

## **Allocation and Management of Resources for the Sustenance of Free Qualitative Secondary Education in Ondo State.**

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### **Background to the Study**

Education constitutes the most formidable industry in Ondo State. Since the creation of the State on February 3, 1976, education has been attracting the largest proportion of the total money earmarked for social services. Of all the levels of education in Ondo State, secondary education has been consuming a sizeable proportion of the total money earmarked for education. The State Government has been bearing a heavy financial burden of secondary education with minimum contribution from individuals. This heavy financial burden borne by the State government had its genesis in the abolition of tuition fees in Nigerian public schools in September, 1976, all over the country as a result of the introduction of the Universal Primary Education (Adesina 1980) and complete take-over of all schools from various voluntary agencies by the Government.

Between 1979 and 1983 investment in secondary education in Ondo State took another dimension, when Governor Michael Adekunle Ajasin, under the now defunct Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) embarked on free secondary education program. During this period tuition fees, textbook fees, development fees and all special levies were abolished. The financial burden of the program was shouldered by the State Government, with little contribution from the household. Also, on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1992, Governor Bamidele Olumilua, under the now defunct Social Democratic Party (SDP) inherited the heavy financial burden of secondary education as a result of free secondary education introduced by the party in Ondo State. Moreover, on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1999, the Civilian Administration in Ondo State led by Chief Adebayo Adefarati, under the Alliance for Democracy (AD) introduced a free qualitative education at all levels in the State. In Ondo State today, there is keen awareness that education is the greatest instrument that could be utilized for the solution of socio-economic problems and for the fullest realization of the potentialities and aspirations of the people. The present civilian administration in Ondo State perceives education as an investment in human capital, with the sole aim of wiping out ills such as ignorance, disease, malnutrition, unemployment, superstitious beliefs and practices, nepotism, tribalism, sectionalism, parochialism, political instability and economic stagnation that usually plague an illiterate society. Hence the commitment of the State Government to the provision of free, qualitative secondary education in the State.

It is not superfluous to remark that to make secondary education free is a question of money, to make it universal and compulsory is a question of public support and law. But what we want today is secondary education that is relevant to the needs of the economy and society. Quality in education can be seen from various perspectives. For instance, the economists of education are always interested in assessing quality in education, by establishing the relationship between “input” and “output” in the education system, that is, the Rate of Returns or Cost-Benefit analysis of quality in education. Also, one may look at quality in education in terms of enrichment of the school curriculum, quality of teaching personnel, quality of school inspectors, quality of school equipment and facilities. However, quality in education may also be measured in term of relevance to the needs of the society. Igwe (1989) describes relevance as: “a question of functionality, fitness and appropriateness to the needs of daily life, the hopes and expectations for tomorrow and preparations for the uncertainties and challenges of the unknown future”. Based on this premise, qualitative secondary education in the context of this paper could be described as the extent to which the secondary education system is relevant to the needs and aspirations of the Nigerian society.

Of all the multifarious problems facing secondary school administration in Ondo State today, none is as persistent and as agonizing as the one relating to the allocation and management of the available resources in the schools. The free secondary education that inevitably paves the way to preponderant increases in secondary school enrolment has further compounded this problem. This problem has become so critical that it continues to echo in public debates, lectures, education seminars, conferences, workshops, and at the periodic meetings of All Nigeria Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools (ANCOPSS), Ondo State chapter. One of the most effective ways of sustaining free qualitative education is to supply the schools adequately with highly competent and well motivated teachers. According to Adesina (1980) “The heart of Nigeria’s educational system is the teacher. Whether at the primary, secondary or University level, the teacher is and would continue to be both the major indicator as well as the major determinant of quality education”. To further buttress the importance of teachers in educational matters, Aggarwal (1981) said that “the destiny of a nation is shaped in its classroom and it is the teacher who is very important in molding that destiny”. In the report of UNESCO on Twenty Years of Service to Peace, the teacher is described as the spark that fixed the whole development progress, the key man in the drive to progress. Fafunwa (1972) remarked that: “the service of the teachers are to a nation, for they more than any other professional group influence the lives of the Nigerian youths and therefore the nation’s future”. The following questions can be raised: How adequate are the secondary school teachers in Ondo State in terms of quality and quantity? How prepared are the teachers for the challenges of the new school curriculum? How

competent are the teachers in handling these subjects? Are the teachers satisfied with their jobs? A school system endowed with sufficient, dedicated, motivated and innovative teachers is bound to maintain good quality of instruction given to its students.

The sustenance of free qualitative secondary education also depends largely on adequate provision of physical and material resources in the schools. Such physical facilities include spacious and well ventilated classrooms, adequately equipped laboratories and technical workshops, well-stocked libraries, assembly halls, recreational ground, farm land, gymnasias, health centers, counseling rooms, staff offices and conveniently placed urinals and latrines. The material resources are made up of items of furniture, laboratory materials (consumable and non-consumable), motor vehicles, instructional tools, books and other stationery items as well as utilities such as electric power, gas and potable water in the schools. The pertinent question that imbues the mind at this juncture is: would the secondary schools in Ondo State be effective in performing their dual role of absorbing the quality primary school products and supplying quality entrants for tertiary institutions when they are starved with funds? This assumes that free qualitative secondary education can be effectively sustained if the schools are well funded. As succinctly put by Aghenta (1984), “the success of any secondary school depends upon the resources available to it. Money is very important in this respect because by it, all other vital elements in the school can be obtained such as buildings, purchase of equipment, payment of teachers’ salaries and allowances and running expenses”. Also, according to Ozigi (1978) “no organization can survive or carry its function effectively without adequate financial resources at its disposal. Money is needed to pay staff, maintain the plant and keep services going”. In his own contribution on the importance of funding the school system, Mussazi (1982) remarks that: “for schools to function effectively, they need sufficient money, money is needed to buy textbooks, establish new buildings, pay teachers’ salaries, buy science equipment and maintain other services that are required by a school to carry out its functions as an educational institutions”. This study is specifically set out to ascertain the extent to which human, physical, material and financial resources are being allocated and managed, towards the sustenance of free, qualitative secondary education in Ondo State.

### **The Problem**

The free secondary education in Ondo State has led to the rapid expansion of the secondary school system. It is no gainsaying that such rapid expansion of the school system will bring about high demand for more school buildings, more qualified and competent teachers and clerical staff and instructional facilities for effective teaching and learning in the schools. The specific research problem is to identify the various criteria for allocating resources to secondary

schools in Ondo State and to ascertain the extent to which the available human, physical materials and financial resources are being prudently managed, with a view to offering some useful pieces of advice for improvement. In this respect, it is essential to investigate the extent to which secondary school administrators in Ondo State have been striving to achieve quality secondary education with the limited or scarce resources at their disposal particularly in a period of political and economic stress.

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses are generated to guide the investigation:

H1: The teachers' gender is not significantly related to their perceptions of the criteria used in allocating resources to the schools.

H2: There is no significant difference in the school's location and teachers' responses on resource management in their schools.

### **Research Questions**

- (a) How adequate are the school physical facilities in terms of decency, space, ventilation and insulation from heat?
- (b) What are the other sources of school revenue, besides State Government grants, in a free secondary education system?
- (c) What staff development programs are organized for the teachers?

### **The Study Sample**

The study was carried out in five Local Government Areas in Ondo State. Six secondary schools were also selected through a sampling technique in each of the selected Local Government Areas. The respondents included the Principals, Vice-Principals, school registrars and other teachers with at least ten years teaching experience in the sample schools. Also, oral interviews were held with five officials of Ondo State Ministry of Education and two officials of Zonal Education Offices.

### **Research Instrument**

A research instrument titled: Resource Allocation and Management Questionnaire (R.A.M.Q.) was constructed to provide relevant information on the criteria for allocating resources to schools, adequacy of resources and the extent to which the available resources are being managed in the schools. The content validity of the instrument was determined through the assistance of some school administrators in the State. Its reliability was established through the

split-half method. The correlation co-efficient of these half tests was calculated using the Pearson Product Moment Formula. The co-efficient obtained was further subjected to statistical analysis using Spearman Brown's formula. A co-efficient of 0.84 was obtained and the instrument was considered reliable.

### Data Analysis

A total of 450 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the subjects in the sample schools. The analysis was, however, based on 400 that is, 88.9% duly completed questionnaire.

### Results

Table I: T-test on Teachers' Gender and their Perception of Criteria for Allocating Resources to Ondo State Secondary Schools

Criteria for Resource Allocation	Male (N = 166)		Female (N = 234)		Calculated t-value	Critical t-value at P.0.05	Remarks
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD			
School enrolment	2.28	1.04	2.44	0.92	-1.59	1.960	Not Significant
Number of subjects offered in the school	2.36	0.91	2.30	0.94	0.55	1.960	Not Significant
Status of the school	2.42	0.94	2.45	0.95	-0.33	1.960	Not Significant
Critical Areas of need of the school	2.75	1.05	2.69	1.00	0.57	1.960	Not Significant

Table II: T-test on School Location and Teachers' Perception of Resource Management in their Schools

Resource Management	Urban (N = 166)		Rural (N = 102)		Calculated t-value	Critical t-value at P.0.05	Remarks
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD			
Staff supervision	2.57	0.98	2.48	1.11	0.81	1.960	Not Significant
Staff development	2.31	0.86	2.22	0.83	0.002	1.960	Not Significant
Regular supervision of school plant	2.36	0.94	2.38	0.93	-0.21	1.960	Not Significant

Prudent Management of fund.	2.52	0.89	2.37	0.95	1.39	1.960	Not Significant
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Table III: Responses on the Adequacy of Physical Facilities in the Schools in period of Political and Economic stress

Facilities	Very Adequate	%	Fairly Adequate	%	Inadequate	%	Not Available	%
Spacious and well ventilated classroom	106	26.5	26.5	66.3	29	7.3	0	0.0
Properly equipped library	0	0.0	120	30.0	280	70.0	0	0.0
Well equipped laboratory	124	31.0	42	10.5	23.4	58.5	0	0.0
Properly equipped Technical workshop	24	6.0	70	17.5	210	52.5	96	24.0
School halls	104	26.0	218	54.5	78	54.0	0	0.0
Students' common room for playing in-door games and relaxation.	0	0.0	84	21.0	41	10.3	275	68.8

Table IV: Responses on the Sources of School Revenue besides State Government Grants in a Free Secondary Education System

Source of School Revenue	Responses			
	Agree	%	Disagree	%
Parent-Teachers' Association contribution	62	15.5	338	84.5
School Harvest and Bazaar	265	66.3	135	33.8
Proceeds from school farms	210	52.5	190	47.5
Sales of Students handicrafts	116	29.0	284	71.0
Sporting Activities	275	68.8	125	31.2
Religious Organisations	106	26.5	294	73.5
Philanthropic Organisations	84	21.0	316	79.0
School Alumni Association	56	14.0	344	86.0
Staging of school plays	24	6.0	376	94.0
Influential community members	17	4.3	383	95.7

## Discussion of Findings

As clearly indicate in Table I, the calculated t-value for each criterion for allocating resources is lower than the critical t-value at P.0.05, with 398 (degree of freedom). Thus, there is no significant difference in the response of male and female teachers to the criteria for allocating resources to secondary schools. The null hypothesis '1' is therefore upheld. Taking a mean of above 2.50 as an index of a group's majority agreement to a statement, it is obvious that most of the teachers held the view that school enrolment; number of subjects offered in the school, status of the schools, and critical areas of need of the school constitute the criteria for allocating resources to schools.

In Table 2, the calculated t-value for each resource management area is lower than the critical t-value at P.0.05, with 398 df. Thus, there is no significant difference in the responses of the teachers in urban and rural schools to the various resource management areas in the schools. The null hypothesis '2' is therefore upheld. Taking a mean of above 2.50 as an index of a group's majority agreement to a statement, it is quite obvious that most of the teachers held the view that staff supervision and development have been given high premium in the schools. Also, there is regular supervision of school plant, while the school fund is being prudently managed.

On the adequacy of the physical facilities, while 63.3% of the total respondents contended that spacious and well ventilated classrooms are fairly adequate in their schools, 7.3% held the contrary view (Table III). However, over 54% of the total respondents declared that properly equipped libraries, well equipped laboratories, properly equipped technical workshops and assembly halls were inadequate in their schools. Also, most of the schools lack a students' common room for playing in-door games and relaxation. Inadequate physical facilities in the schools can be attributed to the financial problems they face.

As indicated in Table 4, over 52% of the total respondents declared that their schools realized substantial revenue from school harvest and bazaar, sales of school farm products, and sporting activities during free education programs. While other sources of school revenue in a period of free secondary education such as Parent-Teachers' Association, sales of students' handicrafts, religious organizations, philanthropic organizations, school Alumni Associations, staging of school plays and contributions from influential community members have proven ineffective, with negative responses of over 70% (Table IV).

Realizing the importance of teachers in sustaining free, qualitative secondary education in Ondo State, the State Government has made a bold attempt in the last six months to recruit more teachers into the secondary schools in virtually all subjects. A survey of the teaching staff in the sample schools revealed that some subject areas are over-staffed, while teachers for subjects like Home Economics, Fine Arts, Technical Drawing, Business Studies, Typing, Shorthand, French,

Hausa and Igbo are grossly inadequate. Student enrolment in these subjects is dwindling, particularly at the senior secondary school level. The State Government has been encouraging staff development programs for the secondary school teachers. Quite a large number of teachers with NCEs have obtained their Bachelor's degrees through the 'sandwich programs' of some Nigerian Universities. While some non-professional graduate teachers are either currently pursuing, or have already completed, their Postgraduate Diploma in Education under self-sponsorship.

However, teachers' participation in staff development programs like workshops, seminars, refresher courses and other programs, such as exchange teaching, professional writing, visits to other schools to observe teaching methods, and staff conferences on modern instructional strategies, have not been given prominent attention in the schools.

Although the school administrators have been supervising the school plant, buildings, materials and equipment to ascertain which schools require immediate and urgent repairs, a survey of the physical facilities in the schools revealed that most of the school buildings have depreciated greatly. According to Afolabi (1998), the depreciation of school buildings can be attributed to a number of factors, including wear and tear, physical decay, obsolescence, negligence in the use of the school plant, and defects in construction of the plant. Classrooms in most schools are without doors, shutters or louvers in their windows, and the floors are either peeled or dusty. Commenting on the problem of dilapidated school buildings, Awokoya (1981) said:

*The worst of our woes is the maintenance of school building. Millions of Naira can waste away if the schools are not properly maintained. The health of pupils can be in constant peril when the toilets are not hygienic and life itself is in danger when the walls are likely to fall. Ministries and Local Governments that fail to maintain their school buildings may unwittingly be sowing the seeds of sorrow among the public at large.*

Furthermore, Olutola (1981) maintained that "the untidy school compound, the unserviced equipment and the poorly maintained buildings do not depreciate fast, but they also cut a very poor image for the institution". The school administrator must ensure that the school buildings are properly maintained and that the surroundings are clean and free from health and safety hazards. This can be effectively achieved through periodic and systematic inspection of schools to identify areas in need of repairs.

Water, like food, is one of the basic needs of life. In most rural schools, pipe borne water is virtually non-existent and in some urban schools supply of treated water is irregular. As the schools have no tanks for storing treated water for the students' use, the students drink untreated water from streams and brooks, which exposes them to water borne diseases. According to



Mallmann (1977) “water from lakes and streams become the water supply and sewage and industrial waste depositories of people living near them. When the sewage wastes contaminated the water supply, enteric disease resulted”. The lofty goal of free qualitative secondary education may be onerous if most of the beneficiaries (the students) could not attend schools regularly due to endemic disease contracted by drinking contaminated water in their schools.

In some of the secondary schools, “maintenance culture” has become a prominent feature of the school system, as evidenced in some of the vital equipment, instructional materials and library resources kept in proper condition in the schools. The procedure of maintenance is not properly followed if one waits until equipment or machinery breaks down before making the effort to get it working again. The most important approach, however, is to keep equipment and machinery in good working condition by regularly ensuring an optimal level of efficiency. It thus becomes imperative for the school administrators to evolve a proper schedule of regular maintenance for all items of equipment and machinery. Due to highly inadequate funding, the necessity of intensifying efforts in this direction can no longer be ignored. According to Oguntonade (1996), “regular servicing of vehicles, periodic renovation of buildings, polishing of furniture, regular lubrication of metal apparatus, checking of water taps and gas tubes as well as prompt washing of containers are only some examples of the strategy of maintenance without waiting for total break down”.

### **Conclusion**

To match the exhilarating growth of the secondary school system with qualitative growth, it becomes necessary to find ways for the secondary school system to be run cost-effectively. Maintenance culture must be deeply rooted in the secondary schools. Special attention must be focused on prudent management of human, physical, material and financial resources, in order to sustain a free, qualitative secondary education in Ondo State.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made: Toward solving the financial problem of secondary schools particularly in a period of free secondary education, the need to embark on some fund-raising activities becomes inevitable. These activities include organizing school endowment funds, encouraging donations both in kind and in cash, offering consultancy services, engaging in commercial farming of poultry, fishing and catering services, and organising sports and games for which gate fees are charged. Companies, politicians, businesspeople, and the community at large must be enticed to assist in secondary

school financing. The school funds must be judiciously expended, while wastage must be curtailed.

The teachers must be highly motivated and must be prepared to face the challenges posed by the economic recession. Teachers must be assigned appropriate classes. The staff development programs should be accorded prominent attention. Moreover, fringe benefits should be reviewed continually rather than tied to agitation, especially in those cases wherein such benefits are justified by economic and social pressures.

Since teacher efficiency could be greatly impaired by the inadequacy of instructional resources, secondary schools must be adequately equipped. The science laboratories, libraries, technical workshops and home economics rooms must be well equipped. To reduce cost, bulk purchases must be encouraged, while a central body should be selected to supply and equip all secondary schools so as to avoid variations in the standard of equipment. The physical facilities and equipment must be properly maintained, so as not to rapidly depreciate

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