

**A SURVEY OF STATE UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION BOARD
(SUBEB) MODEL NURSERY AND PRIMARY SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN
EKITI STATE: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS**

By

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Abstract

The study examines the standard of the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) Model Nursery and Primary School Libraries in Ekiti State. How fit are the school libraries to ably play their roles as supporters of schools' academic programmes? To what extent are the school libraries satisfying the information needs of the pupils and their teachers? Data were collected through on-the-spot assessment of the libraries. Interviews were conducted with selected pupils and teachers and questionnaire was administered on randomly selected 64 and 28 pupils and teachers respectively. Findings show that despite the determination of the State Government to improve the standard of the Model Schools and make them to be model indeed, funding and political instability were identified as the major banes inhibiting the spate of development of the SUBEB Model Schools and that of their libraries in particular. Recommendations that could improve the situation and thereby enhance the academic standard in the Model Schools were offered.

Introduction

Primary education simply connotes the kind of education given in an institution for children aged 6 to 11⁺. According to Fabunmi (2000), this kind of education which is important and desirable serves as foundation or bedrock for subsequent levels of education. Besides, the primary education is a strong determinant for the country's socio-economic development in the sense that it is the formal starting point of learning. At the primary school level a child is psychologically, physiologically, sociologically and intellectually prepared and adequately equipped to face

the higher and more challenging tasks ahead in the next stages of education in the future (Orukotan and Oladipo, 1994).

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme, which encompasses the nursery and primary education, is a reform agenda of the Federal Government that is aimed at improving quality in the basic education system through access, retention, completion and enriched teaching and learning inputs. As the fulcrum for the transformation of basic education, the programme was launched with the aim of developing in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education, the provision of free universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school age, and reducing drastically the incidence of dropout from the formal school system, among others (Punch Editorial Jan. 28).

In 2001, the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) carried out a Learning Achievement Test on primary four pupils in order to assess their level of performance in Mathematics and English. Primary four was deemed suitable because at that level pupils are expected to have achieved the skills of Learning – to – Read between primary classes 1 and 3 and Read – to – Learn from primary four through life. The result gathered from the test indicated low performances as the National mean score for Mathematics was 34.02% and in English Language 40.10%. This low level performance by the pupils in the Test was attributed to poor reading habit among the pupils and the poor reading habit itself was further attributed to absence of well equipped, functional and effective libraries in Nursery and Primary schools (UBEC Guidelines 2008). It is no gainsaying that no nursery and primary school can effectively function and deliver its expected services without a well serviced and functional school library.

Libraries are, no doubt, the basic image makers and yardsticks with which to measure the standards of establishments especially knowledge-imparting ones such as institutions of higher learning, post-primary and primary institutions. Buttressing this assertion, Ogunleye (2000) submitted that the academic programme of a University (and of course any other institutions or schools) is as good or as bad as its library collections and services. Busayo (2002) quoting Toye (1985) argued that in a situation where there is dearth of fund to procure laboratory equipment and to recruit staff, learning and teaching could still be effectively done if there

are well-stocked libraries. Libraries are academic nests where scholars are hatched and the real nucleus of an educational institution where further learning, apart from classroom learning, takes place.

According to Nwalo (2000) school libraries are those ones set up in nursery, primary and secondary schools (and in other equivalent institutions) to compliment the learning and teaching process that take place in the classroom. Fayose (1995), affirming the invaluable roles of school libraries, defined school library as that part of the school where a collection of books, periodical magazines and newspapers, films and filmstrips, video-tapes, recordings of all types, slides, computers, study kits, realia and other information-bearing resources are housed and organized for use by teachers and pupils for learning, recreational activities, personal interest and interpersonal relationships of children. Among the several nomenclatures given to the school library are: School Library Media Centre, School Library Resources Centre (SLRC), Learning Resources Centre (LRC), Media Resources Centre (MRC), and Instructional Materials Centre (IMC). In this paper the designations are used interchangeably. The School Library Media Resource Centre is therefore that part of a school where information is further gathered and transferred into knowledge. It has the effect of helping a child to build up the innate facilities in him that will enable him to put knowledge into good use. Unarguably, the development and provision of functional school libraries will reduce the historical shortage of reading materials in schools because functional school libraries will provide pupils and teachers, access to a variety of quality books and non-book materials than any one child or teacher can provide for herself at any time thereby enhancing literacy skills and learning achievement.

Fabunmi (2000) while enumerating the goals of primary school libraries observed that the pupils go to the school library to majorly satisfy their information needs and to gain experience in research or in use of scientific and reflective thinking. Accordingly, the primary school libraries provide pupils with a variety of resources required for learning. In the primary school libraries, pupils are exposed to a variety of interesting and pleasurable pictures, folktales, fictions, topic books and magazines that ultimately appeal to their mental reflections. A primary school library must

therefore be well equipped in terms of relevant collections in order to be fit enough to support the educational programmes of the school and thereby function effectively as expected and desired. The resources in the school libraries must be those ones that ultimately catch the attention of the pupils and must at the same time be capable of broadening their knowledge.

The audio-visual resources are especially essential as part of collections of school library resource centre in the sense that they are capable of appealing to the two senses of hearing and viewing at the same time. According to Dike (1992) the importance of these materials in the primary school libraries cannot be over-emphasized because the pupils learn faster when they hear and see specimens and model of what is learnt.

Objective of the study

The objectives of this study are to determine the level of fitness of the SUBEB Model Nursery and Primary School Libraries in Ekiti State and to know the extent to which the school libraries are playing their roles as supporters of academic programmes of the model schools. The study also seeks to find out the extent to which the school libraries satisfy the information needs of the pupils and their teachers. An attempt was as well made to give realistic and useful suggestions that could enhance the growth and capabilities of the school libraries.

Methodology

There are 16 Local Government Councils in Ekiti State at the moment. The plan of the State government regarding the SUBEB model nursery and primary schools is that one of such model schools will be located in each of the 16 local government councils. This means that, according to the government plan, there is eventually going to be 16 SUBEB model schools in Ekiti State. However, there are presently 10 SUBEB model schools in the State which means that 6 local government councils are yet to have a model school each.

The major instrument used to collect data for this study include a questionnaire, on-the-spot assessments and oral interviews with randomly selected pupils and teachers of the SUBEB model schools. Altogether, 70 and 30 questionnaires were distributed to randomly selected SUBEB model school pupils and teachers respectively. The questionnaires for the pupils

were written with choiced simple English words that the pupils can easily understand. Moreso, the researcher and his assistant were also on ground to guide the pupils. A total of 64(91.4%) pupils completed and returned their questionnaire while 28(93.3%) teachers did same. The response rates are considered good enough for the study. The data was analyzed by means of tables and simple percentages. Interpretation of result was done and inference drawn.

Finding and Discussion

Table I

Distribution of the existing SUBEB Model Nursery and Primary Schools in Ekiti State

Towns/Location	Name of LGA	No of SUBEB Model N/P school
*Ado-Ekiti	Ado LGA	1
*Ido-Ekiti	Ido/Osi LGA	1
*Afao-Ekiti	Irepodun/Ifelodun	1
Efon-Alaaye	Efon LGA	1
Omuo-Ekiti	Ekiti East LGA	1
*Erio-Ekiti	Ekiti West LGA	1
Ikere-Ekiti	Ikere LGA	1
*Ijero-Ekiti	Ijero LGA	1
*Ilawe-Ekiti	Ekiti South West	1
Ikole-Ekiti	Ikole LGA	1

*Those ones selected for the study.

Legend: LGA – Local Government Area.

SUBEB – State Universal Basic Education Board.

Table 1 shows the 10 towns and the LGAs where the 10 existing SUBEB model Nursery and Primary schools are located. Each of the LGAs, as revealed, has one model school. It also revealed that while some of the

model schools are located at the headquarters of the local government council, some are not. For instance, the headquarters of Irepoḍun/Ifelodun Local government council is Igede-Ekiti and the model school slot of the LGA was given to Afao-Ekiti.

Table II

Respondents' Age Distribution

Pupils			Teachers		
Age Bracket	Number	%	Age Bracket	Number	%
Below 5 years	12	18.8	Below 20 years	-	-
5-10 years	42	65.6	20-30 years	15	53.6
Above 10 years	10	15.6	Above 30 years	13	46.4
TOTAL	64	100		28	100

Table II shows the age distribution of the respondent pupils and teachers. The table revealed that 42(65.6%) of the pupils are between the ages of 5 years and 10 years and 12(18.8%) are below 5 years while only 15.6% of the pupils are above 10 years of age. Also, the table revealed that no teacher is below 20 years of age and 13(46.4%) teachers are above 30 years of age. The bulk of them, 15 representing 53.6% of respondents are between the ages of 20 and 30 years.

Table III
Respondents' perceptions about School Libraries

Statement	Response							
	Pupils				Teachers			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
School libraries are resource centres	30	46.9	34	53.1	26	92.8	02	7.1
Functional school libraries help to support teaching and learning in schools.	27	42.1	37	57.8	27	96.4	01	3.6
Pupils and teachers need functional school libraries to improve their reading culture.	25	39.1	39	60.9	23	82.1	05	17.9
School libraries are generally in doldrums due to neglect by their owners	50	78.1	14	21.9	25	89.3	03	10.7
School libraries can be revived through concerted efforts of the stakeholders.	12	18.8	52	81.3	26	92.9	02	7.1
Satisfactions of information needs is germane to the intellectual development of pupils and teachers	57	89.1	07	10.9	20	71.4	08	8.6
Information needs of pupils and their teachers are best satisfied in functional school libraries.	20	31.3	44	68.8	19	67.9	09	32.1

Table III above shows respondents' perception about school libraries. It further shows their understanding about information needs and its satisfaction. In the table, 30 (46.9%) of the pupils acknowledged that school libraries are resource centres while 92.9 percent of the teachers acknowledged the same fact. 27 pupils representing 42.2 percent affirmed that functional school libraries do help to support teaching and learning in schools while 27 (96.4%) of the teachers indicated that functional school libraries are props of teaching and learning processes in schools. Also, 39.06 percent of the pupils believed that functional school libraries help to improve their reading culture while 82.1 percent of the teachers have the same belief. On the issue of school libraries being in doldrums due to general neglect, 78.1 percent and 89.3 percent of the pupils and teachers respectively affirmed that the school libraries have actually been neglected. On the satisfaction of information needs 57 (89.1%) and 20 (71.4%) of the pupils and teachers respectively said that the satisfaction of information needs is germane to intellectual development. This connotes that the respondents know what information needs are and the value of their being satisfied.

Table IV

Rating of satisfaction of Information needs of the Pupils and Teachers by the School Libraries.

Teachers' Rating			Pupils' Rating		
	Number	%		Number	%
Very highly	-	-	Very highly	04	6.3
Highly	04	14.3	Highly	05	7.8
Low	06	21.4	Low	30	46.9
Very low	14	50.0	Very low	18	28.1
Don't know	04	14.3	Don't know	07	10.9
Total	28	100	Total	64	100

Table IV shows the rating of satisfaction of information needs of the respondents, that is, the pupils and teachers. The table shows that 04 or

(14.3%) of the teachers rated the satisfaction of their information needs highly; (21.4%), low; 14 (50.0%) very low and 4 (14.3%) indicated 'Don't know'. Also 4 (6.3%) of pupils rated the satisfaction of their information needs very highly; 5 (7.8%) as high; 30 (46.9%) as low; 18 (28.1%) as very low and 07 representing 10.9 percent indicated 'Don't know'.

Conclusion and Recommendations

School libraries are, no doubt, the very anchor that holds and supports the academic programmes of the foundation levels of education in nursery and primary schools. The importance of school libraries as resource centres that compliment teaching and learning processes that take place in the classrooms cannot be overemphasized. Effective and well serviced school libraries are therefore not only the national and educational prides but are as well conditions to achieving the desire goals of various educational policies of the government.

The recommendations are geared towards having efficient and effective school libraries that would in effect adequately support teaching and learning processes and make the pupils to be complete social, psychological, cultural and intellectual beings. The ultimate effect of this is that the educational foundations at the nursery and primary schools would be well laid to be able to stoutly carry the further loads from secondary schools to institutions of higher learning.

Awareness must be created by the policy makers and other stakeholders on the importance of having functional and well serviced school libraries. This is necessary in view of the fact that a good number of pupils are ignorant of the real essence of School Library Media Centres. Only 27 (42.2%) of the pupils indicated that it is true that functional school libraries help to support teaching and learning in school. This can be achieved by the counseling units of the schools and by employing competent hands of teacher-librarians to put in place, organize, man and educate pupils and their teachers on the importance of school libraries.

Besides, the lack of political will by the individual states which had either not been accessing the counterpart funding or had been diverting it to unrelated project is another major problem confronting the Universal Basic Education (UBE) and therefore other functions and access of the

scheme including the school libraries. It is observed that despite the huge fund committed to the upliftment of basic education, there are still shortages of teachers and school librarians in schools, inadequate infrastructure and the School Library Media Centres (School libraries) are either in doldrums or not existing at all. It is depressing to note that in the last 4 years, the UBEC had disbursed N20.4 billion to various states of the Federation (The Punch, Jan. 28) and the impact is yet to be as such felt.

Political instability at the national level and in some states of the Federation has been observed as another monster confronting the scheme. The instability tends to affect the educational policies and other policies of the government of the day concerning finance and priorities. For the scheme to make headway, the political office holders must know that government is continuum and that any good policies or schemes initiated by any government must be allowed to continue even when there is a change in government. Still, for the scheme to make a headway and be relevant more commitment must be shown by both the federal and state governments. The activities of the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) should be streamlined while all states should strictly follow the modality for accessing the fund meant for the programme. Any officials of the UBEC caught, tried and found guilty of diverting the scheme's fund should be exposed and brought to justice. The motive is to first deliver the whole scheme because it is when the scheme is delivered from all sorts of unholy corruptions that there can be functional and effective school libraries in the Model Schools.

Above all, it is necessary that the government increases the funds being allocated to education on yearly basis. Finance, as observed by Anafulu (1996) is at the heart of enterprise. The UNESCO directive that at least 26 percent of the national budgetary allocation be given to education must be complied with. This is to ensure better funding not only for the nursery and primary school libraries but for education at all levels in general.

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