

Roles of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the Development of Public Secondary School Education in Katsina Local Government Area of Katsina State

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Abstract

The assumption a large number of people have in Katsina Metropolis with regard to the activities of NGOs in respect of Educational Development and other humanitarian services being rendered might not be unconnected to political and religious factors. This paper explored the motives behind the low patronage and lack of appreciation which the residents of Katsina Metropolis have been showing to the local NGOs operating in the Metropolis. In the course of investigating the fact, the researchers had to rely on literature review and had to use interview as an instrument for sourcing data. It was found out that the contributions and achievements made so far by the identified NGOs in the development of Public Secondary School Education could not be over emphasized for they had played a role in lobbying the State Government to pay Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) fees for the final year Katsina indigenes; Teachers' Development and Provision of teaching materials to the needy students. However, challenges which those identified NGOs were facing included economic, political, cultural and religious among others. To remedy these, suggestions were given including diversification of revenues, and maintenance of peoples' norms and values, among others.

Keywords: role, NGOs, development, secondary, schools, education

Introduction

It is obvious that mankind will never be free from needs due to mortal nature of man. Human fleshes and bones are nurtured everyday with support of a variety of diets to keep them healthy, safe and alive. Likewise, education which is like human in nature must be nurtured and supported in order to maintain its effectiveness and efficiency. Education consumes resources because it is a long term investment which requires frequent expensive maintenance to keep it healthy, safe and virtually alive. To do so, government alone cannot achieve these due to limited resources, population explosion and other related factors. In this regard, a helping hand is necessary to assist directly or indirectly in promoting education at all the three levels (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary). This support may be from NGOs, which is the focus of this paper.

Objectives of the paper

The objective of this paper is to establish the role of Non-Governmental Organization in the development of public secondary education in Katsina Local Government Area. The paper specifically wants to establish:

- a. The role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the development of public secondary school education in Katsina Local Government Area.
- b. The extent to which the NGOs' contributions have promoted teaching and learning in public secondary schools in Katsina Local Government Area.
- c. The extent to which the contributions of the NGOs influence the indigenes of Katsina Local Government Area.

Description of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have a far longer history than this recent resurgence and retreat suggests. Many of the world's best known NGOs predate the emergence of the development industry. Save the Children Fund (SCF) was founded by Eglantyne Jebb in 1919 after the trauma of the First World War. Oxfam, which was originally known as the Oxford Committee against Famine, was established in 1942 in order to provide drought relief to victims of the Greek Civil War. CARE began its life sending US food packages to Europe in 1946 after the Second World War. In fact, NGOs had been active at the international level since the eighteenth century in Western countries, when national level issue-based organizations focused on the abolition of the slave trade and movements for peace. By the start of the twentieth century, there were NGOs promoting their identities and agendas at national and international levels. For example, at the World Congress of International Associations in 1910, there were 132 international associations represented, dealing with issues as varied as transportation, intellectual property rights, narcotics control, public health issues, agriculture and the protection of nature, (Mohinuddin, 2017).

The first wave of academic literature on NGOs emerged in the 1990s as indicated in the Lewis' (2010) research journal in which he cited scholars that presented a wide range of case studies of NGOs in action and began to raise important questions about NGOs' performance and accountability, it was not until the following decade that a second wave of more detailed, theoretically grounded research on NGOs began to become more common within the field of interdisciplinary development studies and this corresponds with the views of both Hilhorst (2003) and Fowler (2000).

There are an estimated 440,000 officially registered NGOs in China. In recent years, NGO is a widely used term. The number of NGOs in the world is estimated to be 3.7 million. There are 277,000 NGOs in Russia. It is estimated that there were approximately 2 million NGOs in India in 2009, just over one in every 600 Indians, which was several times the number of primary schools and primary health care centers in India (Heinrich, 2007).

Characteristics of Nongovernmental Organisations (NGOs)

Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) at the Local Levels are similar to the International Organisations in terms of characteristics with which they are identified. Below are some of the major features which are widely acknowledged and cited from different scholars (Zadja, 2018). They are:

1. Non-profit oriented agencies

A Non-Governmental Organization is a non-profit, voluntary, service-development-oriented organization; whether for the benefit of its members (a grassroots organization) or for other population members. It is established with the aim to providing free services to humanity irrespective of their religion, regions, states or streets, gender or age. This means that they function primarily to provide philanthropic, non-commercial services to the population (Yusuf, 2011).

2. Presence of collaborative efforts

NGOs are composed of individuals who believe in certain basic social principles. They organize their own activities to achieve the development of the communities they serve. Their collaborative efforts assist in developing various aspects of human activities to ensure sustainable living. They work with spirit of cooperative endeavour to achieve a common purpose (Ezenwa, 2011). Therefore, they are considered as social development promoting instruments.

3. Non - politically motivated organizations

Non-Governmental Organizations are independent, free and non-sectarian popular organizations dedicated to empowering economically and/or socially marginalized groups. That is, an organization which is not affiliated with a political party, which is generally dedicated to the assistance, development and welfare of the community. According to Willetts (1996), Donor Organizations should be free from any direct control of any government. They should also not be established as political parties, profit-making agencies, drug-trafficking and other related crime agencies.

4. Culturally oriented organizations

NGOs are agencies established for the community, with or without government intervention. These agencies are not only a charity, but are also engaged in socio-economic and cultural activities. Davis (2011) asserted that Nongovernmental Organizations could use traditional and religious leaders to reach their target communities, partly because religion has an essential place and role to play in any society and in any community and partly because culture has certain norms and values that need to be conformed to.

Classifications of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

In general, NGOs act as implementers, catalysts and partners that have different approaches. Some act mainly as lobbyists, while others mainly carry out planning and activities. In this regard, the NGOs are classified into three classes according to their respective scope of operations. Some have wider scope while others have limited scope due to limited resources and political factors. Vakil (2018) in her research work cited the

following classifications based on guide, coverage and functions of the Nongovernmental Organizations. They are:

1. Classification according to guide

a) Charity: The activities of these NGOs are based on the concept of charity. These activities include the distribution of food, clothing, medicine, educational facilities, relief work, among others.

b) Development direction services: The activities of these NGOs include the provision of medical care, family planning or education services.

c) Participatory: These NGOs are characterized by self-help projects in which local residents participate by providing cash, tools, land, materials, labour, and so on.

d) Empowerment-oriented: These NGOs work to strengthen the awareness of target groups and their potential to control their lives.

2. Classification according to coverage

a) Local: These NGOs only operate in a few villages, communities, or unions that receive funding from local/national/international sources.

b) National: These NGOs operate in four or more geographic locations in a country and receive funds mainly from foreign donors.

c) International: These non-governmental organizations operate in different geographical locations, are headquartered abroad, and are mainly operated by experts.

d) Mixed: These NGOs are voluntary organizations organized locally, but accept funding from foreign governments or organizations

3. Classification according to functions

a) Relief and welfare: These NGOs are dedicated to providing relief support to the homeless and the needy.

b) Service-oriented: These NGOs carry out activities to provide services to target groups.

c) Funding: These NGOs act as channels for foreign donors to provide grants to NGOs and help local NGOs obtain foreign aid.

Table 1: List of some identified NGOs operating in Katsina Local Government Area

S/N	Name of the NGO	Location		
1	Coalition of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)	Katsina Area	Local	Govt.
2	PLBC Organization	Katsina Area	Local	Govt.
3	Council of <i>Ulama</i>	Katsina Area	Local	Govt.
4	Jamatul Izatul Bidi'ah Wa Ikamatus Sunnah (JIBWIS)	Katsina Area	Local	Govt.
5	Young Muslims Association of Nigeria	Katsina Area	Local	Govt.

Source: Author (2022)

Goals of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Non-Governmental Organizations have common and different goals, which they strive hard to achieve. Hann (2022) opines that some NGOs aim at promoting education, especially girl-child education and less privileged women at both local and national levels. At the regional level, they assist in establishing small-scale businesses, providing training and soft loans to target individual persons. NGOs also intervene in the agricultural sector, by assisting in improving farming technique and skills, to enable the target farmers to fight against infectious diseases that may attack their crops. However, a large number of the NGOs aim to eradicate abject poverty in both under-developed and developing nations such as Nigeria.

Challenges affecting NGOs in Katsina LGA

Generally, Nongovernmental Organizations operating in Katsina Local Government Area face some challenges in the course of executing their developmental projects, particularly in the educational sector. These challenges include:

i. **Political factor:** Some politicians regard activities of the Nongovernmental Organizations operating within their constituency as politically motivated movement used as a weapon against them by their political opposition. Page (2021) asserts that pro-government nongovernmental agencies have emerged in Nigeria, using different forms of camouflage to compromise with toxic politicians. He also terms such agencies as “Fake Civil Society” in his book, titled: ‘*Fake Civil Society: The Rise of Pro-Government NGOs in Nigeria*’. This means that, to be free from political influence, there has to be a kind of compromise, otherwise the activities of the agencies can be suspended indefinitely.

ii. **Cultural factor:** Cultural factors do influence the activities of Nongovernmental Organizations’ members of staff, simply due to the place that culture has in any society. Akinkuotu (2020), in his study, opines that culture consists of vital tools and skills for the attainment of success in organization and NGOs are not also excluded; for cultural sensitivity assists leaders in handling sensitive issues. Lewis (2006) asserts that understanding the culture of organizations at different levels makes a visionary leader. Therefore, different cultures and language barriers affect the activities of NGOs in Katsina L.G.A.

iii. **Religious factor:** It is obvious that religion has a special place in our communities and societies whose norms and values are in harmony with the religious rites. Katsina L.G.A. is a Muslim populated area with different religious sects that strive hard to ensure that nothing foreign dominates their territory. Davis (2011) opines that both NGOs and Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) experience difficulty in Muslim populated environment because success could only be recorded there with the aid of religious and traditional leaders.

Contributions of NGOs in educational development

Education is the backbone of every country in the world. Through education, literacy levels are improved and human resources are strengthened. Due to the needs of the education sector, most governments cooperate with NGOs to meet their needs. By bringing together all stakeholders, including civil society, the process is made sustainable.

In view of this, the following selected Non-Governmental Organizations have been playing vital roles in the development of Secondary School Education in Katsina L.G.A. They are:

I. Coalition of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

The vision of the organization is “to harmonize activities of Civil Society Organizations in Katsina State for an improved people’s voice towards a better society,” while the mission is “to undertake research, mobilize and advocate for better people oriented policies and programmes.”

Contributions of the CSOs in Katsina LGA

The CSOs have so far contributed immensely to the development of secondary school education in particular and the other levels of education at large. The following are some of their contributions:

Media Public Policy Dialogue was organized and conducted on Budget, Health, and Education related issues (live radio phone-in programme). One of the latest roles played by the CSOs in Katsina L.G.A. in the development of secondary school education was on 21st August, 2021, when their Secretary’s voice was heard on the media reminding and lobbying the Katsina State Government to settle the 2019/2020 National Examination Council (NECO) examination fees which it promised to pay for the qualified indigenes of Katsina State.

It was reported on 20th April, 2021 that “the CSOs in Katsina State expressed a serious concern over the withheld examination results of students of public secondary schools in the state by the National Examination Council (NECO) due to inability of the state government to balance the alleged outstanding fees of N400 million” (Sardauna, 2021). The message was further spread by other media houses to draw the attention of the Katsina State Government. There and then, the State Government responded positively to the issue and explained what transpired between the two parties (State and NECO). The State Governor made it very clear to the general public that it actually owed the National Examination Council (NECO) the sum of N400, 000,000, yet a part payment of 82,000,000 was made to the Examination Body. Later, the withheld examination results were said to have been released. This was quite a vital role played by the CSOs because the procrastination of releasing the candidates’ results might have denied them admission into various tertiary institutions within and outside the State.

II. Pleasant Library and Book Club (PLBC) Organization

The vision of the NGO is “Towards creating knowledge based economy in ICT.”

The PLBC Organization aims to achieve the following:

- Initiate and implement projects and programmes that help enhance the educational competitiveness of Katsina State and Nigeria.
- Identify major socio-economic issues in the country and the state and offer contemporary solutions to addressing them.
- Facilitate access to library for the under privileged and those in need (PLBC Online Brochure, 2020)

Contributions of the PLBC Organization in Katsina LGA

Certainly, the development of public secondary schools education takes different angles and directions, because it touches teachers, students, school facilities and school physical environment. The development associated with public secondary school teachers has been identified and highlighted below:

a) Teachers' capacity building training

Having carefully studied the state of teachers' capacity in several key areas, especially at the basic level in Katsina Metropolis, the PLBC Organization in collaboration with the Katsina State Government embarked on the training of teachers in order to develop their capacity and promote the teaching profession as well. During the Workshop's Period, Teachers at the Secondary School Level were given an essay topic on: '*Anti-Social Behaviours among Senior Secondary School Students: Role of Teachers in Providing Conducive Learning Atmosphere*'. No fewer than 200 teachers participated in the essay competition and all the selected participants had their write-ups published in book forms in which a copy each was later given to each participant (PLBC Hardcopy Brochure, 2019)

b) Teachers' competency training

To ensure teachers' oral and numeracy improvement, Teachers' Competency Training was organised by the PLBC organization in Katsina Metropolis. Over 8,000 teachers from the three levels of Education across the State were trained and relevant materials for competency test were used. Teachers were equipped with skills to facilitate teaching and learning processes.

c) Introduction of teachers' monthly magazine

Teachers' Monthly Magazine was introduced as part of educational development. Public secondary school teachers were the target and beneficiaries of the giant stride. To ensure uniformity among all the public teachers in the state, the monthly magazine introduced by the PLBC Organization happened to serve as an academic platform where articles from different geo-political zones were being collected, edited and published. The published copies were sent to all the 34 Local Government Areas for distributions free of charge.

d) Collection and distribution of instructional materials

Instructional materials are types of school facilities which assist in facilitating teaching and learning. They make teaching and learning effective and efficient. One of the examples of instructional materials is a textbook. In an effort to promote public secondary school education, the PLBC Organization introduced a scheme, called "Katsina Book Drive" which targeted poor children who could not afford study materials. The organization was involved in collecting both the used and unused books from wealthy ones and distributing them to poor children in Katsina L.G.A. and this gesture had yielded a good result.

e) Extra mural classes

Every year, Katsina public senior secondary school students participate in all the 'O' Level National Examinations (WAEC, NECO and JAMB) like their counterparts in the private schools; their results are usually not impressive. Therefore, due to the mass failures in these examinations, the PLBC Organization organised extra mural lessons and registered interested candidates to benefit from the lessons, the programme is even

extended beyond Katsina LGA. These roles being played by the PLBC Organization has assisted in the development of education at the secondary school level.

Contributions of other NGOs in Katsina LGA

❖ *Fitynul* Islam Organization which is the oldest and the mother of all sects in Nigeria has been operating in Katsina LGA and concentrating fully on religious studies, with a little emphasis on western education. It also has an association, called “Young Muslims Association of Nigeria” through which education is being promoted.

❖ Another NGO named *Jama'atu Izalatul Bidi'a wa Ikamatus Sunnah* (JIBWIS) came into existence in the early 1990s and began its operations within a limited scope due to limited resources, social and political interferences. Under its umbrella, individual donors took the responsibility of sponsoring Muslim young men and women to study both the religious and western education right from primary up to secondary and tertiary levels. But due to persistent crises between the two major sects (*Fityanul Islam and JIBWIS*), the need for educating preachers and the masses arose. Religious foundations were established to teach both religious and western education in Katsina L.G.A.

The Secretary of the Education Committee, Katsina Chapter revealed that JIBWIS set an Education Committee in 2015, under the leadership of Sheik *Balalu* to widely promote both the Islamic and western education, not only in Katsina but in Nigeria. He however revealed the kind of activities being rendered by this JIBWIS toward the development of secondary school education in Katsina L.G.A. For instance, individual persons are being sponsored right from the level of primary school education up to the level of tertiary by the religious organization in the area.

Conclusion

A Non-Governmental Organization is a group of persons having common goals and objectives that operate within and outside societies to remedy some societal problems by rendering and offering services free of charge. The NGOs are of different classes and each and every class operates within its scope. Some target less privileges, while others gear towards the realization of educational objectives, thereby promoting education at various levels. NGOs however face some challenges that are not unconnected with economic, political, cultural and religious factors. Some solutions to these highlighted challenges are suggested for action. These include diversification of sources of their revenues; establishment of good relationship among politicians on one side and between politicians and NGOs on the other side, and maintenance of peoples' norms and values to ensure cordial relationship.

Recommendations

The problems and challenges may not be uprooted, yet they can be mitigated to the extent that they cannot affect the aim and objectives set to achieve. In this regard the following can serve as recommendations:

1. NGOs should device several different avenues for generating incomes to keep their activities healthy, safe and for continuity, so that out of school children can be assisted to continue with their education at all the three levels.

2. Politicians in Katsina L.G.A. should settle their scores and keep their differences aside so as to join hands with these NGOs aiming at the development of education, thereby providing adequate teaching and learning facilities to the public secondary schools in the Local Government Area.

3. People's cultures should always be respected likewise their norms and values to ensure smooth operations. In this case, the study of their cultures would be of great help in managing charity organizations within their domains.

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