

## A Critical Review of Management of Primary Education in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** Primary education is a foundational level of education that needs to be well funded, controlled and managed. Adequate provisions of education to the citizens contribute greatly to the socioeconomic development of the country. Therefore, good administration of primary level of education is required to foster national growth and development. The study thus examined the management of primary education in Nigeria from the colonial administration to date. It is therefore, observed that the management of this level of education has passed through different stages and different authorities exercised its control from time to time. It is being faced with many problems ranging from acute shortage of classroom spaces or over-crowded classrooms, shortage of teachers and equipment to under-funding.

**Key words:** Management, primary education, socioeconomic, Nigeria

### INTRODUCTION

Education is the vital instrument for social and economic mobility at the personal level and an instrument for transformation of society at the national level. Primary education as the focus of this study is the first level education. Apart from home as the first agent of socialization, primary school is the first place that introduces formal education or literacy to the children. In other words, primary school education is a foundation upon which all other levels of education are built. The Nigerian national census of 1991 put the population at about 88 million. It is estimated that more than 35 million of this population figure are 15 years old or younger that is about 40% of the total population. This implies that almost 20 million of these should be attending primary schools in Nigeria. There is no doubt that primary school system in Nigeria is facing serious problems despite this huge number of pupils it has to cater for. Not quite long, the Federal Military government vested the responsibility for primary school administration in the hand of local governments. This same government later reclaimed the responsibility when primary school system was about to collapse. These problems we are talking about culminate in acute shortage of infrastructures, non-payment of teachers' salary and security problem. Some primary schools have no enough classrooms and furniture to the extent that classes are held under shades of trees, some pupils carry-home their benches and desks and bring

them to school every morning. The instructional materials needed to aid teaching-learning activities are not available. The teachers also are no longer committed to their jobs because they are not well paid. It is obvious that unless these teachers are provided with the drive that would energize them or the tools needed, that is proper inputs, their best could not be tapped or attained and the accomplishment of educational goals would be difficult. For instance, a car without fuel could not move anywhere that is the reason educational sector experiences strike today and tomorrow.

The introduction of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) in Nigeria, the transfer of primary education from residual to the concurrent legislative list, the re-establishment of the National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) and State Primary Education Board (SPEB) and this currently introduced programme, Universal Basic Education (UBE) are the moves of the Federal Government of Nigeria in accepting views and its commitment to provide educational opportunities at this level of education.

It is stated in the Nigerian Constitution under the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State policy, Nigerian Constitution 1989 section 19 on further elaboration of educational objectives thus:

- Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate opportunities at all levels.

- Government shall promote science and technology.
- Government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy and to this end, government shall as and when practicable provide:
  - Free, compulsory and universal primary education e.t.c.
- Government shall promote the learning of indigenous languages.

It further expatiates on these above objectives that:

- There will be equal opportunities in primary schools.
- There will be adequate education opportunities in primary schools and others as stated in this provision of Nigeria constitution.
- Some of these usually reflect in the planning and administration of primary school education in Nigeria.

Fafunwa (1974) stated that the aims of primary education in all the states of the federation were to help the child to:

- Master the three Rs-Reading, Writing and Arithmetic, this is to develop permanent literacy.
- Develop sound standards of individual conduct and behaviour.
- Acquire some skills and appreciate the value of manual work.

So, the objectives of the primary education in Nigeria can be summed up as a broad based education with emphasis on the effective communication skills (FRN, 1986). The effective communication skills that will enable the pupils to contribute effectively to the social and economic development of the nation. This objective is purposely to produce a literate and numerate population and to lay the groundwork for further education. For further education to attain these objectives, it has to be adequately managed. So far the effectiveness of higher education rests on a solid foundation, which is the product of primary education system; there should not be instability in the control and management of primary education.

#### **PRIMARY EDUCATION AND UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION**

The National Policy on Education made recommendations for a system of education that segmented the system into 6 years of primary education. The 6 years of primary education are part of the 6-3-3-4 educational system. The system was designed to allow an

exit point after 9 years of schooling to continue careers through apprenticeships or other vocational training programmes. The objectives for primary education put emphasis on a balance between physical and intellectual development. The objectives are stated as follows:

- To widen access to basic education.
- To eliminate present inequalities in enrollment and between urban and rural.
- To ensure greater retention.
- To ensure long-term permanent literacy for those children who had completed the programme.

The primary school certificate examination has been abolished in preference for continuous assessment. The completion rates are generally very low. The recorded average completion rates are 62% for girls and 59% for boys. The average completion rate at the end of primary education as a percentage of enrollments in grade 1 are on average reported to be 55%, with a transition rate of 50.3% to secondary school (Teboho, 2000).

#### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF MANAGEMENT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

The management of primary education in Nigeria passed through different stages and its control was exercised by different authorities from time to time. Ab initio, the management of primary education system was handled by the church missionaries who introduced Western or Formal Education to Nigeria in 1842. After much criticism from different quarters about the crude and lack of proper coordination of the system by these missionaries, the British government intervened through establishment of various Education Ordinances and Codes. It is worth mentioning that the colonial government in Lagos made intermittent attempts to assist some of the missions in the management of schools between 1870 and 1876. While, a bill was passed as an ordinance (first of its kind) for the promotion and assistance of education and it covered the West African territories of Lagos, Gambia, Gold coast and Sierra Leone.

In 1887, there was the enactment of the first purely Nigerian education ordinance as a result of separation of Lagos from Gold Coast in which it became the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos. This ordinance was promulgated to increase the betterment of education administration. In one word, the British government had no clearly defined policy on education for its African colonies during this time till 1925. It was Phelps-Stokes' report that forced the British Colonial Government to demonstrate its interest in African education. So, the principles in which

the educational systems of the colonized countries should be based set out by the 1925 Memorandum on education.

As from 1946, Nigerians were deeply involved in the administration of their educational system as a result of Arthur Richard's Constitution, which created Regional Government - Northern, Eastern and Western regions. It must be stated that during this era, the colonial overlords were still supervising Nigeria's educational affair and partly funding it. The missionaries and voluntary agencies were also with the control of staff recruitment, supervision of staff and the funding of their own schools only with grant-in-aid as subvention from the government.

Some years prior Nigeria's independent, the primary education started developing at different rates in different parts of Nigeria. The Universal Primary Education (UPE) was introduced as first of its kind in January 1955 at the then Western Region followed by Eastern Region in 1956 and later by Federal Government in September 1976. This programme indicated the government dynamic policy to favour the education of the masses on the basis that every Nigeria child has an inalienable right to a minimum of six years of education if he is to function effectively as a citizen of Nigeria that is free and democratic, just and egalitarian, united and self-reliant, with full opportunities (Fafunwa, 1974). After Nigeria has gotten independence in 1960, there was increase clamour for government take-over of schools from the missionaries and voluntary agencies, at least, to be able to revert the old system and to tailor it to meet the needs of the new nation. Adesina (1977) reported that it was contended that absolute take-over of schools would improve their curriculum, teacher quality and centralized provision of instructional resources, minimize inequalities and provide a dynamic center of leadership for educational innovation. So, there was government take-over of schools in 1970.

At the end of the Nigerian Civil War in 1970, a new dimension in public administration and funding of education emerged. That was the government take-over of primary and secondary schools from the voluntary agencies. The trend was started by the then East Central State in 1971 and by the end of that decade most states of the federation especially the Southern states had followed suit. This greatly increased the government burden in education finance. The government was able to expand its activities in education sector during 1970s due to increased revenue from oil. With this, the government felt capable of embarking on the Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1976. At that time, the government assumed full financial responsibility of the scheme. This scheme radically expanded public involvement in education financing and administration.

With the inception of the second republic in 1979, the Federal government withdrew its direct subsidy for primary education and transferred the responsibility to local governments. This effectively marked the end of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in most states of the federation. During this period, most states quickly introduced fees and levies at all levels of education. The military take-over in 1984 helped make this state of affairs nationwide. The states out of party policy doggedly struck to UPE albeit in the name of feeling free to introduce fees. In 1986, the Federal Government again abolished tuition fees in primary schools nationwide. As a result of this, it started making direct grants to local government for primary education. In 1989, this grant included funds for part payment of salaries for primary school teachers.

In 1976, the management of primary was taken over by the Federal Government while the administration and funding was transferred to the state and Local Governments in 1979. As a result, different management and funding arrangements were made by different states during this period.

In 1988, the National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) was established with Decree 31 of Federal Republic of Nigeria 1988 to manage the affair of primary education. It was later scrapped by the Federal Government under the provision of Decrees 2 and 3 of 1991, which vested the full responsibility of the administration of primary education in the hand of Local Government. With the Decree No. 96 of 25th August 1993, the National Primary Education Commission was re-established with State Primary Education Board (SPEB) and Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) and they were once again in control of primary education in Nigeria. The Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) was assigned to day-to-day administration of primary schools in its area of jurisdiction. While the State Primary Education Board (SPEB) was charged with administration of primary schools in the state. The Local Government Councils appoint Education Secretaries who then report directly to the SPEBs. These arrangements have resulted in general conflicting pressures on the Education Secretaries due to the different roles played by the SPEB's and the Local Government Councils (LGC's). There are also areas of overlap in the functions of different levels of management, which need to be addressed. The National Primary Education Commission was the overseer to the State Primary Education Board (SPEB) of all the states of the Federation. But this commission was supervised by the Federal Government. From this arrangement, it is obvious

that the management of primary education is no more one government affair; it involves all tiers of government. According to the provision of this decree, "the National Primary Education Commission receives the National Primary Education Fund as established by this decree from the Primary Education Board of each state and the Federal Capital Government Sponsored Special Primary Education Projects in accordance with the formula prescribed in this decree as the Transitional Council, from time-to-time prescribe". This was the condition of primary education funding and administration since 1993 to the time when the newly democratic government came into power in May 29, 1999. In replacement of Universal Primary Education (UPE) is the currently introduced Universal Basic Education (UBE), which was launched on 30 September 1999 in Sokoto. It is also free and universal in nature like before but now in addition, it is compulsorily accommodating children from primary school through Junior Secondary School. Various responsibilities are assigned to all levels of government (federal, state and local), which is not much different from what was in existence before now.

#### **THE FINANCING OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

The history of primary education administration as viewed reveals the instability in the government in the government commitment to the financing of primary education. Apart from different legislations on education in form of ordinances that were enacted, joint responsibility of Regions and Federal Government on education started in the Macpherson Constitution of 1951. The Education Act of 1952 that established Local Education Authorities and Local Education Committees emphasized joint responsibility of the Central, Regional and Local Governments, the local communities and the parents in primary education funding. In 1954 constitutional amendment, the funding of education became decentralized as the Federal government and the three regions shared the responsibility of funding education. First and second level of education was placed on the residual list; only the Regional Governments could legislate on primary and secondary education while higher education was on the concurrent legislative list, that is, both the Federal and Regional Government could legislate on it. It was during this period that much effort was made to provide mass education in Western Region of Nigeria. This put the public in control of education, the quantity of education in the system was the major concern of the government not the quality. After much contribution of different commissions between 1960 and 1970 on

financing of education, the system of grants-in-aid was eradicated; education financing was based on the enrolment of pupils with the view that this would improve the quality of education.

The National policy on Education 1977 (revised 1981) viewed education as an industry that need a lot of money. Thus, section 12, (106) of the policy reads that:

Education is an expensive social service and requires adequate financial provision from all tiers of Government for a successful implementation of the education programmes. Government's ultimate objective is to make education free at all levels. The financing of education is a joint responsibility of the Federal, State and Local Governments. In this connection, Government welcomes and encourages the participation of local communities, individuals and other organizations...

The funding of primary education suffered seriously some years after this year because the extent to which each participant will perform or contribute was not stated or specified. Even the 1979 Constitution in its provision was not explicit as regards primary education financing. It merely stated that, Government shall as when practicable provide free compulsory and universal primary education. There is no gainsaying that despite the increase in the number of primary schools and government commitment in the funding of this level of education when Universal Primary Education (UPE) was introduced by both the Regional and Federal Governments between 1955 and 1976, there was inadequate and poor management. The situation was not far from the same during the take-over of the ownership and management of all primary schools in 1970, the takeover of financing by the Federal Government in 1976 and during the transfer of funding to the state and local government in 1979.

In 1988, National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) was established with Decree 31 of Federal Republic of Nigeria 1988 and there was emergence of the national Education Fund to allocate fund to State Primary Education Boards of all the states of the federation and other agencies responsible for Federal Government Sponsored Special Primary Education Projects. Instead of deducting the fund needed for primary education administration directly from the Federal Government accounts there was a separate Fund. The establishment of this Fund was no doubt brought lapse in financing of primary education. As a result, they were all expected to contribute their quota to the financing administration of primary education. The Federal Government proportion of

budget both capital and recurrent allocations fall from 21-13% in 1988 and total capital allocations from 7- 4% over the same period (Babalola, 1996). According to the World Bank (1990), There was a progressive withdrawal of Federal Government financing of primary education throughout the early and mid 1980s. Since, these periods, primary school level has been under serious financial pressure and unstable governance till today. There is inadequate supply of human and material resources, over-crowded classrooms in urban schools, poor maintenance, poor supervision and poor learning environment. Presently, it seems as if the primary school level is floating, not sure of where they belong, its teachers do not know their employer out Federal, State and Local Government. Though, its administration is being control by the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) of the state in which the school exists, the funding is the responsibility of the Federal, State and the Local Governments. This without any doubt will affect the inputs and outputs of the system adversely.

#### **CRITIQUE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL SYSTEM IN NIGERIA**

It is obvious that the Nigeria government has good intentions to fulfill primary education purpose, as the National Policy on Education stated its objectives. But it has failed in achieving the intended objectives. As good as primary education is in providing the basic skills needed to acquire permanent literacy and numeracy as well as to gain admission into secondary schools, Nigerian primary schools are not fulfilling the central purpose of primary education. Before Nigeria's attainment of independence, primary schools were effectively managed by the Missionaries and voluntary agencies with grant-in-aid from the colonial government. However, the management of primary education system by the Nigerians has experienced serious problems.

The introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) nationwide in 1976 experienced problems of under-estimation of about 30% of the turn-up number of the children enrolment, acute shortage of classroom spaces or over-crowded classrooms, shortage of teachers and equipment. This has indicated that primary school education is under-funding; most of the primary schools controlled and financed by the government are now in shambles. This may not be unconnected with the neglect and lack of maintenance as a result of present economic depression. This inability of the government to effectively run primary schools has made people to agitate for the return of schools to the missionaries and other voluntary agencies. Also, it brought the emergence of many private primary schools presently experienced in Nigeria.

Experience has shown that public primary schools tend to perform more poorly than private primary schools in Nigeria. It appears as if the private primary schools usually produce more sound products than public primary schools. In other words, the public primary schools cannot boast of literacy and numeracy competences. Despite the fact that there is increasing provision of teachers at public primary schools yet there is constant problem of over-crowded classroom. The parents are also with the opinion that the teachers in public primary schools are no longer committed in discharging their duties due to one reason or the other. So, a large number of parents prefer private primary schools for their wards. The public perception is that the quality of education offered is low and that standards have dropped. These perceptions are based on lack of adherence to acceptable educational practice.

It is estimated that about 80% of the primary schools are located in the rural areas. Schools are subsidized through additional funds contributed by communities to their local schools through Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA's), Schools, Councils and Community-based Organizations. These funds are used for infrastructure construction, maintenance and supply of basic equipment. The infrastructure and facilities remain inadequate for coping with a system that is growing at a rapid pace. The school environment is therefore generally not conducive to learning due to the physical condition of most schools and lack of teaching and learning resources. The annual population growth rate, estimated at 3.3%, contributes to the problem of the large numbers of children who have to be accommodated in schools. The financial crisis left existing facilities inadequately maintained and has retarded progress in building new facilities.

The National Policy on Education prescribes that the teacher-pupil ratio should be 1:40. The classrooms are overcrowded and in some instances schools have operated with teacher-pupil ratios of 1:76. This inadequacy of the classrooms to take care of the increased enrollment is evident in Table 1. The national teacher-pupil ratio reported in 1995 was 1:41. A programme for classroom building, to support the implementation of a scheme for universal primary education was either never developed or if it was, it was not successfully implemented. The estimated enrollment figures for the 1994/95 school year were estimated to be 16,191 thousands school children, with an annual growth rate of 2.0% (FRN, 1995). Due to shortages of classroom space, classes are offered in the open air and are subjected to all problems associated with outdoor teaching such as weather fluctuations leading to class cancellations and lack of quality instruction.

Table 1: Classrooms and enrollments in nigerian primary schools

Year	Classrooms	Enrollments
1989-1990	375,726	12,721,087
1991-1992	377,439	13,776,854
1993-1994	447,859	15870,280

Source: Educational data bank, federal republic of Nigeria (1995)

Another solution used to address the problem of classroom shortages is the use of a platoon system. Double sessions get scheduled from 7 a.m. in the morning until 6 p.m. in the evening using the same teachers. In other instances, as many as four classes are accommodated in one classroom that is already overcrowded and is in a poor state of repair. The NPEC survey in 1995 estimated that 18 billion Naira are needed for the building of new classrooms and 82 billion Naira for the renovation of dilapidated structures. It is presently estimated that the figure could be triple the 1995 figure due to high inflation rates. To understand the scale of the problem, another survey might be necessary as part of the process for developing a plan for the implementation of universal basic education.

The framework provided by the National Development Plan guides education plans. The responsibility for data collection and planning is shared between the Federal and State planning units as well as the NPEC. The planning capacity is weak and this has led to delays in the processing of data and the production of reports. Late in 1999, the NPEC had not completed processing the data for 1997. Data collection and processing at the Federal level has also been very poor. Significant changes and improvements have taken place since the re-instatement of the NPEC in 1993. Teachers' salaries have been paid out generally on time and their overall conditions of service have been somewhat improved. These changes have raised the morale of teachers from its very low point. Previously, the education system had suffered from problems of high turnover and difficulties in recruitment and retention. These improvements in the stability of teacher assignments have, to some extent, contributed to improved enrollment figures and better retention rates of pupils. Another notable change has been the effort to update the curriculum even though the teaching and learning materials were inadequate to support it. A national committee for the improvement of the curriculum was also established and has started to function.

Changes in management structures within the education system have helped to halt the negative trends relating to timely payment of teachers salaries, provision of basic equipment, maintenance of school buildings and the supply of instructional materials. This has led to some restoration of public confidence in the

public school system and to associated gains in school enrollments. However, much remains to be done in this area.

The quality of education offered is affected by poor attendance resulting in low retention rates. The physical facilities are in poor condition and the teachers are not adequately prepared for their roles. The morale amongst teachers is low due to the basic conditions of service such as the work environment and low salaries. Even then, salaries in the past had not been paid out on a regular basis.

Teacher qualifications also impact directly on quality. There are attempts to improve the level of qualification amongst teachers. The Grade II qualification (post secondary school teacher training certificate) is gradually being phased out as a minimum requirement for teaching. The numbers of teachers with NCE (post-school teacher training certificate) has increased and the country seems to be moving towards achieving a goal of having the NCE as a minimum qualification for teaching in the primary schools.

There are few ongoing staff development programs that seem to be effective. The inspectorate system has not included staff development as part of its activities. The teacher education programmes at pre-service levels have been criticized for being too theoretical and for their lack of a sound practical base needed for good classroom practice.

Teachers are generally dissatisfied with their basic conditions of employment and their working conditions. This has resulted in low morale and low esteem of the profession. The situation has improved slightly following the transfer of management of Federal allocations for primary school teachers' salaries and operational costs of schools to the National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) and the State Universal Primary Education Boards (SUPEB's) now State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEB). It is worth noting that there has been an improvement in the supply of qualified teachers to the primary schools. The number of teachers with the National Certificate of Education increased to 31% between the period 1960 and 1996. During the same period, the percentage of untrained teachers dropped to 21%. Teachers with "teacher certificate level 2 remain the highest in numbers and make up about 48% of the teaching staff. The gender disparity patterns differ regionally, with the Northern Zones teaching staff being about 72% male but only 37% male in the Southern Zones. National averages are 54.1% male teachers and 45.9% female teachers. These gender disparities are also reflected in the enrollment patterns between boys and girls (Teboho, 2000).

The re-launch of Universal Basic Education in 1999 is aimed at providing free universal basic education for all, to enable all citizens to acquire appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, communicative, manipulative and life skills. The intention is to provide nine years of compulsory education that would span primary and secondary levels. Access to basic education as a national priority includes literacy and adult education, science and vocational training. To implement the scheme, government established two committees as part of its strategy to ensure the achievement of the goal. The Coordinating Committee and the Technical Committee, which were headed by the Vice President and the Minister of Education, respectively. The plans include public information and community mobilization, provision of resources and the setting up of mechanisms to facilitate implementation of the programmes.

Another major role player is the National Primary Education Commission. This commission was established in 1988, abolished in 1991 and re-established by decree No. 96 of 1993. The Commission has been unable to meet the demands of implementing Universal Basic Education Scheme due to the limited financial resources at their disposal. Two major programmes have been identified and prioritized for implementation by the Commission's Special Projects Unit. The first is a short-term project-the Catchment Area Based Planning Management and Monitoring of Primary Schools Project. The objective is to build capacity and empower people at the community level to initiate projects that would contribute to the improvement of the quality of primary education and to ensure access of all school age children to the schools. The implementation plan includes 3-day intensive workshops targeting 774 community leaders (i.e., 1 person per Local Government Authority) and they were to be conducted in the 10 zones demarcated by the Commission. The second project- Development of Skills Acquisition Centers in the Primary School, is a long-term project. The primary objective is to encourage the acquisition of craft production skills and a culture of entrepreneurship amongst the primary school children, in a schooling environment that is more interesting and functional. It is hoped that acquisition of such skill would address other social issues such as street begging, child street hawking, child prostitution and early marriage, child labor and child abuse.

Federal and State governments, Local Government Authorities, Parent Teacher Associations, Non Governmental Organizations and local communities provide funding for education at the primary school level. The government has primary responsibility for education

but the funding levels are very low. Funding allocations from the Federal Government have remained unchanged, despite the high rise of annual per pupil costs. For example, the costs rose from Naira 891 in 1995-1030.40 in 1996 but the allocation from Federal government stayed at Naira 50 per pupil. Expenditure by parents ranges between 1000 Naira and 2400 Naira per pupil per year for various costs such as LGA levies, registration costs, stationery etc. (Ngwagwu, 1997).

The total public funds allocated to primary education have been halved in the period between 1994 and 1996. State allocations in the same period decreased. In 1996 there was no allocation by the Federal government. There is high reliance on Federal Government allocations because the capacity for local governments to collect revenue is small. Local government revenues are sometimes as low as 10% of the required funding. It is estimated that budget allocations for primary education recently represented about 1.2% of the GDP. In 1990 it was 1.5%.

There are differentiated funding allocations based on the formula used for the poor and the rich states as part of addressing inequities amongst the states. Funding allocations are based on a formula that was revised in 1994. Personnel costs remain high, leaving little or no funds for other expenses such as instructional materials. There are disparities between rural and urban areas in terms of expenditure. On average the personnel costs in rural areas are as high as 99% of the budget allocations. In the urban areas there seems to be slightly more funds in the budget for minor expenses. Local communities contribute supplemental funds and there is also a disparity between contributions made by urban and rural communities. In some instances SUBEBs are reported to have taken over some of the responsibilities assigned to the LGEAs and the accompanying budgets. The Table 2 indicates the percentage allocations of the total budget for the mid-nineties. It is glaring that the allocation to education is not sufficient to address existing problems neither enough to take cater for its needs.

A detailed survey commissioned by the Federal Government of Nigeria in partnership with UNICEF and UNESCO in 1997 also confirmed that the quality of education offered at the primary school level was low (Falayajo, 1997). Three competencies were measured, namely, literacy, numeracy and life skills. The level of numeracy competence was found to be generally low and performance in literacy was the worst amongst the 3 competencies measured. The pupils performed better in life skills learnt through the curriculum as well as those that were acquired outside the school environment.

Table 2: Education budget as percentage of total budget

Year	Total budget (billion N)	Total for education	Percentage of total (allocation to education)
1994	69.30	10.30	14.87
1995	111.45	12.70	11.42
1996	127.47	15.35	12.33

Source: International bureau for education, world data on education, 3rd Edn., 1999

## CONCLUSION

The management of primary education in Nigeria has been assigned to various tiers of Governments and commissions. In other words, it has gone through different experimentations. There was a time the primary school teachers throughout the federation embarked on protracted strike action of about 8 months, mainly because of non-payment of their salary and inability to specify where they belong, whether they are employees of Federal, State, or Local Government. The primary school students all over the federation were at home during that period except those who attend private primary schools that did not lose anything. This action nearly destroyed Nigerian primary education (public school). Even now in the present Universal Basic Education programme, the responsibilities of administration and financing primary education are still shared among the three tiers of government. It is very important for the Nigerian government to find a permanent solution to the problem of instability in the control and management of primary school education, therefore the government should be specific in its provision or declare in clear terms the legislative list upon which the control and management of primary education system is placed.

Without mincing words, the management of primary education by the Local Government is a very big task that needs serious commitment before much could be achieved. It could be suggested that the control and management of primary school education in Nigeria should be the joint responsibility of both Federal and Local Governments. The local government should be involved because it is the government closer to the grassroots with less responsibility on education administration. While Federal Government overall monitoring and funding is necessary in order to maintain a uniform standard of primary education throughout the country. Also, it is the government failure to provide qualitative primary education as a result of poor management and funding that necessitate increased privatization of primary education system in Nigeria. However, the intervention of Federal Government is

needed to rescue public primary school, which is the hope of the poor in giving education to their children, from total collapse. More so, the Federal Government should establish a minimum standard requirement for both the public and private primary school.

To successfully implement the Universal Basic Education Scheme, there is need to develop sound implementation plans. This would have to be preceded by a survey of the existing resources and capacity of the national and local planning structures to implement the plan and monitor progress made in order to detect problem areas and address them at an early stage.

Strategic planning and implementation are essential to the success of the nine-year programme and for capacity building in the system as well as for its implementation. Failures in the past cannot be blamed entirely on low levels of funding but also on lack of capacity for planning and implementation at both national and local levels. National structures such as the Planning Division of the Federal Ministry of Education would need to be strengthened to ensure that there is capacity in those structures to monitor the implementation plan as well as to provide assistance to the local structures.

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