# STAKE HOLDERS IN NIGERIAN EDUCATION AS FACILITATORS IN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LIBRARY SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

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## Abstract

*The paper highlights the objectives of the Universal Basic Education Programme in Nigeria and the relevance of effective school library service to the realisation. It also reviews the state of school library service in Nigerian schools and discusses the suggestions made by librarians, teachers and students for improved school library service. The roles of stakeholders in Nigerian education in development of virile school library service in support of the Universal Basic Education are discussed and recommendations that would facilitate rapid developments in the area of school library service are made.*

On 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1999, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo launched the Universal Basic Education Programme (UBEP) to improve the quality of education in Nigerian schools and in the adult and non-formal sectors. The objectives of the Universal Basic Education Programme are as follows:

1. develop in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion;
2. provide free universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school-going age;
3. reduce drastically the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system through improved relevance, quality and efficiency;
4. cater for the learning needs of young persons, who for one reason or another, have had to interrupt their schooling through appropriate forms of complementary approaches

to the provision and promotion basic education;

5.  ensure the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation of life-long learning.

In the Nigerian context, the UBE Programme has three major components, namely: basic education, pre-school education and adult and non-formal education. It provides skills and knowledge for socialization, literacy, further education, enlightenment, self-actualisation and self-employment. Given the diversity of the programme's clientele and the Multitude of skills and knowledge that it hopes to transmit, it is only obvious that the providers of the UBE, Programme will be diverse and many. These include governmental and non-governmental organizations, religious organizations, community-based organizations, associations, the industry, organized private and informal sectors of the economy etc. All these and others not listed are referred to as the stakeholders in education. In the National Policy on Education, every school is to be provided a school library resource centre adequately equipped and staffed. In this paper the terms School Library, School Library resource centre, media resource centre are used interchangeably as they refer to the same concept.

**The State of Library and Resource Centre's Services in Nigerian Schools**

In a recent survey study conducted, the Education Sector Analysis (ESA) of the Federal Ministry of Education, the following information is known concerning the state of school library services in Nigerian schools. There were libraries in some primary and secondary schools providing some form of services to support teaching in the schools. The learning resource collections consist mainly of books — reference, fiction and non-fiction. The collections are not very current as indicated by the sampled students/pupils and teachers and this constitute one of the constraints to use of the school library resource centre collections. The few libraries that existed in

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schools are managed by teachers with or without any knowledge of librarianship and they carried different designations. As of now, there has been no law enforcing the establishment of libraries in schools and the employment of qualified personnel to run the school library/resource centres. It is only in the Federal Government Unity Schools that librarians with at least a diploma in library science are employed. Lack of qualified staff to run the school library resource centres has remained a constraint to library service development over the years.

The study solicited suggestions for the improvement of library service in the schools from the school librarians, subject teachers and students sampled in the schools.

The following are their suggestions

**Table 1:** **School-Librarians' Suggestions for Improved Library Service in Schools**

| S/ N | Suggestion | Frequency N = 621 | Percentage | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Government to Supply Current books and periodicals to schools | 479 | 77.0 | 1 |
| 2. | Government to Supply information technology facilities to school | 361 | 58.1 | 3 |
| 3. | Recognize the school librarians as an academicstaff in school | 286 | 46.0 | 5 |
| 4. | Create library period on the time-table, | 300 | 48.3 | 4 |
| 5. | Introduce teaching library use skills in schools | 278 | 44.7 | 6 |
| 6. | Provide funds to the school library. | 404 | 65.0 | 2 |

**Table 2:** **Subject-Teachers' Suggestions for Improved Library Service in Schools**

| S/ N | Suggestion | Frequency N =1352 | Percentage | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Library should open for longer hours | 466 | 34.4 | 5 |
| 2. | Students/pupils should be aware of new materials in the library. | 527 | 38.9 | 2 |
| 3. | Library Orientation Programme to be introduced for all new staff, Students/pupils. | 614 | 4.4 | 1 |
| 4. | Make the library collections current | 507 | 37.5 | 3 |
| 5. | Provide reading space with chairs and tables. | 482 | 35.6 | 4 |
| 6. | Library to be supplied with computers and internet access. | 342 | 25.2 | 6 |

**Table 3:** **Students' Suggestions for Improved Library Service in Schools.**

| S/ N | Suggestion | Frequency N = 11,894 | Percentage | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Open for longer hours till evening | 2903 | 24.4 | 1 |
| 2. | Open on weekends | 685 | 5.8 | 6 |
| 3. | Provide Current books and periodicals. | 1864 | 15.7 | 2 |
| 4. | Teach students library use skills. | 1080 | 9.1 | 5 |
| 5. | Create library period on school time-table | 1267 | 35.6 | 3 |
| 6. | Introduce students to the use of computer and other information technology | 1171 | 9.8 | 4 |

Common to the requests of the respondents for improved library service are the provision of current books and other media, and information communication technology. (ICT) The school librarians and Students asked for the creation of library period on the school time-table and the teaching of library use skills. The school librarians requested for fund to run school libraries. The subject-teachers and students request for opening of libraries for longer hours. No school librarian could give statement on the annual budget for the school libraries which may mean that the school libraries exist at the discretion of the heads of the schools.

The library facilities in the primary and. secondary schools are grossly inadequate. The areas of improvement are many, ranging from physical structure, furniture, resource materials, media programmes, adequate funding and qualified personnel to run the services. The library personnel, class-teachers and students are aware of what services are needed in the school libraries to facilitate the effective implementation of the school curricula.

**The Role of the Stakeholders in the Provision of Effective School Library Resource Centres.**

The stakeholders in Nigerian education sector are:

1. **Government Organisations**
   (i)   Federal and State Ministries of Education
   (ii)  Parastatals of the Federal and State Ministries of Education
         -   Universal Basic Educaiton Commission (UBEC)
         -   State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB)
         -   Teaching Service Commission (TESCOM)
         -   Post Primary School Management Board (PPSMB)
         -   Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN)
         -   Education Tax Fund (ETF)
         -   National Teacher Institute (NTI)
         -   National Library of Nigeria (NLN)
         -   State Library Boards (SLB) etc.
   (iii) Local Government

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2. **Non-governmental Organisations**
   - UNICEF
   - UNESCO
   - USAID
   - World Bank etc.

3. **Community-based organisations**
   - Socio-cultural Groups
   - Parents/Teachers Association
   - School Board of Governors
   - School Administrators
   - Philanthropists
   - Individual Parents

4. **Associations**
   - Old Students' Association

5. **Learned Societies**
   - Nigerian Library Associaiton (NLA)
   - Science Teachers Association of Nigerian (STAN)
   - Reading Association of Nigeria (RAN)
   - Nigerian School Library Association (NSLA)

6. **Labour Organisations**
   - Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT)
   - Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC)
   - Non Academic Staff Union (NASU)
   - Association of Nigerian Conference of Principal Secondary Schools (ANCOPSS)

**The Role of the Government in the UBE Programme**

Gidado (2003) identified the role of the Federal Government in the implementation of the UBE Programme. According to him, every tier of government is a stakeholder in the UBE, the Federal Government is the prime mover and therefore has to play a key role in ensuring its success for the overall development and growth of our people and the country. The Federal Government has to take a centre stage in its implementation. It must initiate dialogues and use whatever legitimate machinery within its powers to carry along the

states, local government, local communities, development partners (nongovernmental organizations) and bi-lateral and multi-lateral agencies in prosecuting the UBE.

## The Role of the UBEC in Nigerian Education

1. Coordination of the Scheme nationwide:
2. Sensitisation and mobilization of all stakeholders for their effective involvement and participation:
3. Seeking and negotiating international cooperation and collaboration towards the success of' the scheme:
4. Ensuring regular monitoring and evaluation of the scheme:
5. Enhancing the capacities of state and local governments and other stakeholders for the successful implementation of UBE and
6. Disbursing the UBE national funds (i.e. special capital and instructional materials funds) to the implementation and collaborating agencies for the purpose of implementing UBE projects and programme.

] Part of the functions of the UBEC is disbursement of national funds to implementing and collaborating agencies as well as enhancing the capacities of State and Local Governments and other stakeholders for the successful implementation of the UBE. One of the functions of the UBEC, that influenced the provision of library services in public schools is organizing training programmes for selected primary school teacher in acquiring skills in identifying and selecting appropriate supplementary readers for use in classroom libraries, organized nation-wide. The supplementary reading materials have been purchased and supplied to the 110 "focus schools" throughout the country. The UBEC is expected to do more in the provision of library buildings, employment of qualified schools librarians to work in schools, and provision of annual budgets to schools for development of school libraries among others. In addition to books, schools could be supplied computers and other ICT facilities for library automation.

The State Ministries of Education through its parastatals like: Teaching Service Commission, State Universal Basic Education Board and the State Library Board have funded

some school library development projects in the schools. The States can also do more by employing qualified school media specialists to run the school libraries, sponsor teachers to attend courses in school media resource management ensure that all schools have libary period on the timetable during which students could be taught the appropriate information literacy skills, fund should also be provide for the purchase of books and other resources.

## The Role of Local Government in Nigerian Education

The Local Governments have financial allocations from the federation account like the other two tiers of government. Besides the fund provided the Local Government Education Authorities, the Local Government should set aside fund to develope libraries in their schools. Such fund could be for salaries of school library personnel, procurement of books and other learning resources, provision of suitable accommodation and the training of staff for the school libraries among others.

## Contribution of Development Partners (Non-Governmental Organisations) to Nigerian Education

The Development partners (NGOs) are many and have made notable contributions to Nigerian education. They include: UNICEF, World Bank, USAID and UNESCO. Among their activities are:

- Provision of first aid kits to selected schools in the states of the Federation;

- Funding training workshops for teachers in specific subject areas including school management and administration:

- Provision of fund to build classrooms, laboratories, purchase of instructional materials including supplementary readers.

These organizations constitute a rich source for funding development of libraries in our schools with the necessary encouragement from the government.

## Contribution of Community-based Organisations to Nigerian Education

The role of the community in the provision of qualitative education is significant, such roles includes:

(i) The individual parents at home, supporting the child by ensuring healthy development of the child and providing for the child's educational needs.

(ii) Contributing ideas, personal resources and even money towards the development of the school. Such organisation could donate library building, learning resoures, ICT facilities and employ staff for the school library. The extent at which this is achieved is of course a function of harmonious interactions between the community, the board of governors and the executive committees of the PTA of a given school. School library services should be one of the cardinal programme of the community-based organisations.

## Contribution of Associations and Learned Societies to Nigerian Education

There are Old Students Associations which constitute a valuable resource for their alma matters in development of school projects. The school library programme should feature prominently on the priority list of projects for implementation. Many schools, particularly secondary schools, have received donation of library buildings with learning resource materials from their Old Students' Association.

The learned societies or associations have featured prominently in the area of man-power development through training in curriculum development and provision of suitable publications to enhance teaching and learning. They have also given leadership in introducing innovations to teaching and learning. The labour organizations like the Nigeria Union of Teachers, the Association of Nigerian Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools, the Non-Academic Staff Union etc. are

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organizations that have fund that can be spent on providing some facilities in schools. With proper guidance, part of the money could be committed to meeting desired need of schools libraries.

**Conclusion**

The library facilities in our schools are still very poor. More funds have to be provided to facilitate the improvement of these facilities. The Nigerian Government and the designated parastatals should sensitize and mobilize all the stakeholders for their effective involvement and participation in the funding of school library programmes. Nigeria is ripe for an education law that will make it mandatory for libraries to be provided at all levels of education with facilities for their full exploitation by teachers and students. The statement in the National Policy on Education on provision of school library media centre is not adequate for this purpose and should be backed up with a legislation.

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