This paper examines the role of Parent Teacher Association (PTA) in the administration of secondary schools in Abakaliki education zone of Ebonyi state. It was affirmed that the school and the community of which the PTA is an agent, maintains symbiotic relationship. In other words, just as the community (PTA) exerts certain degree of influence on the school, so the school exerts same on the community. The roles of the PTA as identified and highlighted in the paper include: funding, provision of facilities and equipment, staffing, maintenance of discipline and school community relations. Extent of the performance of these roles were known to have been hampered by the voluntary nature of the organization. Thus, it was recommended, among other things, that efforts should be made to give PTA statutory status in matters of secondary school administration through legislation.

Introduction

Western or formal education was introduced in Nigeria through the pioneering efforts of Christian missionaries between 1842 and 1860 and even beyond. During the period, the different Christian missions established schools in various parts of the country. The missions were exclusively responsible for the management and control, financing, staffing, curricular issues as well as maintenance of discipline among staff and students in their respective schools. Fafunwa (1982) and Taiwo (1986) described the period as tin era of missionaries adventure in Nigeria's education. Neither the government nor the communities were involved in the provision, management and administration of education in the country at the time.

However, following the increased demand for political, economic, social and educational development in Nigeria occasioned by the country's attainment of independence from Britain in 1960, the role of education became widened. Education came to be regarded as a veritable instrument for achieving accelerated national development. Hence, government began to participate effectively in the provision and management of education in Nigeria, fortunately or unfortunately. during the period of government participation and involvement in education enterprise, financial resources available to the government was in a steady decline due to global economic recession as well as the competing demands for the few resources available by other sectors of the economy. To alleviate this problem, and thus facilitate the increasing demand for accelerated national development, it became necessary to evolve a framework for partnership between government and communities in the provision and management of education.

Community participation in the provision of education is justified by the argument of Bray, Clarke and Stephens (1986), that schools exist for the whole communities and that education is basic human right for adults as well as children. Similarly, Nneji (1999) observed that the existence of a school as an agent of education in a community has two major implications. Firstly, the community looks up to education to make it possible for her members to attain their aspirations individually and severally. Secondly, education in turn expects the communities, which are benefactors of its efforts, to make some contributions that will help sustain it and thus make education fulfil its desired objectives.

Participation of the community in the management of education does not connote the entire members of the community entering into the school and being involved in
day-to-day administration of such schools. Nwadum (1998) reported that community participation and involvement in the management and administration of schools is through community agencies. Some of such agencies are: the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), Community Development Association (CDAs), among others, it is in view of this that this paper attempts to delve into the roles the PTA play in the administration of secondary schools in Abakaliki education zone of Ebonyi State.

**Concept and Objectives of PTA**

The existence of Parent Teacher Associations in many secondary schools with unprecedented contributions in the development of such schools cannot be subjected to the theatre of academic debate. Ocho (1997) described the PTA as a voluntary and welfare organization of parents and guardians of children in a particular school, anti the teachers of that school. He stated that Us existence is backed up by the Past Central State of Nigeria Public education Edict of 1971. Though a voluntary organization, its operations are covered by some regulations. It is worths' of note that the PTA has in administrative responsibility whatsoever in the school system. As a voluntary and wellaic organization, its objectives are determined by the members at its formative stage in individual schools.

Jaiyoeoba & Ukandu (1998) described the PTA as an organization, which brings parents and teachers together in the interest of the students as well as the school. On the objectives of the organization, Ajayi (1985) noted that the PTA is expected to:

1. Provide an effective link between the home and the school;
2. Show intimate interest in and, concern for the affairs of the school;
3. Give moral, emotional and financial support to the school;
4. Encourage co-operation and understanding between the teachers, parents and pupils for the progress of the children; and
5. Doing such other things as may effectively enhance the tone and efficiency of the school.

**Importance of PTA in Secondary School Administration**

The importance of the PTA in contributing to the effectiveness and efficiency of school particularly secondary schools cannot be over emphasized. Through the association, the community exerts much influence on secondary schools administration, teaching and learning activities. Again, it is through the association that communities serve as a forum in which parents and teachers exchange useful ideas for the improvement of learning ability of the children. It is through the PTA that the community strengthens the authority of the school in event of disciplinary problems. Similarly, it is through the PTA that the school children become more socialized and morally sound through the religion their parents participate in.

Finally, it is through the organization that schools enlist the co-operation of parents in the organization of some school events like football matches, concerts, sports, festivals, prize giving day celebrations, film shows, Boys and Girls Brigade or Guides as well as young farmers club, among others.

**Role of PTA in the Administration of Secondary Schools in Abakaliki Education Zone**

The school and its community are known to maintain a form of symbiotic relationship. Towards this end, community members (parents) provide human raw materials (pupils and students for the school which nurtures or processes them and churns them out into the society as finished products in the form of educated men and women. Nwadum (2002) argued that since children are essential to parents and communities, they have to invest in their education. Such investment, winch, could be fiscal and or non-fiscal, is done through the participation of PTA in various activities of the school.

Parent Teacher Associations have been recognized to have played and have continued to play significant roles in the administration of secondary schools in Nigeria. Prominent among these role, are mostly in the area of funding, staffing,
discipline, establishment of new schools, provision of school facilities and equipment, among others. Experience shows that the association is not involved in such areas of school administration like planning school programmes, instructional supervision, curriculum planning and implementation, among others. A detailed discussion on these areas in responsibilities will be highlighted more clearly to put the above assertions into proper perspective.

Funding

Funds are indispensable in the running of any human enterprise and education is not an exception. Afolabi (2002:3) maintained that “no secondary school administrator can effectively, administer his or her school, no matter how assiduous he or she is, without adequate financial resources at his disposal”. Without adequate funds, the goal of education may not be realized. In other words, availability of funds for educational programmes and activities determines, to a large extent, the quality of education. Inwards this end. Okunamiri (2001) described educational financing as the process of sourcing, allocating and management of public schools revenues in the production of educational services for the attainment of educational objectives, Ukeje (1085) argued that in matte: N of educational financing, it is basic to recognize that education is never free: somebody always has to pay for it. Besides, education as a social service has been recognized as an investment in human capital, which requires shared responsibility in financing between the government and the communities, parents, the private sector as well as individuals receiving education.

In recognition of the obvious need for partnership in educational financing between the government, communities and parents, the PTA have over the years and in main’ secondary schools, contributed immensely in funding education by raising money through levies in support of various educational programmes and projects. In most secondary schools in Abakaliki education zone, it has been known that money raised by the organization is always lodged into the organization's bank account and is usually managed by trustees who are entrusted with the responsibility of managing and utilizing them for the purpose for which the fund was contributed. This was to ensure accountability and prudence in the utilization of such public funds.
The above table shows that the PTA of the seven secondary schools surveyed provided various school facilities and equipment between 1900 and 2003. These facilities and equipment range from construction of classroom blocks, offices, furniture, toilet facilities, laboratory and science equipment, library books, electricity, water, renovation of existing school buildings to construction of school signboard. The table also shows that the financial cost for the provision of these facilities and equipment was eighteen million, two hundred and ninety-three thousand, three hundred and eighty-seven naira (₦141,820,387) within the five-year period (1099-2003).

However, it could be noted that the role of PTA in the provision of school facilities and equipment is not limited to Abakaliki Education one of Ebonyi State in particular or Nigeria in general. The role of PTA in this regard has also been reported in other countries. For instance, Tamukong (1997) reported a study on PTA financing of secondary school in Cameroon, the study was purposely designed to measure the participation of PTA in 26 secondary schools in Cameroon. The study measured the level of participation in each school and identified strategies for mobilizing resources as well as the projects accomplished with such resources. The data obtained through the use of a questionnaire was analysed quantitatively and the following results were arrived at. It was found that the organization's were involved in building of offices, construction of school fence, purchase of office machines, furniture, equipment, school bus, library books, construction of sporting faculties, classrooms, among others.

### Table 1: Facilities/Equipment Provided by the PTA in Some Selected Secondary Schools in Abakaliki Education Zone (1999-2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secondary Schools</th>
<th>Facilities/Equipment Provided</th>
<th>Financial Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Community Secondary School. Igbeagu</td>
<td>5 classroom block, science laboratory/equipment, library and books, electricity and water</td>
<td>N143,795,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Community Secondary School. Nvvoke</td>
<td>5 classroom block, principal’s staffroom, toilet and science equipment</td>
<td>N142,323,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Community Secondary School. Enyigwe</td>
<td>3 classroom block, science laboratory/equipment, library books, electricity and water bore hole</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Community Secondary School. Iziogo</td>
<td>4 classroom block, staff room, principal’s office, toilet and electricity</td>
<td>N42,321,873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Fkumenyi Comprehensive Secondary School</td>
<td>Renovated school buildings, science equipment, furniture, principal’s office and staffroom.</td>
<td>N43,459,854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Boys Secondary School. Iboko</td>
<td>Renovated school buildings, science equipment, staffing etc.</td>
<td>N41,964,225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Unity Secondary School. Ochafu</td>
<td>5-classroom block, school signboard, principal’s office and staffroom.</td>
<td>14986,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>N418,293,287</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Author's Field Survey (December, 2003).
PTA’s Contribution in Staffing

Most of the secondary schools in Abakaliki education zone of Ebonyi State are confronted with the seemingly intractable problem of shortage of teachers. Qualified teachers needed to teach various subjects in the school curriculum are, more often than not, inadequate. The areas hardest hit are the sciences and technical subjects. Efforts expanded by the state government in the recruitment of staff have not been adequate enough to solve the problem of teacher shortage. To supplement government’s effort in this direction, the PTA recruits, deploys and pays some teachers, in most cases, these part-time or “community teachers”, as they were called, tire from the communities. Some of them are qualified but unemployed graduates. Nwadum (1998) noted that by recruiting unemployed graduates from the communities as part-time teachers by the PTA, solves the twin problems of unemployment and teacher scarcity in community schools.

PTA and Maintenance of Discipline

There is no gain saying the obvious fact that one of the most teething problems facing education in Nigeria today is the vexed issue of indiscipline among students. This cankerworm, which has been found to be endemic in secondary school and tertiary levels of the country’s education system, manifest in various forms. Ezeocha (1985) identified forms of indiscipline among students to include: truancy, riots, violent demonstrations, cultism, drug and sexual abuse, and so on. Most of these acts of misbehaviour by the students could be caused by a number of factors some of which are community related, school environment related, as well as by social and emotional factors.

Irrespective of the causative factors of indiscipline, the communities through the PTA have a role to play in ensuring its preventive and corrective maintenance in schools. They should evolve strategies that will enable parents play their statutory role of inculcating in their children moral values. Ezeocha (1985) observed that in recent times, parents seem to have abdicated the responsibility of child upbringing to the school because of the excessive quest for material wealth. Consequently parents no longer live exemplary lives and the larger society is presently a reservoir of immoral acts. Consequently, the vices perpetuated in the larger society are usually imported into the school by the students. Hence, Achimugu (2000) argued that the school is not far removed from the society where it operates.

The PTA in most secondary schools of Abakaliki education zone have made some contributions in the maintenance of discipline among secondary school students. In some schools, the organization has encouraged principals to sanction students found to be involved in acts of indiscipline. In some other schools, members have assisted in enforcing school rules and regulations—while in a few other schools, the PEA has organized prize giving activities during which some members were selected to talk to students on issues of indiscipline and its implications on then upbringing and future well being.

The PTA as an Agent of School-Community Relations

The school exists in an environment and reflects that particular community and the way it is structured. As a social institution, the school administration is affected by various forces within the community or the society at large. These forces may be socio-cultural, politico-economic or religious. Consequently, it is therefore necessary for the schools and the communities to develop cordial relationship in order to manipulate all those contingences which are likely to affect the school administration. Ezeocha (1985) maintained that to achieve effective school-community relationship, there is need to establish effective channel of communication. This is necessary because according to Obioha (1997:15) the benefits of establishing cordial school-community relationships are as follows; to gain financial support for the educational programme; to give account of the stewardship according to the school trustees and the professional staff; to advance the education programme; to promote the partnership concept between the school and other educative agencies in the community;
to improve the communities and to establish educational leadership for improving school programmes and thus improving the communities through schools, among other benefits.

**Recommendations**

Based on the foregoing discussion on the role of PTA in the administration of secondary schools of Abakaliki Education zone, the following recommendations are made.

1. Government should enact a law making PTA a statutory organization in school administration and thus assigning to it specific statutory or legal administrative functions.
2. Since raising of funds through levies by the PTA seem to have become monotonous thus making members of the organization skeptical about its activities, PTA should evolve other strategies for mobilizing its members to contribute funds in support of school programmes or projects.
3. On the persistence of indiscipline in schools, the PTA should always sensitize parents on the need for proper upbringing of their children at home before their entry into secondary schools.
4. The PTA should intensify their efforts towards provision of facilities and equipment to school in recognition and appreciation of the dearth of infrastructural facilities and equipment in secondary schools due to poor funding of educational programmes by the government.

**Conclusion**

Administration of secondary education should be seen as a joint venture between the government that provides education, the parents, communities and the society that reap the benefits of education. Involving the PTA as community agent in funding, maintenance of discipline, provision of facilities and equipment, staffing and maintenance of school-community relations is desirable and has to be strengthened and sustained.

**References**


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