossed from one form of civilian to military down to civilian again, each with some conspicuous shortcomings, handed down from one government to another and became worst in the present “democratic dispensation which was welcomed by every Nigerian with high hope of healthy political, social and economic atmosphere. But today such high hope is what actually crumbled like igneous rock according to Chuma who further addressed the political nature as “Naira Politics”. Indeed this perception dominated the politics of Nigeria. Today the condition has so degenerated to have bought the conscience of the innocent but foolish Nigerians especially the young ones who have converted their violent empowerment into crime prevailing atmosphere. Even as the politicians ascend the position at the “House” passing obnoxious bills and resolutions that are full of self-aggrandisement becomes the order of the day. The prevailing situation in Nigeria today are divers opinion about the 2 different list of ministered nominees presented by president Buhari to the house lots of petition against those who were declared winner at various political positions. Tribunals and courts are having their fair days for issues that are likely not to add improvement no provide way forward for Nigeria nations.

Educationally, of recent, one will be forced to say Nigeria is doing well. The pay of primary school teachers and their building structure, have witnessed some face value in some states. But the words of Akpans and Iyang need be recalled, that for quite a long time the formal and non-formal system of Nigerian education took after the colonial pattern from Britain. Which has for very long time, resulted in the production of institution-bound graduates rather than skilled personal for the labour market. This situation, according to them has also led to production of graduates for jobs that are no longer available. The gap between what is taught in schools and the skills required on the existing labour market is so wide that many school leavers faces unemployment problem. This is what Olaital (2004) described as de-schooling which he attributed as mismanagement, misplacement, misdirecting the intelligence and ability of learners in the learning process. Akpans and Iyang (2011) affirms that the inherited system still has adverse effect in the economic and social life of Nigeria today in companion with the global dimension. Some problems attributed to this include-lack of standardization and development of non-formal skill impartation processes.

- ❖ Insufficient qualified and competent personnel for skill impactation.
- ❖ Low social estimation of certain skill personnel for which secretarial profession is included due to initial lack of understanding.
- ❖ Lack of proper application of related information and communication technological facilities.
- ❖ Lack of effective supervision and monitoring of labour demand un-implementation.

Socio-economically, it is not doubted that there are churches springing up almost every day, NP. but how much the members and the preachers keep to the words is highly in doubt as the surge for criminal activities rises higher and higher daily. First it was the IjawEgbesu, then Northern Boko haram and now all have culminated to assassinations, killing rapping and kidnapping (Adultnapping) with ransom of reasonable amount of money.

The entire situation of Nigeria politically, socially, technologically, and economically as affected by politics, education and religion has wounded the labour market tremendously. Let us at this juncture draw the discussion to our noble profession. This is the crux of the meeting. The Secretarial profession has its root in business. This is the branch of the labour market that requires the service of secretaries. This has been extensively discussed earlier.

The history of labour market particularly the business perspective in Nigeria may today be considered relatively old. The few companies which carried on earlier business activities in this country, was during the early and middle parts of the present century. They only offer services except some multinationals then such as United African Company (UAC), General British Organization (GBO) etc. which were mainly engaged in buying and selling their products and our produce respectively as

well as engaging in the general merchandise from other countries. As a result of this, there could not be much to be reckoned with concerning Nigerian Labour Market compared to the present day activities, this followed some major reforms experienced for industrialization to boost the labour market. Among such are:

- ❖ Establishment of education regulatory bodies
 - (a) National university commission (NUC)
 - (b) National board for technical education (NBTE)
 - (c) National commission for colleges of education (NCCE)
- ❖ Road map for Nigerian education sector adopted at the 2009 special section of the NCE and approved by federal executive council in June 2009.

Akpans and Iyang (2011) affirmed the importance of educational system being fashioned in ways that the beneficiaries live up to the expectations of the society- the labour market. Specifically they say – education is expected to inculcate in an individual the right type of value and attitudes for survival as well as enable him to acquire appropriate skills, abilities and competences in order to live in and contribute to the development of the society”

Today business activities have undergone some greater revolutions than any other activity but for political activities in the economic and government functions of the country. The concept of writing or clerical services has rapidly changed and the office has become an important and vital department of every organization and even private institutions. The Clerk has equally become an important member of the labour team. The complexity of events and affairs – be they commercial, industrial or government, is no doubt responsible for this rapid change. There is now an increased need for a greater control, planning and co-ordination of complex affairs particularly in the labour market. While labour functions and understanding are tending towards specialization, there must be a greater professional co-ordination of such operations. The importance and usefulness of labour professionalization cannot be overemphasised. Particularly in the regard of the dynamic labour market. It can be regarded as the nerve centre of the Nigerian nation. Labour operations in every sphere especially in business, work with offices and files either in the hardware or software computer system these days. The office through labour services offers the include whole needed information for all operations such information's are disseminated in form of letters, memoranda, telephone calls, invoices, forms, and statutory circular in well-defined labour procedure and processes. This brings us to the labour need for making provision for an easy means of recording, bearing in mind the easy accessibilities to such recorded and preserved information when required. To guarantee such easy accessibilities, such information need be arranged in a way that duplicity and overlapping are avoided as much as possible in the course of operation. Usually information kept in files either general hardware file jackets in a filing cabinet or in an electronic computer file or microfilmed. This is based on the details, arranged

in any chosen method accordingly. Any piece of information that takes the actual labour service treatment can eventually be provided as at when needed. This is the result of effective labour discerning nation. One that can effectively do all these should be seen as an Office Technologist.

The purpose of this work is to examine the professionals that can handle this aspect of labour effectively as related to the changing Nigeria labour market. Infact, there is enormous positions for the secretary profession in Nigerian labour market. A case in point is this host in institution – Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku. According to the minutes of her 296 Academic Board Meeting held on 4th August, 2015, records reveals that the college has

- 5 – Core Management Executives
- 15 – Deans of Studies/Directors of Units
- 27 – Departments. Plus 3 absent

(Source: *Minutes of Academic Board Meeting*)

Let it be on record that every core management Executives are by right, supposed to have atleast a personal secretary serving, who in turns works with atleast a confidential professional secretary as well as a typist or computer operator or operators. Atleast 15 persons of the categories under discussion are expected to be employed here.

The 15 Deans and directors also must have a personal secretary as well as other Confidential Secretaries and Typist or Computer operators. A total of nothing less than 30 of these categories of staff has jobs available.

The 30 Heads of Departments as a matter of necessity needs atleast a Confidential Secretary and a typist each. That is to say 60 of the related staff can as well be employed.

The 15 from core management, plus 30 of the Deans and Directors, plus the 60 of the Departments, numbered upto 105 Secretarial staff, in just one institution alone. This is an average size tertiary institution in Nigeria. Then think of all of the tertiary institutions in the country – The Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education, then the Ministries in Federal, States, Local Government and other Parastatals that make up the labour market.

The question at this juncture therefore is:

1. How much is the labour services or duties of professional secretary understood by Nigerians?
2. How much is Nigeria ready to effectively utilize these services appropriately in her dynamic labour market?

Owing to the complexity of labour operations in all the other spheres of human endeavour in the present economic social nature of Nigeria resulting from advanced technology and political influences, labour forces have been compelled to acquire some diversional degree of complexity in its operations in order to satisfy man and be abreast with the trends of event despite whose ox is gorged. However, in the advanced labour markets, actual skill techniques and computerised operations have reduced such complexities in their labour execution and effective demands are at the barest minimum. The situation is far from being so in Nigerian labour market. Almost Labour-relation is jeopardise due to the absence of cordial collective bargaining every operation is characterised by political objectives and manual operations. This condition has increasingly resulted in malfunctions of vital labour services especially in the offices. The effectiveness of professional secretary and the machines required for this digital era operations remains an illusion. This is the result of inadequacy of personnel and machines utilization. Even though the concept of efficient personnel is relative but skill and professionalism can never be disputed. "While it is true that some personnel are quite efficient, and know their jobs and responsibilities, it is indispensably clear that they are not given the necessary incentives therefore are forced to show too little interest in what they do or ought to do". (Mbaga 1983). The result being that Nigeria is not able to fulfil its obligation to professional secretaries specifically and even the generality of the secretarial services.

Observations

Observation is made on two perspectives on government/general public and on that of the secretaries themselves.

Government/General Public

- The economic rejuvenation is in shamble
- Leading to poor recognition of professional secretaries inclusive
- None availability of the present day technological machines, office equipment inclusive.
- Non availability of professional secretary as at when needed.
- The make due is retained at requirement detriments.
- Insecurity of person and job in the highest order
- Poor placement of developmental strategy. Secretarial profession worst hit
- Poor career developmental strategies, secretaries completely ignored
- Lack of motivation secretaries perfectly forgotten.
- Educationally, there is insufficient curriculum rectification, secretarial field dejected and even condemned
- Time/period allocation, secretarial courses not recognised
- Teaching and learning aids provision, secretariat's too expensive.

On the part of the Secretaries

That the name Secretaries are in several ramifications misused and its value distorted for example

- Anybody with whatever qualification can be appointed – permanent secretary
- Even a computer operator or a copy typist is addressed as secretary.
- Personal Assistants that can just jot down names and dates of visitors are called secretary.
- Poor advertisement of the professionals.....
- Attempting not to be exposed due to inferiority complex that ought not to be.
- Unintentionally paving permanent ways for others (abstract) to come in.

Recommendation

On these premises therefore this discussion hereby holds:

1. The Nigerian society and economies require a paradigm shift to accommodate and promote professional secretarial practice in both private and public sector of the labour market since the concept of services and career development is a life-long process.
2. There is much need now for urgent massive professional secretaries training in quality and quantity to cater for the societal labour market demand.
3. Secretarial profession career guidance services and counselling should be accorded the right place and opportunities in every level through the professional bodies, associations and unions with greater emphases on employability.
4. At the labour market, emphases should rather be on “trainable recruits” than on trained recruits
5. All reforms affecting professional secretaries should be pursued with vigour considering their respective challenges so as to meet with international best practices and quality assurance to improved and well operational labour market in Nigeria.
6. All reforms should be geared towards the real professional attributes rather than performing a given job no-matter-how, as those with professional skills will be better positioned with the required competences for the labour market.
7. Secretaries so employed and deployed should mandatorily be made to undergo career programmes that will offer them atleast the basic knowledge required of atleast a real secretary – ND/NCE/HND B. Sc. While on the job either. Conference/seminar/workshops are not enough.
8. Organisations and government at all level and category should make out a blue print that will ensure that a peg fit into its right whole, taking cognizance of appointments and employment processes.
9. Professional bodies of Office Technologist should kick against quarks or the abstracts using their professional names. Effort should be made to offer licences for real Office Technologist.
10. The name secretary be adequately changed to Office Technologist.
11. Be proud of the profession at all time, ensure you change from abstract to professionals and take your right place in the labour market to enable you bargain better collectively.

Summary

You have been duly informed of a person or persons who are the pivotal focal point of the labour market and how such is prior in Nigeria labour market. What need to be done by you, the general public and the employers are lessons neatly taught here. It behove on you to tell it to the mountains, tell it to the hills, tell it to the valleys, to the sea and to the sky, that you are vital. **The most vital of all resources.**

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