



Changing bodies, degenerating output: phases of Basic Education in Nigeria from 1914 to 2014

*Alterações nas estruturas de gestão, manutenção de resultados ruins:
fases da Educação Básica na Nigéria entre 1914 e 2014*

*Alteraciones en las estructuras de gestión, mantenimiento de malos resultados:
fases de la Educación Básica en Nigeria entre 1914 y 2012*

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Abstract

This paper focuses the administration of basic education in Nigeria under different administrative bodies from 1914 to 2014. It identifies the various bodies that were responsible for managing basic education at different dispensations and why they were established. This study is historical, and historical method is employed. Both primary and secondary sources of information were explored to get relevant materials for the study. It was discovered in the course of the study that the bodies were just changing names as the output continues to degenerate in Basic Education. Therefore, it is recommended among others that; basic education should be devoid of politics for effective planning, community participation should be incorporated and, more and adequate infrastructural facilities should be provided in the primary schools.

Key words: Educational bodies, basic education, implementation.

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Resumo

Este artigo discute a administração da Educação Básica na Nigéria, a partir dos diferentes órgãos de gestão, entre 1914 e 2014. Identifica os diferentes órgãos que foram responsáveis pela gestão da educação básica em diferentes organizações e porque elas foram criadas. Este é um estudo sustentado pelos método histórico. Fontes primarias e secundárias foram exploradas na intenção de obter elementos para o estudo. Ao longo desta pesquisa foi descoberto que os diferentes organismos de gestão tiveram apenas os nomes mudados, contudo os resultados continuavam a ser a degeneração da educação Básica. Desta forma, para encontrar boas soluções à educação básica, é recomendado: que esta fosse destituída de política em prol de um planejamento efetivo, incorporação da participação comunitária, adequações e melhorarias da infraestrutura nas escolas primárias.

Palavras-chave: *Órgãos educacionais, Educação Básica, Implementação*

Resumen

Este artículo discute la administración de la Educación Básica en Nigeria, a partir de los diferentes órganos de gestión, entre 1914 y 2014. Identifica los diferentes órganos que fueron responsables por la gestión de la educación básica en diferentes organizaciones y porqué ellas fueron creadas. Este es un estudio sustentado por los métodos históricos. Fuentes primarias y secundarias fueron exploradas en la intención de obtener elementos para el estudio. A lo largo de esta investigación fue descubierto que los diferentes organismos de gestión tuvieron apenas cambios en los nombres, con todo, los resultados continuaban siendo el declive de la Educación Básica. De esta forma, para encontrar buenas soluciones a la educación básica, es recomendado: que esta fuese destituida de la política en pro de una planeación efectiva, incorporación de la participación comunitaria, adecuaciones y mejorías de la infraestructura en las escuelas primarias.

Palabras-clave: *Órganos educativos, Educación Básica, Implementación.*

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Introduction

It is a common practice in nations all over the world to establish administrative bodies that would take care of various levels of education and serve as watchdogs. In Nigeria for instance, according to Gusau (2008), universities have National Universities Commission (NUC), Colleges of Education have National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), and Polytechnics have National Board for Technical Education (NBTE). These bodies are responsible for regulating all processes that are related to such level of education - establishment, access, quality control, monitoring, rules and regulations, evaluation, personnel, progressive development of the system, and other sundry activities - with the aim of having positive outputs. The management, funding and supervision of basic education is particularly important, since it is the foundation for other levels of education, and, if anything is wrong at this level, it may be pretty difficult to have sound and effective education in such nations.

The National Policy on education (NPE) 1977, revised in 1981, 1998, 2004 and 2013, states in clear terms that primary education is the key to the success or failure of the whole system, it must fulfill two basic functions:

- (1) *Prepare children for life,*
- (2) *give those with the necessary background the opportunity to proceed to secondary school; and the main objectives are:*
 - (a) *the inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy, and the ability to communicate effectively;*
 - (b) *the laying of a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking;*
 - (c) *citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society;*
 - (d) *character and moral training and the development of sound attitudes;*
 - (e) *developing in the child the ability to adapt to his changing environment;*
 - (f) *giving the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable him to function effectively in the society within the limits of his capacity;*
 - (g) *providing basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality.*(NPE 2004:16)

For one hundred years of basic education, since the amalgamation of Southern and Northern Protectorates to form a nation now known as Nigeria in 1914, and up till 2014, several administrative bodies have been set up during colonial and post independence periods, and were responsible for the administration of basic education. These bodies operate at National, Regional, State and Local Government levels, bare different names, for the same purpose, but have not brought the desired changes to Basic Education in Nigeria. The problem is; changing the administrative bodies that manage basic education in Nigeria seems to be only in names and not in output. Rather for basic education to improve, it has degenerated to the extent that some people are even clamouring for the declaration of state of emergency in the sector (Gyamfi,

2015). In the conceptual framework of education for all, and in the light of Archer's (2014) submission that of the 57 million youngsters worldwide who are not receiving formal education, more than 10 million live in Nigeria – and in the current climate, (insurgency and poverty), that number is rising. This paper would address the following questions and others that may arise in the course of the research.

- i. What bodies have been responsible for the administration of basic education since 1914?
- ii. Why are these bodies failing in their fundamental duties of ensuring maximum output from the processes?
- iii. Why do we still have haphazard development, denial of access, rote-learning replacing process of exploration and discovery, poor state of infrastructure, poor quality of teachers and degrading environment in basic education even after fifty (50) years of Nigeria independence?
- iv. Are the conceptions of the bodies faulty?

This is a historical research and historical method is employed. Both primary and secondary sources of information were used by exploring the archives, journals, textbooks, periodicals and other relevant documents. The researcher hopes that this research would sensitize all stakeholders in basic education to focusing global best practices in empowering the bodies that are responsible for basic education in Nigeria so as to have the desired output.

Brief Historical Development and Management of Basic Education before 1914

Although this study did not cover the period before the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern protectorate, it is important to provide brief historical background of western education in Nigeria as foundation for proper understanding of management of basic education in Nigeria. This is because the management of primary, and later basic education in Nigeria, passed through different stages and different authorities exercised its control from time to time (Olaniyan & Obadara 2008). Formal western education was introduced into Nigeria on 24 September, 1842, by the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMMS) in Badagry. The team, led by Sir Thomas Birch Freeman also included Mr. and Mrs. De Graft who established the first school named 'Nursery of the Infant Church' (Fafunwa 1974, Taiwo 1980). The WMMS was closely followed by the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) which also came in December 1842 and moved to Abeokuta in 1846 where they founded two schools, one for boys and the other for girls under the supervision of Samuel Ajayi Crowther and his wife. Crowther also opened the first school in Onitsha in December 1858 for girls between 6 and 10 years old. Missionary effort in Western Nigeria was soon followed by enterprises in the Niger Delta and Eastern Nigeria. In 1847, the United Free Church of Scotland started work in Calabar; in 1887 the Qua Iboe Mission started work in the Eket and Uyo districts, also the primitive Methodists in Calabar and Owerri Provinces in 1894 (Otonti 1965; Fafunwa 1974).

Because the primary objective of the early Christian Missionaries was to convert Africans to Christianity via education, the establishment of missions was always followed by the opening of primary schools. This, Taiwo (1980) observed that, the earliest schools were without any doubt an adjunct of the church. Before 1882, when the first education ordinance was promulgated, which applied to all British West Africa, education was purely a Missionary affair; the colonial government paid little attention and was merely interested in using the products of the mission schools as clerks, messengers and interpreters. Though other ordinances were promulgated in 1887 and 1926, curricula and other elements were largely determined by each denomination to suit its needs; therefore, there was haphazard management.

Colonial Education Board - 1914 and 1951

After the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorate in 1914 by Sir Frederic Lugard, there was visible disparity in education between the North and the South with Qur'anic schools booming in the North and western education expanding in the South. According to Fafunwa (1974), by the time of amalgamation, there were four major educational issues that affected educational development in Nigeria for over sixty (60) years namely:

1. *Uneven distribution of schools in Southern and Northern Nigeria.*
2. *Dual control of education by the mission and the government (including native administration).*
3. *The educational gap between Northern and Southern Nigeria due to geographical and religious problems.*
4. *Intensive rivalry among Christian missions.* (Fafunwa 1974: 110)

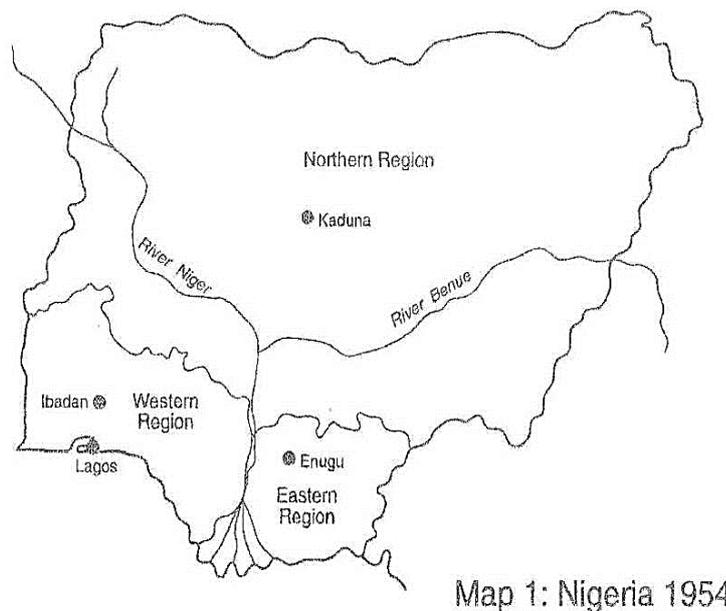
At this period, the colonial government, the native administration and the various missions were responsible for the administration of education. With unnecessary rivalry and battle for supremacy, basic education during this period lack uniformity, there was no common goal or focus. Each group focused on how the product of basic education will benefit its interest.

Regional Primary Education Boards - 1951 and 1960

Education before independence was administered through the use of education ordinances and education laws. These ordinances include the 1882, 1887, 1916, 1926, 1948 and 1952 Educational ordinances and Regional Laws of 1954. Pressure from the international organizations and the nationalist on the two bodies to give Nigerians the best education could only effect little changes. Hence, the principles and practice of education within this period was not satisfactory. ActionAid (2008) noted that one recurrent criticism of Education up to the time when the regions - East, North and West were created was that education was elitist and hardly affordable by a majority of the people. Thus the regions were faced with the challenge of providing education for the majority of the people.

The 1951 Macpherson's constitution led to division of Nigeria into three regions (Eastern, Western and Northern) with power to legislate and make laws on education, health, agriculture and local government within the boundaries of its region. This constitutional provision led to the division of education department into three parallel departments, to reflect the three regions. Each region thereafter had a Regional Director of Education. This eventually led to the promulgation of the 1952 Education Ordinance which empowered each of the regions to develop its educational policies and systems (Taiwo, 1980; Fafunwa, 2004), and the Colonial Education Board was abolished. On the socio-cultural level, the clamour by Nigerians for self government resulted in two constitutional conferences which brought together Nigerian political leaders and the British colonial government between 1951 and 1954. The deliberations of the conferences resulted in the drafting of a new Federal Constitution in 1954. By this constitution, Nigeria became a Federation of three regions (i.e. the Eastern, Western and Northern regions) and Lagos as Federal Capital (Amaele, 2003) as shown in figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Map of Nigeria showing the Three Regions



Source: http://www.waado.org/nigerian_scholars/archive/pubs/wilber8.html

There were three main political parties, each becoming more influential in a particular region. For instance, the Action Group was more popular in the Western Region, while the East and North were dominated by the National Convention of Nigerian Citizen (NCNC) and the Northern People's Congress (NPC) respectively. With the regionalization of education in 1951 and the emergence of the three political parties in 1952, education and other social services become the centre point of the government in each of the regions. In other words, the structure made education to be a political tool. Each regional government increased her spending on education. These various expansion programmes were deliberately designed to produce the required manpower, preparatory for self-rule. The outcome was the promulgation of the

Education Law of 1955 (No. 6 of 1955) which became operational on 14th April in the Western Region, the Education Laws of 1956 in the Eastern and Northern Regions and the Lagos Education Ordinance in 1957. Thus, an initial experiment to give Universal Primary Education started in the Western region in 1955 (Fafunwa, 1974; Osokoya, 2010).

Western Region – 1955

In 1955 the concept of universalising primary education began in the then Western Region of Nigeria, under the Premiership of Chief Obafemi Awolowo who introduced the free, universal and compulsory primary education, popularly referred to as Universal Primary Education (UPE). The ground plan for the programme included massive teacher training scheme, expansion of teacher training facilities, secondary schools as well as introduction of modern schools and technical colleges (Osokoya, 2010). Before the launching of the UPE scheme in 1955, the government was fully aware of some problems on ground as regards education, namely; parent's attitudes toward sending their children (especially their female ones) to schools, shortage of manpower in schools and, lack of proper funding confronting education in Nigeria. Therefore to counter these problems, enlightenment campaigns were carried out to villages and towns on the importance of education. Also, training institutions were expanded and teachers were massively trained, and, the school curriculum was equally developed and adapted to the pupils needs. New schools were established and some old ones rehabilitated. All these things were put in place between 1952 and 1954 in preparation for the scheme.

On the 17th January 1955, the Universal Primary Education, the largest free primary education scheme then in Africa, was launched in the Western Region of Nigeria. It marked an era of educational revolution in Nigeria. The UPE was an educational revolution, not only in the West, but in Nigeria as a whole. In 1954 there were about 457,000 pupils attending fee-paying schools but by January, 1955, the figure rose to 811,000 representing over 56% increase in the enrolment. The enrolment continued to increase yearly. For instance in 1960, pupils' enrolment in the region was put at 1,124,788. This was about 90% of children of school age in the region then (Ameale 2003 p.54). Actually, 90% of the budget on education was spent on primary education alone. By 1957/58 the recurrent expenditure on education from the funds of the region was £7,884,110, which covered personal emoluments, other charges, special expenditure and grants-in-aids (Taiwo, 1980).

This fast increasing enrolment could not be equalled with the available human and material resources and this later resulted to a drop in the standard and quality of primary school work. This necessitated the setting up of the Banjo commission in 1960 to find out the problems facing the UPE programme in the region and advise appropriately. Among the findings of the commission were:

- i. There was large number of untrained teachers.
- ii. There was lack of continuity in staffing.
- iii. There was too much attention to teacher's private studies to the neglect of the children.
- iv. There were too many large classes;
- v. There were too many under-aged children in school;
- vi. It also found out that the syllabus was poor. (Amaele 2003 and Osokoya 2010)

Eastern Nigerian – 1957

In 1953 the government of Eastern Nigeria made a modest proposal for free education in the region. In Amaele's (2006) submission, it was proposed that 45 percent of the cost of junior primary education programme by 1957 would be paid by the local government bodies. However, the crisis in the ruling party in the region ousted the leadership of Eyo Ita and R.I Uzoma and new government of Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe and U.I. Akpabio came on board.

The feat achieved by the Western Region in terms of the UPE led the Eastern Region to embark upon its own 8 years free education scheme. The new government discarded the modest proposal made by their predecessor and launched a full blown UPE scheme in February 1957, without necessary precautionary measures. Thus, in February 1957, the universal primary education scheme was launched in the Eastern Region using the fire-brigade approach. The government started the programme without adequate planning; thus the needed finances for thorough execution were grossly inadequate. Summarily put by Oni (2008), almost everything, except the pupils, was absent.

The Eastern Region Universal Primary Education started to have problems of implementation less than one year it was launched due to pressure and lack of time for proper preparation. The region could not meet up with its financial obligation to the scheme. There was also the swift opposition from the Roman Catholic Mission that had 60 percent of primary schools in the region then. Furthermore, the pupils' enrolment that was estimated at 904,235 rose to 1,209,167 and 1,221,272 in 1957 and 1958 respectively.

The Dike Commission set up in 1958 observed that the government was already spending a third of its entire revenue on education. It added that if the government wanted to successfully implement the scheme in the region, it would take all its resources. The Commission, however, advised the government to work on quality education rather than quantity.

Lagos City Council - 1957

The Macpherson Constitution of 1951 created only three regions, in which case, Lagos was under the western region of Nigeria. In 1954 Lagos was carved out as a federal territory and so was not part of the 1955 Universal Primary Education scheme in the Western Region. Consequently, the Lagos Town Council established its own council, took time to study the UPE scheme and, in 1957 it introduced the scheme with an initial pupil enrolment of 50,182. The scheme was sustained for over nine years. The total pupil enrolment in Lagos primary schools in 1964 was 140,000 in 129 schools (Osokoya 1995 p.81).

Northern Region

The development of education in the north lagged behind that of the south, even though pupils did not pay fees in the government schools, the colonial government had to encourage people to send their children to schools. There was general apathy towards western education by the people who mostly preferred to send their children to the Qur'anic school and viewed

western education with suspicion. This problem was a fall out of the colonial government policy restricting the activities of the missionaries in the area thereby curtailing the spread of Christianity and western education in the predominately Muslim Northern protectorate (Daura and Audu, 2015). The free enterprise which characterised missionary work in the Southern protectorate was not permitted in the North leading to a widened educational gap between the northern and the southern parts of Nigeria. (Imam, 2012), unfortunately, the North had more school age children who were out of school. Also, when grants-in-aid were given to missions and voluntary agencies' schools, the Qur'anic schools were excluded because of their peculiar curriculum (Imam, 2012). The North only passed an education law in 1962 establishing a partnership between the government and the voluntary agencies in an attempt to develop a public system of primary education in which the government would be the leading partner with the Minister of Education having overall responsibility for the promotion of primary education. Also, the government of the Northern Region was more interested in adult literacy programmes than the Universal Primary Education.

The regionalization of education in Nigeria during this period increased enrolment in primary schools in the North from 66,000 in 1947 to 205,769 in 1957; in the West from 240,000 in 1947 to 982,755 in 1957; and in the East from 320,000 to 1,209,167 for the same period (Fafunwa 1974:174). The period 1946-1960 was a period of self determination in Nigeria. Each region tried to maximize the opportunity to improve the education of the people at both the primary and the post primary levels.

Post Independence Period (1961 -1975)

Nigeria had three regions by the time the British colonial rule ended and she eventually got her independence on October 1, 1960. The separation of the ethnic minorities from the Western Region led to the creation of the Midwestern Region by an act of Parliament in 1963. The *Association of Nigerian Scholars for Dialogue* (1997) noted the national crisis that ensued which originated from Western Nigeria and afterwards led to a military coup d'etat of 1966. This eventually culminated into a civil war between the military establishment of the Federal Government, under General Yakubu Gowon, and a rebellious Igbo insurgency led by Lieutenant-Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu which ended in 1970. In 1966, before the civil war, a national curriculum conference had been planned to overhaul the educational system and management, but it held in 1969 barely a year before the end of the civil war. Though at the eve of the civil war, twelve states were created from the former four regions, no remarkable administrative body could emerge. During this period the pre-occupation of the Federal Government was how Nigeria would remain one nation, and apparently, the management of basic education remained under the regions until 1976 when the National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) was established.

National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) and State Primary Education Board - 1976 – 1999

According to Ukeje and Aisiku (1982), the pace of educational expansion set in motion by UPE schemes of various regions lost its momentum in the 1960s. The civil war (May 1967 to January 1970) aggravated the decline; so also was the apparent shift in emphasis from quantity to quality that led to the closure/merging of schools. However, in the early 1970s as a result of the end of the civil war the number of primary schools rose again.

The process of making Universal Primary Education a national project started with the Obasanjo's regime in 1976 during the military rule. For the first time in the history of Nigeria, the UPE programme that originally started as regional project was redesigned by the national government to provide education for the Nigerian citizens by changing the content of UPE to encompass the following philosophy of education as articulated in National Policy on Education.

- *the development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen;*
- *the full integration of the individual into the community and*
- *the provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens at all levels of education both inside and outside the formal school system (NPE 1998: 6; NPE 2004: 2 and NPE 2013: 14)*

With the inception of civilian administration in 1979, and each state adopting different educational policies, the Federal Government handed over completely the financing and management of primary education to the states. The management of basic education then became the responsibility of the Local Government, Local Government Education Authority, Parent Teachers Association (P.T.A) and the School Management Board (SMB). This invariably led to confusion as to who does what, diversion of funds, with its tolling effect on the quality and standard of education. In short, the management of basic education at this period was characterised by changes in decrees and laws. For instance, as noted by Olaniyan and Obadara (2008) and Abdullahi and Abdullah (2014), the National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) which was established in 1988 with Decree 31 of Federal Republic of Nigeria 1988 to manage the affair of primary education, was later scrapped by the Federal Government under the provision of Decrees 2 and 3 of 1991 and the full responsibility of the administration of primary education was then vested in the hand of Local Government. The NPEC was re-established with the Decree No. 96 of 25th August 1993, with State Primary Education Board (SPEB) and Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) then in control of primary education in Nigeria. The LGEA and SPEB were assigned to day-to-day administration of primary schools in their areas of jurisdiction. Education Secretaries were appointed by the Local Government Councils who then report directly to the SPEBs.

In the north of the country, the Qur'anic school system with its attendant problems of itinerant pupils continued to thrive and run parallel with the national educational system because even though the UPE made primary education free and universal, no attempt was made to make it compulsory for all children. On the other hand, in the states of the south, where there

was already in place a policy of universal primary education since the 1950s, pupils' enrolment in school was the norm and so classroom construction at the primary-school and teacher-training levels was less prevalent in these states (Imam, 2012). However, the UPE ended in September 1981. The reason was that the federal government in the revised policy shed the responsibility it undertook in the 1977 policy to finance primary education by transferring it to the states and local governments.

Nwagwu (1997) had noted that a crisis of educational funding was brought about by the oil glut in the world market in the early 1980s which led to a sudden decline in Nigeria's revenue from petroleum products that had accounted for approximately 80% of its income from exports. This led to reduced funding of basic education sector, reintroduction of school fees and gradual decline in primary school enrolment and decline in literacy rates in the country. Also, instead of the automatic promotion policy of the UPE, a combined method of evaluation of pupils/students' performance and certification through continuous assessments and examinations was introduced. However, this did not stop the emphasis on certification instead of skills acquisition. There was also, recognition of the importance of language as a means of preserving the culture of the people and for forging national unity. Consequently, the 1981 revised policy prescribed that each child be encouraged to learn one of the three major languages in the country; Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba, other than the mother tongue (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1981).

Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) - 1999 to 2014

Launching of Universal Basic Education (UBE), in September 1999, primarily intended to enhance life-long education for millions of Nigerian children from the age of six years, who had no access to early childhood schooling. The UBE is a product of the Jomtien Conference on Education for All of 1990 especially goal one; *Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children and*, goal two; *ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.*

The UBE Act 2004 therefore makes provision for basic education comprising primary and junior secondary education. It states that "every government in Nigeria shall provide free, compulsory and universal basic education for every child of primary and junior secondary school age" (UBE Act 2004: 2) The act also provides for the establishment of the UBEC to coordinate the implementation of the programme at the state and local government levels through the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) of each state and the Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs).

In Olubodun's (2008) view UBE programme is a reform measure aimed at addressing inequality in educational opportunity and addressing the distortion in the basic education sub-sector. It also reinforces the implementation of the National Policy on Education and ensures access, equity and quality of basic education throughout the country, especially at the childhood level. The UBE boosted enrolment in the primary schools as submitted by Obanya (2007), that the Millennium Development Goals report on the achievement of UBE in terms of enrolment trends from 1999 – 2003 show consistent increase from 7%, 8%, 11% and 44% in 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003 respectively.

Table 1: Enrolment at Basic Education Level, 1999-2012.

Sources: 1. EFA (Nigeria) Report Card 2007; 2. Statistics of Education in Nigeria: 1999-2005 & Nigeria Digest of Education Statistics: 2006-2010; 3. <http://ubeconline.com/data.php>

YEAR	ECCE	PRIMARY SCHOOL	JUNIOR SEC. SCHL
1999		17,907,328	2,185,974
2000		19,151,442	2,277,291
2001	938,717	19,041,223	2,580,168
2002	1,404,768	19,806,082	2,950,737
2003	1,402,260	25,704,793	3,684,644
2004	1,834,519	21,395,510	3,507,928
2005	1,860,271	22,115,432	3,624,163
2006	2,315,978	22,861,884	2,934,972
2007	1,244,465	21,122,583	3,466,247
2008	1,481,122	21,121,157	3,498,553
2009	1,196,326	21,857,011	2,964,406
2010	1,825,857	20,291,709	4,113,164
2011	2,183,918	22,125,417	4,399,123
2012	2,297,547	23,476,939	4,470,037

The implication of the enrolment is that more children have opportunities to enroll and attend school. Schools are available within easy reach of children and there is adequate number of classrooms within schools. The state of education in Nigeria is however, precarious. The Millennium Development Goals Report 2005 acknowledges that quality assurance in education is yet to be adequately addressed in terms of teachers, curricula, teachers support, teaching/ learning materials etc. Also, according to NPEC (1999), 80 per cent of the primary schools are located in the rural areas with inadequate infrastructural facilities and most of them have no library facilities. In relation to instructional materials and teaching staff, the story is the same throughout the country, less than forty percent of pupils have basic textbooks and writing materials.

The Question to be answered

Despite all the bodies that have managed basic education in Nigeria since 1914, and after over fifty years of Nigeria independence, why do we still have the myriads of problems in the sector as reported by various scholars and the World Bank such as:

1. School environment not conducive to learning, pupil safety, security and health;
2. Inadequate Classroom spaces;
3. Little or no funding to meet maintenance or running costs;
4. Inadequate supply of materials, frequent changes in recommended textbooks;

5. Extremely low remuneration, poor working conditions, and inadequate facilities have inevitably eroded motivation and satisfaction of teachers;
 6. Recruitment of unqualified and untrained people into teaching and inadequate management staff;
 7. Attendance levels vary considerably between schools, and are often low in rural areas, especially during the farming season and on market days;
 8. Little information is made available to the public regarding the budget and expenditure of Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs);
 9. The supervision of primary schools is sometimes irregular and often inadequate;
 10. Headmasters have no funds to respond to minor maintenance problems or to purchase supplies and incidentals;
 11. Many of the problems identified stem from the inadequacy of funding for primary education. Sufficient resources are still not being made available to local governments to build and maintain the necessary infrastructure, provide essential educational materials, or even to pay teachers a living wage;
 12. Spending and not investing the fund allocated to basic education;
 13. Instability of policies due to political instability, and
 14. Lack of continuity of policies.
- (Nwagwu, 1997; World Bank Group, 1999; Olaniyan & Obadara, 2008; Oni, 2009; Imam, 2012 UNESCO, 2014 and Daura & Audu 2015)

The answer may not be unconnected with poor budgetary allocation to education and poor management of the little allocated. A careful study of the budgetary allocation to education from year 2000-2015 revealed clearly that the recurrent items (personnel costs and overheads) are taking more allocation than the capital expenditure which is tantamount to spending and not investing as reflected in table 2.

Table 2: Budgetary Allocation to Education as % of total budget

Year	Recurrent (=N=)	Capital (=N=)	Total (=N=)	As % of budget
2000	29,514,932,709.0	13,500,000,000.00	43,014,932,709.0	5.8%
2001	38,983,776,900.0	24,800,000,000.0	63,783,776,900.0	6.1%
2002	51,335,499,300.0	22,100,000,000.0	73,435,499,300.0	3.2%
2003	61,726,621,039.0	15,723,260,401	77,449,881,440.0	3.1%
2004	72,217,886,838.5	21,550,000,000.0	93,767,886,838.5	3.5%
2005	92,594,737,799.0	27,440,790,000.0	120,035,527,799.0	6.6%
2006	129,915,875,355.7	37,362,503,393.7	167,278,378,749.5	10.4%
2007	142,095,995,407.7	47,103,779,521.1	189,199,774,928.8	9.4%
2008	167,492,419,620.8	50,540,287,898.1	218,032,707,518.9	6.6%
2009	181,887,886,659.0	40,005,096,425.0	221,892,983,084.0	7.3%
2010	196,272,854,913.7	74,923,247,200.8	271,196,102,114.5	7.2%
2011	306,320,538,797.0	59,567,897,860.0	365,888,436,657.0	8.5%

Year	Recurrent (=N=)	Capital (=N=)	Total (=N=)	As % of budget
2012	3,357,223,050,241.3	1,519,986,106,691	4,877,209,156,932.6	6.50%
2013	3,395,563,172,812.1	1,591,657,252,789	4,987,220,425,600.8	4.55%
2014	3,575,575,368,592.5	1,119,614,631,407	4,695,189,999,999.8	5.25%
2015	3,936,368,491,708.7	556,995,465,449	4,493,363,957,157.8	5.69%

Source: Federal Budget Office Abuja, Nigeria

The way forward

There could be no super manager without money or good success without proper management of the little money that is available. The governments at various levels responsible for the composition of these bodies should improve budgetary allocation to education. The situation where recurrent expenditure takes more than half of the allocation cannot augur well for the bodies to do tangible things that will improve basic education. However, one fundamental issue in the management of basic education in Nigeria by these bodies is lack of accountability and transparency in the way money is being spent. Corruption surely must be stepped down or stamped out. Substandard materials are at times supplied for the money collected for standard ones. If these bodies could invest the little allocation very well instead of spending it, some of the problems could be solved and this will improve the output. It is high time for community participation in education in Nigeria. Parents/Teachers Association should be encouraged to participate in the provision of infrastructures in schools in their communities to promote conducive environment for learning, since there is no magic for successful teaching and learning without adequate tools.

Another important way forward is to get rid of poor maintenance culture in Nigeria. Prompt attention should be given to anything damaged anywhere and at any time. Stakeholders should not wait until things get to state of destruction, a stitch in time, they say, saves nine. For effective administration of primary schools in Nigeria, all stakeholders in the society - the government, parents, teachers and even pupils must come together to find solution to these management (multi-faceted) problems. Preparation and provision of qualified teachers to man the nation's classrooms is also germane to this discourse.

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