

**GOVERNMENT POLICY ON SCHOOL LIBRARY IN LEVELS OF
EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF SECONDARY
SCHOOL LIBRARY PROVISION IN KADUNA STATE**

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Introduction

Education has received many definitions by experts. These experts have agreed that the word 'Education' originates from a Latin word "Educare", which means to educate. Such definitions by experts include education as an aggregate of all the processes by means of which a person develops abilities, attitudes, and other forms of behaviour of positive value in the society in which he lives. Ogunshye (1978) defines education in relation to the social context as a social process by which people are subjected to the influence of a selected and controlled environment, especially that of a school, so that they may attain social competence and optimum individual development for positive contributions or value to his society. Education can therefore be seen as the total training of an individual to be able to perform those activities that would improve his living condition. This training could take place within the family, school or society.

At the school, the education of individuals in Nigeria, is programmed in the National Policy on Education to begin from the level of pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary. The levels of education is also backed up with suitable curriculum, plan for the training of the beneficiaries.

The National Policy on Education (NPE) is a detailed educational policy in Nigeria. This is meant to carry out the Nigerian Constitutional provision on education. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (1999) in its Constitution chapter II, section 18 (1) and 3 (a-b) emphasized the direction of the country's policy on education. It is tailored towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels. In pursuance of the educational policy provided in the Nigerian Constitution, the FRN (1998) provided in section 9, a heading "Educational Services" in the National Policy on Education. This

Educational Services' provision is to facilitate the implementation of the educational policy, the attainment of policy goals and the promotion of effectiveness of education system.

The goals of educational services stipulates in item 88 as follows:

- (a) to develop, assess and improve educational programmes
- (b) to enhance teaching and improve the competence of teachers
- (c) to make learning experiences more meaningful for children
- (d) to make education more cost-effective
- (e) to promote in-service education, and
- (f) to develop and promote effective use of innovative materials in schools.

In achieving these goals, the NPE went further to state the role of libraries 'as one of the most important educational services'. That proprietors of schools shall provide functional libraries in all their educational institutions in accordance with the established standards. They shall also provide for training of librarians and library assistants for this service.

The emphasis by the government policy statement is a directive, that the Federal, State and Local Governments functionaries should ensure its implementation.

It is the aim of this paper therefore to trace briefly the history of Government Policy on school library development in primary and secondary levels of education in Nigeria, this is with special reference to school library provision in secondary schools in Kaduna State.

Definition of terms

It becomes very pertinent to define some terms that would be used in this paper. They include:

Government Policy. This refers to the legislative provision on the establishment and management of school libraries in Nigeria.

School library. It refers to a building established in a primary or a secondary school with trained personnel, organised books and non-books materials that are provided for use by students and staff of the school.

Primary level of education. This refers to the education of children from ages 6-12 years in Nigeria. This training comes after pre-primary level of education which is from ages 3-6 years

Secondary level of education. This refers to the education of the child after 6 years in the primary school in Nigeria.

Development. It refers to the state of improvement in an

individual, society or community or nations' social, political, educational, economic and technological capabilities and well being.

Brief History of Government Policy On Primary and Secondary School Library in Nigeria

Government policy on primary and secondary school library in Nigeria is hereby traced through the political development of the Nigerian administration as the British Administration, Regional Administration and the Post Independence.

The British Administration

During the colonial government in Nigeria, most schools were controlled by religious bodies, such as the American Baptist Mission, the Wesleyan Methodist Mission, the Church of Scotland Mission, the Anglican Church and the Church of Missionary Society. These schools were provided with what may be called "Reading Rooms" because there were no trained staff to man what was to be called school libraries. Udoh (1981) revealed that a few government schools were maintained, although government policy was to give grants to mission schools rather than to expand its own.

Regional Administration

With the constitutional development of the Regional administration in Nigeria, school library development just like any other library development, for example, public, academic or special, has naturally followed the trend in regional development.

The three Regional Governments in Nigeria (i.e Eastern, Western and Northern) had their policies of school library development according to their Regions. For example:

The Eastern Region

The Eastern Regional Library Act which was first in the country (Nnaji 1986: 150) was passed on 1st July, 1955 and cited as the Eastern Nigerian Library Board law. It was aimed at establishing the Eastern Nigerian Library Board. Section 13, of the Act. states that it should be the duty of the Board to take all such steps as may be necessary to establish, equip, manage and maintain libraries in Eastern Nigeria. This was an epoch making legislation. The law guarantees the Board to establish School Libraries.

The Western Region

The Western Region established its regional library in 1953 but not the legislation. This was encouraged by the recommendations of the UNESCO Seminar on the development of Public Libraries in Africa that was held in 1953 at Ibadan.

In 1962, a Committee on library development in Western Nigeria was formed to look into the policy of Government with regard to library development, make recommendations on future development and submit its report. The Committee recommended future development on three phases. Among the development was the encouragement of schools to open libraries by the Inspectorate Division of the Ministry of Education. Also a set of standards was formulated.

The Northern Region

School library in the Northern Region had no policy statement from the government up to 1964. Sharr (1963) in his report reiterated the "need for a statement of policy by the Ministry of Education.

It also provided that the Ministry should prepare and issue to all post-primary institutions in the region an official statement of policy on school libraries, setting out in definite terms their purpose and steps the schools can take to carry out this purpose. It specified the intervals, (e.g. every two to three years) a revision of statement should be carried out to ensure that it is up to date and effective.

Sharr's study of library needs of Northern Nigeria was a very big achievement to school library development in Nigeria as a whole.

Post Independence

In the 1970's the birth of the National Policy on Education had a great impact on school library development in Nigeria. This is because of the provisions in the policy that promoted school library development and use! This policy was subsequently reviewed in 1981, 1998 and presently in its fourth edition of 2003. The FRN's (1998) Policy offers a solid basis for the development of primary and secondary school libraries in Nigeria. In this policy, Government provided in paragraph 15, sub-section 21 junior libraries for primary school children and in sub-section 10 (a) it orders the federal, states and local government authorities to establish school library services and ensure that

teachers are given in-service training in the management and organisation of the school libraries.

While the intention of government in Nigeria to provide quality education is clear from the NPE and the role school libraries should play is also highlighted, the question that arose is whether the government policy is being implemented? Muogilim (1984) observed the pre-eminent position accorded school libraries by the Federal as well as the State Governments in the NPE and concluded that the provision and supervision of the libraries at the state level of education was a mere platitude and adduced evidences of ambivalence, prevarication and dereliction of duty on the part of the government in general.

Oni-Orisan (1987) observed funding of school libraries as being haphazard before the revised edition of the NPE in 1981. This accounted for the lack of uniformity in the development of school libraries in both the primary and secondary schools level of education in Nigeria.

Secondary school library provision in Kaduna State of Nigeria

In order to assess secondary school library development in Kaduna State as provided in the NPE in Nigeria the writer undertook a study of secondary school library provision along with their collections and staffing. This is in recognition of the importance attached to school libraries in the Nigerian educational policy.

The following research questions were formulated for answers in the study

1. Do secondary schools in Kaduna State have established school libraries?
2. Do the school libraries in the secondary school in Kaduna State have qualified library staff to run them?
3. Do the school libraries have library collections for use by students and teachers?

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out whether Kaduna State Secondary Schools have established school libraries;
2. To find out whether the school libraries have qualified staff to run the libraries;
3. To find out whether the school libraries have collections for use by students and teachers;

Significance of the study

The result of the study will enable proprietors of secondary schools in Kaduna State and Nigeria in general appreciate the position of secondary school library provision and to take proper steps to adhere to the provision of the NPE in school library development.

Research Design

A survey research is used for the study.

Population and Sample

The study population comprises all Secondary Schools in the twelve Educational Zones in Kaduna State.

A sample size of seven educational zones were randomly selected from the population. This is to find out the number of established libraries, professional library staff and the collections maintained in the libraries.

The seven Educational Zones include: Giwa, Godogodo, Kachia, Kanfanchan, Zonkwa, Zaria and Lere.

Instrumentation

The main instrument for the study was interviews and documentary evidence.

Administration of Instrument

The researcher interviewed the Kaduna State Ministry of Education Librarian, the Zonal Education Officers in charge of libraries in the secondary schools and the relevant library files in the State Ministry of Education and the zonal offices.

Data Analysis

The data collected were analysed using simple percentages.

Results and Findings of the Study

Results and findings of the study are presented as follows:

In Kaduna State, there are 12 Educational Zones with 177 Secondary Schools. It has a total enrolment figures of 235, 953 students in both Junior and Senior Secondary Schools respectively as at year 2001/2002 educational session (NCE, 2002). See table 1 below.

Table 1 shows the distribution of schools and students enrolment in the seven educational zones in Kaduna State involved in the study in the 2001/2002 session

| <i>Educational Zones</i> | <i>No of Schools</i> | <i>Students Enrolment</i> |
|--------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Kachia | 15 | 7211 |
| Kafanchan | 21 | 17840 |
| Godogodo | 13 | 7593 |
| Zonkwa | 13 | 998 |
| Giwa | 2 | 5075 |
| Zaria | 18 | 13769 |
| Lere | 14 | 5535 |
| Total | 106 | 66,664 |

Source: Statistics Division, Ministry of Education, Kaduna, Kaduna State.

The Table 1 above shows 106 secondary schools in the seven Educational Zones in Kaduna State. The secondary schools population in the zones exclude Junior Secondary Schools that have no senior secondary classes. The student enrolment in the secondary schools was 66, 664.

Table II: Shows the distribution of Secondary Schools, Libraries, Collection and Professional Staff in the seven Educational Zones in Kaduna State

| <i>Educational Zones</i> | <i>Schools</i> | <i>Libraries</i> | <i>Collection</i> | <i>Professional Staff</i> |
|--------------------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Kachia | 15 | 5(33.3%) | 5671 | 1 |
| Kafanchan | 21 | 12(57.1%) | 53507 | 4 |
| Godogodo | 13 | 2(15.3%) | 6974 | - |
| Zonkwa | 13 | 3(23.0%) | 4893 | 1 |
| Giwa | 12 | 1(8.3%) | - | - |
| Zaria | 18 | 3(16.6%) | 7338 | - |
| Lere | 14 | - | - | - |
| Total | 106(100%) | 25(24.5%) | 78,385 | 6(23.0%) |

Source: Library Unit, Kaduna State Ministry of Education, Kaduna.

Table 1 above shows that there are 106 schools in the seven Educational Zones involved in the study. Of the zones, Kafanchan Zone has 21 schools. This is followed by Zaria with 18 schools, Kachia followed with 15 and Giwa having 12 schools.

The total school libraries in the zones are 26 (24.5%) with 12 (57.1%) libraries in Kafanchan Educational Zone and 1(8.3%) in Giwa Zone. Lere Educational zone had no purposeful built library as it is found in the other six Educational Zones.

However, a total of 78,385 volumes of books are found in five out of the six Educational Zones said to have purposeful built libraries. Kafanchan Zone has about 53,507 volumes with Giwa not recording any volume. A total of six professional librarians are available in all the libraries in the school libraries involved in the study with Kafanchan Zone having 4 and Kachia and Zonkwa respectively having one each.

Summary of Findings

The results of the assessment of secondary schools library provision, professional library staff and collections show that:

- (a) A few secondary schools in Kaduna State have functional or purposeful built school libraries, 25 (24.5%) out of the 106 secondary schools involved in the study.
- (b) The school libraries (i.e 25 or 24.5%) available in the schools, have professional library staff (i.e 6 (23%)
- (c) From the school libraries available in the secondary schools in the seven educational zones in Kaduna State, some hardly have library collections.

Discussions/Recommendations

In assessing School Library provision, professional staffing and collections in Kaduna State, it is clear from this study that a larger number or high percentage of secondary schools have no purposeful built school libraries. This situation is sad because most secondary schools in the State operate a tripartite arrangement system: the State Government, the Community and Local Government Area, are to jointly contribute towards the establishment, funding and supervision of the progress and development of the institution academically. This includes the school libraries. However, before any secondary school in Kaduna State is recognized as WAEC or NECO centre, there must be a school inspection by the agency concerned. In most cases the secondary schools were given WAEC or NECO approval to establish a centre for the examination. This goes to attest that the inspectors are merely informed of the school libraries which are not functional.

In which case, inspectors of secondary schools in the educational zones examination agencies such as WAEC or NECO and the Inspectorate Division of the Ministry of Education in the State should lay emphasis on purposeful built school libraries with the provision of staff and collections.

The collections of school libraries, though not assessed in terms of type but quantity, reveal that they are not many as compared to the FME (1992) minimum standard provision which stipulated a ratio of 3,000 users to 6,000 titles. Hence, with a population of 66,664 students, one would expect a total number of 133,328 titles instead of what is seen in the zones (i.e 78,385 volumes). However, these collections should include reference books, texts on the various disciplines taught in the school, as well as general reading materials. Audio-visual and instructional materials are equally very important.

The professional staffing available in the secondary school libraries was not encouraging. In the 26 schools libraries, only 6 professional staff were available. The school library staffing is very important. The FME (1992) minimum standard recommends a professional librarian to each school library apart from other support state.

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