

## SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP: A PANACEA FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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### **Abstract**

This paper examined the relationship between the school administration and the community as it relates to the development of the communities. The paper highlight the functions of school administrators, purpose of school community relations the influence of the school on the community. The paper again x-rayed the school administrator's role in the development of the communities. The paper concludes by giving a number of recommendations such as school administrator's participating in the community development programmes.

Schools essentially exist for the development of the students and the well being of the society. The society also has an influence on the school by selling its aspirations which the school inculcates to the learner. The values, attitudes, norms of the society are being inculcated to the individual citizen through the school. The community is seen as a group of people, having the same geographical area and the same culture, hence living together as a people, and school are established bearing in mind the ethos, values and the needs of the society school community relationship involves series of activities undertaken by the school to usher in harmony and understanding between it and community. And this harmonial living and understanding that exist between the school and community is maintained by the school Administrators who by their position are being entrusted with the affairs of the school. Recently the relationship between the school and the

community has gone sour, and the question has been why such a soured relationship. Does it mean that the school administrators have failed in their responsibilities of maintaining the cordial relationship that ought to exist between the school and the community? Or the community is ungovernable? Such soured relationship does not promote peaceful coexistence and development in the community. This is the concern of this paper. What are the challenges of school/community relationship, that impedes community development?

### **Function of School Administrator**

The school administrators have various responsibilities in the school but for the purpose of this paper, only the following responsibilities are discussed herein.

- **Procurement and Development of Personnel:** A good educational administrator identifies the staff needs of the school. He collaborates with various agencies of education such as schools board, ministry of education and so on in making decisions relating to educational personnel matters. To ensure proper placement, promotion and professional growth of the staff under his administration to make careful budget accounts and raise fund for the effective school administration.
- **Students Personnel Administration:** This has to do with selection, orientation,

placement, guidance and counselling of students. Every student is given adequate opportunity and motivation to learn.

- It is the duty of the school Administrator to keep and maintain school records for effective and efficient administration of the schools.
- Both staff and students discipline is being maintained by the school administrator by being a role model to staff and students and to also punish an erring staff or student.
- Coordinating and supervising instructional activities for effective teaching and learning.
- Maintenance of effective interrelationship with the community and external Agencies. The school administrator endeavor to promote school community relations through the participation of the school in community activities and projects, and community participation in some aspects of school life.

#### **Purpose of School Community Relationship**

The school is a formal institution and an important agent of socialization. It is established by the society to inculcate relevant ideas, knowledge and norms of the students to enable them survive in the complex society. Community means a group of people of the same opinion, culture or having common interest and living in a given geographical space. School Community Relationship refers to the relationship that exist between the school and the hoist community where the school is situated. School Community Relationship involves series of activities undertaken by the school to usher in harmony and understanding between it and community. These activities include among others, inviting the community in their inter house sports competition, allowing the community make use of some school facilities like the football field, school Assembly halls etc. all these would assist

the school to maintain a cordial relationship between it and the host community.

According to Amanchukwu (2006), the following purpose of school community Relations are enumerated below;

- Integrates the home, school and the community improving educational opportunities for all children.
- To improve the partnership concept by uniting parents and teachers in meeting the educational needs
- To evaluate the offerings of the school the need of the children in the community.
- To develop an awareness of the importance of education in a democracy.
- To rally support for proper maintenance of education programme.
- To inform the public about the school and to establish confidence in the schools.
- To correct the understanding as to the aims and objective of the school.

The school administrators ought to perform these functions for effective administration of the school since the school is an open and a social organization hence the principal should endeavor to develop and maintain a very good relationship with the community in which the school is situated. This can be achieved through the participation of the school in the community activities and the community may also be allowed to make use of some of the school facilities where necessary (Koko & Nwiyi 2006) when there is good and cordial relationship between the school and the community, there will be effective administration of the school which will eventually lead to the achievement of the goals of the school.

#### **Influence of the School on the Community**

School essentially exist for the development of students and the well being of the society. The society influences the school

while the school also has an influence on the society. The values, attitudes, norms of the society are inculcated to the individual citizen through the school, but below are the influence of the school on the host community.

- The school exist to induct the youths into the culture of their immediate and external communities
- The school is expected to take part in determining the future social change, hence participate actively in the process of shaping the culture. According to Modebelu, M.N (2014), the role of education through school in the face of rapid social changes should change with the changing society as well as moving at the rate of modernization and globalization.
- The school inculcate into the citizens and learners right knowledge, values, attitudes and skills that can make them useful citizens, saleble, employment and self-reliant members of their community. In this way, the school will contribute in developing both the urban and rural communities.
- School as Agency for community economic development is a vital aspect of community or national development. Education is a veritable tool for effecting community development.

Education is an instrument for the development of a free and democratic society. Adequate economic, political and technological development requires progressive leadership and enlightened followership which only education can procure and provide. The proper role of the school under this condition is to see that the right type of education is provided for the attainment of the expected acceptable forms of the modernization (Ukeje 1986).

### **Expected Characteristics of the School Administrators for Community Development**

- **Co-Operative:** The school administrator allows the usage of the school facilities and resources to the community for educational and socio-cultural use for instance avail them the use of Assembly halls; for evening adult classes and wedding receptions.
- **Approachable:** Administrators of schools should make themselves accessible to parents and members of the public. As an administrator you should not wear an unapproachable look or attitude. They should be courteous, considerate and empathic in nature be willing to give assistance to people. A democratic school administrator who runs an open administration is more likely to succeed in fostering a cordial school relationship. The school head has to be accessible to all segments of the community. To achieve this, he/she must have good human relation, warm, straightforward and approachable.
- **Interesting and Motivating:** Demonstrate an active interest in the community life through promoting the involvement and participation of the school in suitable social activities and extra-mural programme for instance, organize cultural activities, clean up campaign in the communities.
- **Neutral Participation** – An effective administrator maintains complete neutrality in political participations both in religious and chieftaincy tussle in the community.
- **Knowledgeable** – This involves reflecting community life in the curriculum by ensuring that teaching of some subjects

adequately utilized to educate the students on the history and culture of their local community life. The administrator is duty bound to invite some personalities from the community to give special talk on their various areas of specialization, hence promoting effective communication between the school and the members of the community.

### **The Role of the School Administrator in the Development of the Community**

The use of school facilities in developing young talented youth in sporting activities in the communities. The school administrator does it by allowing the communities use the school field and other sporting facilities to enhance the growth and development of the youths. It would help to discover some hidden talents among the youths in the community. Modebelu, (2014) in his work discovered that the essence of extra – mural studies, sporting and church activities is to achieve complete sound development of the students in those communities which invariably would lead to the development of the entire community.

The administrator allows the school building or halls to be used by the community in diverse ways. It could serve as itinerant health agencies center for medical services. This is because the school is assumed to be one centre of the community with adequate hygiene facilities for instance the polio vaccine and HIV awareness campaign could be given to the community in the school by medical agencies.

The school administrator recommends and provides employment opportunities for members of the community as security men, messengers, cooks, stewards, labourers, and so on. Also in the employment of helping teachers who are employed by the school authority to assist in the subject areas where the schools are lacking teachers, and they are being paid by the schools through parents teachers Association

fund empowered by the school administrator. Koko & Nwiyi (2006).

When all these groups of people are gainfully employed and engaged by the school, it enhances both human and economic development of the communities where these school is situated.

The school administrator utilizes carpenters furniture makers, painters from the community in the rehabilitation and maintenance of local projects. The maintenance and rehabilitation of local projects in school goes along way in helping to empower the carpenters, painters, furniture makers and so on. Human capital development would also enhance community development because when individuals are developed, it invariably would lead to the development of the entire community. The community is made up of people and when the people are developed, the community is also developed and this is why (Igwe), 2004 sees community as a group of people located within defined boundaries and closely related to one another by socio-cultural, socio-economic, socio-religious, socio-occupational ties which usually provide a cohesiveness in building and developing the community.

An effective school administrator provides a base for local humanitarian and social groups such as the guides, Red cross, boys scouts, Man 'O' War. Ademola and Adebola (2014) in their work observed that school administrators enhance community development by ensuring that some agencies such as Civil defense, health centres, man 'o' war functions effectively in the community through the support of the school. This situation ensures strong and positive relationship between the agencies and school for the overall development of the host community.

They assists the aged the sick and the indigents through educational services and

financial assistance to enable them complete their programme of studies.

The assistances that the school administrator renders to the host community for its development cannot be overemphasized as indigent students are given financial assistance, scholarship in various forms to enable them complete their program of studies. Experience had it that some indigent students from the host communities' were assisted in both their in West African Examination council, National Examination council and junior WAEC registration. And it is generally believed that when individuals are developed, the entire community is developed. Therefore the assistance of the aged, the sick and indigent students through educational services have enhanced the community development. (Nwiyi, 2013).

The school usually participates in local and national festivals or carnivals. The school administrator allows the community to make use of school premises in national campaigns such as headcount census, elections and so on.

According to Ademola and Adebola, (2014), they found, out that school administrator could organize enlightenment campaigns that will enhances the development of the community. And these programs that will benefit the community are HIV/AIDS awareness programme, immunization and so on.

These are various ways the school administrator could enhance the community development in Nigeria.

#### **Challenges of School Community Relation**

**Community Politics** – school administrators who play active politics in the community stand the risk of staining the long existing relationship between the school and the community. The involvement of the school administrators in chieftaincy tussle and community Development committee politics will not have the full support of the community because of their involvement.

Land dispute between the school and community sometimes the community trespasses in the school land which brings conflict in the bid to demarcate the boundary of the land. According to Asodike (2013) this situation during the Governor Chibuike Amaechi's tenure, in Rivers State the school land were recovered by the government and it stained the school community relationship, in the affected places

**Cultism in the Community** – The youth in the communities who belong to one cult group or the other have not only frustrated the good relationship between the school and communities but have paralysed teaching and learning in school. According to Nwiyi, Osuji and Okorie (2014), schools in some parts of Etche have closed down due to the activities of the community youths who kill, destroy, rape and steal peoples possession at random, serving teachers and school administrators are even on the run while some have demanded for transfer out of these affected communities in Etche in Rivers state.

**Time Factor** – Lack of time on the part of community members is a significant barrier to effective school- community relationship (Asodike, 2013). Due to work schedule, the parents do not have time to attend meetings that could enhance cordial relationship between the school and community. The school administrator needs to do more work in coordinating the parents for effecting school community relation.

#### **Conclusion**

School Administrator cannot justify their effectiveness when they cannot contribute to the development of the host community. School administrators would assist in the development of the community where there is cordial relationship between the school and the

community, which are supposed to be created by the school head, because a situation where the school and the community are not in mutual relationship, it may be difficult or impossible for school to add expected value to the community development, it is therefore expected that every school administrator maintains good and mutual relationship with the host community for the overall development of the communities in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

This paper recommended the following:

1. The school administrator should effectively participate in the school community development programmes.
2. Land dispute should be highly avoided between the school and the community.
3. The school administrator should always maintain open door policy in his administration.

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