

PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BAYELSA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the private sector participation in Education and the development of secondary schools education in Bayelsa State. Three research questions were posed and three hypotheses were formulated. The instrument adopted in this study to collect data from the respondents is a questionnaire titled "Private Sector Participation and Development of Schools Questionnaire (PSPSQ) in Bayelsa State". The population of the study is 2,240 proprietors, teachers and ministry of Education officials comprising 22 private school proprietors, 1,660 teachers and 558 staff of the ministry of Education in Bayelsa State. The sample size of the study is 300 proprietors, teachers and ministry of Education Officials comprising 22 school proprietors, 228 teachers and 50 ministry of Education officials. The collected responses were duly analyzed using mean (\bar{x}) and t-test statistical methods. Analysis of the data indicates that the three hypotheses formulated were accepted at a significant level of 0.05. This revealed that there are no significant differences between the perception of school proprietors and ministry officials on the hypotheses formulated. The finding of the study shows that proprietors are in school business to reduce illiteracy level of the state. However, ministry officials agree that profit is upper most for some school proprietors. It also indicates inadequacy in qualified teachers, equipment facilities etc. it is recommended that Government should subsidize the funding of education of the private sector. They should be encouraged to set up more quality secondary schools to meet the educational needs of the state. Government must also step up routine checks and inspection of private schools while unapproved schools should be closed down.

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Biographical Note:

INTRODUCTION

In Bayelsa State the private sector is playing a dominate role in delivery of goods and services. However it has not succeeded in the education sector. Educationally the education sector is weak and unable to generate economic growth and jobs that are required hereby making the state and Local Governments the largest employers of labour which brings fiscal

imbalance. This is because Education in the state is almost state controlled delivered and regulated. Be that as it may, the private Education sector is playing an important role in the development of secondary schools in the state.

According to Soyebbo (2003), between 1996 and 2000 the private sector has provided 32 percent of secondary enrolment and provided employment for some indigenes in the state. Government is yet to appreciate the efforts of the private sector, while the state budget for Education remains high every year, structural inefficiencies and lack of focus on secondary Education have resulted in a low literacy rate. Government alone cannot take education to its height, but complementary efforts of public and private sector's participation in the secondary Education can develop Education into enviable heights. The Federal Ministry of Education (2004), the basic legal frame work for educational management in the country, as provided in 1999 constitution, spells out basic national objectives for education. It states that the government should seek to ensure equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels, to promote science and technology and to eradicate illiteracy. Education is accorded concurrent legislative status in both the 1979 and 1999 constitutions. This indicates that both Federal and State Governments have legislative jurisdiction as well as corresponding functional responsibilities with respect to education. This is a division of labour, though not fully articulated among the three tiers of government with respect to the different levels of the educational system. A few functions are exclusively assigned to the Federal or State Government, external affairs and defense, among others.

Suffice to say that government has been largely responsible for the provision of education in Nigeria. Invariably, there has been a tremendous public sector participation in educational provision in the country, interestingly, an increasing number of children, youths and adults need, and in many cases actively demand education. However, government alone cannot meet these demands. There is a need for a greater community and civil society participation in providing, managing and funding education. There is a need therefore, for all levels of government to forge part partnerships across the public and private sectors in the provision management and financing of Education in order to meet the challenges of education for all (EFA), such partnership is relevant to all the different tiers of government and across every sub-sector.

Emunemu (2008), states that the issue of educational output (at all levels) has been a matter of serious concern not only to the public but also the private sector. If the goals of globalization are to be achieved, then human resources for increased productivity and the growth of enterprise become very critical. In terms of productivity and improvement studies even among subsistence farmers have shown that education is a very important and vital factor of any economy. Education world over have been recognized as the basic human right whose main function is to develop the skills and the talents of the individual to the fullest extent possible in order to enable him to participate and contribute freely especially within a free society. No wonder Thompson (1981), questioned "can we legitimately seek to define the society which we wish to create other than in terms of a limited number of broad

principles such as liberty, equality and fraternity”. It therefore becomes essential that for individual talents, skills and capacities to be developed and channeled proportionately to the developmental needs of a people in a free society.

Considerable interpretations and explanations should be accorded to the institutions of education. This is because understanding the establishment, contents and methods of running these educational institutions would enable us to appreciate the role(s) of Education in the development of free society. It is in keeping with this that one can state here that, before the inception of Western education or colonialism into Nigeria, there were already systems or patterns of preparing people of adequate life in the society by the various ethnic groups in Nigeria. This traditional system of Education is largely vocational, and generally aimed at the acquisition of basic skills, abilities attitudes and behaviours necessary desirable for effective life in the society.

This traditional system lacked requisite learning materials, classrooms and no time frame. Education was given by every adult member of the extended family, everywhere and at anytime. The mothers, of society including the peer groups were all agents of socialization. Going by what Ukeje (1992), said, the western form of school education in Nigeria started with the missionary activities, which actually commenced with the arrival of the Methodist Society in 1842. The church missionary society followed suit in 1845 and open their own mission in the same Town of Badagry, and others followed accordingly, Establishment of schools is an integral part of the activities of the early missionaries going simultaneously with evangelism, many schools were therefore established and controlled by different missionary bodies.

The major Educational changes took place in Nigeria in 1945 following the introduction of the Richards constitution which divided the country into three regions East, West and North each with its own government. This period also witnessed the existence of three political parties in 1952, the Action group lead by Obafemi Awolowo, the Northern people’s congress lead by the Sadauna of Sokoto and the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroun lead by Herbert Macaulay and Nnamdi Azikiwe respectively. As expected, the Action congress took over Government in the West, the N.P.C in North while the NCNC was in charge in the East in the Election of 1952. The Action Group led government was to waken Nigerians up fundamental educational programme tagged the universal free compulsory primary Education (UPE), for the Western region. As a result of adequate planning and others the programme was a huge success in the West. The success story of the Action Group experiment was not only an inspiring experience but became a “standard imperative” that other regions found it too difficult to ignore. And so, the NCNC lead government in the East with improper and inadequate planning launched her UPE programme in the Eastern region. Because, she could not plan well the programme which ran into serious difficulties, right from the beginning, by 1958 collapsed due to lack of funds and others. The Northern region however was not keen in this competition because of her peculiarities in the challenge posed by Western and Islamic education.

However, an important issue here was the takeover of schools in Nigeria at the end of the civil war in 1970, this preceded the introduction of free universal and compulsory primary education (UPE), programme throughout the country. Perhaps in the thinking of some people in educational opportunities in the whole country, the scheme was also in conformity with the 1961 Addis Ababa Conference of African States on Education, where it was agreed that by 1970, all African states have achieved a universal free primary education. This UPE programme launched in the whole federation in 1976 and like the Eastern UPE ran into some problems commenting on the situation, Ukeje (1992), states “practically every where school were in short supply, classrooms were in short supply, equipment were in short supply, teacher were also not enough, indeed everything was in short supply apart from students. It is in this light that a positive way has to be devised on how education can be developed in Bayelsa State. Moreso, in an area where traditional education was already made a versatile instrument for social change and engineering. But the establishment of the first secondary school in Bayelsa State (in the old Rivers State), Bishop Deminary Grammar School Yenagoa in 1956 sparked off some tremendous positive changes in the provision, management and the organization of secondary education in Bayelsa State. Simultaneously, St. Judes Girls Secondary School in 1962, Matter Dei High School Immiringi 1962, Nember National Grammar School 1963, etc were all established to carter for the Grammar School needs of the people. Orubite (2002) observed that, the late 1930s and 40s marked the period of inter-community rivalry in the establishment of schools on the realization that education would make for gainful employment which leads to progress. Education is seen as a tool for prestige and civilization, communities involved deeply in its establishment. The government of Bayelsa State (the old Rivers State) in 1977 checked the rivalry, which ensured. By this enactment the government took over all schools formerly owned by the private sector.

Later, Decree No.48 of 1977 eventually crumbled with the coming into effect on 1st October 1979 of a new constitution. Although, these schools were not returned to their original owners but the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) which took over the central government realizing its lean resources to meet educational demands allowed individuals, corporate bodies, communities as well as religious bodies to participate once again in the establishment and running of secondary schools.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The basic aim of education all over the world is to create a good society and good life for all members of the society to use the education, intellectuals, moral resources acquired in realizing the goals of a free society. Education is the necessary tool that can ignite the human skills and knowledge essential in liberating individuals from ravaging poverty, societal constraints and make them compete favourably with their counter parts anywhere in the world-Okilo David (2010).

The participation of the private sector in the provision and establishment of secondary schools in Bayelsa State has increased tremendously. There is therefore, no gain saying the

fact that most of the schools are established with or without government approval. Thus some of the schools may lack basic facilities for secondary education and qualified teachers may not be found in some of the schools. Employment in Bayelsa State is public sector driven; about 60% of those employed are in public service (UNESCO 2008). Presently, there is inability of the public sector to employment; the rate of unemployment has been on the increase. According to Ezionye (2002), the unemployment rate for university graduates may be around 25% and their prospects are worsening in Bayelsa State. This situation is not only a waste of human resources, but also a potential social bomb. There is also the problem of mismatch between the skills with which students graduate from tertiary institutions and those required for the healthy development of the economy of the state. The encouragement of educational development of secondary schools and to stem unemployment rate in Bayelsa State requires the involvement of both the public and private sector. According to Okya (2007), crime amongst the youth restiveness in the South-South is alarmingly high and likely to rise if the situation is not checked now. Crime statistics in the state shows that almost 20% of all convicts involve youths less than twenty one (21) years of age. Also Ukeje and Ndu (1992) highlighted in their study the other social issues such as poverty and HIV/AIDS are likely to be aggravated in the region. It is clear that there is a need for expanding the opportunities for relevant education and skills development programmes and improving access to them must be central goal. This goal cannot be achieved by the efforts of Government alone.

The question is, how can the unique skills and competencies of the private sector be mobilized to effectively complement the efforts of Government to ensure that the skills and the educational development required to solve the problem of unemployment, increasing crime rate, youth restiveness etc., by the government now and in the future are available. The problem is how will Bayelsa State provide a conducive environment for private school proprietors to establish strong, virile and efficient private schools that could partner with public schools effectively to bring about development of secondary education in other to reduce unemployment, crime rate, youth restiveness and illiteracy. It is only at this point that Bayelsa State can witness real economic development and growth now and in the near future.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to identify and examine:

1. The extent of private sector participation in the provision of secondary school education;
2. Ascertain the adequacy of the private schools organization
3. Highlight the problems facing private sector participation in development of secondary school education.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is hoped that the findings of this study will help to identify the factors responsible for private sector participation in secondary school educations. The results of this study will

reveal the problems encountered by the private sector proprietors in establishing secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

The findings will enable the state ministry of education and other agencies to favour private school proprietors in deriving intrinsic motivation in establishing strong virile and effective secondary schools; that could work with public schools in the attainment of desired objectives.

Furthermore, the result will reveal the impact of private schools on the economic, social and political life of the people of Bayelsa State. The findings will help future researchers on this topic in gathering literature for their work.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were examined for the purpose of this study:

1. To what extent is the private sector participation in the provision of secondary school education in Bayelsa State?
2. What is the adequacy of the private school organization, materials and curriculum in private schools in the state?
3. What are the problems militating against private sector participation in the development of secondary schools in Bayelsa State?

HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference between the perception of proprietor, teachers and ministry officials and private sector participation in the provision of secondary school education in the state.
2. There is no significant difference between the perception of proprietors, teachers and ministry officials on the adequacy of private school organization, materials and curriculum in private schools in the state.
3. There is no significant difference between the perception of proprietors, teachers and ministry officials on the problems encountered by the private sector secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design adopted in the study is the survey research design. It is intended to determine the perception of opinions of school proprietors, teacher and ministry officials on the impact of private sector participation in education and the development of secondary school education in Bayelsa State.

THE POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population of the study is 2,240 school proprietors, teacher and ministry officials in the state. The population consists of 22 private school proprietors from the approved 22 private

schools in Bayelsa State, 1,660 teachers from the 22 schools, while 558 are staff of the ministry of Education in the state.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The sample of this study is 300 school proprietors, teachers and Ministry of Education officials. The sample comprised all the 22 private school proprietors, 228 teachers and 50 ministry of Education senior staff officials. To determine the sample size for the study the Yarrow Yamer's sampling method was applied. Based on the formula, a sample size of 300 subjects were determined.

INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION

The data for this study was collected through a 15 items questionnaire it is titled "Private Sector Participation and Development of schools Questionnaire (PSPDSQ) in Bayelsa State. The Instrument has three major sections A, B and C. Section A deals with factors that promoted the private sector participation in the provision of secondary schools. While section B examined the adequacy of the schools organization in Bayelsa State and section C deals with the problems faced by private schools in the state.

VALIDATION OF INSTRUMENT

The instrument was subjected to face validity, content and construct validity. The questionnaire items were constructed and given to two lecturers in measurement and evaluation and a lecturer who is an educational administrator in the faculty of educational management. Their criticisms, modifications and correlations were utilized in the final draft of the questionnaire.

RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

Test re-test approach was adopted to determine the co-efficient reliability of the instrument, the research instrument to ministry staff and proprietors of private schools in five schools not included in the study. After one week the research instrument was re-administered on the same respondents and the scores were also taken. The co-efficient of the two sets of scores were executed, adopting Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient. The co-efficient reliability of 0.86 was obtained from the respondents.

PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION

The researcher visited the selected schools with the help of some assistants, the questionnaires were administered to the respondents, they responded and the questionnaires were duly retrieved. The same was done with the staff of the ministry of Education. Three hundred (300) questionnaires were administered but 290 were retrieved.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation statistics were used to analyze the research questions. The T-test statistics was used to test the three hypotheses.

PRESENTATION AND DATA ANALYSIS**Table 1: Opinion of proprietors, teachers and ministry officials on the motives of private sector participation in the provision of secondary schools in Bayelsa State.**

S/NO	ITEMS	Proprietors & Teachers	Ministry of Education Officials		
			SD	\bar{x}	SD
	Objectives of private sector in Secondary Education	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD
1	To help government in the promotion of a literate society	3.82	0.56	3.75	0.60
2	To reduce the burden of the establishment of secondary schools on government	2.00	0.70	2.00	0.90
3	To bring secondary education to the grassroot/masses	3.73	0.44	3.64	0.61
4	To satisfy their philanthropic aim on education	3.57	0.57	3.26	0.84
5	For financial gains and prestige	1.60	0.64	3.73	0.64
	Total	14.72		16.38	

Source: (Field Work, 2012)

From table 4.2, it is observed that the proprietors and ministry officials are of the opinion that, the private sector participation in the establishment of secondary schools was to promote literacy in the society. The mean scores of proprietors and ministry officials do not show any major difference in their views. On the area of the reductions of burdens on the government, it is evident from the mean scores of the responses that there is no significant difference in their perception. Thus, the efforts of the private sector are geared towards reducing government burdens on secondary education. However from the data analysis, it is discovered that, the efforts of private sector to bring education to the grass-root was acknowledge by both groups there was no significant difference from the mean scores. This suggests that, the private sector should be encouraged in this direction. Other areas like the satisfaction of their philanthropic aims and for financial gains and prestige rank lowest respectively.

Table 2: The Perception of proprietors teachers and ministry officials on the adequacy of school organization, in private schools in Bayelsa Stae

S/NO	ITEMS	Proprietors & Teachers		Ministry of Education Officials	
		\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD
1	Examination of adequacy of materials, organization management and curriculum				
1	Do you have enough and qualified teacher to handle every subject taught in the school	3.44	0.73	3.49	0.61
2	Are the staff of private schools happy with their condition of service	3.46	0.76	3.23	0.90
3	Do you have enough teaching materials in the school	3.24	0.85	3.24	0.80
4	Are the teaching content, laboratories, libraries and curriculum adequate to meet the challenges of the time.	3.36	0.64	3.29	0.79
5	Is the level of moral discipline for teachers and students in private secondary schools adequate.	3.82	0.56	3.75	0.60
	Total	17.32		17	

Source: (Field Work, 2012)

Table 2 shows that, there is no difference between the views of proprietors, teachers and education officials towards the inadequacy of teachers, condition of service, equipment and curriculum development of private schools. It also revealed that if private schools would be allowed to operate then, sufficient improvement must be made in the area of laboratories, teaching materials and libraries. However, on the state of morals and discipline in private schools, the two groups agreed that, good morals and discipline are maintained as the mean scores do not show any difference in their views.

Table 3: Opinions of proprietors, teachers and ministry of education officials on the problems facing private sectors in secondary schools in the state

S/No	Items	Proprietors & teachers	Ministry of Education Officials		
	The problems facing private sector school proprietors	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD
1	Is your school operating under the approval of government	3.14	0.64	2.75	0.86
2	Does your school have the infrastructures and adequate materials to achieve set goals in education	3.12	0.70	2.85	0.93
3	Does your school have qualified and trained teachers	3.19	0.67	3.19	0.72
4	Does government give subsidy and other financial aids to private sector schools	2.95	0.79	3.03	0.76
5	Are private schools properly supervised and inspected by government school inspectors in order to achieve standards.	2.86	0.86	2.99	0.83
	Total				

Source: (Field Work, 2012)

Table 3 shows that, there is no difference in the opinion of proprietors, teachers and ministry of education staff on the non government approval of some existing private schools in the state. It is also obvious that school materials and infrastructures are inadequate in their schools from the data analysis; it was revealed that, there exist in private schools, untrained and unqualified teachers. Equally, government do not offer subsidies nor financial aids to private sector secondary schools. School supervisors are not sent regularly to inspect private schools.

HYPOTHESES

Hypotheses 1

There is no significant difference between the perception of proprietors, teachers and ministry staff on private sector participation in provision of secondary education in Bayelsa State.

Table 4: T-test of difference between perception of proprietors, and ministry staff and private sector participation in provision of secondary education

	\bar{x}	SD	N	DF	T-Cal	T-Value
Proprietors & Teachers	3.34	0.62	290			
Ministry of Education Staff	3.22	0.99	330	618	1.69	1.96

The table above showed that the calculated T-value 1.69 is less than the table value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and the degree of freedom of 618, hence, the hypotheses, which showed that there was no significant difference between the mean perception of the proprietors, teachers and the education staff on the aims of the private proprietors for establishing schools. Therefore we accept the Hypotheses which means that the aims of private sector participation in the provision of secondary school education is to help government increased literacy in the state to make education accessible to all etc.

Table 5: T-test of difference between perception of proprietors and ministry of Education staff on the adequacy of organization, materials and curriculum in private schools in the state

	\bar{x}	SD	N	DF	T-Cal	T-Value
Proprietors & Teachers	3.38	0.71	290			
Ministry of Education Staff	3.32	0.82	330	618	1.01	1.96

The table revealed that the T- calculated 1.01 is less than the T-value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom is 618. This indicates that the Hypotheses there is no significant difference in the perception of school proprietors and ministry staff on the adequacy of organization materials and curriculum in private secondary schools. Hence, we accept Hypotheses. This means that there is inadequacy in the number of teachers, condition of services as well as the curriculum development of private schools in the state.

Hypotheses 3

There is no significant difference in the perception of proprietors and ministry of education staff on the constraints and problems facing private schools in Bayelsa State.

Table 3: T-test of difference between perception of proprietors and ministry of education staff on the constraints and problems facing private schools in Bayelsa State

	\bar{x}	SD	N	DF	T-Cal	T-Value
Proprietors & Teachers	3.62	0.51	290			
Ministry of Education Staff	3.58	0.60	330	618	1.92	1.96

Table 3, revealed that the T-calculated of 1.92 is less and the critical T-Value of 1.96 and the degree of freedom is 618. This means that the Hypotheses of no significant difference in the perception of proprietors, teachers and ministry of education staff on the constraints and problems facing private secondary schools in Bayelsa State are accepted. The implication is that, some essential educational needs and equipment are inadequate in the private sector. It is an indication that laboratories, libraries and some important equipment are not provided in the private secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings indicate that both the school proprietors, teachers and ministry of education staff agree that the major motive/aim of private sector participation in the establishment of secondary schools is to help government in the promotion of literacy and reduction of illiteracy by reducing the burden of government provision of secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

However, the perception of the respondents differ slightly on the question as to whether, the private sector embarked on the provision of secondary schools to satisfy their philanthropic purposes and also, for financial gains and prestige. While the proprietors argue that financial gains have no place in their participation in the exercise, the ministry of education officials maintained that it is uppermost in their minds. And because of the urge for financial gains most of them neglected the conditions set by the development of private schools establishment. The implication of this is that, most private schools lack some basic facilities necessary for learning inspite of the huge amount of school fees and levies collected. Whatever the argument for or against in respect of the aim of private schools, the general view is that they are contributing immensely in the reduction of illiteracy in Bayelsa State.

The findings of the study shows that there is inadequacy in the number of teachers, equipment, condition of service as well as the curriculum development of private schools. This findings agrees with Egbuchu (2000), "why I dislike the school proprietors system is that they employ few teachers and make them to teach subjects they do not have good knowledge about. The implication is that, the students are not properly taught. Since their teachers are limited in knowledge. The finding also shows that, the two groups agreed that good morals and discipline are maintained in the private secondary schools. However, it was discovered that school materials and some important educational equipment were inadequate. The investigation revealed that both laboratories and libraries are grossly inadequate. The study shows that government does not subsidize private schools therefore, if private schools are allowed to operate sufficient improvement must be made in terms of government funding, supervision laboratories libraries and teaching materials.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings, the following recommendations are proffered towards improvement of the private sector participation in secondary school education in Bayelsa State.

- The private sector should be encouraged to step up their level of providing secondary schools in the state. But it becomes imperative for government to co-finance all secondary schools either public or private after all; it is our children and the future inheritance of the state that is involved.
- Adequate workshops and publicity be organized to sensitize the proprietors and teachers of private schools on the conditions set by government for the establishment and operation of private schools in the state.
- There must be routine checks and inspections by the state government to the private schools in the state to assess facilities, laboratory equipment and content of studies to bring their contents in-line with what is obtainable in the public schools.
- Private school proprietors should not see the establishment of schools as mere expression of their philanthropic gestures; rather it should be considered as the fundamental sacrifices and contribution to the eradication of illiteracy from the state.

CONCLUSION

In view of the overall results obtained from this work, it shows that private sector is showing considerable interest in the eradication of illiteracy in Bayelsa State. However, the efforts of proprietors in the private sector are not honestly appreciated by successive governments in the state. Considering funding, private sector should be subsidized by the government so that facilities would be improved in learning condition for our children in private schools. Having indicated interest in this direction, it is obvious that if government subsidize private sector, creates awareness and proper mobilization, the private sector will participate more effectively in the provision of secondary schools and boost the economy of Bayelsa State.

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