



**COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE PROVISION AND MANAGEMENT OF
SECONDARY EDUCATION: A STRATEGY TO REDUCING RECURRENT
EXPENDITURE BY NASARAWA STATE GOVERNMENTS, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The paper examined the need for community participation in provision and management of secondary education in Nigeria as a strategy to cut down government recurrent expenditure on education. This position is apt owing to the fact that government has unequivocally stated in the National Policy of education that it welcomes the contributions of private entities and voluntary organizations in the provision and management of education because of the huge budgetary requirement of the sector in the year 2018. The Federal government proposed N544.07bn as recurrent expenditure for the ministry of education. The state governments also spend huge sums to finance that section of their budgets annually. The paper highlights the need of the community participation/involvement in educational provision and management, strategies for encouraging community participation, challenges for community involvement, as well as offer solutions to the challenges for effective and efficient involvement. Conclusions were drawn and way forward were made. Some of which include; sensitization of the community by the relevant agencies of government on the need for communities to own their education by providing it to suit their need and managing it appropriately, formation of strong and reliable community-based awareness campaign among others.

Key Words: Community, Participation, Educational provision

Introduction

Community refers to a group of people living in a geographical area, who have identical culture, beliefs, values, traditions and are united by common interest (Bala, 2017 & Abubakar, 2017). The people living in a community strive to promote and transmit their cultural heritage from generation to generation. Schools as conscious creation of the community are solely established to transmit society's cultural heritage from generation to generation and they operate as an open system influenced by forces within and outside it. Therefore, the central business of the school is to help the community in the implementation of its educational needs and aspirations as contained in the curriculum. Nwachukwu (2004) asserts that education constitutes the very foundation of meaningful socio-economic, political and developmental growth of any nation. To this end, there is need for collaborative relationship between the school and the community in various facets of

the school life for survival and continuity of the community.

Secondary education is the education children receive after primary education and before tertiary stage (FGN, 2013). It is a bridge between primary and tertiary levels of education system aimed at preparing individuals for useful living in the society as well as for higher education. Primary schools are turning out pupils who need placement into secondary schools in their millions annually with limited existing vacancies. A statistic from Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC, 2018) indicates that the North Central Geo-political zone has a total of 13,148 primary schools with only 2,595 junior secondary schools.

This indicates that for all the school leavers to be enrolled in secondary schools there is urgent need for a geometrical increase in the number of junior secondary schools in the zone. The



Abubakar, R. I., Musa, M. F. and Ogundele, B. B.

157-161

Federal government of Nigeria budgeted N544.07bn for recurrent cost in its 2018 fiscal appropriation (Onigbinde, 2018). Even though the amount may sound huge but in actual sense it translates to a gross under funding owing to the divergent demands of education at all levels.

However, Federal Government has unequivocally stated in the National Policy on Education that it cannot do it alone, it welcomes the participation of local communities, individuals and organizations to complement its efforts in providing education for the citizenry. It is on the basis of the foregoing, that the need for community participation in the provision and management of education in Nigeria becomes pertinent.

Community Participation

Community participation connotes the involvement of the community in matters of collective concern such as education. As pointed out earlier, the community needs education in the transmission of its cherished cultural heritage hence the need to partake in the affairs of the schools established in the locality. Community participation in education revolves around *studying* the school needs, goals and aspirations; *using* the school to transmit its cultures as well as using its resources; *servicing* the school by providing its needed resources to deliver on its mandate; and *involving* the school in the educational process.

Community participation in education according to Sulaiman (2017) refers to active involvement of parents, families and local communities in the planning, designing, coordinating, executing, supervising, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects (of schools) for better service delivery. The community is therefore expected to participate in the affairs of their schools to enable schools help their children to succeed in their educational pursuit.

Need for Community Participation in Secondary Education

As a result of the gross inadequacy of government allocation to education and to individual schools in particular, participation of

community in the education of its subjects is therefore evident. The National Policy of Education (2013) stated that: School systems and consequently their management and day-to-day administration shall grow out of the life and social ethos of the community which they serve.

Based on the above, the community has been participating in the administration and management of education through the Parent Teachers Association (PTA), School-Based Management Committee (SBMC), Alumnus Associations, among others. Through such participations, community assists schools in provision of instructional materials, hiring/employment of volunteer teachers and resource persons etc. However, these forms of collaboration and support have to go beyond the bounds of materials provision and other petty service to full-pledged participation through ownership and control of community secondary schools where the community will build, own and control schools in their localities. This will surely increase the number of secondary schools in our communities for more students' enrollment. As such, for effective and efficient management of secondary education, there must be strong partnership between the school head, teachers and students with members (community) where the school is situated.

Areas of Community Participation in Education

Silas (2012) identified the following areas as where local community could lend supportive hand in the provision and management of secondary education as thus;

- 1. Funding:** inadequate funding is one of the major problems confronting secondary schools in Nigeria. Today the major sources of funding secondary schools in Nigeria are governments of the three levels. Education all over the world receives tremendous assistance and helping hand from other sources other than government in form of donations and Internally Generated Revenues (IGR) such as proceeds of sales of local crafts and produce of agric farms, PTA and other levies collected by the schools etc.



Abubakar, R. I., Musa, M. F. and Ogundele, B. B.

to supplement government funding (Tarda & Fika, 2017). Local community financial support could be supplementary to the efforts of government. This supplementary support could be in the following ways; special levies, donations by individuals or groups – in whatever way possible, organizing tent raising activities, income from cooperative ventures such as banks and other business ventures hosted by the community.

- 2. Provision of infrastructure:** local communities or individuals can assist secondary education through the provision of basic school infrastructure and amenities like free land for building or expanding existing schools, constructing or renovating classrooms, purchase of learning materials such as books, chairs, desks, toilet facilities, libraries, clinics, boreholes, access road, etc. Where such is not provided by the community, the burden lies ahead with the government.
- 3. Hiring/employment of staff:** communities where schools are provided have to demonstrate commitment and take ownership of the school provided in their locality. The community can hire or employ the services and qualified staff-both teaching and non-teaching (as may be required) and pay them from their coppers instead of waiting for the government to employ and post staff to them. Education is a collective responsibility of all and sundry hence no quantum of commitment and investment can be too much.

Silas (2012) identified the followings as the reasons why community should participate in the management of secondary education for effective and efficiency.

- 1. Fostering community values in the learners:** Every society should hold in high esteem its cultural values and guide it judiciously. One of the best ways culture norms could be preserved is through education. The federal government sees the relevance of norms and values of community and preserve it in section 3(12) of the Nation Educational Policy that “the study of norms and values of the local community be

included in the curricular activities of the school”. Education shapes the lives of people by equipping them with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to participate effectively in meaningful decision making (in the community) (Ige, 2004).

- 2. Enhanced community economy:** Community participation in the management of education helps in self-sufficiency by educating their generations. Totten (2010) stated that the reshaping of life of unskilled peak, reduction of poverty and development of local business are some of the benefits local community members could enjoy when they partake in education program of their community. If local community participates in the running of secondary education in their community, they enjoy economic growth as well as attract people’s need. These needs are to be met by those who are conscious of them and never ready to explain these opportunities through house wives engage in selling some eatery, drinks during school break time which serves as source of getting income.

Strategies to Encourage Community Participation in Education

Strategy according to Strassman (2012) involves the dealing with the external environment and the broad missions and goals of organization. Bala (2010) added that; there are three major features of strategy, defining the goals and objectives, developing an action plan that mediates between the organization and the environment and designing effective method of implementation. The following strategies, when adopted encourage community to participate in educational provision. Thus:

- 1. Sensitization of general public:** proper enlightenment campaign should be undertaken by the government through the state ministry of education to sensitize the general public on the needs to fully participate and contributes to the education sector either in cash or kind.
- 2. Recognition of any type of contribution:** the way of contribution should not necessarily be in cash or financial aids even piece of advises from the community should



Abubakar, R. I., Musa, M. F. and Ogundele, B. B.

be highly welcome and recognized as such could make community to participate immensely in provision and management of secondary education in the state and also includes the community in decisions related to their schools.

3. Development of positive attitude towards respect of community social values: in order to attract the attention of community towards participation in educational activities, there is need for abiding by the ethics of teaching which contain respect and values as well as participating in their social affairs. Therefore, the state ministry of education should be considered only those who deserve both in merit and personal characters before assigning them to be secondary schools managers.

4. Adjustment of some government policies: the government policies need to be adjusted and make it mandatory for each and every executive officer in the state civil service to enroll their children in public schools that will call for the attention of the community to fully participate in the secondary education.

Challenges of community involvement in Provision and management of Secondary Education

1. Wrong assumption from community members: as a result of many parents, guardians and students are residing in rural areas they possess low level of awareness concerning government policies on education. They assume that the total responsibilities of secondary education from establishing of schools, provision of curriculum, procurement of furniture, recruitment of both teaching and non-teaching staff and payment of their salaries, instructional materials and security of the entire school system relies only on government.

2. Poverty in the society: the communities putting their hands in the management of secondary schools is crippled by the level of poverty among community members. Many manage to maintain the basic needs of nutritional routine and struggle hard to meet it and survive that keeps them busy and

prevent them from contributing their quota in the management of secondary education.

3. Attitudes of stakeholders: inability of school management to maintain and establish cordial relationship with the host of the community faces a lot of challenges and decline of concern in the school programs as the communication gap occurs.

4. Poor attitude of politicians: most of our secondary schools in the state are public and enrolls highest number of students compared to private schools, while most of our politicians do not enroll their children in public schools due to some reasons best known to them, that paves way for unpleasant and lackadaisical attitude towards funding and management of public secondary schools hence, the politicians are part and parcel of the community whose contribution is equally and highly needed.

Suggestions and way forward

The followings are the suggestions/recommendations made out of the content of this paper:

1. Secondary school managers should involve local community members at all time in the decision making of the schools since the school is belonging to them such as; School Based Management Committee,
2. Secondary school managers who are genuinely interested in the progress of the school within the communities require good school-community relation. E.g., Parent Teachers Association, Women Association, Old Students Association etc.
3. Government through teachers' service board of the state should device means and ways of honoring the native community members who make serious donation or support in any form of secondary schools' activities. Such as philanthropist, well to do Business men and women from the community where the school is situated at.
4. Local communities from their own part should strive hard to successfully participate in provision and support to secondary schools in order to actualize the objectives of secondary schools.



Abubakar, R. I., Musa, M. F. and Ogundele, B. B.

5. There is need for the government to initiate policies that would enhance community participation in the provision and management of secondary education, through inserting a clause for compulsory involvement of community members in terms of running the school programme.
6. All the barriers that stand as a stumble-block to local communities to effectively participate in the provision and management of secondary education should be discarded. For instance, lack of inter and intra-community relationship between school and the community.
7. All the channels of information and communication both electronics, non-electronics and local town criers should be utilized in order to enlighten and make educational policies known to communities on the need for them to participate in both provision and management of secondary education.

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