

## CORRUPTION AND DIVERSION OF FUNDS AS THE MENACE OF FUNDING BASIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

<sup>1</sup>Blessing Ogechi AJUNWA, Samuel Eniola AGBI, Lateef Olumide MUSTAPHA & Ibrahim A. MUHAMMAD

Department of Accounting,  
Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna, Nigeria  
E-mail: <sup>1</sup>ogeodinaka@yahoo.com

### Abstract

*The issue of corruption and diversion of funds earmarked for the funding of basic education in Nigeria has lingered for a long time, subsequently crippling every effort to revive the sector. Despite the prevalence of other factors that are posing as a problems like poor remuneration of teachers, adequate teaching materials and building infrastructure, various studies have been found to prove that corruption and diversion of funds is the major menace of this sector. This challenge has caused millions of children that are of school age to be out of school. The main objective of this study is to examine the various cases of funds diversion and pilferage by corrupt individuals and public officials, thereby investigate the loop holes in the system that are enabling the infestation of the act. Various cases of corruption and diversion of funds were analyzed and it was discovered that there are no adequate measures in place to deter the people involved in such practices from promulgating the act. In conclusion, once the issue of corruption and the diversion of funds are sorted, the sector will begin to manifest formidable changes and development. Hence, in order to save the ailing basic education in Nigeria, it was recommended amongst others that those found guilty be made to return the looted funds, as other studies carried out omitted this important fact of returning stolen funds before serving their prison terms and that they should be barred from any professional association they belong to avert a future re-occurrence of such acts of fraudulent impunity.*

**Keywords:** Basic Education, Corruption, Diversion, Funds, Menace, Nigeria

### Introduction

Corruption is not a new development in Nigeria, but its impact on basic education is of lethal consequences, whereby funds earmarked for remuneration of teachers, building school infrastructures, purchase of books and writing materials are being embezzled. This has left the education sector bereft of adequate facilities to pursue its numerous agenda successfully. Education is the development of the human mind to enable it to think,

care and contribute to the economic growth and development of the society wherein it operates. Elem (2019) opined that education develops the creative ability of citizens and this ability stimulates a change in the economic, political, moral disposition of citizens that enables them to traverse different circumstances to their advantage. Basic education is the foundation whereas other educational or learning structure of the child later in his life will be augmented. It is the structure on which child's academic progress will be established, Elem (2019). Every other learning thereafter in the child's lifetime will subsequently be built on the foundational learning acquired during the basic years of schooling.

Due to the enormous importance of this critical education process, the government of most nations where education is considered serious grant a compulsory and free basic education opportunity for children in an adequately equipped school. This will encourage the citizens to avail themselves of the opportunity to be educated at that basic level. However, the strategic moves of both the donor agencies and the Nigerian government to create an ambient environment for learning have been scuttled by corruption. This has led to the numerous ills experienced in that sector. This study has examined the various ways corruption and diversion of funds is negatively affecting the funding of basic education in Nigeria and diverse contributions from various studies have been sought to tackle the menace.

### Demystifying the Concept of Sustainable Basic Education in Nigeria

Basic education according to the law includes "early childhood education care and development. It is basically six years of primary education and three years of junior secondary school education. The Basic education in Nigeria is being supervised and regulated by the Universal Basic Education commission known as UBEC which is an arm of Nigeria Federal Government Agency. It was established by the compulsory free Universal Basic education and other related matters Act of 2004 to eradicate illiteracy, ignorance and poverty as well as to encourage and

increase natural development, political awareness and national integration to bring into fruition the national philosophy and educational goals which is the bedrock of the country's target to social development (UBEC, 2004). The main aim of basic education is to equip the school age population of young children evolving into potential young adults with skills, knowledge and values that will enable them to be caring, independent, productive and patriotic citizens (UBEC, 2004).

### Sources of Funding for Basic Education in Nigeria

Funding for basic education in Nigeria has been basically from federal, state and local government, while the international donors are not left out in their contribution to basic education sector. Despite the fact that there have been some agitations for an increase in government spending in the sector, there is need for the optimal utilization of the resources being made available to the sector. There are numerous research evidence to prove that the diversion of funds earmarked for financing basic education and corruption is actually the menace bedeviling the sector. If the corruption underpinning the sector is not eradicated, then the increased spending by the various financiers will be squandered and its impact not seen.

The issue of corruption has permeated every sector in the Nigerian economy, of which the education sector is included, as earlier stated this is one of the problems bedeviling the sector and leading to an increase in the number of children that are out of school Samuel (2018) According to Aliyu and Bichi (2019), funds generated from the schools were not used for what they were earmarked for. He opined that the school fees collected are not used in the provision of teaching aids and classroom maintenance, further suggesting that corruption amongst other factors is the reason why many children are out of school.

According to Rufai (2020), the problems facing basic education in Nigeria is basically due to lack of transparency and accountability. He further opined that the sector has been demoralized by the same problems that is faced by social delivery system mechanism in the country. Hence, basic education is not exempted from the rot that is in the general society. A robust research literature abounds to buttress the fact that diversion of funds and corruption is the menace faced by the basic education system in Nigeria. Once it is tamed, the journey to fixing the rot in the basic education system will be properly aligned to yield a positive result.

### Corruption in Financing Basic Education Sector in Nigeria

The importance of schools in the overall socialization and enlightenment process of children cannot be overstated. The excellent solution should tackle the streams of challenges in the Nigerian basic education sector that promulgate incentive for cyclic corruption to infest the sector. The character and learning that these children will exhibit in the future are usually reinforced in learning environments. In societies where corruption abound and children witness those who are meant to teach and guide them like their care takers, parents and educators engaging in corrupt practices, the value of integrity is undermined. According to Hoffmann (2021), corruption at the basic education level is particularly endemic to the society because it limits the development of educated, efficient and competent individuals with high ethical and moral standards with a sense of common citizenship. This is so because at that age these children are in the character formation age and will tend to imbibe what they are exposed to in the environment where they are interacting and the society at large (Hoffmann, 2021).

The growing trend of corruption in the educational sector will on the long run impact negatively on man power and the national development of the nation as opined by Madaki & Kanibin (2019) in research on the effects of corruption on the educational system in Nigeria. In another study on the effect of corruption on the Nigerian educational sector, it was established that there is an interplay between corruption and the poor educational system. While many people are clamoring for more funds to be invested in the sector some are of the opinion that if corruption is not nipped in the bud, any fund introduced to the sector will dwindle away without any noticeable impact as has been the case in the past.

### Diversion of Basic Education Finance Funds in Nigeria

Evidence abound to prove that funds earmarked for financing basic education in the country are most times being diverted for other selfish interest and purposes by corrupt government officials and individuals. Reports of such diversions will include the Kwara State Universal Basic Education Board (Kwara SUBEB) involved in such diversions to the tune of one billion, five hundred million naira intervention funds in 2013 and was blacklisted after the incidence Amoo (2019). This magnitude of diversion was perpetrated firstly because high ranking public officials were involved, secondly the Kwara SUBEB was not maintaining relevant books of

accounting records, thirdly they did not submit their financial returns to UBEC for a long time and finally, the Kwara SUBEB was maintaining three bank accounts instead of one as is required by UBEC operational guidelines. In yet another diversion of funds episode, the United Nations Children's Educational Fund (UNICEF) has confirmed the diversion of learning materials donated to assist the less privileged and vulnerable children in Adamawa State. Further investigations found that those materials were being sold in various markets in the state. It was suggested that a special task force should be established to recover such stolen education materials that are sold in the market and returned to the schools for the purpose of which they were meant to accomplish. Sahara Reporters (2021).

While in Ondo State, the contractors who doubled as members of the All Peoples Congress (APC) which is the ruling party in the State have been directed to refund thirty eight million naira, being funds meant for the school feeding Program but was diverted. The Federal Government's home grown school feeding program which was launched in 2018 in the state was intended to provide free meals every school day for pupils in government primary schools in the state. However, the feeding program was suspended in the state due to diversion of funds by corrupt party leaders that were awarded the contract, Vanguard newspaper (2019). Furthermore, if these materials were used for the purpose they were meant for, they would have gone a long way to improve on the current situation of basic education in Nigeria. In yet another finding, the Ekiti state former governor diverted the UBE funds into questionable ventures and when a panel of enquiry set up by the State House of Assembly to investigate the fund diversion summoned him, he declined the invitation.

#### Theoretical Perspectives of the Study

The theories supporting the study will be forayed in two instances. The theories supporting this study will be analyzed. The main theories that support corruption are the principal-agent theory, collective action theory, institutional theory, game theory. For the purpose of this study the Principal-agent theory and the Collective action theory will be adopted.

#### The Principal Agent Theory.

The desire for personal enrichment is usually perceived as the primary cause of public sector corruption, but this is an under rating of the complex relationships between individuals and the state. There are various theories that help to deconstruct these

relationships. The two most popular theories on corruption in the economic literature are the principal-agent model and the related agency problem (Klitgaard, 1988; Shleifer & Vishny, 1993). The principal-agent assumes that agents, usually the public officials serve to protect the interests of the principal which are either the public, parliament or supervisors. However, in reality the interests of the agents are often different from the interests of the principal, and while the former can prescribe the pay-off rules in the principal-agent relationship, there is informational asymmetry to the advantage of the agent, which could be used by them for personal benefit Groenendijk (1997). In this context, an agency problem occurs when an agents choose to engage in corrupt transaction, in fulfilment of their own interests and to the detriment of the interests of the principal. To reduce the agency problem, the principal can introduce incentives and schemes like monitoring, bonding and oversight to curb the agent's inherent abuses.

The Principal-agent Theory is applicable in describing the occurrences of corruption that is endemic in the financing of basic education in Nigeria. Most public officials in Nigeria perceive such positions of authority as a means to enrich themselves at the expense of the projects that the funds being diverted were meant to be used for. The case of the diversion of funds in Kwara SUBEB (Amoo, 2019) and other similar cases as earlier analyzed in the literature review will bear witness to the reality of the principal-agent theory's applicability to the occurrences in the Nigerian basic education sector.

#### The Collective Action Theory

For a many years now, the economic literature referred to the principal-agent theory model to explain corruption Groenedijk (1997). Recently, collective action theory has emerged as an alternative explanation for why systemic corruption persists despite laws making it illegal and why corruption resists various anti-corruption efforts in certain countries. The collective action theory is beyond traditional principal-agent relationships and emphasizes the benefits of factors such as trust and how individual perceive the behavior of others. Persson, Rothstein and Teorell (2013) regard systemic corruption as a collective problem, because people rationalize their own behavior based on the perceptions of what others will do in the same situation. When corruption becomes an acceptable social norm, most people tend to see it simply as the

way to get things done. People are aware of negative consequences of widespread corruption, but they engage in corrupt actions because they believe that "it does not make sense to be the only honest person in a corrupt system" Marquette & Peiffer (2015). In such an environment, anti-corruption measures based on the principal-agent model will not be effective, as there are no "principled principals" who will enforce corruption norms Klitgaard, (1998). This collective action theory can explain why corruption is generally rampant in the Nigerian Basic education system because the general public have an enabling environment that has been in existence for years and this has made it difficult to eradicate.

This collective action theory explains the reason why most people in Nigeria that are placed in a position of authority will likely engage in corrupt practices despite the laws making it illegal. Due to the fact that people rationalize their actions based on their assumption that when other people are placed in a similar position will equally loot, this has been the practice.

#### Conclusion

There are evidences to support the cases of funds diversion from the investigation of previous study. There abound a robust evidence from this study, Kwara State Universal Basic Education Board (kwara SUBEB), the United Nations Children's Educational Fund (UNICEF) confirmed the diversion of learning materials donated to assist the less privileged and vulnerable children in Adamawa State, to buttress the fact that corruption manifested through the diversion of funds, outright theft of finance earmarked for the Basic Education in Nigeria is the major challenge faced by the sector of which if tamed, the journey to fixing the rot in the sector will not be properly aligned to yield a positive result. There has been an over rated clamor by concerned individuals and civil organizations that the basic education in Nigeria is inadequately funded, but studies abound to prove that the corruption that has eaten into the fabrics of the nation in other sector is the same thing that is undermining the development of the basic education sector.

Although, some of those found guilty of embezzling the funds were jailed, like the case that was cited in the literature review, many escaped the penalty for their actions.

#### Recommendations

There are numerous evidence to support the rampant cases of funds diversion and pilferage by corrupt individuals and public officials, however this can be drastically reduced by implementing these suggestions made in this study. The loop holes in the system that are encouraging the infestation of the act can be eradicated by setting up independent monitoring committee to monitor the approval, deployment and distribution of the learning materials from the ware house to the benefiting primary schools. This independent monitoring department should work hand in hand with the ministry of education to ensure that anything earmarked for the funding of these schools get to them intact. An anti-corruption agency, dedicated solely to the education sector should be set up to investigate, recover looted basic education funds and penalize defaulting persons, this will dissuade all future intending looters from perpetrating the act. Defaulting individuals should be made to pay back the stolen funds before serving their prison terms and barred from any professional association they belong to.

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## EXAMINING THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION FOR SUSTAINABLE BASIC EDUCATION IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

Folasade Rotimi FAMUYIWA

Department of General Studies in Education,  
Lagos State University of Education  
Noforija, Epe, Lagos State, Nigeria  
E-mail: [speaktoa3@yahoo.com](mailto:speaktoa3@yahoo.com)

### Abstract

*The study examined language of instruction for sustainable basic education in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study examined the effects of language of instruction for sustainable development basic education in Lagos State and determine the factors militating against the implementation of the language policy in Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design where questionnaire was used to acquire necessary data for the research work. Population comprises of all primary schools in Ibeju Lekki Local Government, Lagos State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select ten (10) Primary Schools in Ibeju Lekki Local Government area of Lagos State. Ten (10) teachers were randomly selected using simple random sampling technique from each of the chosen school to make a total of one hundred (100) as sample for study. Two (2) research questions were raised and answered in this study. To test the reliability of the instrument, five (5) Primary schools' teachers were selected randomly who are not part of the sample population and the value of 0.77 was obtained as correlation coefficient which is reliable enough for this study. Data collected were analyzed using frequency counts and simple percentage statistical tool. The research findings revealed that, language of instruction is a good indicator and predictor of sustainable Basic Education in Nigeria, therefore, the language policy statement for the lower primary level of education will continue to be a mere statement of intention, not practicable in the classroom until the language of instruction is been considered as immediate language of the pupils for the sustainable education in Basic level of Education. Therefore, it was recommended that, government, educators, parents and the public in general should be adequately sensitised about the language policy on education. Parents and pupils should be enlightened on the importance of upholding their mother tongue in order to enable them change their attitude towards indigenous languages both mother tongue and language of the environment.*

**Keywords:** Indigenous, Basic Education, Instruction, Sustainable, Mother-tongue

### Introduction

A policy is a principle or protocol that guide decisions

and achieve rational outcomes. Language policy is the plan of course of action of a dynamic programme in directing language affairs as needed by government. It is what a government does either officially through legislation, court decisions, or policy to determine how languages are used, cultivate language skills needed to meet national priorities or to establish the rights of individuals or groups to use and maintain languages, (Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia). Many countries of the world have a language policy designed to favour or discourage the use of a particular language or set of languages.

Human communication is specifically called "language". Language is the unique characteristics of human species which serves as a medium of communication. The term language is purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols (Yule, 2009). Human beings have both the oral and written language. The oral language, as in listening and speaking, involves the use of vocal sounds while written language involves the arbitrary graphic representation of the sounds in writing. Human communication, that is language, is far more complex than the system of communication used by nonhuman. Human beings do not communicate in isolated sounds or words, rather sounds and words are woven together in connected discourse. Man's daily activities are conducted via language.

Language carries information; it is like a map that points to people, things and places all around us. It is a meaningful medium of sending a message from a sender to a receiver. How well individuals use language has much to do with what kind of people they are. Language is the most important tool of communication that distinguishes human beings from non-humans; educated from uneducated persons. Word power is as important as muscular power. With inspiring words, an individual will triumph over a formidable enemy (Ojetunde, 2012) stated that the strategic position occupied by language in human affairs can never be exaggerated, that whatever scientific and technological breakthroughs achieved by man to date is attributed to the existence of