

TIME AND SECURITY MANAGEMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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Abstract

Time and security management constitute two strong pillars that hold the success of any organization, be it public or private. Failure to effectively manage time and security can make or mar any organization. Most organizations owe their success stories to how effective they have been able to manage their time and security issues. These two variables (time and security) can only be ignored at a very great risk to any organization including the Local Government. In fact, Local Governments should take the issue of time and security management very serious because they are the closest level of government to the people and perhaps the most neglected tier of government in the tripod arrangement.

Introduction

Local Governments are established to achieve set goals just like any other organization. Local Governments are set up to implement government policies at the grassroots as constitutionally provided but Local Governments can also make bye-laws and implement same for the benefits of their people. The judicious use of time to accomplish their set goals and objectives is of utmost importance to Local Government administrators. It is thus my belief that Local Government and indeed all other organizations need effective time management and security of their human and material assets.

Drucker (1988) refers to time as “the limiting factor” for effective managers. Therefore, time management in Local Government stands out as an effective tool necessary for its effectiveness in the realization of set goals and objectives. Time in any organization is crucial and a lead resource in effective running of any system, for example, the opening and the closing time in every organization. This if implemented would facilitate the achievement of such organization’s goals and objectives. Drucker asserted that time itself cannot be rented, hired, bought or obtained.

Perhaps, this explains why in most organizations, personnel are paid for extra time used as overtime because it is the personnel that is rented, hired or bought for the time used.

Meaning of time management

Time management is a set of principles, practices, skills, tools, and systems that work together to help get more value out of time with the aim of improving the quality of life (Akamolafe, 2011). Time management is the art of arranging, organizing, scheduling, and budgeting one’s time for the purpose of generating more effective work and productivity. In arriving at a definition of time management, it is important to note that time management is a broad topic that covers many different areas from your day-to-day actions to long term goals. Some of the skills associated with time management include planning, prioritizing, goal setting, scheduling, and managing workload. A good time management system integrates these different skills using a consistent set of tools designed to work well with each other.

While thinking of time management, however, we tend to think of personal time management, which is loosely defined as

managing our time in order to waste less time on doing the things we have to do, so that we have more time to do the things we want to do. Time management is about planning your day effectively so that you can achieve all that you want to achieve.

Time management can be seen as making the best use of your time so that you can handle all your responsibilities, without giving in to the misery of procrastination. The belief is that once we master the time management skills, we will be more organized, more efficient, more effective and happier.

Time management also means the development of a process and tools that help you to be more productive, effective and efficient. You may find that everyone has different levels of time management and ways of making things happen for them. There are people and organizations that use their time management skills to help organization members to be more effective and efficient in the discharge of their duties or functions. You will be more productive and better able to achieve your goals in life work when you are skilled or prudent in managing time. When you think about time management, it is about making sure that you get things accomplished within a time limit.

At this juncture, it is imperative to emphasize that time really cannot be managed! This is because time cannot be slowed down or sped up or manufactured. Time management is planning activities while following some basic management principles. It is therefore an endless series of decisions that gradually change the shape of one's life. Everybody is increasingly aware of the cost of time. People's attitude towards time is complex and varied. Perceptions of time and its usage vary the world over. Differences are often reflected

in the average number of hours worked per day or week, the importance of punctuality and closing time or time spent on leisure activities.

Time management skills are essentially for effective people. People who use these techniques routinely are mostly the highest achievers in all walks of life. If you use these skills well, then you will be able to function effectively, even under intense pressure. It is always observed that many people spend their days in a frenzy of activities but achieve very little because they are not concentrating on the right things. This is neatly summed up in the Pareto principle, or the "80:20 Rule". This principle argues that typically 80% of unfocused effort generates only 20% results. The remaining 80% of the results are achieved with only 20% of the effort. While this ratio is not always 80:20, this broad pattern of a small proportion of activity generating non scalar returns, occurs so frequent to be the norm in many areas.

The key to effective time management is to use proactive thinking. Do not wait and let time make its demands on you; instead decide what you will do with your time. Your values and goals are to reflect on your time management. We can cut the number of reactive occurrences by thinking and planning in advance by being proactive.

Reasons for time management in Local Government

The following are reasons for time management in Local Government.

Time management is planning ahead

Time management is very important for all categories of staff in the Local Government system. An important aspect of time management is planning ahead.

Sometimes, successful time management involves putting in more time at the outset in order to reorganize one's life. Though many time management books and teachings differ in their suggestions, most agree that the first step in efficient time management is to organize the workspace. Even if one's schedule is well-ordered, but the office and the filing system are a disaster, time will be wasted trying to work efficiently in a disorderly place. Often, when individuals write down every last activity, they find that there is very little time left for sleeping. The end result is that many activities must be parried down, eliminated or delegated.

Bringing out the best

Time is a precious, special, and valuable resource that should be jealously managed to bring out the best in our lives endeavour. It is a known fact that time marches on and does not wait for our leisure or excuses. It is usually said 'make best use of your time'. Make the best of each day, live every day as though it's your last day.

Being able to manage time is important for those people who desperately would like more time to do all the things they want to do. There are some people that seem to get so much done each day and still find time to relax and enjoy themselves. One thing God gives to everyone the same is time- the normal 24 hours. As such, good time management is about making the best of the time available to you. This also means using your time to help you attain both your short term and long term goals.

Managing stress

Stress is a huge problem in the society and being in control of your own time is a sure way of helping you manage

the stress you face every day. By knowing what you are doing and when, then having enough time to do each activity will go a long way to helping you towards a life of reduced stress.

Minimizing time wasters

It is important to mention the concept of flow. Flow refers to those moments where you are so focused on an activity that all other things are forgotten. If you are managing your time well, you should be engaging in regular flow-inducing activities.

This means minimizing time wasters that do nothing to add to your wellbeing or give you that feel-good feeling that comes from engaging in something useful that absorbs all of your attention. So begin by switching off television, stop checking your e-mail, whatsapp, messenger, instagram, facebook, etc., every five minutes and browsing websites that you are not really that interested in. These constitute time wasters and if minimized will enhance effective time management.

Ensuring working on the right things

The important point here is that time management is not necessarily about getting lots of things done but about doing the right thing - the things that truly need to be done. Smart time managers know that there is much more to do than anyone could possibly accomplish. So instead of trying to do it all, smart time managers are very picky about how they spend their time.

Avoiding spending time on trivial things

It is good to focus and spend time doing a few important things that will really make a difference, rather than spending all the time doing many trivial or less important things that do not really matter that much. If you become a good time

manager, you'll not only get a lot more done in less time but you'll feel more relaxed, focused and in control of your life. Prioritizing activities on a scale of one to three-one being the most important and three being the least can help with some tasks.

Getting better results by doing less work

Improving your time management skills can even help you get better results by doing less work because you are focusing on the things that really matter rather than all the low-priority busy-work that just keeps you busy. If you don't learn how to manage time well, you'll be far less productive than you could be and you'll get a lot less done. You'll also feel much more stressed and overwhelmed, and you'll struggle to find time to spend to accomplish your goals and objectives.

Time management strategies

Time can be managed using the following strategies:

Setting priorities

Setting priorities is very essential in time management. If you write a list of things to do, it probably contains more things that you can actually accomplish. The list is valuable, by looking over it, you can choose the most important things and do them first. The rest can be transferred to other lists. If you have a list of things to do that are all about important, and if you are sure that the most important things are in the list, then you don't need to spend any time comparing them, just start doing one of them. It does not matter which one.

Create clear, specific goals for each day or even each hour by writing them down, if necessary, on a "to do" list with the most important things at the top and going down from there to the least important. Do

not go on to the second goal (or job) until you have completed the first.

Scheduling time for your tasks

Scheduling and managing time wisely are essential in managing every Local Government system. In managing time, there is a need for you to have a clearer understanding of how you now use your time. The personal time survey will help an administrator to estimate how much time he currently spends in typical activities. To get a more accurate estimate, he needs to keep track of how he spends his week. This will help him on how to get a better idea of how much he needs to spend on its activity, assignment and programmer.

It will also identify time wasters. Your concentration can be easily lost in the sea of many boring or less important things waiting to be done in your head. Undone things circulating in your mind are also a big drain of your mental energy. Most often, there is no way to get those things out of your mind except to either do them or schedule them in a trustable system, convincing your mind that they will be done in due time.

Set goals

The proven way to do your task is to set goals, and set them smart. Plan your actions for achieving your goals. Convert your goals into a system of specific actions to be done. Planning will help you to identify potential conflicts and crises, reducing the number of urgent tasks. Planning can also significantly lower the time spent on routine maintenance tasks, leaving you more time on what you like to do or for what you think is important for your long-term success. Also remember that planning and related time management tips work best when you review your plans regularly.

Delegating work

Effective delegation of functions could enhance judicious management of time. Learning how to delegate aspects of someone's work properly would enable him/her has time to complete the most important elements of his/her job schedule successfully. The process of delegation comprises the decision to delegate, the briefing, and the follow-up. Delegating work to your subordinates frees up time for you to concentrate on other important tasks before you. Delegation has its own rewards. Once someone has learnt a particular task, they will be able to do it in the future without repeated briefings.

Eliminate frivolities

There are lots of activities that constitute waste in spending out time. The most common are social, telephone calls, friends, dropping by, and conversation in the office. Another common source of waste of time stems from delaying work, which is unpleasant by finding distractions, which are less important or unproductive. Learn to be ruthless and eliminate the unnecessary appointments.

Make the phone work for you

The Local government administrator's use of phone goes a long way to enhance his performance on the job. Return calls at your convenience. As long as it doesn't affect others, you can put your phone on speaker, so you can do other tasks while you are talking on the phone. Let your friends and business associates know that your "telephone hour" when you prefer to receive calls. Learn to say, "I can't talk right now, can I call you back?" Set aside time (an hour in the morning for work calls or in the evening for personal calls) to return calls all at once. Limit waiting "on hold" to three minutes, unless the call is

really important. Use your time on the phone, especially if you are placed on hold, to do other things. When you leave a message, try to give a specific time for someone to call you back so that you avoid telephone tag as much as possible.

Avoid putting things off

Local Government administrators should avoid exhausting their energy on unimportant activities. Rather use the energy you spend putting off an unimportant task to get it done and off your mind. Make it the day's priority or the first thing you tackle. Divide large tasks into smaller, more manageable ones. Use the reward system and reward yourself as you complete each narrower task. Decide in advance how you will reward yourself when you complete the entire necessary task.

Security management in Local Government

In the beginning, God created all things, animate, inanimate and natural habitats and created man last. God put man in charge of all things He created. God equally empowered man to procreate. God's creation was intrinsically safe, but due to human disobedience man failed from God's grace and God drove man out of the garden of Eden- the place of safety and security. From this time on man began to face insecurity in his life. To preserve his life and property from harm, man now tries to secure his life and property, (King James Bible).

The word security has been viewed differently by different authorities depending on the angle the respective author looks at the word 'security'. In essence, security is the protection and preservation of assets and individuals within an organization or its environment. The organization could be church, school, home, companies, industries, banks,

business premises, government establishments, etc. Security is a state in which a person, organization, or an asset is free or is protected from loss-causing events. Actually, no organization is free from criminal activities such as arson, fraud, kidnapping, assassins, spies, and other forms of human and material waste.

One of the most sensitive tasks confronting humanity today is the safeguarding of lives, properties and environment. In a sentence, security is nothing but the absence of the evil of insecurity. As food is important to the human body, beyond doubt is also how important security is to all walks of life.

Classification of security

Security can be classified into three broad groups. These are individual security, organization security and government security. All these three classification are important to the survival of any system. But the one that concerns us most in this paper is government security.

Government security

According to Walter Lipmann every government is secure to the extent that it is not in a position to lose core values, life, property and liberty, and if it wishes, to deter aggression or win war when unavoidable. Seen this way, security therefore, provides the enabling environment for good social and political order in any governmental system. This means by implication that, the relationship between life, service and security is very strong and in fact inseparable. Every other sector of the system hinges on the function of security. It offers a protective umbrella for all other sectors of the economy.

This is why no serious minded government in the world treats matter of security with levity. In the rating of national

interest, security is on the top list. It is the primary interest. This is because life must be secure before man thinks about how to eat, clothe and shelter himself or even talk of leisure. There is nothing absolute that gives meaning and essence to life except security. It is that condition of freedom from threat, stress, strains or fear of losing life and other valuables of life. Security cannot be taken to be all about gun. No, though this is one mistake people make to think that security is equated to only the barrel of the gun. In fact, there is security in everything. In a holistic sense, security covers all policies, laws and institutional setup aimed at giving the citizens an assured psychological feeling of internal and external vigilance and freedom from fear of losing life or other core values.

Without security in the land, lives and properties cannot be secured. It means the stronger ones will have a field day in all aspects. This is why our government has to provide us with the Army, Police, Customs, Immigration, Navy, Air force, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, State Security Service, etc. All these security agencies are for our security though they all have their areas of specification.

They all check and ensure that security policies are enforced in their areas of specification. Any government that fails to provide security for her people, such government is not worth staying in office for a day.

Security Policy

A security policy should clearly define the role and responsibility of the security personnel within the management structure. The policy should state realistic guidelines for the provisions of various resources that are required to achieve specified security goals. And so, the aim of

security policies is to protect lives and properties within that government area of jurisdiction. The aim of security policies should be:

- Restricted access to some areas in the Local Government.
- Security guards at some strategic places in the Local Government
- Security guards duty roster to ascertain security personnel on duty within the Local Government Council.
- Adequate security lighting at work places and other strategic locations within the Local Government.
- Standby security vehicles at strategic places within the Local Government.
- Creating security awareness education to all staff of the Local Government and the public at large.
- Limited information on journey plans of key officials and residents of the Local Government.
- Provide minimum security escorts to prominent individuals within the Local Government.
- As much as possible, night travelling and outings by prominent individuals within the Local Government without adequate security personnel should be avoided.
- Visitors to the Local Government Council should put on tag to identify them.
- In the event of a security breach or incident within the Local Government, security personnel should be informed.

Also, in security implementation within the Local Government Council, it is vital for experienced security personnel to be engaged on gate duties. Gate duty is one of the most important duties connected with Local Government security, yet it is

often left to most inexperienced, poorly trained, inactive, and sometime old and almost vegetative personnel. This is not correct security-wise. The gate should be well manned by able-bodied security personnel who are efficient in checking in and out of people coming in and out of the Council.

Good vehicle movement, documentation and personnel identification also go a long way to assist in security management in the Council. The alternative is to employ reliable security firm or consultants to oversee the security needs of the Council. Security personnel should be handsomely paid. In fact they should have a different and better salary scale while their training and re-training should be made a watchword.

In security education, the common mistake lies in the thinking of many that security is an exclusive responsibility of the institutionalized security operatives (the military, the police force, State security service and Para-military establishments. The correct understanding, therefore, is that security is the duty of all and that every one of us is a security operative. On the whole, security education is better achieved through public seminars and conferences just as this.

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