

THE PLACE OF SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES (SBMC) IN IMPROVING ACCESS TO BASIC EDUCATION IN FAGGE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KANO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The increasing number of out of school children in Nigeria is very disturbing. It is observed that many school age children are out of school and are seen on the streets roaming about aimlessly during school hours without access to education. This disturbing trend is a complete negation of one of Nigeria's philosophies of education which provides that education is a right of every Nigerian irrespective of gender, social status, religion, ethnic background and any peculiar individual challenges. This paper examined the impacts of School Based Management Committees (SBMCs) in improving access to Basic Education in Fagge Local Government Area of Kano State, Nigeria. This review was to address the dearth in available literature for use by researchers, students, ministry of education and other related shareholders who will like to have access to literature to further strengthen and sustain the impacts of SBMC in improving access to Basic Education in Fagge Local Government Area of Kano State, Nigeria. The paper x-rays the strategic contributions of SBMC in improving access to Basic Education in Fagge Local Government Area of Kano State. This is because, children of school age still roam the streets without access to Basic Education in communities where schools do not have functional SBMC. The paper recommended among others that; SBMC should be established and efforts should be made to ensure its effective functions in all basic education institutions in Fagge Local Government of Kano State, the government and community should reengineer advocacy for awareness and contributions of stakeholders in the provision of education.

Keywords: Communities, School – Based Management Committee, Contribution, Access, Basic Education.

Introduction

Education is an indispensable vehicle necessary for the promotion and sustenance of national growth, development and social change. This is in addition to the crucial role it plays in the development of an individual into a sound and effective citizen. The case of Nigeria having 13.5 million children out of school is a clarion call to improve access to school (Oluwatosin, 2018). Education is a right of every Nigerian irrespective of gender, social status, religion, ethnic background and any peculiar individual challenges (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004). Thus, efforts should be taken to provide unrestricted access and equity to education for the total development of the child.

It is however disturbing to notice that many children in Fagge Local Government of Kano State are out of school without access to basic education. This indicates that the development of the children out of school into a morally sound, patriotic and effective citizens cannot be realized. This normally will give room for idle children ready to serve as easy pawns to perpetuate crime and cause chaos thereby further aggravating challenges related to poor access to basic education. Government efforts through the State Universal Basic Education Authority aimed at checkmating the problem of poor access to education have not yielded the needed results as children still roam about on the streets unabated. The use of threats and promise of sanctions by the government against parents who fail to send their children to school are yet to be translated into reality. This also indicates that Government alone cannot effectively address the challenges of poor access to education, hence the need to involve the community.

The lack of access to school calls for collaborative efforts with development partners as well as the local communities to address access related challenges in Basic Education Institution in Fagge Local Government Area. A relevant platform for addressing access related challenges is the SBMC. Fagge Local Government Authority collaboration with Kano State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) has made concerted efforts to stem the tide of poor access to school, but these efforts have not yielded the required results as many children still roam the streets without visible access to education. This necessitated the activation of SBMC to contribute their quota towards promoting access to Basic Education. It is against this background that this paper examined the concept of School-Based Management Committee and its contributions in improving access to education, and creating awareness of SBMC in communities.

Concept of School-Based Management Committee

School-Based Management Committee was established in all schools in Nigeria in 2006 with the approval of the National Council on Education (NCE). This was done to ensure inclusive participation in the school system. The SBMCs were expected to provide platforms for communities and schools to work together to enrich school governance and promote improved management by education authorities towards the achievement of better learning outcomes for children. The SBMC act serves as a bridge between schools and communities. They contribute to school planning, advocate on behalf of the school and provide support to school activities (Universal Basic Education Commission, 2011). The main objectives of SBMC include enhancing school governance for effective education services delivery, promote mechanism for accountability in the school system, encourage harmonious relationship between school, community, local Government Education Areas and Local Government Authorities, promote community participation in school planning, monitoring and evaluation of school progress, promote and support schools to achieve set targets/benchmarks to yield better outcomes for children, create greater awareness and provide feedback to the larger community on issues that have to do with school governance, management regulation as well as planning, and promoting the participation of all groups within the community in decision making (FRN, 2006).

The SBMCs should be representative of the diverse groups in communities and generally made up of 12 to 19 people and it is a voluntary and non-political committee. The composition of the SBMCs includes the Head Teacher who serves as the secretary, representative of teachers, representative of students (male and female), representative of traditional rulers, former students representative, PTA representative (male and female), youth representatives, artisan, and Faith Based Organization (male and female). (Universal Basic Education Commission, 2011). The task of the aforementioned members of the SBMC is to ensure the translations of the objectives of the SBMC into reality with a view to promoting access to education.

Contributions of SBMC in Improving Access to Basic Education

Community is a group structure, whether formally or informally organized, in which members play roles which are integrated around goals associated with the problems from collective occupation and utilization and habitual space (Zenter, 2004). Community service delivery is a process whereby the local people identify their needs, set their priorities, plan and implement them. It has to do with member's involvement in enrolling children in schools, contributing money, labour and materials and attending PTA meetings at school. Members of the community participate in execution of responsibilities or tasks delegated to them, as well as in decision making especially in matters related to school governance, accountability and promotion of access to school. It is evident that good governance that recognizes and engages stakeholders in decision making process of education re-directs parents' philosophy on the need to send their children to school (Human Development Initiatives, 2015).

Education institutions whether at local, state or Federal levels are established within designated geographical locations referred to as communities. Schools are located to address the need of communities within which they are established. Community participation can therefore be seen as involving communities in the management and improvement of the schools to enhance teaching and learning activities. The basis for community participation revolves round deciding strategic locations for establishing schools to enhance access, intervention by the communities to mitigate the challenges posed by poor funding, enhancing collective ownership and control of education (Ede, 2000). Schools are often not fully financed by the government, and SBMC is an attempt to integrate the community participation. Community participation through SBMC will definitely transform this arrangement and make schools become sensitive to community needs, a situation that can enhance access to Basic Education.

School Based Management Committee and Access to Basic Education.

The provision of equal access to qualitative basic educational opportunities for all citizens is very central in the establishment of Universal Basic Education (UBE). This is because education plays a vital role in enhancing national development. Encouraging an uninterrupted access to it at the primary and junior secondary school levels is a compelling necessity. The fact that education is a right of every Nigerian irrespective of gender, social status, religion and ethnic background, further call for the need to have access to it. It is however evident that several factors hamper access to it in Fagge Local Government Area of Kano State. These impeding factors include political, economic, cultural and lopsided enrolment related challenges (Zenter, 2004).

Political influence is evidenced in the way community political leaders influence the location of schools arbitrarily without recourse to school mapping procedures (Udoh, Akpa & Gang, 2010). This leads to over concentration of schools in some areas where they are not needed while other areas suffer lack, which denies access to education by children of these communities. It is necessary to note that school mapping is an essential exercise useful to rationally locate educational services of any type related to any level of education (Cailords, 2003). When schools are not located

rationally, access to such schools can be hampered. Despite the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act (2004) which advocated for free education, evidence abound to suggest that there are still some costs deterring some parents from sending their children to school and withdrawing those already in school from attending school thereby denying them access to school. Girls are often sent to work in the markets or hawk wares on the streets (Action Aid, 2011). This action denies children access to education. Several cultural factors also influence the value some parents attached to their children's education. Other parents show hostility towards girl's education as they tend to relate it to westernization which erodes good morals. This explains why enrolment of boys in most of the schools in Fagge Local Government Area appears to be remarkably higher than that of the girl child. (British Council, 2013). Cultural practices which encourage early child marriage and placing the girl child in purdah deny them access to education. In view of the foregoing, there is a very clear indication that efforts at sensitization of parents and the entire community by the government on the importance of education may not be adequate. Hence, the need for a more robust effort to reposition the SBMC which serve as a bridge between schools and the communities they serve. The SBMC contributes to school planning, advocate on behalf of the school and provide support to school activities all aimed at improving access to school (Universal Basic Education Commission, 2011). The presence of representative of Muslims, Christian, youth, women organizations as well as PTA as member of the SBMC can further give impetus to aggressive advocacy, mobilization, and sensitization of parents and the entire community on the importance of education and the need to send their children to school. This sensitization can be done in churches, mosques, public gatherings and other related media. Effective sensitization will go a long way in dispelling erroneous notions and harmful cultural practices relating to the education and especially of the girl child thereby paving way for uninterrupted access to Basic Education in Fagge Local Government Area of Kano State.

Creating Awareness of SBMC in a Community

Awareness in this case is concerned with the sensitization of the people through public enlightenment on the importance of education with a view to encourage them to send their children to school. Other parents show hostility towards their girls' education as they tend to relate it to westernization which fear of pregnancy outside marriage intensifies when girl reach puberty, sometimes inducing early marriage (Schaetzel, 2000). Marriage may be viewed as in terms of protective mechanism shielding girls honor from potential shame of early unwanted pregnancy. This is the existence of socio-cultural prejudice that the school destroys established customs and respect due to parents and husbands (UNESCO, 2008). This is a very serious challenge that can have an adverse effect on access to education especially on the part of the girl child. It becomes necessary for SBMC to mobilize and sensitize the community on the need to contribute to the provision of education. Creating awareness on the benefits of sending children to school will go a long way in facilitating access to school.

Community participation in advocating education through the platform of SBMCs will no doubt pave way for communities to positively contribute to the development of Basic Education. This is because SBMC drawn from members of the community act as a bridge between schools and the communities they serve. They contribute to school planning, advocate on behalf of the schools. SBMCs help to identify school problems, participate in feasibility studies, and engage in planning, implementation and evaluation of activities (Shaeffer, 2004). The aforementioned roles played by SBMC contribute in no small measure creating school environments that are conducive, non-threatening and necessary for improved access to school. It is important to realize that in some communities in Fagge Local Government Area, the boy child is the one often discriminated against in terms of access to education as some parents prefer to send their male children to the farm rather than send them to the school (Oluwatosin, 2018). It is in view of this that the role of the SBMC in creating awareness can enhance access to school thereby solving the problem of out of school children in the area.

Conclusion

School Based Management Committee was established in all Nigeria as part of government's efforts to ensure inclusive participation in school. They were expected to provide platforms for communities and schools to work together to enrich school governance and promote improved management of better learning outcomes for children. They act as a bridge between schools and communities they serve on behalf of the school and provide support to school activities necessary for improved access to education. The major contributions of SBMCs towards improving access to Basic Education focus on creating awareness on the importance of education and enlightening members of the community on the need to send their children to school, encouraging community participation in school planning, monitoring and evaluation as this will give parents a high sense of belonging and feeling of being carried along in school management. It promotes school governance for effective community service delivery and enhancing

democratization of school management thereby paving way for members of the community to take active part in decision making relating to school management and governance.

Recommendations

Access to Basic Education is one of the major goals of education enshrined in the national policy on education. Considering the fact that the provision of education is a huge national investment which government alone cannot effectively address, the involvement of the community through the platform of School Based Management Committees (SBMCs) is a necessity. This is necessary to enhance unhindered access to education. In order to better position the SBMC to effectively contribute in improving access to Basic Education in Fagge Local Government Area of Kano State. It is recommended that;

1. The SBMC should ensure that major stakeholders are involved in educational mobilization, awareness and sensitization of members of the communities on the importance of education and the need to send their children to school.
2. There should be an aggressive campaign by the government at all levels to encourage community participation in school planning to ensure that the needs of the communities are appropriately captured and addressed.
3. Concerted efforts should be made by school administrators to ensure the promotion of good governance for effective service delivery of SBMC. This will facilitate accountability, transparency and trust that can facilitate access to education.
4. The school administrators should democratize school management by involving parents in decision making to promote the SBMC goal achievement.

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