COMMUNITY AND PARENTAL PARTICIPATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA

A.B. Loto
Department of Educational Administration & Planning,
Adyemi College of Education, Ondo.

Abstract
Policy makers, educators and others involved in education are seeking ways to utilize limited resources efficiently and effectively in order to identify and solve problems in the education sector and to provide quality education for children. Their efforts have contributed to realising the importance and benefits of community and parental participation in secondary school administration. There is no doubt that if parents are fully aware of the problems facing student and staff in the school, they will be well informed in all the decision-making processes about their children and this will quicken the problem – solving situation arising between parents and teachers, community and school administrators.

The paper discuss community and parental involvement in secondary school administration, it further explain the role of parent teachers association and the hindrance facing the effective functioning of community and parents in secondary school administration. The paper concludes that it is important for community and parents to participate in secondary school administration because the government and school administrators cannot achieve the aims and objectives of secondary school alone without the contribution of other stake holders in education and base on this some recommendations were made.

Introduction
The National Policy on education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1982) define Secondary Education as the form of education that children receives after primary education and before the tertiary stage. This level of education should be severally supported by the parent’s, community, government and government spirited individuals and organization such as the voluntary agencies.

Secondary education is considered as the post – primary schools education built for the adolescents and youths between the ages of 12 years and 18 years respectively.

A normal secondary school in Nigeria operates the system of 3,3 educational system i.e. 3 years for Junior Secondary School and 3 years for Senior Secondary School. Similarly, high quality Secondary Education determines the standard and quality of tertiary education.

Against this background, Adesina (1984) regarded the period of Secondary Education as the time when youth can show deeper
appreciation for some occupation and where a choice of occupation has been made, the youth can work towards efficiency and some personal adjustment in his life in relation to the occupation of his choice. He further opined that secondary education has been taken seriously not only as an acceptable qualification for good job but also as the gateway to a sound higher education.

Development of Secondary Education

Prior to the advent of European, all the ethnic groups had their own distinctive culture, constitutions, languages and indigenous system of education. However they all had common educational aims and objectives but methods differed from place to place as dictated by social, economic and geographical circumstances in the old Nigeria society. The purpose of education was clear; functionalism was the aim guiding principle. The society regarded education as a means of an end itself. Western education was brought to Nigeria by the Europeans, this indicated that all the sets of education started in the developed world.

For a long time, the only system of western education in this part of the world remained primary and post primary (secondary) this means that pre-education programme is a recent development in Nigeria which started with religious bodies who felt the need to catch the young ones.

Adesina and Ogunsaju (1984) claimed that the first secondary school was established at Lagos in 1859 by the Church Missionary Society. Awoyemi (1984) noted that the ambition to establish and manage secondary schools during the early periods made planned expansion very difficult to achieve and the effect of this lead to the growth of three types of secondary schools.

According to Ogunsaju (1984) the three types of secondary schools are government, grant-aided and private schools. The wastage and inefficiency in administration of these procreated secondary schools and the quality of education received later determined the interest and the employment opportunities of the schools leavers in relation to the benefit of the society.

Aims and Objectives of Secondary Education

Secondary Education is the form of education children receive after the primary education and before the tertiary stage. Its duration is six years and shall be given in two stages of three years duration each. This implies that the students will pass through the junior secondary school (JSS) and sit for the JSS examination before being awarded the junior school certificate. JSS graduates are admitted into the senior secondary schools (SSS) and are required to write the West African Senior School Certificate (WASSC) examination.

The board aims of secondary education within our overall national objectives should be;

i. Preparation for useful living within the society

ii. Preparation for Higher Education

Across Nigeria, secondary education is expected to expose the children to diversified curricular, professional training and industrial
experiences in both the JSS and SSS classes. The comprehensive education and training are intended to equip the students with necessary professional competence and value-orientations that will prepare them sufficiently for useful and pleasant living within the society. It is a means of producing healthy self-reliant citizens that would create wealth and harmony for sustainable human and material development when they become self-employed. Secondary education might have imparted marketable skill and also creative knowledge required to provide employment generated opportunities. Such entrepreneurial competence and managerial dexterity could make the school graduates adopt some strategies human survival instincts to halt the ravages of diseases, hunger and poverty. The remaining individuals with enough drive, financial assistance and interest could proceed for higher education in the Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Universities within and outside Nigeria.

In actual terms, the aims of secondary educations should be specified more precisely to ensure more concentration of efforts towards their attainment by teachers in Nigeria schools. Hence, the objectives of secondary education are to:

i. Provide an increasing number of primary school pupils with the opportunity for education of a higher quality, irrespective of sex or social religious and ethnic background.

ii. Diversify it’s curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and roles possessed by or open to students after their secondary schools course.

iii. Equip students to live effectively in our art and language as well as the world’s cultural heritage.

iv. Develop and project Nigerian cultural art and language as well as the world’s cultural heritage.

v. Raise generations of people who can think for themselves respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour and appreciate these values specified under our broad national aims and live as good citizens.

vi. Foster Nigeria unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity.

vii. Inspire it’s students with a desire for achievement and self improvement both at school and in later life.

The realization of these laudable objectives shall produce energetic educated youths that can make use of their brain and hand as a result of their acquired creative knowledge and employable skills (Oyekan 1994). Such productive individual’s equip with necessary professional competence, entrepreneurial ability and managerial skills would sustain quality production of goods and services to ensure human survival, peace and prosperity. When they are equally exposed to ethnical orientations within a stable frame of mind, the
secondary school products shall display effective citizenship and creative leadership. This could eradicate the social vices, economic recessions and political instability that continually threaten the peace, unity and existence of humanity in Nigeria as creative individuals; they would be inspired to continually contribute to the growth and development of their community.

To achieve the above stated objective both the JSS and SSS will be under the same roof while they complement each other when they are separately located in different places. Government prescribes core and prevocational subject as well as non-vocational electives as curricular activities for the secondary schools the JSS is both academic and pre-vocational in curricular content and teachers teaches all the basic subject which will enable the pupils to acquire further knowledge and develop skills the curriculum is structured under three subheadings i.e. the core subject (compulsory), pre-vocational and non-vocational.

Students who leave school at the JSS stage may then go to the Government Trade Centre and Government Technical colleges as well as apprenticeship system or some other scheme for out of school vocational training.

Here the student are exposed to vocational subject that would make them acquire some marketable technical skills so that they will become employable on gradation they can be made to design and fabricate (machine) tools and equipments for small scale and intermediate technology as anchored on functional self reliance for the production of beneficial and reparable local implements and raw materials for high-tech products.

At the SSS stage, the students shall make their subject combination to satisfy the requirement of the West African Senior School Certificate (WASSC) examination in view of a lifetime career choice guidance and counselling (G &C) departments should be established with sufficient competent staff that will provide necessary vocational assessment tasks, career guidance and learning counselling as the students proceed to the SSS 3 class for the WASSC examination. Adequate guidance and counselling that are appropriate to the students, abilities, interest and aspiration will enhance their intellectual tempo and conceptual understanding as well as academic achievement and vocational inclination towards their chosen subject learning failure and frustration which often induce academic malpractices and culminate in students dropping out of the schools shall be gradually eliminated.

Efforts should be intensified to provide quality teacher education that will nurture efficient and responsible competent teachers in secondary school. Such teachers will be required to participle more in the active production of continuous assessment of learning outcomes and in the planning and development of school infrastructural facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries and furniture. In the schools with boarding facilities, teachers should endeavour to
help develop in our youths a sense of unity, patriotism and love of our country.

Appropriate measures ought to be taken by professional teacher to see that training in citizenship education goes beyond the usual civics and social studies.

The school cannot exist without the community (Roc and Broke 1980). It is therefore very important for parents to take part in the administration of the school. This can only be done through the activities of the Parents Teachers Association. Active participation of the community is very important because both the school and the students belong to the community.

The role played by Parent Teachers Association in Secondary School Administration cannot be over-emphasis, because this is one of the components which the schools use to achieve its objectives. Statistics shows that government spends “heavily” on education and still cannot meet the ever-rising cost of maintaining schools because of increase in student enrolment and so there is need for active participation of other bodies to assist the government in the funding of secondary education.

Secondary education is very important in the Nigeria education pyramid it is the bridge between primary education and tertiary education. It is important because it is expected to produce the nations requires manpower. The future of the nation’s political, social economic and technological development is enveloped in this level of education. The future of tertiary education depends sorely on the product of secondary schools (Oyewole 2002).

Parent – Teachers Association can be defined as an organized association consisting of both parents and teachers of a particular school who sees to the day to day activities and smooth running of the school. The association is a way of bringing parents, teachers and the community in the basis of equality for the interest of children/wards regardless of difference in religion, ethnicity or politics. Parents – Teacher Association (PTA) is an association which consists of the parents of the individual students and the teachers in a particular school. The concern of the association includes the development of reading skills, children safety and emotional health, juvenile protection and raising the general quality of education. It seeks to remove the false pictures that parents and teachers sometimes have at one another, this making it possible for them to work as partners and fruitful collaborators in the education of the child. The PTA is involved in programme of public enlightenment whose aim is to make parents and teachers conscious of their responsibilities to children and the community in which they live. Prominent in this programme are home visits by teachers; school visits by parents, attendance by parents and teacher at joint meetings, seminars, panel discussions, symposiums and week-ends schools.

Community Participation in Secondary School Administration

Briggs (1979) stated that education cannot be discussed or operated in a
vacuum but in relation to the community and life of the people. So it is important for our education to be closely tied with the life of the people and the community to which the school is located. Educational Policy, learning and teaching should at the same time revolve round the community. For secondary education to be successful, the community has to fully participate in creating awareness in every member of the community and ensure the support of everyone. There must be cooperation among all the components of the community before there can be full realization of desirable education outcomes.

According to Loto (2009) the community can participate in secondary school administration in the following ways:

1. **Financial contribution:** The community assists the school financially through donations from importance personalities in the community to enable the school meet up with its financial commitment.

2. **Physical Development of the School:** The communities assist the school in the area of physical development since government alone cannot shoulder all the responsibility of developing the school by itself.

3. **Provision of Instructional Resources:** Community assist in the provision of instructional resources to school for effective teaching and learning to take place.

4. **Curbing Indiscipline among Staff and Student:** The community assists the school in curbing in disciplines among staff and student who violate the school rules and regulations.

5. **Mouth Piece/Megaphone of the School:** The community assists the school in disseminating information to the people in the community about the school.

6. The community assists in the area of decision making in school.

7. **Staff Matters:** Community contributes in the area of staff matter e.g., It assists the school in looking for teacher and also any staffs who go against the rules, customs, traditions, norms of the community will be disciplined.

8. **Tone of the School:** A peaceful community will produce good school tone. But in a situation were the community is bad, it will also affect the tone of the school since the children in the school are from the community.

**Parental Participation in Secondary School Administration**

The role of parents in secondary school administration is very important. They are expected to give maximum support in releasing their children/wards to be enrolled in secondary school. They need to supply the students with the necessary materials needed for their education, which include school uniforms, writing materials,
adequate feeding and fund. The parents should also give their support to the school by monitoring their children academic performance. They should visit their children school and give support to the teachers.

The activities of parents-Teacher association should be strengthening. Many parents-Teachers association is concern with the tradition of building classrooms and hostels, student discipline, fees and uniform instead of involving themselves in supervising the education of their children. Parent Teachers Association fund should be spent on the provision of classroom and a conducive learning environment for the child and a conducive work place for the teachers.

According to Oduwoiye (2002) the parent-Teacher Association is a great pool of resources no matter where the school is located in the country. So the school administrator needs to inform the association of any problem begetting it so that they will be able to assist in the solving of the problem.

Areas in which Community/Parents can participate in Secondary School Administration

1. Financial Contribution:
The community assists the school financially through donations from eminent personalities in the community to enable it function effectively and meet up its financial commitment.

2. Educational Materials:

Community/Parents can assist the school in the area of providing required learning materials such as Textbooks, Computer/Typewriters, tape recorders with cassette, Fine Arts materials, things for the teaching of Agricultural science and Home Economics in the school.

3. Physical Environment/ Maintenance of Infrastructure:
Good school environment promote effective teaching and learning. So the community/ parents should provide a conducive learning environment that is free from hazard and maintain all the infrastructural facilities in the school.

4. Co-curriculum Activities:
Community/ parents should try to encouraged and sustain co-curriculum activities in the school such as girl’s guides, Red Cross, Home makers club, Science club, Arts club, Drama Club, etc. They could sponsor inter-house sports and prize giving ceremonies.

5. Health care services: Community/ Parents should ensure that they provide quality health care services in the school by employing qualified staff nurse and purchasing adequate and quality drugs for the sick bay.

6. Staff Welfare: This service should be giving proper and prompt attention by the community/ parents because when staff welfare are adequately taken care of they will want to put in their best. They should encourage staff development
programme and try to support staff financially with their programme.

**Role of the School Administrator in Promoting Community/Parental Participation in Secondary School Administration**

1. The school principal should be accessible to visitors, he should be humble and honest always ready to listen to complaints.
2. He should understand the philosophy of the community in which the school is located.
3. He should allow the community and parents to make use of school physical facilities.
4. Invite personalities in the community to school functions.
5. Organize students excursion to important places in the community.
6. Use knowledge and experience people in the community as resources person in school programmes.
7. Disseminate information about the school to the community/parents.

**Hindrance to Effective Functioning of Community/Parents in Secondary School Administration**

1. Members of the community/Parents see the school as Government own property and as such they don’t need to participate.
2. They feel it is time wasting and as such some refuse to participate.
3. They see it as money consuming venture and do not want to spend their money.
4. They see it as a way of enriching the Principals/ Staff of the school purse.
5. Some of them feel that since the school authority cannot afford to pay stipend for their service, it is unnecessary for them to participate.
6. Some of them see it as something that is meant for the educated people only. While the educated ones do not have the time.
7. The community/parents do not have authority over the various agencies that control education in the country because the dictates and decisions of the Ministry of Education over the school is more superior to the activities and decision of the Community/Parents.

**The Aims and Objectives of Parent Teachers Association**

(i) Creation of opportunities for the development of mutual confidence, relationship and understanding between the parents and the teachers.
(ii) Helping to build curriculum that will prepare young people to live in the complex world today.
(iii) Rendering of financial assistance to the school authority.
(iv) Promoting the welfare of children and youth in home, school, church and community.
(v) Helping parents and guardians to understand the role of education in a democratic society to the extent that a stable, uniform and good standard of discipline is...
established both at school and at home.

(vi) Giving the school personnel opinion as to the way the school can succeeds or fails.

Conclusion
It is important for community and parents to participate in secondary school Administration because the government and the school Administrators cannot achieve the aims and objectives of secondary school alone without the aid of other stake holders in education.

Recommendation
The following recommendations are necessary for effective participation of community/parents in school Administration.
1. the government should allow the community/parents to have a say in decision making in schools.
2. illiterate community members/parents should not see the school as meant for educated members of the community only.
3. community/parents apart from financial contribution, provision of infrastructure and good physical environment should also participate in supervision and Ministry of Education programmes.
4. government should acknowledge the contribution of community/parents in school Administration to encourage other stakeholders.
5. Community/parents should cooperate with one another by releasing their children to enroll for secondary education.
6. Every school should operate an active Parent Teacher Association where issues concerning the development of the school can be discussed.

References


