

# HOW DILAPIDATED CLASSROOMS, UNCOMPLETED PROJECT CRIPPLE STUDIES IN KANO COMMUNITY

-Pupils avoiding school in fear of snake bites

**By Zahraddeen Yakubu Shuaibu**

Sleeping under a tree, is the head teacher of Tsebarawa village Primary School, with his books and motorcycle parked aside. He was waiting for the right time for him to leave, when the sleep unknowingly took him away, as he is not expecting any of the students to attend the school for lessons.



"The few students that are expected to come, usually arrive at the school around 10am, with the help of some community members who went round house-to-house to chase them out. While sometimes they often woe their attention to the school with gifts of sweets and biscuits."

This has been the routine between the headmaster and the only teacher attached to work with him, coming to the school around 9am to 10am and leaving around 12pm. For the past three months, they couldn't teach one single student due to so many reasons they found unsecured to share with this reporter.

Tsebarawa is a community under Balare ward of Ajingi Local Government Area of Kano. With a population of over Fifteen thousand people, the community is facing serious challenges with regards to education as there was no single conducive classroom available for studies.



The only two classrooms building used as a school was constructed in 1976, and the damaging structure has prevented students from attending to avoid risk of collapse.

Speaking to this reporter, the headmaster of the school (Malam Rabo Shuaibu), pen name, said they had four classrooms before, until the other two classrooms collapsed due to dilapidation and failure to undergo a serious renovation.

He said despite that fact that the school is not fenced, the over 500 students usually conduct their lessons under tree, while few others entered the remaining two classes amidst fear of collapse.

“For a very long time this has been the situation in this school. We have no conducive atmosphere of learning and the children are not coming as a result of that. I will come here every day but the students will not come. The few that come, will come late and leave immediately. That has been the condition.

“The main challenge that forced parents to remove their children from the school was when the building was about to collapse. Also, recently snakes are coming out of the cracked parts of the building. They are dangerous and big threats to the children. Since the day we saw those snakes the attendance has reduced drastically, and up till now it remains the same,” he said.

According to Rabo, they had to mobilize members of the community to begin sending their children to the school after a series of meetings with some of the parents, adding that they have no instructional materials enough to conduct impactful learning.



“These days some of them are coming, but still not up to 20 percent out of 100. So we still need the school to be renovated so that we can have all of them coming. Otherwise, I doubt the future of education in this community.”

One other reason that adds to the poor attendance in the school is the suspension of the School Feeding Programme, the headteacher has said. "When the School Feeding

Programme was ongoing, the students were trooping in. But after the Covid-19 lockdown, when the feeding programme stopped, they were not coming. Sometimes we have to buy them sweets or biscuits from our own money, all for them to come to the school."

Also speaking on the problem of studies in the village, Kabiru Usman, who spoke on behalf of the community leaders said they have been raising alarm to the local government authorities on the dilapidated nature of the school but they could not be heard. He said the Parent Teachers Association (P.T.A) and SBMC have been calling for the repair of the school but not yet considered.

"We dont know what democracy is all about if our children will not have sound and quality education. How many times are we going to complain about this? It is too much. Look at the school, who do you think will send his child there... we can't do that honestly," he angrily said.

### **The failing classrooms contract**

However, it was discovered that a contract of two classroom buildings was approved and fully paid for construction in the village as a constituency project and sponsored by Kabiru Ibrahim Gaya, a Senator Representing Kano North Senatorial District. Although the school was built, this investigation gathered that for the past one year it has been abandoned with no furniture and other necessary materials for studies.

Our findings revealed that there were provisions of the teaching and infrastructural materials, books, etc for some schools in some selected local government areas in the country, while the Universal Basic Education Board Commission was allocated N112 billion for the year 2020.



But in October last year (2021), Resource Centre for Human Rights and Civic Education, (CHRICED) raised the alarm over what it described as dozens of poorly executed constituency projects scattered across Kano State.

The Centre's Executive Director, Comrade Dr Ibrahim M. Zikirullahi raised the alarm after tracking in collaboration with Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), about 126 Constituency projects implemented under 2019 and 2020 federal budget cycles in the state.



“The team inspected a block of two classrooms in Tsebarawa, Ajingi Local Government sponsored by Senator representing Kano South where the contractor abandoned the project after funds meant to execute the projects were completely paid to him but only returned back to the site to hurriedly complete the project when he got wind of the visit by the Commission's team to the project site during its third phase tracking exercise.”

One of the community leaders told this reporter that, “This has been abandoned by the contractor for a long. It has to take long before he even paints the place and as you can see he is not willing to bring the furniture and other required materials to make it a full standard classroom. We have waited as our children are not going to school. The only school they attend is Islamic and it is conducted under a tree,” one of the community leaders said in anonymity.

Our findings also revealed that the contract was awarded by Universal Basic Education Board (UBEC), for the construction of the school in December 2020, with a completion period of three weeks.

It was equally discovered that the contractor was fully paid on the advice and certification of the project supervisor, but it took over two years for the project to reach completion level with no furniture installed, an incident that forced the village to use it indirectly for extra lessons without waiting for commissioning.

“The most painful part of this is while we are eager and told that the contractor will finish in three weeks but we had to wait for this long. That aside, he has not shown any interest in completing the project in near time and our children are not going to school,” the source added. During a visit to the school by our reporter, the school was found open and accessed by a few children and a volunteer teacher. The children, without uniforms, found the place more convenient though it was not fully completed and commissioned.

This reporter gathered that the single building was painted with milk and green paint, with no offices and toilet constructions. The structure contains two classes with no fan, bulbs and sitting materials.

“We are using the place for lessons and other study related activities. Only a few pupils are coming because it was not commissioned and we have only one person as a teacher here. Instead of waiting, we are using the school for that purpose,” the volunteer teacher identified as Aminu Lawan said.



Some of the community members pleaded with the contractor and the government to look into the matter and rescue their community from challenges that tamper with the education of their children.

**Gov't not aware**

Meanwhile, efforts to reach the contractor for comments on the project proved abortive as he couldn't be reached on phone and neither responded to messages sent to him.

Also, when contacted, the Public Relation of the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Jazuli Danlami, said they are not aware of the situation in the community and that he will investigate and get back to our reporter.

“I am just hearing this from you at the moment. We are not aware of the situation. But I will investigate the matter and get back to you,” he said.

Photos: The old dilapidated school and the uncompleted project.