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Policy Brief

AN INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION PAYS THE BEST INTEREST

Introduction

Education is the bedrock of development. But, unfortunately education in Nigeria is affected with myriads of problems. These includes; poor funding, poor educational infrastructures, inadequate classrooms, teaching aids, paucity of quality teachers and poor / polluted learning environment. In addition to these inadequacies, our school system is plagued with numerous social vices such as examination malpractices, cultism, hooliganism and corruption¹. These inadequacies cut across the country in which Osun State is not left out. Osun state which is one of the six south-western State in Nigeria with the 2nd largest number of tertiary institutions in Nigeria runs a unique grouping system of education (Elementary School: Ages 6-9 (Grades 1-4); Middle School: Ages 10-14 (Grades 5-9); High School: Ages 15-17 (Grades 10-12) which is slightly different from the National Policy on Education grouping of 6-3-3-4 due to reforms introduced by the past administration to salvage the inadequacies in the state educational systems². It's quite unfortunate that despite the reforms introduced, the state still experience low performance in educational ranking according to the 2017 and 2018 West African Examinations Council (WAEC) state ranking with 24th and 29th position respectively across the country though there was a slight percentage increase as against previous years. The increase was from 15.68 per cent in 2010 to 44.47 per cent in 2017 examinations as reported on the State government website.

The reform of branding Osun State schools with same school uniform has done more harm than good which has led to increase in poor performance of students, social vices and hooliganism among students of high schools. All these

inadequacies cannot be disassociated from lack of effective system of education which cannot just be taking care of, by building of Mega schools, use of same school uniform or change in the system of education alone but having a reorientation of students and teachers towards achieving the goals of education through proper effective system of education which can only be managed by good quality of teachers³. Similarly, there is need for improved educational system in the state to salvage the inadequacies and fill gaps that are presently experienced in the state both at the elementary and tertiary level. For the state to experience improved education, the youth of Osun state (18-35) which constitute 33% of the state population and are largely the major target when we talk about education, request that the gaps of Moral decadence amidst students and lack of quality outputs and outcomes from teachers and Students should be filled.

ISSUES

- MORAL DECADENCE AMIDST STUDENTS IN MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

The introduction of unified school uniforms for public schools in Osun State as part of the reforms introduced by the past administration as interesting and good as it may be has posed more havoc than good to the state schools most especially high schools. The unified school uniform which was proposed to create a unique identity for Osun students, promote culture and stimulate the local economy has led to increased rate of moral decadence in secondary schools, social vices such as truancy, hooliganism, cultism and add to the rate of insecurity amidst the students. Easy detection of students from other School in case of riot becomes a great task as there will not be any element of straight identity because every one of them appears the same uniform⁴.

This in no way differs from what is being experienced in Osun State according to the research carried out by Akinwale, 2014⁵ on “Acceptability of a Unified school Uniform for Public Secondary Schools in State of Osun”, The research findings showed that, the uniform has no way been helpful in curbing bad behaviors as it gives more strength in promoting bad behaviors in school because, no element of straight identity to differentiate students of school A from School B.

- **LACK OF QUALITY OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES (TEACHERS AND RESOURCES)**

One of the most effective way of improving students’ learning is by engaging efficient and effective teachers⁶. Determinants for better students’ academic performance were found to include: the status of teachers, class size, increasing workload, professional freedom, the work environment, teacher education and professional development, teachers’ salaries and negotiations and consultations. In Osun State, since the past administration, teachers’ welfare has not been prioritized which has resulted into lack of commitment from teachers, absenteeism in school, low morale in impacting relevant knowledge to learners, lack of interest in teaching job, irregularity and lack of zeal for teaching, inferiority complex, no room for self and professional development and psychological trauma. Hence, teachers cannot put in their best into the teaching service and students are left alone to self-tutoring and peer tutoring which as grievance effect on students ‘academic performance in Osun State’⁷.

Also, aside from the Mega schools built by the past administrations, secondary schools are not properly funded in the areas of physical infrastructures, laboratory materials, tools and equipment, instructional materials and conducive learning environment among others according to the baseline survey done to itemize challenges facing Osun State Educational system state before structuring the MTSS (2018)⁸ which have contributed adversely on the quality of education delivery in terms of student academic performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The government should review same school uniform with a view to improve the security of students and address moral decadence in public schools. This recommendation is in accordance with the recommendation given by Akinwale O. 2014 in her research titled “Acceptability of a Unified school Uniform for Public Secondary Schools in State of Osun” that the state government should find a way of differentiating school uniforms of one school from another⁹.
2. Provision of adequate teaching and instructional materials e.g. textbooks (especially Literature, Mathematics, Accounting, English and other science subjects), ICT laboratory equipment, well equipped libraries for primary and secondary schools to enhance effective learning and improve student performance
3. Recruitment of trained and qualified teachers in primary, secondary and Tertiary schools to address the shortfall

and taking a step towards attaining the UNESCO standards (one teacher to forty students). Also, there is need for constant training for teachers which is in accordance with Dr. F. B. Bamire and Prof. M. A. Adelabu in 2018 that says there is need for adequate in-service training and retraining of teachers and principals to ensure adequate knowledge of their expected roles so that they will not run the risk of becoming too rigid and fixed in their ways¹⁰.

4. Provision of special incentives for teachers posted to schools in rural areas e.g. accommodation, bonuses etc.
5. The State Government should strengthen School Management Board and partner with CSOs to design and implement effective teacher performance monitoring procedures.
6. Implementation of performance-based reward system for teachers in public schools
7. OYES cadets in school and N-Teach personnel should be adequately trained.
8. Re-introduction of Guidance and Counselling Department in schools with qualified, trained and non- academic counselors, due to the emotional imbalance amidst the teenagers to reduce prevalence of suicides and guide students on choice of career.
9. Government should provide Ramps and Hand Rails for school having people with disability

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