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LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE MANAGEMENT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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INTRODUCTION

A local government is a political authority which is created by law or constitution of a State at the grassroots level of the society for the purpose of providing basic services for the local communities. The allocation of these services either by law or constitution is governed by certain factors. These factors include the scope and nature of the services, the size of the local government areas, the available financial resources and the executive capacity of the local government. In most nations of the world, local government is involved in the provision and management of primary education. This is in consideration of the business, and local nature, of primary education. The degree of involvement of the local government in the provision and management of primary education varies from nation to nation. In Nigeria, from the time the modern local government system was introduced in the country in 1950.- the local government has participated with the State Government in the provision and management of primary education. The Local Government Reform of 1976 still allocated to the local government the function of participation in the provision and management of primary education. This function was for the first time entrenched in the *1979 Constitution* which provided:

The functions of a Local Government shall include participation of such Local Government in the government of a state in respect of the following matters, namely, the provision and maintenance of primary, adult and vocational education. (*The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1979, Fourth Schedule*).

The provision was retained by The *1989 Constitution*. However in 1990, the Babangida administration gave the local government the exclusive responsibility for the provision and management of primary education. This was given constitutional backing by Decree 3 of 1991. This decree amends the Fourth Schedule, section 2 of the *1989 Constitution*, which provides that the local government shall "participate" in the provision and maintenance primary education. Decree 3 of 1991 allocates to only the local governments the duty of the provision and management of primary education in their respective areas of jurisdiction. This involves full responsibility in funding, provision and maintenance of infrastructure, staffing and control.

This development poses a number of searching questions, Viz.:

1. What is the rationale for the local government's exclusive responsibility for the establishment and management of primary schools in the country?
2. Has the local government adequate, competent personnel for effective management of primary education
3. Can the local government provide qualitative free primary education with its existing financial resources?
4. Is it administratively suitable and appropriate for the local government to be given exclusive responsibility for the management of primary education?
5. What conditions are necessary under which the local government can effectively manage primary education in Nigeria?

These and other related questions constitute the problem area of this paper. Hence, the objective of this study is to undertake a systematic study of the functions, finances, executive and managerial capacity of the local Government in relation to the overall primary education costs and professional manpower needs with a view to determining whether the local government can provide qualitative free primary education. The study will determine whether the allocation of the function of the management of primary education is guided by the four considerations listed above, namely, size of local government area, available financial resources, the scope and nature of the service (local and basic nature of the service), as well as managerial and executive capacity.

THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

Primary education is basic and local in nature. It is basic as it constitutes the foundation on which the rest of the educational system is built. Primary education serves as the key to the success or failure of the whole educational system. It is local as its content of orientation, pupils and teachers are drawn from local communities. It is local in nature as it involves the inculcation of literacy and numeracy based on local conditions, the study of science and social norms and values of the local communities, the study of local crafts, creative arts and agriculture. Primary education operates within "community schools" whose activities are governed by local conditions.

Generally, the teachers and pupils of primary schools come from the local government area and the teaching is conducted in the local language of the people. The *1987 Constitution* and the *National Policy on Education* provide that the teaching in primary schools should be conducted in the mother tongue of the pupils or the language of the immediate community. Primary education, therefore, requires detailed local knowledge and local political control, and depends on community participation and responsiveness for effective performance. Primary education is universal and most families are involved, and the consumers live in local communities. The provision and management of primary education, therefore, should be close to the local people as it requires significant use of discretion and understanding of the local people, local conditions and peculiarities.

THE QUESTION OF SIZE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

An important consideration for the allocation of functions to the local government is the size of the units. The Local Government Reform of 1976 created single-tier and multi-purpose local government which are uniform and large in size. Thus, the present structure of local government in Nigeria is large-sized unitary local government system. Most local government areas have populations which now range from 300,000 to 800,000 and each occupies a very large geographical area. Some of them are as large as very small independent states of Africa. Consequently, the Local Government areas are large enough to discharge large-scale functions of local nature. It follows that from the point of view of size, the local government is appropriate and administratively suitable for the management of primary education. A local government area possesses many community primary schools with a good number of pupils and teachers. The table below illustrates this point.

Table 1

PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN SOME SELECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS

<i>S/No</i>	<i>Name of</i>	<i>Total No. of</i>	<i>Total Pupils'</i>	<i>Total No. of</i>
	<i>Local</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Enrolment</i>	<i>Primary</i>
	<i>Govt.</i>	<i>School</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>Teacher</i>
				<i>1990</i>
I.	Ezinihitte			
	Mbaise	51	24,274	652
1.	Nkwerre	42	15,730	423
3.	Ikwuano			
	Umuahia	136	65,547	1,581
4.	Isiala	61	21,271	504
	Mbano			
5.	Aboh	57	27,448	709
	Mbaise			
7.	Onicha	35	21,101	205

In the whole of Imo State where there were 21 local government areas in 1987, there were 2,031 primary schools, 21,953 primary school teachers and

911,975 pupils which represent averages of 97 schools, 1,045 teachers and 43,427 pupils per local government area.

In Anambra State, the situation is the same. With a total number of 23 local government areas in 1987 there were 2,075 primary schools; 26,056 teachers and 787,990 pupils which represent averages of 90 primary schools, 1,133 primary school teachers and 34,260 pupils per local government area (Nwagwu, 1990:14)

One can then conclude that the local government area constitutes an appropriate administrative unit for the management of primary education. The number of schools, pupils and teachers in each local government area are neither too small nor too large for effective management. The number of schools and strength of pupils and teachers are administratively adequate and convenient for effective management where other administrative requirements are present.

PERSONNEL FACTOR

The personnel of the local government charged with the management of primary education can be classified into five categories, Viz. teachers, headmasters/headmistresses and supervisors, official of the Local Government Education Department, the Executive and the Council of the Local Government. Teachers play a dominant and central role in the delivery of primary education services. Hence, the success of the primary education programme depends on their adequacy in terms of quality and quantity. It is quite encouraging to observe that most states of the Federation possess adequate and well-qualified primary school teachers. For instance, Ikwuano Umuahia Local Government with a total of 1,581 primary school pupils has 65,547 teachers. In Imo State, the primary school teachers have either the Teachers Grade Two or the N.C.E. Certificate which points to the fact that they are well qualified. Local governments have adequate well-qualified and experienced headmasters. However, they do not possess enough school supervisors as a result of shortage of funds. The Local Government Education Department is headed by the Education Secretary who also acts as the Chief Executive of the Local Education Authority. Before this reform, the officials of the Local Government Education Department were paid and controlled by the State Primary Education Board which was an agency of the State Government. However, with the reform, the staff of the Local Government Education Department were converted to local government staff. It is equally expected that the staff of the State Primary Education Board will be redeployed to various Local Government Education Departments. When this is done and where more experts in educational administration and supervision appointed, they will beef up the executive capacity of the Education Department.

The executive arm of the local government consists of the local government chairman and his supervisors. This body is responsible for making policies in respect of primary education and for directing the efficient execution of such policies. *The 1989 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* which provides that the minimum academic qualification

for the chairman and councillors of the Local Government should not be less than the School Certificate or its equivalent has guaranteed a high quality of the educational standard of the local government executive. Thus, most of the chairmen of local governments elected during the 1990 polls are well qualified and experienced professionals of various fields like law, education, political science, medicine, economics, administration, etc. The recent autonomy granted to the local government coupled with the increased funding from the local government serves as a great attraction to highly qualified and experienced elites. Moreover, the presidential form of local government will also attract well qualified and competent persons as chairmen of local governments. In addition, since the chairman in the presidential form of local government is vested with the power of appointing as supervisors any one of his choice from either within or outside the Council, he now has the opportunity of appointing well qualified and competent professionals in education as the supervisor(s) for the Education Department. The implication of all these is that the officers of the current executive of the local government are of high quality and are well qualified and competent to manage primary education with great efficiency.

The quality of councillors is another important factor for an effective management of primary education. The Council is the body of the representatives of the local community which is responsible among other things for the making of broad policies in primary education control, supervision and monitoring the delivery of primary education services. Just like the chairmanship of the local government, the councillorship quality has significantly increased as a result of four main factors. These are the raised status of the local government, increased funding, enhanced autonomy of the local government and the constitutional requirement that the minimum academic qualification for membership of the councils should not be less than the School Certificate. As a result, the local government councils, as are at present constituted in most areas, consist of men and women with good academic qualifications and experience in various fields of endeavour. So, one can state that the present local government councils are adequately qualified and competent to supervise and monitor the management of primary education.

From the above analysis on the local government personnel one can conclude that the local government possesses adequate- and qualified personnel for the management of primary education. The question that remains is whether the local government possesses sufficient funds for the continuous motivation and retention of such services and personnel through regular payment of their salaries and allowances, recruitment of more staff in the areas of educational planning, supervision and administration, as well as the organisation of regular training and re-training for all the categories of personnel. This leads us to the issue of finance.

FINANCIAL FACTOR

Finance is a very critical issue and a decisive factor in the management of primary education. Finance determines the quantity and quality of personnel,

the amount and quality of materials and infrastructure to be provided, the regularity in the payment of salaries and allowances and other motivational incentives. Thus, for the local government to be capable of managing primary education, it should possess a strong financial base.

The local government derives its revenue from such sources as general rates, property rates, market and motor park charges, fees from the registration of births, deaths and marriages and from a variety of licenses, fines, profits and earnings from commercial ventures, statutory allocation from State and federal government as well as loans. In theory, the local government has a wide range of revenue sources allocated to it. But in practice not much is realised from the internal sources. The fundamental reason for low generation of internal revenue is that since most rural communities are in a deplorable state of poverty, the amount generated from those areas are invariably meagre. Hence, the independent revenue sources allocated to the local government are generally non-buoyant sources. Move over, most local areas are not developed and at the same time are depopulated as a result of urban migration, which makes it difficult for local governments to generate adequate revenues from their areas. Another important factor is that some of the revenue sources are difficult areas to collect revenue. Sometimes the cost of revenue collection exceeds the actual money collected. These areas include registration of births and deaths, radio and television license fees and other licence fees. Hence, Egonwan rightly observed that:

the state governments have thus acquired the more lucrative, elastic and collectable revenue sources — leaving local governments with taxation with low ceiling revenues which are administratively and politically difficult to exploit in an environment where the vast majority of the people are poor, self-employed and dispersed in rural areas. (Egonwan, 1984:106).

There are also the factors of corruption, fraud and embezzlement of funds among revenue officials, which factors contribute to the inadequacy of local government revenue. The statutory revenue allocations from States and Federal Government respectively also have problems. In the past, when federal allocation to local governments passed through the State Governments, most State Governments remitted only part of what was due to the Local Governments. Moreover, most State Governments did not play their statutory ten percent of their total internal revenue to their Local Governments. At present, the situation has improved since Babangida's reform in which the Federal statutory allocations were paid direct to the Local Government. Yet, there still exists a wide gap between approved estimated revenue from statutory allocations from States and Federal Governments and the actual revenue received by the Local Governments. The wide gap between approved and actual revenue is illustrated in the Table below, which shows the Approved and Actual revenues respectively for 1987 of one of the big urban Local Governments in Imo State:

Table 2
APPROVED AND ACTUAL REVENUE IN 1987 OF
A BIG URBAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN IMO STATE

<i>S/No</i>	<i>Revenue Source</i>	<i>Approved Estimate (N)</i>	<i>Actual Revenue (N)</i>	<i>% of Actual</i>
1.	Capitation Rate	1,500,010	590,719	39.4%
2. 3.	Property Rate	4,500,000	1,278,808	28.4%
4.	Licences and Fees Earning from Economic Ventures	2,004,200	1,132,309	56.5%
5.	Rent on Local Government Property	4,023,030	2,579,743	64.1%
6.	Interests and Dividends	6,020	3,880	64.5%
7. 8.	Miscellaneous Statutory Allocation from State and Federal Governments	6,010 3,040	431 50,726	7.2% 1668.6%
	Total	4,006,990	2,788,670	69.5%
		16,049,330	8,413,981	52.4%

Source: N. A. Nwagwu, "The Management of Human and Material Resources for Education at the Local Government level in Nigeria in a period of Economic Reconstruction," 1990, p. 26.

The Table above shows that apart from the miscellaneous sources where the actual revenue exceeded the estimated revenue there was a very significant shortfall in the projected revenue in all other sources. Moreover, the total actual revenue of N8,413,981 is grossly inadequate for a big urban local government when one considers the enormous functions it is assigned to perform, even though at that time the Local Government's share of the Federation Account had not been increased to 20% which it is at present. This position of inadequate funding is more serious with non-urban Local Governments. The situation is illustrated in the Table below:

Table 3
ACTUAL REVENUE OF OBO\VO LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN
1989 AND 1990 FISCAL YEARS

<i>S/No.</i>	<i>Revenue source</i>	<i>Total Actual Revenue 1989 -N-</i>	<i>Total Actual Revenue 1990 -N-</i>
1.	Capitation Rale	7,940.00	35, 150.00
2.	Licence Fees and Fines	21^956.64	84,399.00
3.	Earning from Commercial Ventures	10,584.40	10,956.50
4.	Interests and Dividends	88.97	3,050.46
5.	Miscellaneous	23,786.08	105,030.17
6.	Federal Statutory Allocations	2,639,917.74	3,381,021.66
7.	State Statutory Allocation	38,768.11	115,243.00
	Total	2,743,041.91	3,734,850.79

Source: Data from Finance Department, Obowo Local Government, 1991.

H is important lo relate the above total actual revenue to the total actual expenditure during the same period. This is shown in the Table below.

Table 4
ACTUAL EXPENDITURE OF OBOWO LOCAL GOVERNMENT
IN 1989 AND 1990 FISCAL YEAR

<i>S/No.</i>	<i>Source of Expenditure</i>	<i>Actual Expen- diture 1989 N-</i>	<i>Actual Expendi- ture 1990 N</i>
1.	Education: School Buildings and Equipment	75;IXK),00	168,110.00
2.	Health	40,000.00	200,000.00
3.	Rural Electrification	130,000.00	200,000.00
4.	Water Resources and Supply	-	450,000.00
5.	Maintenance ot" Roads and Bridges	250,000.00	400,000.00
6.	Chairman's Residence	200,000.00	—
7.	Community Development , Markets and Motor Parks	75,000.00	150,000.00
8.	Personnel Costs	405,983.46	360,958.55
9.	General Administration and Overhead Costs	1,570,944.83	1,470,479.29
10.	Capital Expenditure	532,795.78__	661,917.16
	Total Expenditure	3,179,795.78	4,121,465.03

From the Table one can observe a wide range of basic, essential local services on which the local government spreads its meagre actual revenue. One also observes that a large part of the expenditure is made on overhead costs as well as administration and personnel costs, while very little was spent on capital projects. Furthermore, the total annual expenditure exceeded the total actual revenue which shows that the Local Government is in debt. Moreover, when one considers the adverse effect of the Structural Adjustment Programme and its resultant galloping inflation on the value and the purchasing power of the naira, one can appreciate the actual amount of services provided with the amounts of expenditure contained in the table. It is also important to note that the Table of Expenditure does not include teachers' salaries which up to 1990 was paid by the Primary Schools Management Board. The question that follows from the above is whether local governments with such fragile financial base, in spite of the increase in their share of the Federation Account to 20%, possess the capability of effective management of primary education, and at the same time carry out other important services assigned to them.

MAJOR ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Education is a capital-intensive service. The management of primary education involves large numbers of school pupils with the resultant large number of teaching staff. For instance, in 1987, there were in Nigeria a total of 30,358 primary schools, 298,733 classes, 272,598 primary school teachers, and 10 532 545 primary school children. Details are shown in the Table below:

Table 5
PRIMARY SCHOOL STATISTICS BY STATES IN NIGERIA, 1987.

	<i>States</i>	<i>No. of LGA's</i>	<i>No. of Schools</i>	<i>No. of I Classes</i>	<i>Vo. of Teachers</i>	<i>No. of Pupils</i> -----
		23	2,075	25,579	26,056	787,990
1.	Anambra					
2.	Bauchi	16	1,605	9,921	10,036	320,632
3.	Bendel	19	1,766	21,090	802,255	
4.	Benue	13	2,315	17,217	13,299	544,794
5.	Borno	18	1,433	11,113	10,902	464,478
6.	Cross River	7	576	5,877	4,874	243,496
7.	Gongola	17	NA	NA	NA	NA
8.	Imo	21	2,031	25,565	21,953	911,975
9.	Kaduna	7	1,332	13,449	10,201	559,503
10.	Kano	20	3,132	21,847	17,659	832,786
11.	Kwara	12	1,292	12,883	15,235	362,133
12.	Lagos	8	952	18,589	16,750	771,921
13.	Niger	10	1,122	6,594	7,886	245,946
14.	Ogun	10	1,294	12,943	11,192	398,493
15.	Ondo	17	1,577	15,576	14,379	504,014
16.	Oyo	24	2,576	31,807	29,234	1,028,502
17.	Plateau	14	1,412	14,009	15,244	510,283
18.	Rivers	9	1,094	12,168	11,470	510,283
19.	Sokoto	19	NA	NA	NA	NA
20.	PCT Abuja	4	203	1,442	1,632	36,355
21.	Akwa Ibora	10	1,031	10,624	10,191	441,647
22.	Katsina	7	1,540	10,747	6,496	180,901
	<i>Total</i>	305	30,358	298,733	272,598	10,532,545

Source: Federal Ministry of Education, Statistics Unit, Lagos, 1988.

It is important to note that as inflation heightens with attendant increasing depreciation of the value of the naira, the population of the primary school children and teachers continues to increase year by year. For instance, in Ezinihitte-Mbaise Local Government Area the number of primary schools rose from 20,282 in 1989 to 24,274 in 1991, while the total number of teachers rose from 647 in 1989 to 652 in 1991. The primary school population also rose from 59,481 in 1988 to 65, 547 in 1990. In Nkwerre Local Government, the total number of pupils rose from 14,018 in 1990 to 15,730 in 1991. The implication of this steady rise in pupils and teachers' population is heavy financial involvement in management.

The large number of pupils and teachers results in huge teachers' wage bills which constitute a heavy financial burden on Local Governments. This is illustrated with the Table below:

Table 6
TOTAL TEACHERS' ANNUAL WAGE BILLS FOR SOME SELECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN IMO STATE FOR 1990

<i>S/No.</i>	<i>Local Government</i>	<i>Total Teachers' Salaries -At</i>	<i>Total Cost of Development, Maintenance and Equipment -N-</i>
1.	Isiala Mbano	6,637,133.64	144,198
2.	Aboh Mbaise	6,700,000.00	145,000
3.	Ikwuano Umuahia	9,941,116.84	3,625,568.14
4.	Ezinihitte Mbaise	5,454,612.00	62,872.00
5.	Nkwerre	3,196,569.63	156,463.50
6.	Onicha	1,560,670.13	233,192.50

Source: Data from Local Governments, 1991

It was the responsibility of the Primary School Management Board to provide for the teachers' salaries up to 1990 while the Local Governments were and are still responsible for development projects, maintenance and equipment of schools. With Decree 3 of 1991 which gave the Local Governments exclusive responsibility for the management of primary education, the Local Governments shouldered the burden of the payment of teacher's salaries and allowances in addition to the development, maintenance and equipment of primary schools. It was observed that each local government had many primary schools whose buildings were in a deplorable state of neglect and decadence. Most of them lacked the required school equipment and instructional materials to make teaching and learning meaningful. A lot of funds

were required to put these primary schools in conducive teaching and learning environment.

An important factor for consideration in the issue of the management of primary education is free primary education system which is an important policy of the Federal Government. This is a fundamental policy for national development which the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria should not detract from. The policy is in keeping with *the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1989* which under Section 19(2) provides for "free, compulsory and universal primary education". One of the two political parties in the country, the Social Democratic Party, promised to provide free, compulsory primary education if voted into power. Accordingly, the party categorically stated in its Manifesto (1989) thus:

primary education is the pillar on which rests the country's educational system. Therefore, primary education shall be free, compulsory and relevant to our overall national needs.

The crucial question is whether the Local Governments under their existing financial resources can provide free, qualitative primary education and at the same time provide other numerous functions assigned to it. Where a local government is incapable of raising adequate revenue, a situation will arise where essential school infrastructure and equipment will not be provided, schools not maintained and salaries and allowances of teachers owed for many months. Should the situation be left as it is now and it is felt that a good foundation has been laid for the management of primary education, the Third Republic will, no doubt, witness a rehearsal of what happened during the Second Republic. This situation was summed up by the Director-General of the Federal Ministry of Education in his keynote address read at the Seminar on Improvement of the Quality of Education at the Local Government level held in Lagos in July 1988. In the address he observed.

The System is manifesting gross shortage of everything. Some States owe teachers salaries for upwards of six months. Buildings are unmaintained, children read under trees; teaching aids, books and furniture are lacking; teachers are laid off to save costs.

The system is on the verge of collapse. Four adaptive measures may be taken by local governments if adequate funds are not provided for the management of primary education. First, some Local Governments can charge school fees under various disguised names. Second, many may neglect further school development, maintenance of existing school buildings and other infrastructures and provision of school equipment and facilities. Third, some Local Governments may owe teachers salaries, allowances and pensions for many months and thus frustrate the entire educational system; and fourth, many of them may abandon the provision of other services allocated to them thereby causing under-development of local communities. It is in recognition

of this problem that the Committee on the Review of Local Government Administration in Nigeria popularly known as "the Dasuki Committee" recommended that the "Local Government takes full responsibility for the development, maintenance, provision of school equipment and the management of primary education, while the State and Federal Governments take full responsibility for the payment of teacher's salaries and allowances". The Committee recommended that "the assessed bill of salaries, allowances and pensions should be shared between the Federal and the State Governments in the proportion of 40% by the Federal Government and 60% by the State Government' (*Government Views on the Report of the Committee on the Review of Local Administration in Nigeria*, 1985:13). What the Federal Government later did was to increase the Local Government share of the Federation Account from 10% to 15%. The Federal Government later shifted the full responsibility of funding and managing primary education to the Local Government which obviously completely neutralised this significant increase in its financial resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Primary education is the rock on which the entire educational system of a nation is founded. The Political Bureau which provided the theoretical foundation on which the transitional programme and the new political order are formulated and built forcefully stated:

Nigeria has a literacy rate of only about 20% for the people who are above 15 years old. This shows an urgency for a scheme of mass education.... In order to have a literate Nigerian society there is need to have the education of youths **free** for the first nine years. (*Report of the Political bureau*, 1987:61)

Hence, primary education should be truly free in all its ramifications and really qualitative in content, management and output. From our analysis above, one concludes that the Local Government possesses three out of the four essential factors which are required for the successful management of primary education, namely, local and basic nature of educational service; good quality and quantity of personnel for the management and delivery of educational service; and a large size of the Local Government area. However, finance which is a crucial and decisive factor in the management of primary education is grossly inadequate. Inadequate financial resources can seriously jeopardise and frustrate the entire primary education programme and its management as inadequate finance would adversely affect the quantity and quality of personnel, the managerial capability, and the provision of required infrastructures and equipment for functional and qualitative teaching and learning.

The allocation of full responsibility for the management of primary education to the Local Government is proper, appropriate and commendable. However, adequate financial resources have not been

provided to the Local Governments to ensure qualitative free primary education. As the Local Government is intended "to lay the political and economic basis for grass-roots-centred development" (Babangida, 1991:23), and serve as a powerful instrument of rural transformation, it should be adequately funded. According to President Babangida (Olagunji and Oyovbaire, 1990:23):

Growth points must emerge from the Local Government areas and provide the much-needed push to activate and energise productive activities in rural Nigeria and to reverse the phenomenon of rural-urban drift.

This can be realised not by creating heavy financial burden for the Local Government but through provision of adequate funds for it to serve as a real third tier of government.

It is therefore recommended that to ensure efficient management of primary education which is truly free and qualitative, the Federal Government should take over completely the payment of primary school teachers' salaries, allowances and pensions throughout the Federation. The Federal Government should re-establish the National Primary Education Commission at the centre and the Primary Schools Management Board in every State. The primary responsibility of these bodies will only be to collect primary school statistics which should include total number of pupils and teachers, their qualifications, salaries and allowances with which they allocate the federal funds to the Local Governments. The funds should be allocated strictly on the basis of the total number of teachers and their total pay bills which funds should be paid to Local Governments on quarterly basis in advance as special education grants. The Primary Education Commission should not interfere with the Local Government in its responsibility of the management of primary education. However, it should be the responsibility of the Primary Education Commission/Board to monitor and ensure that the funds allocated to the Local Government for teachers' salaries, allowances and pensions are strictly used for the purpose. The Local Government will then concentrate its energies and resources on building new classrooms, provision of school furniture and equipment, maintenance of existing school infrastructures, and provision of games and sporting facilities. It is through this arrangement that genuine free and qualitative primary education can be realised and, at the same time, the Local Government can possess adequate funds to discharge other numerous local services which are of great concern to the citizens in the rural areas.

The Federal Government should establish through a law/decreed, a national special education fund in which the State and Federal governments should respectively pay some amount of money on annual basis, which should be a percentage of their total annual income while all industrial and commercial establishments that make profits of up to N1, 000,000 (one million naira) and above should pay in to the fund a certain percentage of their total annual profits. It is from this special education fund that the primary school teachers' salaries, allowances and pensions will be fully paid. Part of the fund could also be set aside to give regular grants to secondary schools and tertiary institutions in the country for specific projects.

The management of primary schools by the Local Government creates an appropriate situation of treating the primary schools as "community schools". One of the implications of the concept of "community schools" is that through the mobilisation of communities and the promotion of the growth of town development unions, parents-teachers' associations, school committees, and their full involvement in the management of schools, the burden of the local government in the development and maintenance of schools will be significantly reduced. If appropriate political, administrative, and communicative skills and techniques are employed to secure their full involvement, their resources and leadership potentials could be fully exploited, harnessed and utilised for the management of primary education. The Local Government chairman and his supervisor for education should hold regular meetings with leaders of town development unions, parents-teachers' associations and education committees within their areas of jurisdiction. There should be a Local Government Advisory Committee on Primary Education in every Local Government area which should comprise chairmen and secretaries of parents-teachers' associations, town development unions and education committees of various primary schools within the Local Government area. This body should be presided over by the Supervisor for Education, meet regularly and identify problems of primary education in its area and offer suggestions to the Local Government Chief Executive. The Local Government should also give matching grants to communities for school development and maintenance. This will boost self-help development spirit. It is in this direction that Professor N. A. Nwagwu has rightly observed that:

only those States and Local Governments that have learnt how to encourage and support local initiatives towards the development of educational facilities at the Local Government levels that have experienced very rapid expansion and consolidation of their educational system. (Nwagwu, 1990:18)

He, further, advised that "educational planners and administrators must therefore see local leaders and development associations as partners in educational progress" (Nwagwu, 1990:18). To ensure great improvement of existing facilities, regular supply of school equipments and rapid development of the schools, the communities should be fully mobilised by the Local Government for effective participation. Accordingly, the Dasuki Committee observed that 'the success of primary education depends on community responsiveness and participation'. (*Government Views on the Report of the Committee on the Review of Local Government Administration in Nigeria*, 1985:13).

In conclusion, the Local Government is most suited for the management of primary education as it guarantees local and close political control and supervision, and fosters community responsiveness and participation needed for effective management of primary education. However, the Local Government, under its existing financial base, cannot

successfully manage and deliver qualitative and free primary education and, at the same time, provide other important services allocated to it. Consequently, for the effective management of primary education in Nigeria, the Federal Government should take full responsibility of the payment of all primary school teachers' salaries, allowances and pensions which should be funded from a national special education fund to be established by a decree/law of the Federal Government. It is only through this measure that the country can effect qualitative and free primary education which will ultimately result in a literate Nigerian society that can firmly establish a new political and socio-economic order.

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