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EVALUATION OF THE ROLE OF ASUBEB, POST PRIMARY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT BOARD AND MINISTRY OF EDUCATION IN SCHOOL LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

Anambra State Universal Basic Education Board (ASUBEB), post-primary school management board and the ministry of education are major stakeholders in school library development in the state. There are 1,023 primary schools and 255 secondary schools to be taken care of in the state, apart from privately owned schools. Interview method was used to assess the role of these bodies in school library development. Only ASUBEB was found to be actively involved in school library development but at a very slow pace. It is recommended that the three organs should work vigorously to complement each other for rapid development of school libraries in Anambra state which may not be achieved otherwise.

Introduction

School libraries exist to provide information resources required for the school education programmes and to help in the learning of school subjects. They serve the students and staff and are expected to improve and increase the reading skills and learning habits of students (Etim, 2004).

School systems devoid of efficient school libraries can be likened to food without salt, in terms of the real value of school libraries to the child's educational development.

In Nigeria, the responsibility of school library development revolves around the ministry of education and their parastatals in both Federal and State governments. In Anambra State, these stakeholders include Anambra State Universal Basic Education Board (ASUBEB), Post Primary School Management Board and Ministry of Education.

These among others are the major players in primary and post primary school affairs in the state. For any meaningful and sustained development of school libraries in the state to take place, a combined effort of these organs is required. If there is no joint effect rapid development of school library as well as achievement of its purpose in the educational system cannot be achieved. In absence of such combined effort also, school libraries will not develop as expected and this will negatively affect the standard of teaching and learning as well as the quality of primary and secondary school graduates-turned out yearly.

Extensive search of literature reveals that stakeholders role in school library development in Anambra state has not been highlighted. Not many realize the important role the Anambra State Basic Education Board (ASUBEB), Post Primary School Management Board and Ministry of Education could play in moving school library forward. The purpose of this paper therefore, is to identify the roles played and the expected roles of these three organs in school library development in Anambra State.

In April 1991 while launching America 2000, a striking vision for American's schools, president G. Bush (1991), remarked;

"Today education determines not just which students will succeed, but also which nations will thrive in a world in pursuit of freedom of enterprise, and if we must want America to remain a leader, force for good in the world, we must lead the way in educational innovation"

The foundation for such good education is laid from early school years in primary and secondary schools. Such educational system must be comprehensive and inclusive with the school library as its backbone.

The school library plays a particularly important part when other libraries are remote and homes contain only limited reading materials. Access to a variety of reading materials is essential from the very beginning of the child's school life. School libraries in primary schools lay the foundation of the reading habit and impart reading skills at the formative stage of the pupils education. Reading skills should be developed early and sustained by reading materials at successive stages of life (Obi, 1977). She further asked, "how can school library achieve these objectives and fulfill their educational roles? To this question, Madu and Ibeun (2003), answered "all stakeholders in education must be involved".

For the purpose of this paper the stakeholders focused on only Anambra State Universal Basic Education Board, Post Primary School Management Board and the Ministry of Education. Before the launching of UBE in 1999, there were virtually no libraries in our public primary schools (Elaturoti, 1982, Udoh 1986). The private nursery and primary schools have some form of libraries which though not of high standard, are better than none. So also, the private secondary schools have libraries funded from the school fees collected from students. They were not also of the required standard. While for the secondary schools they noted that many of them have no libraries and the few that have could not meet the established minimum standards for school libraries. The essential library use skills were not taught as part of the curriculum in these schools to make the pupils independent learners and equip them for life-long learning. The library period does not exist in most schools' time table and where it is created the period is not utilized for the purpose it was intended.

Later, in their very extensive survey of school library services in Nigeria Elaturoti and Udoh (2002), acknowledged that the establishment of Universal Basic Education Programme has improved the state of school library service in the nations primary schools. With UBE the provision of physical facilities, books and non-book resources, training of teacher libraries to take charge of schools libraries have begun. But the condition of libraries in post primary schools remains the same.

They also noted that the provisions of libraries in public schools still remain the responsibility of the ministry of education or its parastatals. They articulated the following problems facing public schools in the country:-

- Inadequate funding;
- Lack of qualified teacher - librarians;
- Lack of suitable accommodation;
- Non-existence of library legislation to enforce conformity with established standards;
- Lack of adequate database on school libraries for planning purposes and
- Apparent lack of sustained effort on the part of government for school library development.

It is in the light of these that it becomes pertinent to evaluate the role of ASUBEB, State Ministry of Education and Post Primary School Management Board in school library development in Anambra State.

Methodology

The researcher visited and conducted separate interviews for the head of school library services in ASUBEB (Mrs. Anamlaeze), and state ministry of education (Mrs. G.U. Nwabuwu) and for director of school services in post primary school management board (Mrs. I. J. Nwobi). This was done using structured questions covering 17 items. Further clarifications were obtained through several telephone discussions with them. These were conducted between 23rd July and 16th September, 2008.

Findings and Discussion

The range of library services provided by Anambra State Universal Basic Education Board, the State Ministry of Education and Post Primary School Management Board to schools in the state are ten.

Table 1: Types of Library Services to Schools

	Services	ASUBEB	Ministry of Education	Post Primary School Management
1	Supply of books to school libraries	√	X	X
2	Supply of non-book media to school libraries	√	X	X
3	Select books and other media for school library	√		
4	Provide furniture for school libraries	√	X	X
5	Inspect/monitor school libraries	√	X	X
6	Train teacher librarians for school libraries	√	X	X
7	Conduct library week	√	X	X
8	Provide consultancy services for school libraries	√	X	X
9	Review of books from publishers	X		
10	Distribution of book consignment from federal of agencies to school	√	X	X
11	Laid down policy guiding school library services	√	X	X

- ASUBEB gets yearly allocation of funds from the Education Trust Fund (ETF) for provision of books, non-book media and furniture to schools. Fifty percent of the

allocation is meant for furniture and fifty percent for books and nonbook media. The books which are mostly novels are selected by ASUBEB from catalogues of local publishers and also ordered through them. The nonbook media include wall charts and maps. Furniture materials they provide to school libraries include book racks, carrels, tables, chairs, newspapers racks and bulletin boards. Only ten (out of the 255) JSS in the state and 21 (out of the 1,033) primary schools get the share of these library materials from ASUBEB annually.

- ASUBEB inspects and maintains the activities and condition of school libraries according to zones on termly basis.
- ASUBEB conducts training workshop for teacher - librarians in the state. This has been done three times within the last ten years. It also conducts library week at reasonable interval another library week is coming up in this last quarter of 2008. In addition, ASUBEB offers consultancy services to the teacher librarians and school authorities.
- The school library section of the Anambra State Ministry of Education routinely reviews books from authors and publishers proceeding recommendation of the approved texts for use in the schools. This is done once every three years for primary section and every six years for secondary section. To do this, the publishers are required to submit six copies of each title. These copies are thereafter sent to ASUBEB for onward distribution to school libraries. Every other donation of books from federal government agencies or individuals received by the state ministry of education is moved to ASUBEB for distribution to schools. Specifically, in 2001, a large consignment of books, non-book media and mathsets were allocated to the state by the Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF). These were received by the Ministry of Education and later shifted to the Post Primary school Management Board for distribution to schools.
- Only the Universal Basic Education Programme of the federal government has laid down policy being followed systematically for school library development.

The above findings from the interviews conducted reveal that the Anambra State Ministry of Education and the Post Primary School Management Board presently play very little or no role in the advancement of school libraries in the state.

ASUBEB's role which is being propelled from the federal sector is consistent but not elaborates enough for the number of schools and school children in the state. It is also note worthy that the school library services of ASUBEB covers only primary school and

junior secondary section, leaving out the senior secondary classes. Also, left out completely are private schools. These may not augur well for the desired impact of school library on both the pupils and students.

ASUBEB which is doing some work-for school library development in the state encounters some problems in the process which the interviewer articulated as follows:

- Teacher - librarians already sent to schools are completely absorbed into regular school activities with no time left for school library affairs. This results in the underutilization of library facilities where they exist.
- Low annual allocation from the federal government for books, non book media and furniture for schools results in scanty and uneven library provisions to the state schools.
- Lack of funds has also stopped ASUBEB from organizing training workshops, library weeks and other events like this on regular basis.
- The library sector of ASUBEB does not have enough qualified librarians to effectively manage the affairs of school libraries in the state.

Expected Roles

In addition to the already mentioned roles, it is expected that these major stakeholders in education especially ministry of education and post primary school management board should ideally do the following for the rapid development of school library system in Anambra State:-

1. Get actively involved in all spheres and school library development in the state to complements present efforts of ASUBEB.
2. Prepare a blue print for school library development in the state.
3. Influence state government policies in school library development.
4. Review the existing laws and get more legislative backing for state government participation.
5. Press for specific budgetary allocation for state school libraries.
6. Set targets for uniform and basic standard of school libraries in the state.
7. Integrate senior secondary section into the school library programme.
8. Integrate and extend library services to private schools.
9. Involve the private sector and local government in school library development.

Conclusion

The study found out that only ASUBEB is active while the Ministry of Education and Post Primary School Management Boards are dormant in terms of school library development.

It therefore recommends the waking up from slumber of the two state bodies to their fundamental responsibilities in this respect to complement efforts of other bodies in moving the state school library forward.

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