

Problems of Public Primary Schools Administration in Federal Capital Territory Abuja, Nigeria and Possible Solutions

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ABSTRACT

Public primary schools in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja are confronted with many problems. These problems are the central ideas of this article. Secondary data sourced from print and online materials were used to make the literatures of this article robust. The article identified a number of problems facing the administration of public primary schools in FCT and discussions were made on the points identified. Key areas were suggested as lean way to addressing the prevailing problems. The paper opines that, if the concerned authorities will key into the suggestions made, it will leverage the present administrative problems public primary schools in FCT are confronted with.

KEYWORDS: *Administration, Problems, Public, Primary Schools.*

1.0 Introduction

Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja is the capital of Nigeria. Abuja is located inside Abuja Municipal Area Council. The Federal Capital Territory is under the administration of Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA). Federal Capital Development Authority is in charge of the construction and infrastructural development of Abuja city. The Federal Capital Territory is made up of six area councils. The six area councils include: Abaji, Abuja Municipal, Bwari, Gwagwalada, Kuje and Kwali area councils. The population of Abuja as at 2006 census was 776,298 making it one of the most populous cities in Nigeria occupying eighth position. The United Nations observed that Abuja was growing by 139.7% between year 2000 to 2010. This growing rate makes it the fastest growing city in the World. Abuja is the political and administrative seat of Nigeria and also a key capital on the African continent due to Nigeria's geo-political influence in regional affairs. A Federal Minister is appointed by the Presidents to oversee the political administration of the Territory (Wikipedia, 2020).

Education in Federal Capital Territory is administered by Federal Capital Territory Education Secretariat. Federal Capital Territory Abuja is home to many educational institutions both public and private schools. The educational system in Federal Capital Territory is implemented according to the National Policy of education (2013). Education in FCT consists of three forms the Universal Basic education (nine years), secondary school (three years) and higher education which include universities, Colleges of Education, Poly-technics Education, vocational Education (four, six years depending on the study). Other forms of education in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja include adult education, special education and mass education. According to Nigeria's latest National Policy on Education (2013), the basic education will last for nine years of formal and compulsory education, six years for basic schooling while three years for junior secondary school. The senior secondary school is three years.

To ensure effective administration of Primary schools in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, the Minister of FCT established the FCT UBE Board. The FCT UBE Board was established following the enactment of the UBE Law of 2004 and was inaugurated on the 15th November 2005 and recently reconstituted on 12th October, 2010. The Board's mandate is to provide quality Basic Education, which include Early Child Care, Primary, Junior Secondary and Nomadic Education, to the teeming school age population in the FCT. Presently, we have 321 ECCDE Centres with an enrolment figure of 27,036; 559 Primary Schools (including Nomadic Schools) with an enrolment figure of 214,929 pupils and 159 Junior Secondary Schools with an enrolment figure of 116,585 students. There are 754 Caregivers, 8,321 Primary School Teachers and 5,215 teachers in the Junior Secondary Schools (FCT, UBE Report, 2017).

The Basic education is an organized education designed for children between ages 6 to 12 years. Basic education is the pre-secondary school education meant to prepare the children for secondary school education. The objectives of the basic education include: to provide free and compulsory education for all Nigerian children, to reduce dropout from formal education system; to ensure acquisition of the literacy, manipulative and life skills; to ensure ethical, moral and civic values) education for life-long learning; to ensure access to basic education for nine years to nine years. The Basic education in Federal Capital Territory is faced with many challenges. This article is aimed at discussing the problems facing the administration of primary schools in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.

2.0 Concept of Public Primary School

Basic Education is the education given to children aged 0-15 years. It encompasses the Early Child Care and Development Education (0-4) and 10 years of formal schooling. Early Child Care and Development Education however is segmented into ages 0-4 years, situated in daycare or creches, fully in the hands of the private sector and social development services, whilst ages 5-6 are within the formal education sector.

The goals of Basic Education are to:

- a. Provide the child with diverse basic knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship, wealth generation and educational advancement;
- b. develop patriotic young people equipped to contribute to social development and in the performance of their civic responsibilities;
- c. inculcate values and raise morally upright individuals capable of independent thinking, and who appreciate the dignity of labour;
- d. inspire national consciousness and harmonious co-existence, irrespective of differences in endowment, religion, colour, ethnic and socio-economic background; and
- e. provide opportunities for the child to develop manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capability.

2.1 Concept of Administration

Ogunode & Abashi, (2020) opined that administration deals with systematic organization, arrangement, integration, evaluation and co-ordination of both materials and human resources in an effective and efficient way to realize the general educational objectives. Nwankwo, (1982) viewed educational administration as the arrangement of human and material resources and programmes available for education and carefully using them systematically for the achievement of educational

objectives. Educational Administration is regarded as the process of integrating the appropriate human and material resources that are made available and made effective for achieving the purposes of a programme of an educational institution. The term "Administration" doesn't refer to any single process or act. It is like a broad umbrella encompassing a number of processes such as: planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, controlling and evaluating the performance. The same situation occurs in the field of educational administration. The concept of educational administration is applicable in case of an educational organisation which has certain purposes or goals to fulfill (Diksha, 2018). In order to achieve these goals, the head of the educational organisation plans carefully various programmes and activities. Here the educational organisation may be a School, College or University. The head of the school/college/University organizes these programmes and activities with co-operation from teachers, parents and students. He/She motivates them and coordinates the efforts of teachers as well as directs and exercises control over them. He/She evaluates their performances and progress in achieving the purposes of the programme. He provides feedback to them and brings modification, if required in the plans and programmes of the School, College or University. So the totality of these processes which are directed towards realizing of the goals of the school/college/University is called educational administration (Diksha, 2018). The objectives of school administration include:

1. To provide proper education to students:

This objective seeks to mention the fact that good education doesn't mean education at a very high cost as is practiced in modern public schools. Rather it means the right type of education from the right type of teachers within reasonable cost. This objective also implies quantitative expansion and qualitative improvement of education.

2. To Ensure Adequate Utilization of All Resources.

For adequate realization of the various purposes of educational programmes, there is the need for ensuring adequate utilization of all available resources (human, material and financial).

3. To Ensure Professional Ethics And Professional Development Among Teachers:

As teachers are the senior and mature human elements to accelerate the programmes in time, their role is highly felt in this regard. They are to be encouraged and given the facility to devise innovative ideas on instruction and to participate in servicing educational programmes. In this context, it can be visualized that educational administration should aim at developing a desire for hard work, dedication and commitment for their job.

4. To organize educational programmes for acquainting students with the art of democratic living and giving them excellent training in democratic citizenship.

5. To mobilize the community:

Like general administration, educational administration seeks to maintain and improve the relations with the community. For this, it should seek community support and co-operation for quantitative expansion, qualitative improvements, smooth and fair examination in the educational system.

6. To organize co-curricular activities effectively for developing talents of students and work efficiency of teachers.

7. To get the work done:

The most important objective of administration is to get the work done effectively, efficiently and with satisfaction to individuals and benefits to the society.

8. To prepare students for taking their places in various vocations and avenues of life.

9. To train the students in developing scientific attitude and objective outlook among them towards all aspects and activities of life.

10. To ensure qualitative improvement of education:

Good education can be provided to students by bringing qualitative improvement in instruction. Regular supervision of teaching and guidance of teachers will help to ensure quality teaching in schools (Diksha, 2018).

Educational administration doesn't refer to any single process rather different processes or aspects constitute administration. These are planning, organizing, directing, Coordinating and evaluating. The human resources in the educational institutions include pupils, teachers, supervisors, administrators and parents. The materials resources include the teaching aids, infrastructural facilities and learning instrument etc (Ogunode & Abashi, (2020).

3.0 Problems Facing Administration of Public Primary Schools in FCT

There are many challenges facing the administration of public primary school in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Some of which include inadequate funding, inadequate professional teachers, inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of instructional materials, corruption, lack of data to plan and weak school administrators.

3.1 Inadequate Funding

The administration of primary schools in Abuja requires funding. The budgetary allocation for administration of primary schools in Federal Capital Territory is inadequate. Many public primary schools are in bad shape because of the failure of the government to fund the primary schools adequately. Olowoselu and Bello (2015) observed that poor funding of schools is a major problem of leadership as it weakens leadership potentials. In the school system, school heads are often faced with paucity of funds as they are not allowed to collect extra money from the students irrespective of its purpose, and the meagre sum of money given by the state government as grants is not regularly released and it is even not enough to run the affairs of the school. Principals often experience shortfall in providing basic needs such as chalks, markers, pens, lesson notes, teachers' time/movement book, stationaries, well equipped first aid box, fuelling and maintenance of generators, maintenance of computers, provision of toilet facilities for members of staff as well as convenient offices for teachers among others. All these are believed to be essential in effective running of the school, but can hinder principals' managerial effectiveness if they cannot be provided as at and when due. Inadequate funding of education has been a major challenge facing the sector. Researchers such as Aina (2002), Durosaro (2006), Amadi (2007) and Balogun (2010) lamented over the inadequacy of fund in the education sector. It is not an understatement to note that the Nigerian government, over the years has not been meeting the UNESCO recommendation of 26% of the total budgetary allocation to the education sector, (Akindutire, 2012).

3.2 Inadequate Professional Teachers

Effective and efficient administration of public primary schools in Federal Capital Territory and its' environs will be a function of adequate teaching quality and quantity. Many public primary schools in the six area councils of FCT are facing the problem of shortage of professional teachers. The role of teachers in curriculum implementation is very essential because they translate educational policies and programmes into action. The teachers plan the lesson note, prepares the lesson plan and also present the lessons. As important as the teachers are to the administration of primary school, it is unfortunate that professional teachers are not adequate in many primary schools in Federal Capital Territory. Many public primary schools in FCT do not have adequate professional teachers especially in the sciences. Ejeh (2003), revealed that the major challenge posed by the universal basic education

(U.B.E) programme is the provision of adequate numbers of qualified teachers. Emmanuel (2016) submitted that there is total scarcity of trained teachers in Nigeria. The total atmosphere of teacher education as can be seen in the recruitment into teacher education programmes in Nigeria is uncompetitive. Many teachers employed in primary schools are untrained. They pose more administrative challenges on the managers of the primary schools as rigorous supervision is carried out to ensure quality delivery of service from these teachers. Some of these teacher who come with the training certificates in education leave one in doubt about how they come about the certificate they parade. The 2018 National audit report on Universal basic education programme in Nigeria revealed that there was a deficit of 135,319 teachers at the Early Childhood Care Development Education, 139,772 deficits in primary schools and 2,446 shortages in Junior Secondary Schools across the nation. 27756 teachers at the early child education programme, 3564 teachers at the basic schools (Independent, 2019). The problem of shortage of professional teachers at the public primary schools in FCT is preventing the administration of primary school education.

3.3 Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities

Infrastructural facilities include classrooms, libraries, laboratories, administrative blocks, water, electricity, internet facilities, offices tables, chairs and ICT centres. Many primary schools in Federal Capital Territory and its environs do not have adequate classroom, libraries, laboratories and offices for the implementation of teaching and non-teaching services. Ogunode (2020) did a study that investigated the challenges facing the administration of Soil Technology and Mathematics Education (STEME) in Gwagwalada junior secondary schools of FCT, Nigeria. The study revealed that there are challenges facing the administrations of STEM Education in Gwagwalada junior secondary schools and these challenges include; inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of science teachers, lack of instructional materials, lack of motivation, inadequate fund, poor supervision, high population, poor capacity development programme for science teachers and negative attitude of students towards STEM education. The result also revealed that 100% of the respondents agreed that the effects of the challenges facing the administration of STEM Education are responsible for poor implementation of STEM education in Gwagwalada junior secondary schools in FCT, Nigeria. Philip, Peter & Iro (2015) carried out a study to investigate the manner in which the FCT Universal Basic Education Board (UBEB) is implementing the UBE Policy. The investigation produced the following findings, among others: The FCT UBEB was slow in achieving its objectives; The quality of the UBE programme design and inputs were inadequate in the FCT; The UBE in the FCT lacked adequate human, institutional and financial resources for the implementation of the policy; The UBE in the FCT enjoyed stable political environment; and The UBE in the FCT lacked adequate monitoring. Tijani (2014) observed that one of the outstanding problems of primary education in Nigeria is inadequate provision of infrastructural facilities such as school building, classroom, library, sporting facilities and equipment. These are very important for effective teaching and learning. The Government being the overseer is aware of these as slated in the National Policy on Education that "Government will ensure that all primary schools are properly equipped to promote sound and effective teaching, and in particular that suitable textbooks and libraries are provided for schools. However, a visit to most public primary schools reveals the opposite of Government statements. Most school buildings are dilapidated, broken windows and doors, pot-holes on the floor. No chairs for teachers, no libraries, no running taps and toilet facilities. As a result of all these, most schools are often littered with dirt, urine and excreta, and after school hours these buildings become hide-out for criminals where they use for smoking prohibited drugs and cigarette. Such conditions are not good or conducive for any meaningful learning (Tijani, 2014, Safiya 2005).

3.4 Shortage of Instructional Materials

Many public primary schools in Federal Capital Territory Abuja, do not have adequate instructional materials. Emmanuel (2016) did a study on problems and prospects of primary schools administration (A case study of Kuje Area Council of FCT Abuja). The findings showed that administration of LEA schools in Kuje Area Council had problems of non-availability of teaching aids, inadequate funding, over populated classrooms, lack of recommended textbooks for teachers and pupils, poor functional P.T.A; lack of security. Iheagwan (2000), submitted that resource constraints have been there since time immemorial as one of the major problems besetting our primary education in Nigeria. Adesina (1990), has identified some of the problems facing primary education to include, the infrastructural facilities. Most of our primary schools are nothing to write home about. Most of the buildings are dilapidated with rickety tables and chairs, no library, and writing materials.

3.5 Corruption

Funds meant for the implementation of programmes and policies for the development of public primary schools are been looted by some officials and political office holders working both at the administrative and management levels. Ogunode, & Abashi, (2020) did a study that investigated the challenges facing the administration of Universal Basic schools in Abaji area council of FCT, Nigeria. The result established that there are challenges facing the administration of Universal Basic schools in Abaji area council of FCT. The study identified the challenges to include; corruption (looting of school fund), inadequate fund, , inadequate infrastructural facilities, inadequate professional teachers, large class size, inadequate instructional aids, unstable policies, ineffective supervision, challenges of achieving quality and poor motivation of teachers. The study also revealed that 60% out of 100% of respondents agreed the challenges facing the management of primary schools is militating against the achievement of objectives and that it is responsible for the poor quality of education of primary schools. Emmanuel (2016) observed that the deplorable condition of our primary school environment has negative effect on meaningful teaching and learning. Economic crisis which has faced African countries especially Nigeria has been felt hugely in the educational sector. It is not a hidden truth that when monies are made available for the execution of projects and maintenance of existing infrastructure, greedy government officials and head teachers misappropriate or embezzle such monies and due to poor or lack of accountability, such offences remain unpunished.

3.6 Lack of Data to Plan

There is a problem of data generation and distribution in Nigeria. There is limited educational data on basic schools. School administrator needs data to be able to plan and take decision. Ogunode (2018) conducted a study that investigated the challenges facing the planning of Basic Education in FCT, Abuja, Nigeria. Result collected and analyzed in the study showed that: 100% of the respondents agreed that there are challenges facing the planning of basic Education in FCT, Abuja, and the challenges facing the planning of basic education in FCT include; lack of reliable data/information, inadequate funding of planning, inadequate planning tools, inadequate educational planners, poor capacity of educational planners, political influences and political instability. Based on this finding, the study recommends that the government should increase the funding of education and specifically the funding of educational planning in the country.

3.7 Weak School Administrators

Weak school administrators appointed by the government to head the various public primary schools in FCT and its environs is also responsible for poor administration of public primary schools in Abuja. Emmanuel (2016) observed that the problem of primary education in Nigeria has its root in

poor administration and organization system. Harber (1986), noted that teachers are transferred indiscriminately and ministry of education does not attend to complain. One overriding consequence here is basic attitude on the part of victims. Syntheses of existing primary school effectiveness confirmed that the leadership of the head is a crucial variable in determining organizational climate and culture. Their characters, knowledge, skills, belief and dispositions are important antecedents.

4.0 Ways Forward

To address the problems facing the administration of public primary schools in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, the following were suggested: increase in the funding of public primary schools, employment of professional teachers, provision of adequate infrastructural facilities and instructional materials, fight all forms of corruption, generate adequate data and appoint competent school administrators to head the public primary schools in FCT.

- A) Government should increase the funding of public primary schools in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja;
- B) Government should employ more professional teachers and deploy them to all public primary schools in FCT and its' environs;
- C) More infrastructural facilities like classrooms, administrative blocks, tables, chairs, libraries, laboratories and electricity need be provided;
- D) Government should provide adequate instructional materials to all public primary schools in FCT;
- E) Government should fight all forms of corruption in the ministry, department and agencies of education;
- F) Government should ensure credible and current data are generated and distributed to school administrators to aid effective planning of public primary schools in FCT; and
- G) Competent school administrators should be appointed to head various public primary schools in FCT.

5.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper discussed the challenges facing the administration of public primary schools in FCT. The paper identified inadequate funding, inadequate professional teachers, inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of instructional materials, corruption, lack of data to plan and weak school administrators as the challenges facing the administration of public primary school. To solve these challenges facing the administration of public primary schools in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, the following suggestions were preferred: increase in the funding of public primary schools, employment of professional teachers, provision of adequate infrastructural facilities and instructional materials, fight all forms of corruption, generate adequate data and appoint competent school administrators to head the public primary schools in FCT.

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