



COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN YOLA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ADAMAWA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This paper is meant to examine the assessment of community participation in educational development in Yola South local Government Area. This revealed several literatures relevant to the study. Data were collected through the use of questionnaires as well as through one on one interview with school administrators and some educational stake holders in the community. These school administrators were randomly selected by the researcher to avoid biasness. The results obtained were presented using simple statistical presentation, simple percentage, were descriptively analyzed. The paper reveal that there has not been any significant community participation in educational planning and development in the local government, it also attested to the fact that everybody can play roles in educational development process. The paper also reveals the ways through which individuals with interest could participate in the process of educational development. Based on the findings of this research, it shows that there has not been any significant participation in educational planning and development in Yola South Local government Area of Adamawa state. It shows that every interested member of a community can contribute to education development and progress if so will or wish.

Keywords: *Community, Participation, Educational Development*

INTRODUCTION

Seeing the backwardness of education in our state, the insufficient effort of the government to provide the required educational needs of the greater

majority of the school growing age group of our children, despite the efforts made by the Universal Basic Education to upgrade some of the school structures which of course is not translating to improvements in the educational outputs. Is community necessary to be able to improve this backwardness? In which way(s) do the communities participate? Bray (2000), "proposes a matrix indicating the possible degrees of participation in different education functions, ranging from policy-making and curriculum development to school construction and resource mobilization. To be truly participatory, community members should themselves choose their roles, and would need the appropriate skills to carry out their functions effectively".

Due to the prevailing financial challenges that are experienced in the developing countries of the world, development in every aspect of the economy which includes education always calls for community participation in order to supplement the government's efforts. This can be achieved through the contributions of the development agencies, well-meaning individuals, donor agencies, and nongovernmental organizations across the developing world. In her qualitative study of community participation in southern Ethiopia, Swift-Morgan (2006) examines the form and scope of community participation. She finds out that "in rural Ethiopia, the range is complex, but large portion of what is characterized as community participation is monetary contributions rather than involvement in decision making or teaching and learning. She also shows that financial incentives and technical assistance that encourage broad-based decision making create incentives for broader community participation. Communities can play a variety of roles in the provision and management of education and learning processes. Community participation can contribute to promoting education" (UNICEF, 2000).

(USAID, 2005) reported that "many children were being kept out of school, particularly girls, because they were needed to help out with chores at home, and because the school was so little valued. Fortunately for Coulibaly and other students, the community education assessment served as a wakeup call for Bamboougouwere, with the help of some World Education bodies and their program of enhancing community participation in schooling, the parent teacher association (PTA) began changing the face of education in Bamboougouwere. UNICEF(2007). The PTA is currently constructing three new classrooms. They repaired the roof to the school using locally donated

materials and funds, and they furnished the classrooms with enough dried mud benches for all students. More than that, the PTA mobilized groups of parents to talk to others to reduce the amount of work children do at home, so that they are free to attend school and study. As a result, the school has two new, better qualified teachers and the mayor's office is supplying the school with chalk, notebooks and a new well so that children will have portable water. Enrollment in the school had increased. Bamougouwere is just one of 405 public schools that USAID (2005) supports in Mali to improve the quality of education for over 16,750 students".

The level of school drops out in the developing countries of the world today, Nigeria inclusive, will drastically decrease if the community will do the right thing in the areas of developing education. Schools can engage their wider community on a range of sustainability issues. Developing skills and positive environmental values in students at school will help them understand and contribute to findings ways forward to some educational challenges in the community. In some situations, students provide a strong and common link between many people in the community. Through this link, people can work collaboratively using their knowledge, skills, time, creativity, vision, and resources.

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Community Participation in School Development

The term “participation” can be interpreted in various ways, depending on the context. Looking at it from the context of it as a tool for education development, there are many ways in which members of the broader school community can contribute to the life of the school. These may include fund raising for facility development, scholarship to the less privilege to give them opportunities to develop in their fields of interest, provision of sport and recreation facilities, funding for running of some programs such as excursions, camps, covering library books, provision of uniforms, volunteer staff training

or its sponsorship, coaching courses, individual's award of excellence in some specific courses as a means of encouraging the learners to learn.

Participation could also mean helping in identifying common societal problems that need to be solved through educational means. Typical of these can be seen in Nigeria and of course Adamawa State in the effort of the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) as several of efforts were and are still made by them through constructions of class rooms and examination halls as well as provisions of some important facilities to schools.

According to Onsomu (2004), Kenya is one of the African countries in south Saharan Africa where community participation has greatly contributed to educational development and where the model of "newly created community schools" using government official curriculum for primary schools is on the rise.

Reid (2000) opined that community participation is far more than a requirement. It is a condition for success. Studies have documented that communities that engage their citizens and partners deeply in the work of community development raise more resources, achieve more result, and develop in a more holistic and ultimately more beneficial way. Community participation then is critical to community success. According to Reid (2000) it is the work of everyone in the community and so participating communities do not sit by passively, waiting for a diverse group of citizens to present themselves for involvement.

Murali (2011) An example of community participation to ensure the reach of education at the grass-root level is that of the initiative in Andhra Pradesh to involve community members on a large scale through programmes such as 'Chaduvula Panduga' (festival of education). Another example is 'Alokar Jatra,' from Assam, a programme whereby local communities are involved in conducting a household survey, resulting in 'a local-level database on the educational status of children with positive impact on access and enrolment. Nepal does not have long history of development of education, after the political change in 1950; people had a new spirit and zeal for all round development of the country. Thus, people started opening new schools in their own initiations. A growing trend in expanding of education facilities was observed. The government had to given funds from the government treasury to the school. The community people did not wait for the government to take initiative to establish new schools and hire teachers in their areas. Most

schools at the initial stage were community initiated schools which received different kind of contributions from the community e.g. land, funds, volunteer teachers, labours, construction materials etc. From the point of expansion of education, it was a very good time to achieve reasonable level of progress with the direct involvement of the community (Khaniya, 2007).

As members of the communities initiate the schools, they were responsible for their management as well. The community managed schools were introduced successfully at that time. The modality of the community managed schools was simple in the sense that community did things such as establishing the school in a location as agreed by the people, building a house for classroom purpose as per their financial situation, hiring and firing teacher and getting their salaries and other benefits.

Most of the educationalists all over the world seem to be arguing that the community participation plays vital role in promoting education in terms of quality and quantity; and it is assumed that community participation and empowerment has the potential to make contribution in educating people and enriching their quality of life (Govinda and Diwan, 1998).

Why Participation?

It has been argued that volunteering and other forms of participation can: influence better education, health, employment and economic and other community outcomes; extend social networks and improve the sense of 'belonging; develop a greater sense of trust and tolerance within communities; improve capacity at the individual, organization and community level; contribute to the delivery of social goods and outcomes. (Municipal Association of Victoria 2002).

The Queensland government's department of education and training identified reasons for community participation as to "Promote the interest s of the school and to assists with school's development and improvement". This will help in realizing the school's vision. According to Catholic Education Office Archdiocese of Melbourne, recent educational research indicates that: successful schools are those where a true partnership exists between the main stakeholders; excellent schools are ones in where there is a strong connection with the parent community; parental interest in a child's schooling is the most important influence on a child's progress at school.

These current theories regarding the relationship between community involvement and increased school efficiency and student learning are based on the premise that in traditional society, the community is often the provider of children's education and therefore, the public owns its schools.

Describing the role of community in school reforms, Robledo (2005) said "as partners in education and catalysts for education policy and funding reform, their role can be critical to helping local neighborhood schools turn the tide of student attrition. She further stated that, the promise of fulfilling every child's birthright to a quality education will become reality only when we fully embrace a vision of teacher and parent as co-leaders, co-creators of a new reality for schools.

Involving communities in the education planning requires facing and tackling a number of challenges. In general, as Crewe and Harrison (1998) articulated, participatory approaches tend to overlook complexities and questions of power and conflict within communities. They are designed based on the false assumption that the community, group, or household is homogeneous, or has mutually compatible interest. Differences occur with respect to age, gender, wealth, ethnicity, language, culture, nature and science.

Ethiopian Community Development Council (2008), states that many institutions of higher learning in Ethiopia are faced with the problem of making educational resources accessible to the rising number of students enrolled in their programs. The shortage of textbooks and other educational materials makes it extremely difficult for these institutions to fulfill their mission of educating Ethiopia's next generation of doctors, lawyers, nurses, civil servants, teachers, and businessmen. ECDC's Education Development program is an ongoing effort that collects, ships, and distributes donated books and educational materials to institutions of higher learning throughout Ethiopia.

According to the council, this programme represents an important resource in helping educational institutions strengthen their capacity to serve members of their communities throughout the country. This endeavor enable administrators, faculty, and students the opportunity to increase their competence and knowledge base. It also allows institutions of higher learning to use their limited resources for needs other than the purchase of textbooks.

Education Development Centre (2011) posits that the success of a school improvement effort often hinges on communication and relationships between educators and community members.

It was in realization of this that made the Parents and the Teachers and community stakeholders to come together in Nigeria to form the Parent Teachers Associations with goal of identifying and solving or contribute in the solution of their common educational problems. They also do by discussing the problems and advising the appropriate authorities on the better way of having the problems solved through periodic meeting

Areas of Participation

Schaeffer (1994) in Uemura (1999) clarifies different degrees or levels of participation, including; involvement through the contribution of money, materials, and labor; involvement through 'attendance' (e.g. at parents' meetings at school), implying passive acceptance of decisions made by others; involvement through consultation on a particular issue; participation in the delivery of a service, often as a partner with other actors; participation as implementers of delegated power; and participation "in real decision at every stage," including identification of problems, the stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation.

In Nepal the government does not suggest that a certain place needs a school or another class – it is up to individual villages to ask for such facilities. Even if there are many needy children the government will not act of its own volition. The community itself has to support the school by asking permission to add classes as the need arises. Such permission is bogged down with conditions such as the requirement that the community provides the salary for temporary teacher at the rate of \$120 per month (\$1440 per year, which is a fortune for poor people) each year village people have to come up with sufficient money to support a teacher for one year and deposit funds for the school running costs if they want another class – then the government may tell them to go ahead. Personal possessions and land have been used as collateral, which is very risky measure and puts families in a precarious. (Kirat, 2009).

Swift-Morgan's(2006) suggests that there are least six domains for community participation in schools: infrastructure and maintenance,

management and administration, teacher support and supervision, pedagogy and classroom support, student supervision, and student recruitment.

Evidence for education United Kingdom identified that the most common form of community involvement involved the provision of materials, labor and financial resources for the construction and/or maintenance of school buildings, or supporting teacher compensation. This they said can mostly be achieved through organized school-led governance structures such as Parent Teacher Association or Community Education Committees.

Aliyu (1993), addressing Zaria Education Development Association (ZEDA) describing the role of communities and organizations in education advancement said, for an organization to be able to contribute meaningfully, "it has to see itself as operating in concert with, and additional to the appropriate education authorities. It should not attempt to do it alone. And as communities, we have to be concern ourselves with examining problems, principles and inferring good advice to other authorities. We have to prepare ourselves to be consultants to such authorities because we know better than them what we need, if they have the money and expertise to provide. Additional to consultancy, we can provide some of the need services ourselves, particularly in those areas where the authorities are unable or unwilling to provide services. ZEDA has already made a good start in this direction. We must also as a community, be prepared to donate our spare money and time to help our own educational project for us. Above all, we have to remember that those of us who have been lucky to have had any measure of formal education and to have so obviously benefited from it, owe a debt to our parents who sent us to school, to our community which in many ways supported us through and to our children who must now go through the same process".

METHODOLOGY

The research is limited to some selected schools in Yola South Local Government Area of Adamawa State where the school administrators were used as the respondents as their opinions will be sought for as to the extent to which the Yola community is contributing to the development of education in the local government. The schools are: Aliyu Mustafa College, Yola, Government Technical College, Yola, Government Secondary School Shagari, Government Secondary School, Wuro-Hausa Government Day Secondary

School, Yolde- Pate. The sample population proposed for the collection of the primary data for the study consists of five randomly selected school administrators out of the fifteen secondary schools comprising of the public and private schools in Yola South, school teachers, and some education stakeholders.

DISCUSSION OF RESULT

Level of the community members of the educational needs of their community

Table 1: Frequency distribution of the opinions as to community participation's necessity

| Not Necessary | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 0 | 0% |
| Agreed | 0 | 0% |
| Disagreed | 3 | 15% |
| Strongly Disagreed | 17 | 86% |
| Total | 20 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey 2016

As can be seen on table 6 above, 100% of the respondents were of the opinion that community participation is necessary for educational development process with no single respondents having different opinion

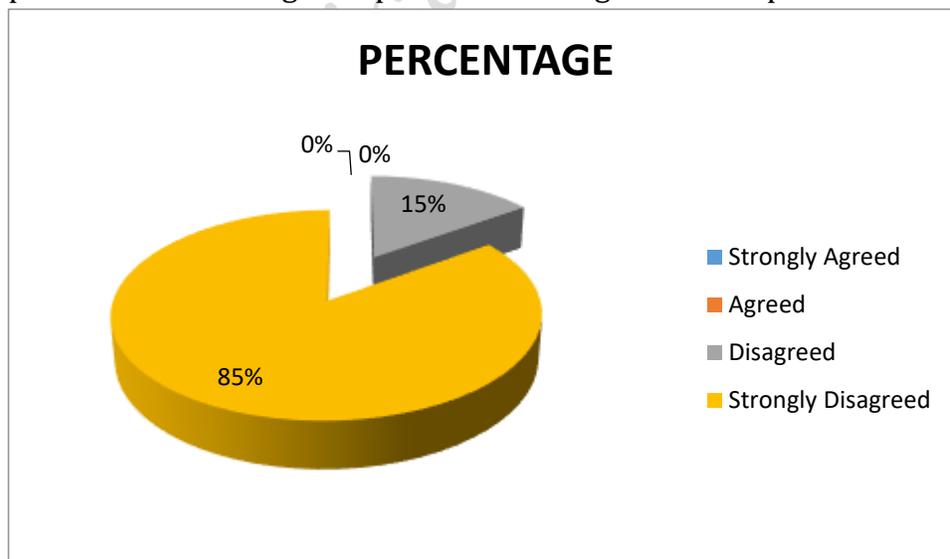


FIG: 1 Pie chart showing distribution of the opinions as to community participation's necessity

Table 2: Frequency distribution table showing respondents opinions on inconsistency in government policies deters community participation.

| Inconsistency In Educational Policies | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 6 | 30% |
| Agreed | 5 | 25% |
| Disagreed | 6 | 30% |
| Strongly Disagreed | 3 | 15% |
| Total | 20 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey 2016

Table 7 tells us that 55% of the respondents believe that inconsistency in government policies on education hinders community participation in educational development process. While 45% are of the opinion that it does not hinder participation.

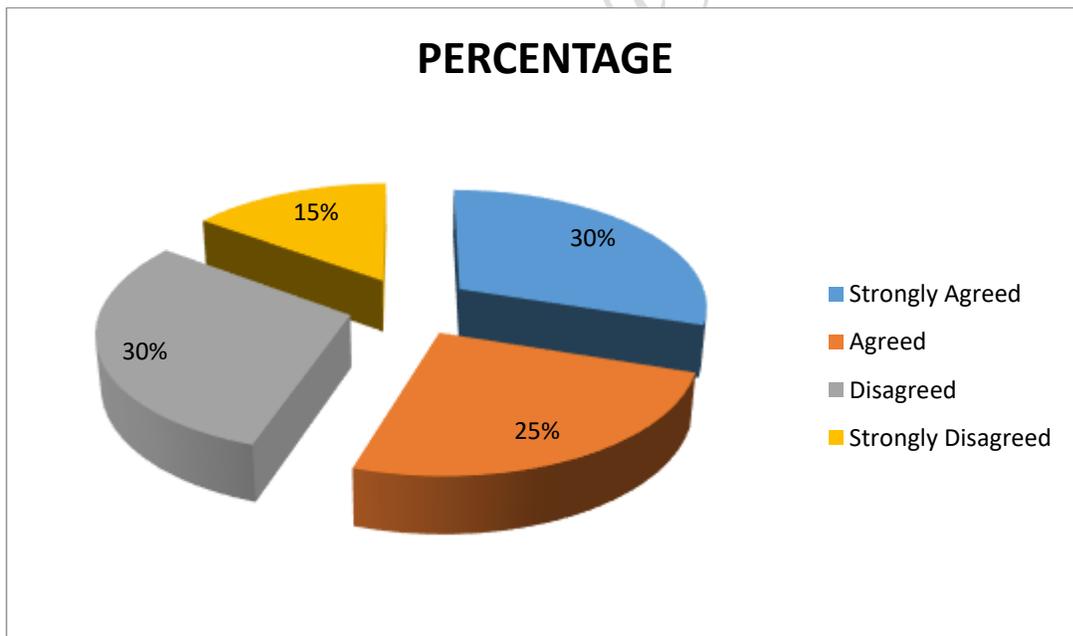


FIG: 2 Pie chart showing distribution of respondent's opinions on inconsistency in government policies as it deters community participation.

Table 8: Frequency distribution table showing respondents opinions on only the professionals and the rich are capable of participating in educational development process.

| Only Professionals And The Rich | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly Agreed | 2 | 10% |
| Agreed | 3 | 15% |
| Disagreed | 8 | 40% |
| Strongly Disagreed | 7 | 35 |
| Total | 20 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey 2016

As can be clearly seen from table 8 above, only 25% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that participation in educational development in any community is the sole responsibility of only the rich and the professional. While 75% disagreed and strongly disagreed with that opinion, and are of the opinion that is the responsibility of everyone in the community to work toward educational development process.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this research work, the following conclusions were made:

- i. There has not been significant community participation in educational planning and development in Yola South Local Government Area of Adamawa State.
- ii. Every interested member of a community can contribute to education development and progress if so will.
- iii. That there are variety of ways through which members can contribution to educational development among which are, money contributions, construction of school facilities, repairs and or improvement of the existing ones. Footing the bills to train the existing staff of the community schools money contributions, construction of school facilities, repair and or improvement of the existing ones, advocating enrollment, contribution of labor, contribution of learning and instructional materials, providing security for teachers by preparing adequate housing for them, making decisions about school locations and schedules, and activity

- attending school meetings to learn about children's learning progress so as to advise the children appropriately.
- iv. People are not interested in the act of participation in the area of education.
 - v. There exist few groups and organization that participate in educational development process in the local government. These include Spring Hotel (A group formed by People living with HIV in Yola), American University of Nigeria community service group, Rotary Club International Yola district, Parent Teachers Association (PTA), Religious groups, politicians and organizations such as banks.

Recommendations

The study showed that community participation can contribute to educational planning and development through various channels. Uemura (1999), identified the following as ways through which communities can contribute to the educational planning and development; advocating enrollment and education benefits, boosting morale of school teachers; raising money for schools; constructing, repairing, and improving school facilities; recruiting and supporting teacher; making decisions about school locations and schedules; monitoring and following up on teacher attendance and performance; forming village education committees to manage schools; actively attending school meetings to learn about children's learning progress; providing skill instruction and local culture information, helping children with studying; garnering more resources from and solving problems through the education; providing security for teachers by preparing adequate housing for them; identifying factors contributing to educational problems.

For participation to receive a required acceptance in any community, community members must be made to appreciate the overall objectives of education, clear the mismatch between what the parents expect of education and what the school is seen as providing.

All education stakeholders must learn to speak with one voice having the same focus, united in purpose and vision and as well develop interest in the progress of education and achievement of the goals of education as stipulated in the Nigeria national education policy.

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