

An Overview of the Place of Parents' Teachers Association In The Provision And Management Of Facilities In Schools

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Abstract: *This paper examined the relevance of Parents Teachers Association (PTA) in the development of schools through the provision and management of facilities required for teaching and learning. The classical theory of equal opportunity and the theory of development were examined to explain the need and relevance of parents and teachers intervention in the development of schools facilities. The concepts of PTA and schools facilities were also espoused to highlight the place of PTA in the provision and management of facilities for teaching and learning in schools. A review of empirical works on the contributions of PTA to the development of schools facilitates revealed that although PTAs have contributed significantly to the development of schools facilitates, their contributions have become grossly inadequate in view of the growing population of schools and concomitant increase in their needs. The paper therefore recommends that government should explore adequately other sources such as education tax in meeting the needs of schools. Furthermore, government should subsidy the cost of teaching and learning resources, while school heads should create better forum for interactions of parents and teachers to pave way for more judicious and transparent use of funds and resources provided. Finally the paper recommends the integration of PTA in education policies formulation and implementation in view of their increasing importance in the development of schools.*

Keywords: *Development, Parents, Teachers, Facilities, Schools, Teaching, Learning*

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I. Introduction

Ayot and Briggs (1992) observed that the call for new ways of financing education as government resources were strained left more responsibility for education financing to parents in the area of development expenditure which includes building classrooms, laboratories, teachers' houses, workshops, besides providing other items such as uniforms, textbooks and transport which their children need to use in schools. Eshiwani (1994) further noted that in most part of Africa, there is a high proportion of education borne by students, parents and community. According to the International Encyclopedia of Education (1994), insufficient finance and poor sustainability of educational investments is one of the contributing factors to inefficiency, low access and retention rates of students in developing countries. The foregoing considerations underpin the growing relevance of Parents Teachers Associations (PTA) in educational development in Nigeria and elsewhere in the World.

Very often PTAs are an important source of financial and material support, crucial for schools development. For example, in most parts of Nigeria just like in all other African countries PTAs play a key role in the financing of education. Parents PTA have also contributed towards the financing of education by bearing the cost of the available facilities on ground. The partnership between the government and PTA was for the purpose of improving the quality of education in schools by providing the funds the schools badly needed in order to run effectively. In Nigeria, PTAs had become the major financiers of school development and this is true even today (Bogonko, 1992). Currently government contribution to any one school can be as low as 15% or even less of the total income of the school, while the rest is contributed by parents. Therefore this paper focuses on a critical examination of the conception of PTA in the educational development process. The rest of the paper examines the classical theory of equal opportunity and the classic theory of development in explaining the relevance of PTA in the development of school facilities and further reviews the concepts of PTA, school facilities and role of PTA in the development of school facilities in Nigeria.

II. Theoretical Overview

The effect of PTA on facilities development in schools may be explained with the Classical Liberal Theory of Equal Opportunity and the Classical Theory of Development. Liberalism is a political theory that is primarily based on the need to improve and to protect the individual. It espouses the principle of mutual benefits and international cooperation (Shirayev, 2014). For Bannister (1989), Liberalism is a policy that emphasizes individual liberty and equality of opportunity. Liberal theories support provision of basic rights to all and seek to avoid discrimination (Dorrien, 2001). Procedural Liberalism allows individuals to pursue their own vision of life

within the framework of their means and the state law. Wolfe (2009) observes that classical liberalism emphasizes the individual and says that the society must be arranged to allow individual to live a good life in a way that he chooses. It therefore follows that deliberate steps must be taken by the society (stakeholder in the provision of education and all it takes to make education possible). In this case, the parents and other stakeholders should play their roles in the provision of structure and facilities in the smooth education of their children.

Opportunity for all individuals is the main concern of the Classical Liberal Theory. Individuals are born with abilities, talents and given amount of capacity which to a large extent is inherited and cannot be substantially changed. Therefore the consideration of all categories of person, including the poor and the rich is put into perspective to remove the possibility of side tracking the interest of the less privileged in the society.

Development theory is conglomerate or a collective vision of theories about how desirable change in society is best achieved (WFI, 2017). The Classic Theory of Development formulated by W. Arthur Lewis in the mid-1950s stipulates that the right quantity and mixture of savings, investments, and foreign aid are all that is necessary to enable developing nations to proceed along an economic growth path that historically had been followed by more developed countries (Scribd.Com, 2010). Generally development theories draw on a variety of social science disciplines and approaches and depending on which theory that is being looked at there are different explanations to the process of development and their inequalities. They include Modernization Theory, Structuralism, Dependency Theory, Basic Needs, and the Neoclassical Theory.

The modernization theory is more appropriate to the current work. Modernization theory is used to analyze the processes in which modernization in societies take place. The theory looks at which aspects of countries are beneficial and which constitute obstacles for economic development. The idea is that development assistance targeted at those particular aspects can lead to modernization of 'traditional' or 'backward' societies. Scientists from various research disciplines have contributed to modernization theory. The earliest principles of modernization theory can be derived from the idea of progress, which stated that people can develop and change their society themselves: One way to do this is as espoused the French sociologist Emile Durkheim is through Division of Labour which describes how social order is maintained in society and ways in which primitive societies can make the transition to more advanced societies (Durkheim, 1893).

Another conception of the modernization theory is the Linear Stages of Growth Model: an economic model which is heavily inspired by the Marshall Plan used to revitalize Europe's economy after World War II. It assumes that economic growth can only be achieved by industrialization. Growth can be restricted by local institutions and social attitudes, especially if these aspects influence the savings and investments. The constraints impeding economic growth are thus considered by this model to be internal to society (Khun, 2008). Perhaps the most well-known example of the linear growth model is the Rostov's stages of growth: According to the model, developing countries will have to go through five stages to be developed. These are: (i) traditional societies, (ii) pre-condition for take-off, (iii) take-off (iv), drive to maturity and (v) age of mass consumption. According to the model, to reach the take-off stage a country needed to increase investment rate to at least 10%; established one or two manufacturing sectors with a high growth rate; and put in place an institutional, political and social framework to promote the expansion of the sectors (Rostow, 1960 and Cairncross, 1961). However, the Rostow's model has been criticized mainly for (i) assuming that development can be achieved through a basic sequence of stages which are the same for all countries, a doubtful assumption; (ii) measurement of development solely by means of the increase of GDP per capita; and (iii) focusing on development, but not identifying the causal factors which lead development to occur: It thus neglects the social structures that have to be present to foster development.

The Classical Theory of Development was later modified and extended to create a new framework which is a holistic and integrated approach to development strategies and programs that highlights the interdependence of all aspects of development strategy, social, structural, human, institutional, environmental, economic and financial." This theory therefore advocated for aids from external bodies in the development of the facilities within an institution. The aids coming from PTA in the development of the facilities in a school is supported by this theory.

Lewis model of the theory of development noticed that the level of wages in the urban industrialized sector is assumed to be constant and determined as a given premium over a fixed average subsistence level of wages in a traditional agricultural sector. With this, Lewis assumed that urban wages would have to be at least 30% higher than average rural income to induce workers to migrate from their home areas. It therefore indicates that the level of influence that would be wielded on facilities development by the PTA in the rural owned schools would be financially lower than those from the urban owned schools. This again strengthens the equality and opportunity struggle held by the classical Liberal Theory of Equal Opportunity. Therefore the level of development of facilities expected in urban located schools would not be expected to be same as that of the rural areas. Also, the model recognizes that differences can arise among countries in the pace and pattern of development, depending on their particular set of circumstances, Factors influencing the development process

include a country's resource endowment and size. It would therefore be expected to experience differences in the level of PTA response or funding on the facilities development since factors influencing development process include resources, endowment and size. The rate of income to the PTA association and level of influence they have in the development of facilities in any schools would largely be determined by the strength of its resources, endowment and size.

In order to have equal opportunity among students, the two theories (theories) are of the opinion that Parents Teachers Association (PTA) should give aid to schools, so as to bridge the economic gap between the rich and the poor since the government alone cannot bear the financial burden of facilities development in public secondary schools.

III. The Concept Of Parents Teachers Association (Pta)

According to Maryam (2008), the PTA started in USA with the kindergarten developments which were engineered by the Mothers meetings in Chicago in 1855, taking off effectively in 1894 through the Mothers' Congregations. In the USA the PTA is a national organization enshrined in the constitution with each PTA serving a local state. According to the United States' National Parents Teachers Association mission and purpose statement, the PTA seeks to promote the welfare of the child and youth at home, in the school, and in the community (Maryam, 2008). The PTA has also sought to raise standard of life at home, secure laws that protect children and youth, bridge the gap between home and school, and to build and develop efforts connecting educators with the public in securing the highest standards in mental and physical, social and spiritual education.

Maryam (2008) further noted that the steering committee in developing the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) strategy in Nigeria identified the national Parents Association of Nigeria (NAPTAN) as one of its strategic partners in the effort to ensuring that civil society supports government to ensure that all Nigerian Children have access to good quality education. This is based on the realization that in the delivery of education there are four principal actors; the state as the duty bearer, the child as the right holder, the parent as the first educator and the teacher as the professional instructor. It is common knowledge that for rights to be enforced there is need for advocacy or demand for the implantation of such rights. The Parents Teaches Association has been known to be one of the earliest civil associations advocating for the rights of children, especially within the school environment.

In the early years of educational development, schools were characterized by limited formalized contacts with parents except in the event of being invited for speech days, sports day and so on. The parent had no say in what was taught or how the schools were run. As opined by Lasibille (2000) the fact is that the school leadership did not attempt to establish a partnership with the parents, believing that parents were irrelevant to the schooling process, since they did not even know what was been taught: A number of parents at that time were illiterate or had low educational background; anything to do with school was intimidating to them. There were long distances between home and school, and the cost of travelling inhibited parents from checking on their children at school and parents believed teachers could do it all alone and did not see the need to get involved.

The relationship between parents and teachers in Nigeria however changed for the better from the 1980's to date. The cause of the changed attitude and circumstances was the reduction of government funding in schools, economic breakdown, and lack of maintenance and development of the already existing school structures and facilities; which consequently created financial crisis in the schools. The government right from the time it took interest in education in 1925 had been heavily funding education in the country: However, due to failure on its part, and increased number of schools, government funding in schools shrunk considerably, in the 1980's to date (Lewin, 2006). According to Lewin (2006), schools found themselves unable to run effectively anymore, with shortages of scholastic materials and basic infrastructure in some cases: Teachers, who are poorly remunerated, resorted to teaching in two or more schools to make ends meet. Some teachers left the country to seek for greener pastures, while others, who remained, resorted to coaching as a means of earning extra income. It is against this background therefore that parents became key players in the management of schools since the 80's. The financial influence (support) of parents became inevitable as parents now contribute greatly in the provision of the basic facilities in the running of the school. Parent Teacher Association (PTA) were thus born, with the aim of building a partnership between parents and teachers, for the purpose of improving the quality of education in schools (Lewin 2006).

One way of influencing the development of the facilities in schools by PTA was to provide the funds the schools badly needed to provide such facilities or to directly provide them to the school. Within a short space of time from their formation, the PTA's had become one of the major financiers of school expenditures and this is true even today. Nowadays government contribution to any one school can be as low as 15 percent or even less of the total income of the school (Lasibille, 2000).

IV. The Concept Of School Facilities

Schools exist for the purpose of teaching and learning. Human and material resources are deployed for this purpose. Schools facilities are very important for sound education of the child towards the realization of educational goals and objectives (Asiyai, 2012): School facilities are the material, natural, and human resources provided for staff and students to optimize their productivity in the teaching and learning process. The realization that the transfer to the students rather that learning takes place through discovery, exploration, interaction with the internal and external environment has necessitated the creative innovative development of teaching and learning facilities that reflect these changes. Schools exist to serve socio-economic and political needs of the ever-changing society; consequently, they are in constant interaction with their external environment. They receive inputs from the external environment in the form of human and material resources, process them and empty same into the society as finished products and services. The quality of the products bears a direct relationship with the quality of the facilities deployed in the process of the production. This demands that state of the art facilities are provided in schools to prepare school leavers for life in the global village. According to Porpst (1972), useful types of resources to be considered by the planners and the management team are acoustical design engineering, audiovisual design engineering, behavioural sciences, building systems design, community and press relations, ecological studies, electronic data processing of hardware specifications, electronic data processing for programme development, use of hardware specifications, electronic data processing for programme development, use of facilities training and financial planning: Others include food service planning, graphic design, health care planning, and engineering, lighting design, management consulting, project planning, safety engineering, site planning, technical equipment specialization, and urban planning.

The school plant is a major component of the school facility. Knezevich (1975) described it as “the space interpretation of the school curriculum: He emphasized that the curriculum finds its physical expression in construction and arrangement of the school plant, which is a controlled environment that facilitates the teaching and learning process and also protects the physical wellbeing of the occupants. He further stated that since teaching and learning does not take place in a vacuum, school facilities give meaning to the planned curricula and extra-curricular activities. A discussion of the school plant starts with the conceptualization of the educational programmes to be offered in the school. The nature and types of the educational programme will determine the nature and types of the school facilities to be provided. Unruh (1974) emphasized that both teachers and students need places and equipment to search, read, write, confer, interact, view, listen, think, experiment, and record. Students need places to transact student affairs or to study for social purposes. Teachers need office space, conference rooms for planning, facilities for diagnosis of pupil's needs, and facilities for preparing instructional presentation. New views of the teaching-learning process that move beyond memorizing of knowledge toward involvement of students in applying, analyzing, synthesizing,, and evaluating knowledge stress the need for flexibility of space in the schools. The complexity of the learning environment requires flexibility in the design of the school plant. Modern facilities are designed for diverse academic and social activities.

Equipment and supplies are essential for the attainment of education goals and objectives. Simpson and Anderson (1981) defined equipment as “items that last a minimum number of years or cost more than a certain amount” and supplies as items such as microscope slides, glass tubing, and cotton swabs, that are quickly consumed and that are usually less expensive than equipment items”. Some equipment performs specific functions while others such as computers perform multiplicity of functions.

Ihuoma, (2008) noted that school facilities give meaning to the teaching and learning process of any school. Thus, facilities development is an integral part of the overall management of a school which would need the attention of the mangers and stakeholders to carry out comprehensive assessment of the facilities to determine areas of need. With quantum leap in school enrolment, increasing number of academic programmes and limited resources, flexibility must be an integral part of the planning process. Facilities should be established or developed such that they will serve new functions in future. In facilities planning, Caudill, (1954) emphasized that, “more specific terms like expansible space that can allow for ordered growth, convertible space that can be economically adopted to programme changes, versatile that serves many functional and malleable space that can be changed at once and at will should be used”. For these to be achieved Regnier (1980), “advocates team efforts of facilities planners and capital budget analysts, administrators, academic staff, fiscal and institutional research personnel”. This implies that facilities management is a collective responsibility of all stakeholders: the federal, state, local government authorizes, staff and students of the individual schools, parents and the community where the school is located. The Federal Government through the Federal Ministry of Education provides the policies that guide the educational system and also oversees the implementation of these policies at the State level. On the other hand the State Government ensures the actual implementation of the National Policy on Education by providing the enabling environment for effective teaching and learning.

The parents provide needful support for the development of schools while together with the teachers and the students ensures proper management of the schools facilities.

V. Pta And Development Of School Facilities

Since the very beginning, human beings the world over have done a lot to enhance their lives through the provision of necessary facilities (Ajayi, and Oguntoye, 2003). Same applies to education. Physical facilities provide and maintain safe, clean and creative educational environments that are conducive to high achievements of the students. Physical facilities strive to give students a comfortable atmosphere in which they work and learn. Bell and Rhodes (1996) noted that school facilities include the administrative office, staff rooms and offices, classrooms laboratories, workshops, equipment, stores libraries, hostels, staff houses and the school grounds. In order for a school to advance the learning opportunities offered to the students, it has to avail adequate facilities. In developing countries, low levels of learning among children can partly be attributed to poor or inadequate facilities of the schools. Physical facilities are the fundamental factors in better learning and achievements of the students (Ajayi and Oguntoye, 2003). Ahmed (2003) revealed that in most of the Nigeria's secondary schools, teaching and learning takes place under a most un-conducive environment, lacking the basic materials and thus hindered the fulfillment of educational objectives.

The introduction of Free Secondary Education, in schools as noted by Onyango (2001) has registered over-enrolment, which means that the resources available in schools are constrained. Thus PTA levies became instrumental in the provision of physical facilities in schools (Verspoor, 2008; Mbugua, 2008). According to Shehu, (1996), PTA participation in schools is the best way a community can participate on matters affecting education in Nigeria. For him, virtually all schools in the country in which PTA exists has benefited from the activities of the PTA. The benefits include provision of infrastructural facilities, materials (books, food, beds and beddings).

In most part of Nigeria Parents Teachers Association is the major source of input in financing of education. Survey by the Ministry of Education (1973) revealed that PTAs provided 21.2% of the costs of building 63.8% of the costs of furniture and equipment. 63.4% of repairs and 87.7% of general contingencies. In a paper presented at the African Conception of Principals' Conference Johannesburg, South Africa, Laboke (2000) pointed out that there are traditionally other sources of education financing and these are being given serious attention. For example parents and guardians are being encouraged to give support of schools through payment of levies to use fund specified running cost of schools. According to Kochhar (2008) PTA funds in most schools play a major part in financing school activities and programmes and providing all the structures to enhance these activities. The allocations from the free secondary education is inadequate and is not based on any feasibility assessment of schools to determine their financial needs based on the financial needs of schools in relation to the number of activities and programmes. This has forced most schools to revert to PTA levied to cover the deficit.

The main function of PTA is providing the necessary financial support to the school by organizing for school development projects. Mbugua (2008) however notes that in most secondary schools, PTA funds are inadequate forcing schools to solicit for other sources or funds to provide needed facilities. Asyago (2005) further noted that quite a number of schools lack physical facilities such as libraries and laboratories and the main reason that was given by most principals was inadequate funding by the Government stressing that PTA funds were directed towards financing recurrent expenditures and were in any case inadequate. Chima, (2012) noted that PTA role remain supportive only to ensure that quality of academic service meets the expected standard: It should not be fund generation for the school proprietors. PTA for him can be for Mission Schools which are absolutely nonprofit making ventures.

VI. Summary Recommendations And Conclusion

Since education has not enjoyed adequate attention from the government, other concerned bodies like the PTAs in various schools have to mobilize education stakeholders to fund development projects within the schools. PTAs have sourced for these funds from the Parents and other stakeholders in order to cover up for the lapses that have evolved from the government standpoint. This endeavour though a noble one has encountered challenges especially in the areas of inadequacy, and unavailability particularly in the rural areas where even the financial strength of parents is grossly farfetched from the desired. The summation of this paper is that to a very large extent PTA wields a significant influence on the development of facilities in the secondary schools but the reality of today is that PTA levies have fallen short of addressing the needs of schools. It is therefore recommended that:

Governments at all levels should make concerted efforts to increase funding for schools at levels as quality education is undoubtedly the key to national development. Furthermore alternative sources of funding for schools such as endowment funds by individual and corporate bodies, imposition of education tax on some

commercial and industrial activities in the country among others should be explored. Government should subsidize school teaching and learning resources to make them affordable.

School administrations and management should embrace more transparent and accountable utilization of available PTA funds in order to enhance the provision and development of school facilities using PTA funds. The school Heads create better forum to establish variable rapport between the school and the PTA body. This will serve as an avenue to bring to the awareness of the parents the pressing needs of the school and the staff.

Finally, in view of the increasing key role of the PTA in educational development in Nigeria members should be integrated in policies formulation and implementation in the education sector.

Conclusively, there should be concerted efforts on the part of all stakeholders to improve the quality of teaching and learning in our schools: This requires not only quality and adequate staff but also the creation of enabling environment with modern physical facilities and teaching aids. The increasing role of the PTA in the provision and management of facilities to enhance teaching and learning in schools is pivotal and should be encouraged, appreciated and possibly formalised.

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