

Repositioning Kogi State Primary Education Sub Sector for Effective Teaching and Learning

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ABSTRACT---- *The main thrust of this paper is repositioning Kogi State primary education sub-sector for effective teaching and learning. Education was described as a process of learning that assist in the provision of suitable skills, training the youth for economic, social, cultural and political responsibilities, individual transmission and transformation of social, economic and cultural structure from generation to generation. Primary education was considered in this paper as the first official foundation of the Nigerian education system and it is given in institutions to children aged 6years to 11+. The teacher and teacher professional development; the environment for effective teaching and learning were identified as the two basic areas to be considered in repositioning the primary education sub sector. The principles that underscore effective teaching and learning were identified. Likely challenges of repositioning the primary education sub sector in Kogi state were fathomed. It was the recommendation of this paper among others that information and communication facilities should be provided in our primary schools.*

Keywords--- Repositioning, education, effective, teaching and learning, teacher and Nigeria

1. INTRODUCTION

Education has been described as the basic foundation of every society, and tool for national development. It is the fulcrum of a nation's socio-economic development and perhaps an instrument of change, a potent equalization of life chances (Odiba, 2007). Suffice one to say that, education is a process of learning that assist in the provision of suitable skills, training the youth for economic, social, cultural and political responsibilities, individual transmission and transformation of social, economic and cultural structure from generation to generation . Education is a companion which no misfortune can depress, no crime can destroy, no enemy can alienate, no despotism can enslave. It is the reason for affluence and influence, enhancing the basis for knowledge and expertise (Odiba, 2013). Education is what makes the society to advance beyond her neighbours in all spheres of life.

Primary Education is the first official foundation of the Nigerian education system. It is the type of education that is given in institutions to children age 6 to 11 +. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2009) stipulated that, since the rest of the education system is built on it, the primary education level is the key to the success or failure of the whole education system. The goals of the primary education system FRN (2004) include;

- a) Inculcating permanent literacy and numeracy ability to communicate. effectively;
- b) lay a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking;
- c) Give citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society;

- d) Mould the character and develop sound attitude and morals in the child.
- e) Development in the child the ability to adapt to the child changing environment.
- f) Give the child the opportunity for manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capacity.
- g) Provide the child, the basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trades and crafts for the locality.

The above mentioned goals are policy driven goals that will form the basis of primary education in all the state of the federation. Thus, repositioning Kogi State Primary Education Sub-sector for effective teaching and learning should dovetail the set goals of Primary Education. The following sub-themes would assist in providing a guide to repositioning the primary Education sub-sector in the State. In repositioning Primary Education, two basic issues has to be considered viz

- a) The teacher and teacher Professional development.
- b) The environment for effective teaching and learning.

a) *The teacher and teacher Professional development.*

The teacher is an important and indispensable tool in the achievement of education and educational goals in all educational institutions. It is important to state clearly who a teacher is, because, from the common usage of the term "teacher", there is the tendency to lump together the scholar and the instructor, the research worker and the professor, the theoretician and the coach in practice skills. The word teacher connotes all those persons in schools that are responsible for the education of Learners. This means, the teacher is the centre between knowledge and learning. In this case, the term teacher encompasses all those who discover, or order transmit, disseminate, appraise, or administer any leaning and teaching process. The teacher as centre between knowledge and learning is the central process of quality and equality in education. Worthy of mentioning, is the fact that, no school can be stronger than the quality of the teachers. Upon their numbers, devotion and quality, the effectiveness of all educational arrangement must chiefly depend. Ukeje in Odiba (2008), opined that, the teachers are the hub of any educational system, for the schools cannot be better than their teachers. Suffice one to posit that, the teacher is the implement of the national curriculum. The teachers among other includes inculcating positive values and attitude in students, guiding them towards the discovery of new knowledge, expositing them to useful skills, counseling them on personal and social issues. About all the teacher has the responsibility of moulding and equipping the students to fit into the society and any political environmental, equip them with the necessary orientation in terms of attitude and values to cope with the challenges, and give them skills that will make them functional contributors to the economic development of the society (Odiba, 2013).

The professional development of teachers according to Avalos (2011) is studied and presented in relevant literature in many different ways which are at the core of such endeavours as considering professional development to be all about teachers learning that is, how to learn, and transform their knowledge into practice for the benefit of their pupils growth. It is not out of place to contend that teacher's professional learning is a complex process, which requires cognitive and emotional involvement of teachers individually and collectively. This ensures the capacity and willingness to examine where each one stands in terms of convictions, beliefs, the perusal and the enactment of appropriate alternatives for change.

The professional needs of the teachers should be identified and addressed through the instrumentality of workshop and seminars or in - services training. In fact the instrument used to trigger development according to Avalos (2011) depends on the objectives and needs of the teachers as well as their pupils. The attainment of the goals of primary education in Nigeria generally and Kogi State specially depends on the quality of the teachers. The international survey (2009), observed that teachers who have undertaken more professional development tend to feel better equipped to deal with teaching challenges. This is to say, that teachers participation in professional development goes hand in hand with their mastery of a wider array of methods to use in the classroom.

b) *Conducive environment for effective teaching and learning.*

This is another important factor to be consider by Government and all education stakeholders, if the repositioning bid is to taken serious. For the teacher to be effective the classroom needs to be an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. In fact, improving teaching and learning environments is a strategic priority in rep ositing the education sector of the Nigerian economy. Conducive environment simply put, is an environment that allows pupils space and time to interact not only among themselves but also with teaching and learning materials that enhance their mastery of content taught and allows them to quench their as they discover new knowledge or reinforce what they

already know. It is an atmosphere of both concrete and abstract that allows a free flow of ideas, and environment where Learners can exercise their own experience from home and school. The abstract environment has to do with the teachers interact with the Learners, freedom for learners to interact among themselves, gender sensitivity, provision of opportunities to participate and give attention to individual differences among other factors. This then means an environment that has to do with those intangible aspects that create a free environment for Learners to enjoy and benefit from the teaching learning situation. A conducive learning environment is a critical step towards achieving position learning outcomes. According to Nyoni and Manufanechiya (2013) "if we are to provide a curriculum that speaks to the needs of individual children, of various ages and stages, we must let the learning environment do the teaching"

The concrete environment has to do with tangible visual displays, that are put around the room to highlight key topics and concepts, this according to Farrant (1980) include charts, mobile learning centre and displays of children's works among others. This again includes the physical structure in the school, the environment. The schools need to be repositioned from under the trees and dilapidated building to a well designed structures to facilitate teaching and learning. There is always a psychological effect of good building on the tone of the school and the learning capabilities of the pupils.

The marriage of the teacher professional development and the conducive environment will result in effective teaching and learning. Promoting the learning and achievement of pupils is the main aim of school education. Teaching is the main way of achieving this. Teaching and learning are what ultimately make a difference in the mind of the learner and thus affect knowledge, skills, attitudes and the capacity of young people to contribute to contemporary society, we must bear in our mind that effective teaching and learning of concepts are based on certain principles. Some of these principles according to James and pollard (2006) include the followings:

- 1) Equip Learners for life in its broadest sense. Learning should aims to help individual and group to develop the intellectual, personal and social resources that will enable them to participate as active contingents, contribution to economic development and flourish as individual in a diverse and changing society.
- 2) Engage learner with valued forms of knowledge. Teaching and learning should engage Learners with the big ideas, key processes, model of discourse and narrative of subject so that they understand what constitute quality and standard in particular domains.
- 3) Recognize the importance of prior experience and learning. The previous knowledge of the pupil is vital including the cultural experience of different group of Learners.
- 4) Scaffold learning. By this, teacher should provide activities and structures of intellectual, social and emotional support to help Learners to move forward in their learning, so that, when these support are removed the learning is secure.
- 5) Ensure that needs assessment is congruent with learning. Assessment. Should be designed and implement with the goal of achieving maximum validity both in terms of learning outcome and learning processes.
- 6) Promote the active engagement of Learner. The chief goals of teaching and learning should be the promotion of learner's independence and autonomy.
- 7) Foster both individual and social processes and outcomes Learners should be encourage and helped to build relationships and communication with others for learning purposes.
- 8) Recognizing the significance of information learning. Information learning such as learning out of, should be recognized as being at least as significant as formal learning and should be valued and used in formal processes.
- 9) Depending on teacher learning. The need for teachers to learn continuously in order to developed their knowledge and skill and adapt and developed their roles, especially through classroom inquiring, Should be recognized and supported.
- 10) Demand consistent policy framework with support for teaching and learning as their primary focus. Institution and system- level policies need to recognized. The fundamental importance of teaching and learning and be designed to create effective learning environment for all Learners.

2. CHALLENGES

Repositioning the Kogi State primary Education sub-sector is not without challenges. Some of these challenges include;

- i. Poor remuneration: teachers in Nigeria are poorly paid compared to their counterparts in other parts of the world. The current pay level does not attract job satisfaction leads to job performance. Poor remuneration is the reason for moon lighting among primary school teachers. Most female compete favorably with the market traders in terms of sale of goods of different sorts. The male teachers are majorly "Okada " riders. These male

- teachers engage in commercial motorcycle ridding at the expense of teaching the children. Above all salaries of teachers are in arrears. This retard teachers commitment to work and dedication to professional ethics
- ii. Problem of insecurity. Nigeria in recent times has been bewildered by security on every side of the economy, Boko-Haram activities and kidnapping are some of the threats to our security nationwide. The lives of both Teachers and pupils are not safe. This hampers academic progress in our educational institutions.
 - iii. Poor reading culture. It has been said in some circle that, the easiest way to hide anything from a Nigerian is to put it in a printed materials. The reading culture has been totally lost among many Nigerians. This has adverse effect on our educational system generally and primary education specially.
 - iv. Corruption in high places. Corruption is one of the cancer worms that have eaten deep into the fabrics of the people in position. Things should be done following the due process formation of the authority. Many hands are socked in the oil of corruption and corrupt practices. The act has gravious penalties on the future of our educational system.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is the recommendation of this paper that:

- 1) Both the state and local Governments should provide a conducive environment for the teachers and the pupils to function properly. This involves building standard classroom blocks and Provision of learning materials. Instructional materials should be adequately provided and where necessary improvised. Improvisation therefore is to make or do something using whatever is available. It is actually the use of non conventional materials to achieve the objective of instruction. It is an act of using alternative materials and resources due to lack or insufficiency of some specific teaching aids to facilitate instruction. Improvisation of instructional materials has great implications on our educational system. Teaching and learning become better understood with the use of improvised materials. In fact both the teachers and the Learners exposed to the two methods of improvisation. That is substitution and construction methods. Substitution involves mere use of other materials in place of conventional ones while construction method involves actual construction of instructional aids. Again the teacher's effectiveness and efficiency stand improved through improvisation and the use of the improved material. Improvising teaching aids and getting the students involved sustains interest. Students learn to be obedient and compliant, cooperate, develop courtesy, and good relations with colleagues. Involving the students in the process of improvising has a lot of advantages, for instance, students creative potentials are discovered in the process. Improvisation is one of the miracle drugs to our ailing educational sector. Teaching and learning activities at the secondary school level becomes a thing of interest when both the teacher and the students are directly involved in the production and utilization of improvised materials. The utilization of the improvised materials have a positive impact on the teachers effectiveness
- 2) Teachers should be properly remunerated as at when due. The salaries of the teachers should not be in arrears. Proper motivation of teachers will among other things help to enhance commitment and improve job performance. Job satisfaction leads to job performance in most organizations.
- 3) Provision of information and communication technology facilities in the schools. Education stake holder should provide computer sets and laptops to enhance effective teaching and learning at the primary school level. Both the teacher and the pupils should be trained in terms of computer usage. The knowledge of ICT on the part of both the teacher and the pupils enhances performance and educational goal attainment in the school system.
- 4) Teacher Professional Development programs should be made available to be teacher at regular intervals. Some of these programmes include the cluster, school model, construction model, creative/reflective thinking model of teacher professional development.

4. CONCLUSION

The teacher is the only instrument for positive change in the society. The quality of our education system is a must for all teachers. In the words of Huainanzi cited by Ale (2012) opportunities are changing ceaselessly, those who get there too early have gone too far and those who get there too late cannot catch up. As the sun and the moon go through their courses, times does not go along with people. Therefore sides do not value huge jewels as much as they value little time Is hard to find and easy to lose. It is time to reposition our primary education sector. Enough of lip service on the part of the government and the education stake holders.

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