

Impacts of the Media on African Socio–Economic Development

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Chapter 9

Education, Gender, and Child–Rights: Salient Issues in SDGS Years in ADO–ODO/OTA Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Promoting and improving quality education is one of the core missions of the United Nations at ensuring sustainable future; hence, the slogan: Change towards a better quality of life starts with education. This paper examined the place of education, gender and child rights within the current status of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Ado-Odo/Ota local government of Ogun State, Nigeria. Questionnaire and interviews were used as instruments of data collection. School children between ages 7 and 18 in both private and public schools formed the study population. A sample size, 1000 respondents, was drawn from the population out of which 976 responded effectively to the questions. The findings revealed that education and child rights remain in a precarious state in the local government. There was a limited awareness about child rights among children in primary schools and secondary schools; teaching materials and instructors were grossly inadequate in many of the schools sampled and basic needs such as water and electricity were unavailable. It was also observed that the number of enrolled male children in schools is 24% higher than the females. These challenges should be put into consideration when formulating policies for education in developing countries. There is therefore the need to prioritize education, especially female education, as well as child rights in general in the local government through adequate funding, investment in teachers and creation of awareness about the rights of the child.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the core missions of the United Nations at ensuring sustainable future is improving the quality of education, hence the slogan: ‘Change towards a better quality of life starts with education’. Quality education entails provision of school building and amenities, as well as textbooks, qualified and trained teachers, etc., which would ensure the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity. As contained in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), education is one of such rights to ensure future sustainability and the goals can only be realised when the rights of children are targeted and fulfilled (Oyero, 2010).

Global organizations such as The World Bank, UNDP and UNICEF recognize the relevance of education in the drive for sustainable national development around the world. Thus, Education for All (EFA) as an international initiative was first launched in 1990 to bring the benefits of education to “every citizen in every society”, with six main goals:

- To expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
- To ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, those in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free, and compulsory primary education of good quality.
- To ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.
- To achieve a 50% improvement in adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
- To eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
- To improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensure the excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

In 2000, 189 countries and their partners adopted the two EFA goals that align with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5, which refers to gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls and goal 10, which refers to the reduction of inequality within and among countries.

The idea of women in development is an issue to be prioritised as women play a significant role in fulfilment of the rights of the child because many of child rights would not be fulfilled without the women. As primary care-givers to children, women need to be appropriately positioned to perform their responsibility. Positioning women then begins from the cradle, such as receiving necessary education, healthcare and empowerment to function. Unfortunately, women in developing countries are generally marginalised. Many young women face serious threat to their empowerment through child marriage and denial of educational opportunities. It thus follows that development must focus on women too if something tangible would be achieved. Thus, there exist wide-ranging and deep linkages among gender, child rights, education and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Statement of Research Problem

The dawn of year 2015, the year meant for the achievement of MDGs, lends credence to the statement- 'the future is now'. While setting goals is important to expedite efforts and monitor progress, care needs to be taken to ensure that real efforts beyond the rhetoric of goals are geared towards the achievement of the stated goals. As regards the MDGs, we do not really know whether the primary targets and beneficiaries of these goals are aware of any effort being made to improve their situations. Besides, it is important to ascertain the level of progress made thus far on MDGs in order to chart a clearer path for future agenda. While there have been global and national reports on the MDGs progress, there is need to understand with specific indicators in a small scale setting, the reality of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is in this direction that this study was undertaken to study the place of child rights, education and gender in development agenda after the 2015 target.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were set to be achieved in the study:

1. To find out the extent to which pupils/students are aware of the SDGs and Child Right Acts.
2. To compare the learning conditions (quality of education, conduciveness of classroom, availability of teachers and teaching materials) of public schools with private schools.
3. To assess if there are disparities in the boy-girl school enrolment in the local government (LG).
4. To investigate the factors responsible for the non-enrolment of school-age children.
5. To evaluate the feasibility of achieving child rights, education and gender balance in post- 2015 development agenda.

Research Questions

1. What is the awareness level of SDGs and Child Rights among pupils/students in Ado-Odo Local Government Area (LGA)?
2. What are the learning conditions (quality of education, conduciveness of classroom, availability of teachers and teaching materials) of public schools compared to their private counterparts?
3. Are there disparities in the boy-girl enrolment in the LG?
4. What are the factors responsible for the non-enrolment of school-age children in the LG?
5. What is the feasibility of achieving child rights, education and gender balance in post- 2015 development agenda?

MILLENIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS, EDUCATION, AND CHILD RIGHTS IN AFRICA

We cannot talk about SDGs without looking at the MDGs. The African continent is the contextual framework for examining the challenges confronting the attainment of MDGs by 2015 with particular reference to education. But Africa has 52 independent countries and each country is different in many

respects, yet they all fall within the category of developing or underdeveloped countries. None of them has attained 100% literacy rate; life expectancy is below the world average; quality of life is low with many citizens living below poverty line which is less than one US dollar a day. These are some of the major indicators used by the World Bank to rate a country's standard of living. By way of case study, Nigeria will be used to represent the African scenario in this study. The choice is informed by the fact that it has the largest population with diverse peoples, linguistic groups and cultures at different stages of development. Moreover, many of Nigeria's social, religious, economic, political and developmental problems and challenges are replicated in the other African countries. Comparisons and contrasts will be made when necessary or possible.

According to Oyesomi, Oyero and Okorie (2014), child right issue is a perennial issue that has been discussed and debated among media experts, educationists and social scientists. Child Rights Acts 2003 contained the rights of children. One of such rights is right of a Child to free, compulsory and Universal Primary Education (UPE): Universal primary education is a must for every child. Therefore, every child has the right to be educated at least at the primary level. This means that every parent or guardian should ensure that his or her child irrespective of the gender is educated.

At the international level, it is rare to find a voice outside of academia that will question the value of the MDG-education. To question the goal of universal primary education comes too close to questioning the right of all children to receive a basic education, as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As the human-rights approach, championed by international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as well UN agencies, is competing ever more fiercely with human capital theory as the dominant paradigm for understanding development, there is little opportunity to consider whether the cost of expansion in enrolments is sustainable in terms of its impact on quality. However, within the many countries where class-sizes have surged in advance of the implementation of reforms intended to improve quality (Riddell, 2003), this question has become a matter of public debate. EdQual researchers based in Tanzania, for example, have come across this debate in the popular media. Statistics published in the Global Monitoring Reports, however, do suggest that whilst national and international resources are channelled towards primary education, many countries are managing to raise retention rates and reduce repetition rates simultaneous to enrolment expansion.

In Kenya, significant milestone in the promotion of the rights of the child was the enactment of Children's Act by Kenya's Parliament in 2002. Concerted efforts towards domestication of the UNCRC (1990) were made when the government directed the Law Reform Commission (1984) to look into children's issues and ways of implementing the convention (Nwanko & Okwemba, 2002). The bill was enacted into law in 2002 and it provides for the legal instruments for the development of policies as well as legal framework for education and promotion of children's rights (ibid.). It recognises that children have a right to education, parental care, religious education, healthcare, and protection from abuse, protection from harmful cultural practices, protection from sexual exploitation and drugs (RoK, 2001).

MDGs are a tool through which people can hold governments and policy makers to account regarding the eradication of poverty. Analysts on the progress of MDGs argue that whatever happens post 2015 must include education and creation of rights awareness and targets to all people. Access to free education, health and protection by all is one such key target enshrined in the rights of the child. It was for this reason that the study was undertaken, particularly to determine whether children were aware of children's rights since child rights and contemporary global development agenda are inseparable (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2006).

With the new developmental agenda, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the SDGs has been proposed to attend to the shortcomings of the MDGs. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a proposed set of targets relating to future international development. The Sustainable Development Goals offer major improvements on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The SDG framework addresses key systemic barriers to sustainable development such as inequality, unsustainable consumption patterns, weak institutional capacity, and environmental degradation that the MDGs neglected.

THE PLACE OF EDUCATION, GENDER, AND CHILD RIGHTS TOWARDS ATTAINMENT OF THE SDGs

Oyero and Oyesomi (2014) is of the opinion that when a child is securely attached to the family through active and co-viewing mediation, it will help the child process what is right and wrong in what he/she is viewing, and learn to cope realistically with social pressures and expectations. Education is therefore the key to the development of the society especially the child. The right to education is inseparable from the child's right. Education constitutes the core of human development. It is a vital tool for transformation and key to the sustainable development of a nation. Education is the most crucial instrument for empowering young people with knowledge and skills, which in turn provides them access to productive employment. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted in September 2000 at the United Nations Millennium Declaration has two of the eight goals devoted to education. They are goal 2 (to achieve universal primary education) and goal 3 (to promote gender equality and empower women). Over the years, Nigeria has expressed a commitment to education, in the belief that overcoming illiteracy and ignorance will form a basis for accelerated national development. However, regardless of the controversy surrounding education in Nigeria; it is very crucial to the development of the community and nation. There are inequalities in access to education. Millions of poor people and their children are excluded from the processes and outcomes of education (Otive, 2006).

According to Odekunle and Okuwa (2012), the global debate on the place of education and training in social, economic, political and technological development is important. It has been empirically proven and universally acknowledged that unless the citizens of a nation are well educated and appropriately trained, the achievements of rapid economic and social development of such a nation cannot be guaranteed. Education has long been seen as the bedrock of national development and the primary level of education is the foundation required for this development. Therefore, basic education in Nigeria represents the most facilitating and perhaps the most contributory factor to the education system. It is the most fascinating because therein lies the greatest foundational activities in the educational systems.

When children are helped to be knowledgeable and self-aware about their rights, they grow up in the society with the ability to protect and respect their rights and those of others. Knowledge of child rights is critical in the overall development of all children. The use of communication media is critical in the achievement of this awareness among children. Kumar (2006) notes that creating awareness about the Convention, its application and monitoring is a necessity which calls for a joint effort of all the parties concerned with children. He argues that communication media can be a powerful tool for advocacy and awareness creation provided it is used in a planned manner. More importantly, the media serves as a major vehicle for sustainable development in a society through the choice and use of appropriate language that would effectively create and sustain awareness among the masses. Besides, the awareness

roles of the mass media across multiple platforms are performed through language (Owolabi & Nnaji, 2013). Hence, if awareness on child rights as well the need for education is to be increased, attention should be paid to the discursive forms and practices that the mass media employs.

With reference to goals 2 and 3 of the MDGs, gender as well as child rights cannot be dissociated from the attainment of universal primary education. The Nigeria Millennium Development Goals Report 2010 estimated that there is an average potential that children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling by 2015. The goal to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and all levels of education no later than 2015 was also reported to have an average potential to be actualised. The report further notes that the availability of a supportive environment for both of these MDGs could be rated as 'good/fair' (p.12).

To achieve the targeted 100% gender equality by 2015, the MDG Report 2010 noted that it would be helpful 'to identify those social, economic, traditional, cultural and religious factors that militate against gender equality', and consequently, these should be addressed. Furthermore, appropriate programmes such as 'the training and supply of female teachers to schools in rural areas' should be developed to boost girl-child enrolment (p.24).

Based on data collected from Child Labour Survey of the Federal Office of Statistics (FOS), in conjunction with International Labour Organization (ILO), Okpukpara and Chukwuone (2001) opine that there are econometric forces that influence school enrolment. As such, the child, parent, household and community in both rural and urban areas of Southern and Northern Nigeria play measurable roles in the increasing or decreasing rates of child enrolment in and attendance of schools. This is closely related to Olaniyan's (2011) findings which note that socio-economic factors that range from household incomes to parents' education are major determinants of child enrolment. In some other situations, a child's schooling is influenced by the child's gender, age and educational level of the household head (Okpukpara and Chukwuone, 2001). In fact, Olaniyan (2011) reveals that it is more likely for an educated mother to enrol her female child in school, the same way a father's education positively influences the male-child's enrolment. Other factors that influence a child's enrolment in school, as provided by Okpukpara and Chukwuone (2001) include age of the child, relationship of the child to the household head, household composition, regional differences, location and access to school" (for example, Southern Nigeria has more children in school than Northern Nigeria, and there are more children from urban non-poor homes than those in rural and poor homes). Both studies suggest that there is more gender equity (in relation to child enrolment) in urban areas than in rural areas.

In addition to all these, Kainuwa & Yusuf (2013) posit that female children are more likely to drop out from school because of patriarchal belief patterns, some of these for instance suggest that females are care-givers and are needed more around the home to perform house chores. There is also the issue of early marriage of very young girls in the Northern region of Nigerian. A significant fraction of the respondents (41.1%) also ascribe high drop-out rates of girls to absence of proper security. Alika and Egbochuku (2009) add that the learning environment and learning experiences provided for female education are also variables that increase drop-out rates.

The United States Embassy in 2012, reports that the Northeast and Northwest zones of Nigeria have the highest record of non-school attendance. For instance, it observes that 72% of primary age children never attended school in Borno state; whereas, the Southern zones record less than 3%. Factors responsible for primary school drop-outs largely include: monetary cost and insufficient interest (Nigeria Education

Fact Sheet, 2012). With the new developmental agenda, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is hoped that the SDGs would correct the shortcomings of the MDGs.

METHODS

This study was based on a survey research design. Questionnaire and interview guides were used as instruments of data collection. The population for this study were school-age children between 7 and 18 in both private and public schools in Ota local government area of Ogun State. Primary four to six pupils (Pry 4-6) were sampled in primary schools, and Junior Secondary School 1 to Senior Secondary School 3 (JSS 1-SS3) were sampled in secondary schools. A sample size of 1000 respondents was drawn from the population. A total of 976 respondents were able to effectively respond to the questionnaire.

Demographic Data

As stated earlier, nine hundred and seventy six (976) students participated in this study, out of which 62% were male and 38% female. These students were sampled from two schools; public and private, 52% attend public while 48% attend private schools. The class distribution revealed that 45% were in primary school, 30% in junior secondary school while 25% were in senior secondary school. Their ages range from 7years to 18 years; 45% were between 7-10 years of age, 33% between 11-14 years of age while 22% were between 15-18years years of age. Only 44% reported payment of school fees while 56% paid other levies (PTA, Excursion) excluding school fees.

Results

Table 1 shows that there is a significant difference in the level of awareness of Child Right Acts and SDGs among male and female children at $X^2=182$, 2 degree of freedom and $p<0.05$.

In determining the level of awareness of Child Right Acts and SDGs among children, the findings revealed that 25% could be categorised as having high level of awareness of Child Right Acts and SDGs, while majority (42%) had average level of awareness, 33% have low level of awareness. This implies that many of the students sampled have average level of awareness of Child Rights Acts and SDGs.

From Table 2, it is clear that there were provisions of learning facilities to students in private schools than to their public school counterparts. This implies that in public schools, provision of basic facilities for learning was inadequate.

There is a significant relationship between available facilities in learning environment and type of school at $X^2=207$, 4 degree of freedom and $p<0.05$.

Table 3 shows that there were teachers for all subjects. It was however pointed out that some teachers teach more than one subject because it was noted in some schools that some teachers were teaching up to four subjects.

Table 4 shows that there is a significant relationship between sex and type of school at $X^2=10.4$, 1 degree of freedom and $p<0.05$. It is evident from the findings that there were more male students than their female counterparts.

Table 1. Level of awareness of Child Right Acts and MDGs among children

| | High | Average | Low | Total |
|--------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Female | 56 (5.7%) | 98 (10.1%) | 218 (22.3%) | 372 (38.1%) |
| Male | 188 (19.3%) | 314 (32.1%) | 102 (10.5%) | 604 (61.9%) |
| Total | 244 (25%) | 412 (42.2%) | 320 (32.8%) | 976 (100%) |

Table 2. Learning conditions in private and public schools

| | Public | Private | Total | Ratings |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Adequate Chairs and desks | 194 (19.8%) | 388 (39.8%) | 582 (59.6%) | 1 st |
| Marker boards | 20 (2%) | 389 (39.9%) | 409 (41.9%) | 2 nd |
| Electricity | 56 (5.7%) | 314 (32.2%) | 370 (37.9%) | 3 rd |
| Computer | 13 (1.3%) | 333 (34.1%) | 346 (35.4%) | 5 th |
| Decent walls, roofing, windows etc. | 47 (4.8%) | 301 (30.8%) | 358 (36.6%) | 4 th |
| Total no of students in public and private schools | 505 51.7% | 471 48.3% | 976 100% | |

Table 3. Availability of teachers in all subjects

| Type of School | Yes | No | Total |
|----------------|----------------|----|--------------|
| Public | 505 (51.7%) | - | 505 51.7% |
| Private | 471 (48.3%) | - | 471 48.3% |
| Total | 976 (100%) | -- | 100% |

Table 4. Gender (dis)parity in schools

| | Private | Public | Total |
|--------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Male | 267 (27.4%) | 337 (34.5%) | 604 (61.9%) |
| Female | 204 (20.9%) | 168 (17.2%) | 372 (38.1%) |
| Total | 471 (48.3%) | 505 (51.7%) | 976 (100%) |

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In defining who a child is; 43% described a child as anybody under 18 years, 51% described a child as anybody who lives with parents, while 6% described a child as anybody who is not working. The greater number of students (73%) believed that children are entitled to basic needs of life (food, shelter, education, clothing, etc.) However, participants' responses differed on who should provide these basic things of life; 82% were of the opinion that shelter should be provided by parents against 18% that were of the opinion that shelter should be provided by government, 96% were of the opinion that food should be provided by parents against 4% that were of the opinion that it should be provided by government and 64% were of the opinion that education should be provided by parents against 18% that were of the opinion that this should be provided by government. Furthermore, 18% were of the opinion that edu-

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cation should be provided by religious bodies. Medical facilities was seen as the responsibility of the government (77% respondents), 18% were of the opinion that it should be provided by the parents while 5% believed that it should be provided for by the religious bodies. The security of lives and property was seen as the responsibility of the government (77% respondents), while 23% were of the opinion that it should be provided for by parents. However, only 64% participants were of the opinion that they had access to these basic needs of life, while 36% declined.

Participants were asked to describe availability of teaching materials; 44% had access to textbooks, 62% described their classrooms as conducive, 100% had teachers for subjects, while 44% perceived their teachers as having love for their jobs. Only 26% of the respondents aspired to be teachers, while 74% did not want to be teachers because they were not comfortable with the ways teachers are treated.

Findings are discussed in relation to proposed research questions below:

RQ1: What is the awareness level of pupils/students on SDGs and Child Rights?

If majority of the children report that they have fairly average knowledge about SDGs and Child Rights Acts, the implication of this is that they do not know their entitlements in the society, and when children do not know their basic rights, they could pass for 'uneducated' citizens. It should be noted that education is not limited to classroom education; social awareness is a core aspect of education. This suggests that children who were thought to be educated are not getting the best of education. More so, this could be an index that the sensitisation efforts of the Local Government are not as widespread as expected. Kiprotich and Ong'ondo (2013) are of the opinion that when children are helped to be knowledgeable and self-aware about their rights, they grow up in the society with the ability to protect and respect their rights and those of others. Knowledge of child rights is critical in the overall development of all children.

RQ2: What are the learning conditions (quality of education, conduciveness of classroom, availability of teachers and teaching materials) of public schools compared to their private counterparts?

Except for the availability of chairs and desks which is below 30% in public schools, all other required facilities and infrastructure required for learning in the public schools sampled are inadequate and few. The environment in which a child learns is a great determinant of the value placed on that child. If children are exposed to harsh learning conditions, the interpretation is that these children have little or no worth in the society, and when there is an effort to improve these conditions, the children are more likely to perceive such as privileges rather than rights. More so, learning is impeded under conditions that are not favourable for learning, as the child is first seeking comfort rather than the new information being transmitted to him or her. About 100% of respondents stated that there is availability of teachers in schools. It was noted in some schools that some teachers teach up to four subjects in secondary schools. There is therefore need for even distribution of efforts to bring to fruition the overall SDG on education.

RQ3: Are there disparities in the boy-girl enrolment in the LG?

Even though the reports from the Local Government office claim that boy-girl enrolment in Ado-Odo Ota Local Government Area is fairly balanced, the questionnaire administered present a conflicting picture. Findings reveal that the number of enrolled male children is 24% higher than the females. This

suggests that the girl-child is still significantly denied the right to education, and as such, cannot compete favourably with her male peers; this means that she is still being disempowered, and her future would still be determined by her gender. Though the Local Government reports that the regular sensitisation/awareness programmes she organises has greatly boosted the enrolment of the girl-child in its schools, with the findings from the questionnaire, it could be hypothesised that if there has been a significant increase in the enrolment of the girl-child, then the enrolment of the girl-child before the introduction of the MDGs was approximately insignificant now that SDGs is in operation. If so, then the efforts of the Local Government with respect to girl-child education are laudable. This output though, is not commensurate with the expectations of the United Nations by 2015, as it is expected that by then, the disparities in boy-girl enrolment in schools would have been eliminated.

RQ4: What are the factors responsible for the non-enrolment of school-aged children in the LG?

The study reveals that not many children are out of school and those who are not in school are likely to have financial constraints. Truly, Universal Basic Education is free, notwithstanding, some parents are faced with economic hardships. As such, they require their children to hawk goods to support their livelihood and sustenance as families, and these children become part of the economic providers in the family.

In an interview with participants, it was pointed out that some parents or guardians probably do not see the need for child education, especially when it is a girl-child. This is buried in the age-long belief of the patriarchal Nigerian society, that the place of the girl-child is the home, and as such any educational investment on her would be a waste. This erroneous belief however, places these children who are not in school at a disadvantaged position.

RQ5: What is the feasibility of achieving child rights, education and gender balance in post- 2015 development agenda?

During an interview session with Mr. Bisi Orebiyi, the MDG Technical Assistant, Ogun State, he had this to say:

In 2005, we got debt relief and following that, the office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs was created. It is from that office that the Conditional Grant Scheme was created. The scheme started with the Federal ministries, agencies and departments. We give money to them to execute MDG-related projects like the construction of classroom blocks, roads and streetlights. Later on, the Conditional Grant Scheme moved to the state level. The state was given some money to execute its own MDG-related projects. The budget was divided as: 50% to the Federal Government, 50% to the State Government. In order to fast track the MDG attendance in Nigeria, the Local Government was brought in, learning from the experience of the Millennium Villages. We have two Millennium Villages in Nigeria: the Ikara Millennium Village in Ondo State and the Pampaida Millennium Village in Kaduna State. From these two Local Governments, the MDGs increased and later spread across 113 Local Governments in 2011. Here in this case, one Local Government per senatorial district is selected plus those in the FCT and the two Millennium Villages. After the 2011 set, in 2012, the number of Local Governments increased to 148 out of which we have Abeokuta and this project which Abeokuta is also involved in healthcare, water sanitation and education. In the case of education, we look at access, that is, what we need to do in order to make education accessible to the people; looking at structure improvement, facilities, basic

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amenities (desks, chairs, water, and toilets). In this case, the Local Government Planning Committee and the Local Government Technical Team were constituted. The Conditional Grant Scheme to the Local Government is a tripartite system supported by the Federal Government, State Government and the Local Government. The Federal Government contributes 50% of the funds, the State Government contributes 30% and the Local Government contributes 20%. We have already selected some schools where renovations would be carried out in the case of building more classroom blocks and constructing toilets, supplying a thousand desks and benches for pupils, that is, double seats benches which would be able to sit 2000 pupils in total. In fact, I was driving some days ago and I passed through Abeokuta where I saw one of these projects being carried out, that is, three classroom blocks were being constructed in one of the selected schools. We have also executed projects like this in other Local Governments. The Local Governments outside this tripartite arrangement are also supporting these school projects on their own. They supply benches, construct classroom blocks, for example, there is a Primary school at Oke Ore which is one of their beneficiaries.

Though from the interview conducted the participants agreed that the government has provided uniforms and also some necessary infrastructure (furniture) and textbooks required for learning (for few schools), these are however insufficient. There are still lots of gaps to be filled as indicated by this study. There is the need for more funds to be directed towards child education in Nigeria. In addition to this, more strident measures in the awarding of contracts alongside monitoring and supervision of allocated projects would go a long way in the realisation of MDGs on child rights and education. Some of the efforts of the government would be siphoned by corrupt individuals if intensive policies are not in place. With the new development agenda (SDGs), it is believed that gender equality and education for all would be a reality.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The outcomes of the study show that there is limited awareness about children's rights among children in primary schools and secondary schools in Ado-Odo Ota L/G of Ogun State. From further interaction with the students, there is low participation in children's rights activities like seminars and conferences. Children are hardly informed through the mass media on the issue of child rights and SDGs. To remedy these situations, it is recommended that media houses and schools should raise awareness about societal concerns in a balanced way so that some pertinent aspects such as children's rights are not left unaddressed. Most importantly, all partners such as parents, teachers (by giving emphasis to children's rights topics in subjects in the sciences and Mathematics), religious leaders, medical doctors among others need to step up campaigns to supplement existing communication media in promoting awareness about children's rights among children and adults. These campaigns can be in form of designing and using publicity materials such as posters, brochures, branded materials like T-shirts, caps, pens, calendars, umbrellas and billboards among others.

Particularly, attention should be paid to language use in promoting awareness of child rights among the citizenry. The English language which is the language of wider communication, together with Nigerian Pidgin as well as other indigenous languages should be deftly employed to effectively pass across intended messages by the mass media. Careful attention should be paid to the domestication of discursive choices to make mass media messages on child rights and basic mutually intelligible to the

masses. This could even include forms of English that reflect the local nuances of the environment where the campaigns occur.

The use of literary materials such as pamphlets, story books, etc. could also effectively serve as tools for publicising the MDGs and SDGs. Language is key to development in any society, therefore, creative writers should weave plots around themes that reflect the unpleasant impacts of gender disparity, lack of education, lack of awareness of child rights, etc. on individuals and the society at large. In doing this though, they should note that simplicity is key, therefore, messages should be comprehensible enough to a large heterogeneous audience, in such a way that can influence change of attitude and perception; this simplicity lies largely in appropriate language choice and its proper use (Onobajo, 2001; Eko, 2002; Owolabi & Nnaji, 2013).

The findings also show that there are still inadequate teachers and teaching materials in many of the schools sampled. Odekunle and Okuwa (2012) are therefore of the opinion that for basic education system to achieve its set goals, the need to put certain educational materials, equipment and facilities in place cannot be over-emphasised. Unfortunately, these facilities are in short supply at all levels of education. In some cases, they are non-existence and where they are available at all, they are in deplorable conditions. To enhance proper teaching-learning processes in basic schools, facilities such as libraries and laboratories must be well-equipped and dilapidated buildings must be reconstructed. Also, teaching aids must be made available to teachers to facilitate learning and the school environment should be made conducive and attractive for proper administration. The findings clearly point out that there are still insufficient teachers in schools and the ones who are available are overburdened. The popular saying that “no educational system can rise above the quality of teachers in the system” is rather apt at this moment in the Nigerian education system. Odekunle and Okuwa (2012) assert that the attainment of the Universal Primary Education component of the MDGs depends largely on the availability of qualified teachers. For UBE to have its intended impact on students and pupils, teachers and instructors as well as school administrators must be capable of imparting permanent literacy and numeracy and some useful communication skills to their pupils and or students. The government is therefore enjoined to provide adequate and qualitative staffing for schools.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

For future directions, this study recommends that the Local Government should embark on intense rural re-orientation and mobilisation to further sensitise the masses (through campaigns, literature, rallies, television programmes, flyers, among others) on child rights and education, paying particular attention to simplifying the messages. Educational policies that allow for monitoring of roads and streets during school hours would help to ensure that all children are in school when they should, rather than leaving them to disregard their basic rights. The masses too are not left out; it has been observed that many citizens are passive towards the enforcement of child rights. Stakeholders and appropriate authorities likewise should guard against negligence towards quality of education, gender and child rights; there is dire need for government and stakeholders to see basic education as a fundamental tool to attaining national development. Therefore, more funds should be directed towards basic education in order to enhance its quality. If we can achieve quality basic education in Nigeria, then attaining the Sustainable Development Goals will not be a mirage. There is also the need to address the variance between quantity and quality of the education attained by primary school pupils and secondary school students in Nigeria.

At the inception, the focus on education was on increased enrolment. This, however, is at the expense of ensuring the quality of the education attained by the students. Beyond 2015, there is a need to critically reassess this issue with a view to ensuring that the quality of education received by primary school pupils and secondary school students is emphasised beyond the mere numbers.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Child Rights: The rights of children to association with parents, human identity as well as the basic needs for physical protection, food, universal state-paid education, health care, and criminal laws appropriate for the age and development of the child, equal protection of the child's civil rights, and freedom.

Children: Boys and girls between ages 7 and 18.

Education: The process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits.

Gender: The state of being male or female. It is determined by the conception of tasks, functions and roles attributed to women and men in society and in public and private life.

MDGs: The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were the eight international development goals for the year 2015 that had been established following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000, following the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

SDGs: A new, universal set of goals, targets and indicators that UN member states will be expected to use to frame their agendas and political policies over the next 15 years.