

FUNDING OF FEDERAL COLLEGES OF EDUCATION LIBRARIES IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATION FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

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Abstract

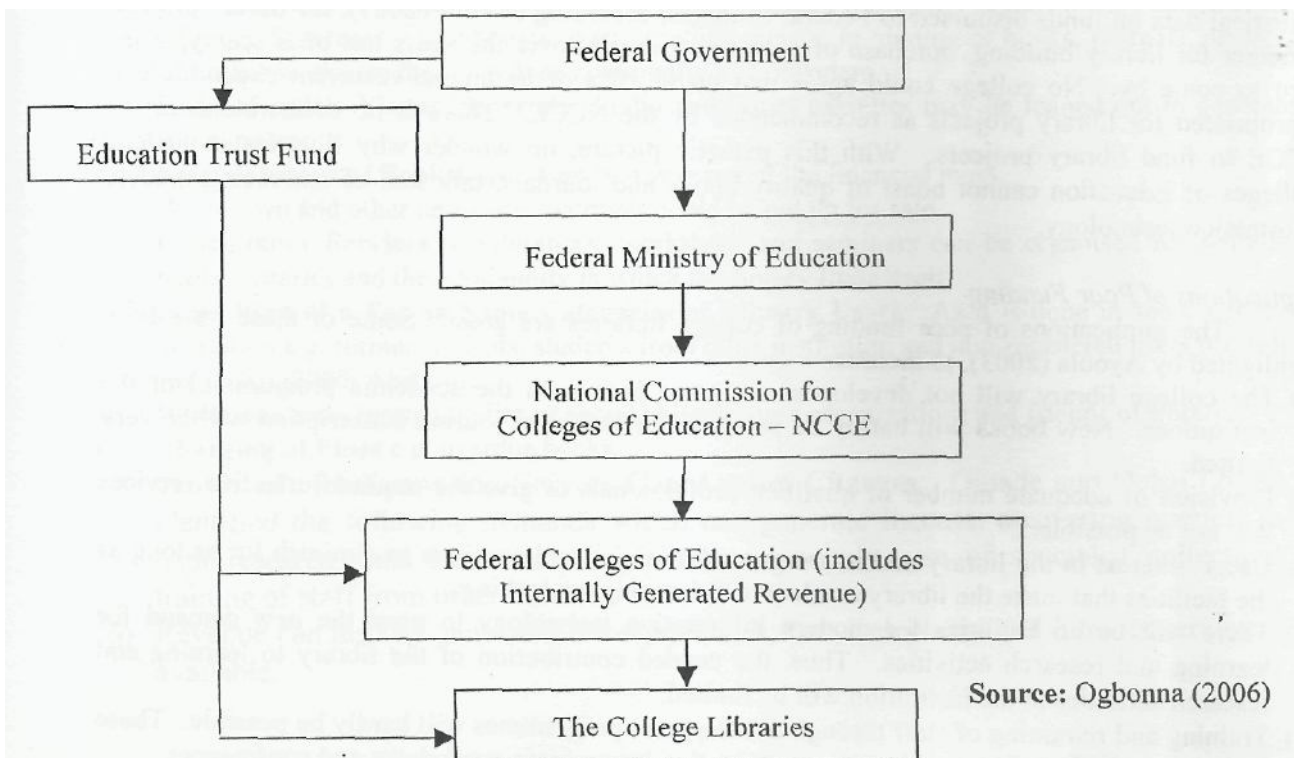
Libraries are made up of building, collection and staff but the tendon that holds all together in a whole is money. Funding received by libraries in Nigerian Colleges of Education has never been enough to provide qualitative service to the users. This has pushed librarians to pursue internal generation of fund. It is believed that a combination of increased funding by government and internal generation of fund that can help keep libraries afloat.

Introduction

Every library, Anafulu (1997), observes, stands on three legs namely - a building, collections and staff; however, the tendon that holds each of those legs and ultimately binds together into a whole is money. Funding is certainly an issue that cut across all forms of administration or organization whether private or public because no establishment can exist without the need for finance. Funds are supposed to be made available to various units in an organization. Hence, Ayoola (2003) believes that budgeting and funding have a very strong link.

If the library is to meet the objectives for which it was established, money is essential for the procurement and processing of materials, for the hiring of personnel and for the purchase and maintenance of equipment. Where finance is lacking, it is impossible to organize the library service of any kind and where fund is inadequate the efficiency of that service is bound to be adversely affected. The NCCE's (1994), guidelines for running Libraries in Colleges of Education in Nigeria recommended that 10% of the institution's recurrent allocation be set aside for the college library. This important policy statement has been lying in the document without implementation. *Funding of College Libraries*

Libraries are essentially a service organization. Most libraries generate little or no fund internally. In Federal Colleges of Education, the main source of fund is the Federal Government. This is passed through various establishments before finally getting to the libraries. The chart below demonstrates the movement of fund from the source to the libraries.



The Federal Ministry of Education disburses allocated fund to the National Commission to the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) who in turn remits such money to the individual colleges. Sometimes, however, the Federal Government (Finance Ministry) may remit money directly to the Bank account of colleges, by-passing the Federal Ministry of Education and the NCCE - which is the situation presently.

The powers of financial control and supervision of Federal Colleges of Education is vested in the NCCE through the provisions of Decree No. 3 of 1989. This decree created the commission and vested in it, among others, the powers to advise the Federal Government, through the Minister of Education, and make necessary recommendations on the financial needs of the Federal Colleges of Education. Sometimes in the past, lump sum of money is made available to NCCE by the Federal Government for disbursement to Colleges. But, in this time of Due Process, budgetary approval/allocation determines the release of fund to colleges.

The Education Trust Fund (ETF) is a major organ of the Federal Government that provides fund to Federal Colleges of Education. The ETF intervention fund in libraries has been the major fund provided for Federal Colleges of Education Libraries in recent years. The fund has a special allocation earmarked for libraries in each college of education among other institutions on a yearly basis. An analysis of this list of year 2003, reconciled projects in the ETF beneficiary institutions as at December 2004 (The Punch, Dec. 23, 2004), reveals that 11 Colleges of Education in the Southwest zone, 7 in the South zone, 5 in the Southeast zone, 12 in the Northwest, 10 in the Northeast and 13 in the North Central zone benefited from the library intervention scheme of ETF in the year 2003. Under this scheme, each of these 58 college libraries was entitled to a minimum of N1.125 million. Further analysis of the reconciliation statements showed that these funds were variously expended on books, journals, computers and needed library equipment and materials.

Perhaps, a combination of government direct funding and the ETF library intervention was thought to take college libraries to the promised land, however, experiences have shown that this is still a far cry from expectation with the result that college libraries are still under-funded and qualitative services yet unattainable.

Poor Funding of College Libraries

The strategic position of libraries in the pursuit of teacher education makes it mandatory for each college of education to establish a library with varying staff strength, book and non-book materials. The libraries aim at promoting teaching, learning research activities, as well as publishing. Statistical data on funds disbursed to Federal Colleges, according to Utor (2003), for library projects (whether for library building, purchase of books or journals) over the years has been scanty, if not hard to come by. No college could agree that up to 10% of its annual recurrent expenditure is appropriated for library projects as recommended by the NCCE. There is no deliberate effort by NCCE to fund library projects. With this pathetic picture, no wonder why libraries in Federal Colleges of Education cannot boast of quality books and journals, talk less of embracing modern information technology.

Implications of Poor Funding

The implications of poor funding of college libraries are great. Some of these have been highlighted by Ayoola (2003), to include:

- (a) The college library will not develop at the same pace with the academic programmes of the institutions. New books will hardly be purchased, renewal of journal subscription will be very limited.
- (b) Provision of adequate number of qualified professionals to give the required effective services will not be possible.
- (c) Users' interest in the library and its usage will diminish and continue to diminish for as long as the facilities that make the library conducive to learning are lacking.
- (d) There will be no facilities for modern information technology to meet the new demand for learning and research activities. Thus, the needed contribution of the library to learning and research activities in the institution will be limited.
- (e) Training and retraining of staff through development programmes will hardly be possible. These include acquisition of higher degrees, participation in seminars, workshops and conferences.
- (f) As a result of these, college libraries will be unable to adequately fulfill the primary objectives for establishing it, that is, to provide adequate facilities for promoting teaching, learning, research, publishing and recreational

activities of students and staff.

Internal Generation of Fund as Alternative

As a result of declining library fund allocation and ever-increasing cost of library materials, libraries have resorted to looking for alternative sources of revenue. The federal government is favourably disposed to looking inwards to fund tertiary education programmes. The NCCE (1994) approves of supplementary sources of funding through provision of reprographic and bindery services for college libraries. Rosenberg (1997) confirms that on the average, libraries in the U.K. and West African sub-region have obtained about 6% of their income from internal income generation while only a few have raised funds up to 17%.

These College Libraries have to get themselves involved in revenue generation, as noted by Ayoola (2003), in order to:

- a) Supplement and maintain library funding and staff at reasonable level.
- b) Respond to government's warning that institutions should not depend solely on government but look inwards to fund their programmes.
- c) Fund new developments that may be otherwise impossible-if the library depends on formal fund allocation.
- d) Reduce excess demands when resources and staff are inadequate.
- e) Fund provision of facilities for modern information technology in order to enhance learning and research activities.

This could be seen as a result of under-funding of Federal Colleges of Education which has a bandwagon effect on college libraries' services.

Mel-hods of Internal Generation of Fund

As a result of poor financial situation of Federal Colleges of Education, libraries in these institutions, have devised alternative ways of generating fund which include:

- (i) **Library Fees:** On the Nigerian scene, Federal Colleges of Education have introduced library fees for students in Pre-NCE, Part-Time and Regular NCE programmes respectively, the impact of which is yet to be assessed.
- (ii) **Photocopying:** This can be a veritable source of income if properly organised and handled.
- (iii) **Bindery Services:** The library can successfully engage in binding of books, journals, projects, and other works for the immediate community and outsiders,
- (iv) **Loan of Audio-Visual Materials:** Audio and visual cassettes may be loaned out to generate some income.
- (v) **Establishment of Bookshops:** Can be a way out of the financial mess, (vi) Withdrawn and other unwanted materials could be put up for sale,
- (vii) **Consultancy Services:** Conferences, workshops and seminars can be organised for schools, public libraries and the community in which the library finds itself,
- (viii) **Imposition of a Fee OH Some Categories of Library Users:** As it is done in some African institution e.g. former students, students from other institution and non-registered users (Ojoade and Ochai, 2000; Abifarin).
- (ix) **Donations** from foreign bodies or social philanthropic organizations and friends of library.
- (x) **Charging of Fines** e.g. overdue books.
- (xi) **Provision of Information Service Can Attract Charges:** Ojoade and Ochai (2000), identified the following demands which can generate income: answering queries, in-'dept research, data base searching, document supply, use of specialist collections, training of staff from other libraries.
- (xii) Revenue can also be generated through E-mail, Fax, Telephone and Internet services if available.

However, the question to ask is; to what extent has the additional income improved the level of funding of these libraries? One finds that the revenue generating efforts have not yielded much gain. For instance most libraries still find it difficult to get good money to acquire materials. While only a few have been able to computerize their service, many college libraries are yet to get connected to the Internet.

Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that:

- (i) Government will increase funding of libraries by exploring some other ways of giving special grants to libraries in Colleges of Education,
- (ii) Efforts to generate money internally should not be made at the expense of the library's function as a social service so as not to be counterproductive,
- (iii) It is only a combination of increased funding by government and integral generation of fund that will help keep libraries afloat,
- (iv) The federal government must increase the level of funding in such that the shortfalls in allocations to federal colleges are abridged.
- (v) Government must accord education priority in its budgets.

Conclusion

The paper has attempted to examine the poor financial situation in which the Federal Colleges of Education libraries have found themselves, justification for income generation in order to get enough fund to meet the objectives for which the libraries are established and the ways and means by which income can be generated.

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