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Full Length Research Paper

Government and private efforts in the provision of secondary education in Ogun State, Nigeria: An appraisal

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Pre-independence, it was predominantly missionaries that were providing formal educational services. Immediately after and before 1975 it was mostly by governments. Contributions of missionaries and private individuals were very minimal. Services rendered by the governments were unable to meet the needs. Governments rolled out guidelines for private individuals and groups to establish schools. The objective of this paper is to compare private and government efforts in the provision of secondary education. Twenty five private schools and thirty public schools were randomly selected for interview across the geographic zones. Documents on school registrations and students enrolments in both public and private schools were perused and compared. Principals and proprietors of schools and colleges were interviewed. Principal Officers in the Ministries of Education were interviewed. Private schools exist all over. There is no Educational Zone that does not have Private Schools. There were more private schools than governments' in some zones. They are complimenting and supplementing the services of the governments'. But, their services and operations have to be checked and controlled by the governments. Governments should encourage and support establishment of schools and colleges. Private individuals and groups should combine efforts to render stronger and more reliable services as it is in the banking industry. Government should not attempt to take over schools again. Private individuals and groups should also venture into establishment of Technical Colleges and Trade Centres where the focus is solely on technical education.

Keywords: Secondary education, government and private efforts, Ogun State.

INTRODUCTION

According to Taiwo (1980) and Ijaduola (1998) education system is a complex organization of interactions between interdependent bodies, groups and individuals all aimed at the achievement of educational goals. The stakeholders are usually the governments and religious groups, voluntary organizations, Teachers' Associations, the teachers, the parents and the public. In some countries like the United States of America, the system is

one of secular education. The interaction and contributions of religious groups are not so significant. The interacting bodies are mostly the governments, Teachers' Associations and the people. Whereas in Britain and most British colonies, religious groups are "a potential factor although the principal bodies are the Central Governments and the Local Education Authorities and more recently Teachers' Associations, (Ijaduola,

1998 p.1). Probably because Nigeria was a British Colony, her education system has been modelled very closely after the British pattern. There are variations in the organization of the system because of the diverse characters, historical background, culture and general complexity of the communities, (Ijaduola, 1998 p. 2). These variations are noticed mainly in various “efforts of governments and private voluntary agencies, admission ages, levels of education, duration for each level of education, school curricula,” and others.

Particularly at the post primary level, there used to be Middle School, Secondary Modern, Secondary Commercial, Secondary Grammar and Comprehensive Schools and Colleges in different states of the Federation. Some of the levels, like the Secondary Modern, were never established in some states. Similarly, there have been variations in the pattern of technical education programmes and those of teachers’ training. The same goes for the post secondary education.

The focus of this piece is on the Post Primary level of education- the Secondary Education. The development of this level of education, post independence decades, was influenced by a number of factors namely: expansion in primary education and the acceptance of Ashby’s recommendation for increased number of Secondary Schools and diversification of the curricula, (Ajayi, 2004 p.65). Notable among the Secondary School types was Grammar School that runs five year School Certificate programme and two years for Higher School Certificate. The graduates had the option of attending Teacher Training Colleges, Technical Institutes, Trade Centres and or taking up junior positions in the civil services, departmental stores and others. Many of them used to take up appointment with Teaching Service Commission.

As recommended by Banjo’s Commission, Junior High Schools, were established but short lived. Comprehensive Secondary School type was adopted upon the recommendation of Banjo and Dike’s Commission but only became popular for a short while before reversion to Grammar School type of education. There were evening classes particularly at the urbanized centres – Abeokuta, Ijebu-Ode, Shagamu, Sango, Ota, and Ijebu-Igbo. They were geared towards WASC to supplement the normal school system.

It is obvious, from the fore goings, that educational growth and development must have passed through several stages and modifications at least to be able to give the best to help the nation economically, politically and socially: Policies and programmes have changed. Systems have been modified. All, however, resulted in what is in existence today. Private individuals and organizations are providing educational services at this level just as it is for primary and tertiary levels of education. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to specifically examine and compare the roles and contributions of the governments and private individuals

in the provision of Secondary Education in Ogun State, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Twenty five private schools and thirty public schools were randomly selected across the educational zones, the local government areas and across the state. They were visited when the schools were in session. The Principals (Chief Executive Officers) of the schools were interviewed; and so also few teachers and students. The facilities and amenities in the schools and colleges were examined. The conditions and status of the Laboratories, Studios, School Farms, School Vans/Buses, Staff Quarters, Principals’ Quarters and offices, Classrooms, Technical Workshops, Staff Rooms, School Records and others were examined. The discussions/interviews, observations and examinations provided information/data on the resources, enrolment, manpower, curricular, extra-curricular, challenges and prospects of the schools and colleges. Principal Officers in the State Ministry of Education were interviewed. They also gave information/data on the public and private secondary schools throughout the state. The research was carried out under the Nigerian 6-3-3-4 system of education. Data/information used was limited to 2006.

Simple tabulations, mean, median, mode and percentiles were used to analyze the information /data collected. Rigorous statistical analysis and interpretations that will make the understanding of the facts ambiguous were avoided. The paper is in seven parts: The first part is introduction. The second part is the methodology applied. The third gave an overview of the National and State Policies on Education. Parts four and five discuss government and private efforts in the provision of education at the post primary level. Parts six and seven discuss make recommendations and conclude. The words “schools” and “colleges” were interchangeably used to mean post primary level of education. Technical Colleges and Trade Centers are in this group.

An Overview of the Policies

Oyekan (2000 p.54) observed that before the 1925 Educational Memorandum, the British government had no clearly defined policy on education in its African colonies. The memorandum also patterned the Nigeria formal education after the English cultural system while it guided the Nigerian Educational Policy and development from 1925 to the time of independence, (Fafunwa 1989) and Oyekan 2000). In the 60s, Nigeria realized the prospects for education and development in the world community of nations. The nation witnessed a phenomenal proliferation of primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. The Ministries of Education at the

State and Federal levels coordinated the programmes of the schools and colleges. With the increase in the number of schools and colleges, and the corresponding enrolments, coupled with the expanding government activities, programmes and economy, large manpower requirements became obvious. It became necessary therefore to forge a new strategic direction because there were criticisms and discontentment against the prevailing education system. There were needs for proactive Education Policy. Oyekan (2000 p.54) has this to say on the genesis of Education Policy in the country:

.... the 1969 National Curriculum Conference in Lagos might have inspired the Federal Government to summon a seminar of distinguished educational experts from a wide range of interests in 1973. The motive was to diversify the school curriculum, make it relevant to the varying needs of individuals, and respond to the realities of the modern world and rapid changes in Nigerian society.

A critical and in depth review of the education system was fine-tuned with a series of curricular workshops, seminars and conferences between 1972 and 1976. All of them gave inputs into the National Policy on Education, (Omolara, 1991). The First was published in 1977 and the second and the most current in 1981. While the former is bookish, the current is structurally based on the 6-3-3-4 schooling pattern and it is more realistic - flexible to the ever changing circumstances of a developing nation like Nigeria. That is, with emphasis on vocational guidance and preparation for any skilful work to earn gainful living, (Adio, 1999, and Oyekan, 2000 p. 5).

The Secondary Education is designed for children to receive and benefit after six years of Primary Education. It spans through a period of six years in two stages of three years duration each. That is, Junior Secondary School (JSS) and Senior Secondary School (SSS). The JSS Candidate graduates into SSS after successful completion of the three-year programme. Broadly speaking, the aims of the Secondary Education within the Nigerian overall national objectives are:

to prepare individual citizens for useful living within the society they find themselves; and

to prepare individuals for higher education, be it within and outside the country.

Thus, both JSS and SSS classes of the Secondary Schools are expected to expose the children to diversified curricular, professional trainings and industrial experiences within the six years. Specifically, the objectives of Secondary Education are:

To provide an increasing number of primary school pupils with the opportunity for education of a higher quality, irrespective of sex or social, religious and ethnic background;

To diversify its curriculum to cater for the differences in the talents, opportunities and roles possessed by or open to students after their Secondary School courses;

To equip students to live effectively in our modern age

of science and technology;

To develop and project Nigerian culture, art and languages as well as the world's cultural heritage;

To raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour and appreciate those values specified under the broad national aims, and live as good citizens;

To foster Nigerian unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite them in diversity; and

To inspire its students with a desire for achievement and self – improvement both at school and in later life.

According to Oyekan (1994 and 2000 p. 73) the realization of these laudable objectives should produce energetic educated youths that can make use of their brain and hands as a result of their acquired knowledge and employable skills. In order to achieve the stated objectives, both JSS and SSS were to be under the same management within the same premises and thus complement each other. Both Federal and State governments prescribe core pre-vocational and non-vocational subjects and electives as curricular activities for the schools and colleges.

At the Junior Secondary Schools, the core subjects are Mathematics, English Language, French, Nigerian Languages, and Integrated Science, Social Studies, Citizenship Education and Introductory Technology. The Pre-Vocational subjects are Business Studies, Agricultural Science; and the Non-Vocational are Religious Knowledge (Christian and, Islamic Studies), Fine Arts, Music and Physical and Health Education.

The children were expected to be exposed to religious knowledge, problem-solving situations and creative production of things within the context of their culture and resources (animate and inanimate). There are three choices for the graduates of JSS. They may:

Proceed to Government Trade Centre or Government Technical College;

Go on to any apprenticeship system of programmes or other schemes for out-of-school vocational training; and

The more brilliant and privileged ones may proceed to Senior Secondary Schools.

In other words, drop outs were not expected. The Senior Secondary School (SSS) is for those that are capable, willing and have every other opportunity to further their education. It is more comprehensively designed to broaden the knowledge and outlook of the beneficiaries. Aside the specialties of every child, the core subjects that must be taken are English Language, one of the Nigerian Languages, Mathematics, one of Physics, Chemistry or Biology; either of Literature in English, History or Geography, and Agricultural Science or a Vocational subject.

The choice of core subjects is basic and has to be related to the career the child intends to pursue in his or her life. In addition, students make the subjects combinations to satisfy the requirements for the WASSC

Table 1: Zonal Distribution of Public Secondary Schools

Zones	Public Schools
Abeokuta South	20
Shagamu	17
Abeokuta North	16
Ikenne	11
Ijebu North East	8
Ijebu – Ode	14
Yewa North	18
Ijebu East	10
Ijebu North	19
Yewa South	13
Ado – Odo/Ota	18
Ifo	11
Remo North	6
Ogun Waterside	13
Obafemi Owode	12
Odogbolu	17
Ipokia	10
Ewekoro	8
Imeko/Afon	5
Odeda	10

Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Abeokuta.

and NECO examinations in view of the life time career choices. There were to be Guidance and Counselling Department that should give adequate guidance and counselling services in respect of the students' abilities, interests and aspirations. Over Twenty years after, what can we say the state has realised all over. There have been some adjustments here and there. The next sections of the paper discuss the situations, the policies, programmes, structures and systems.

Government Efforts

Regardless of the statues and standards, as at June 2002, Ogun State Government has 253 schools for her

over a million enrollable children. The Federal Government has four schools. There is no Zone that has less than five Secondary Schools owned by the State Government. Some Zones have as many as twenty schools. See Table 1. Most of them are located within the old suburbs of the settlements where they were found. Table 2 shows the selected few that were visited. Some were established pre-independence. Notable among those visited are Lisabi Grammar School (1943), Abeokuta, Methodist High School (1964) Arigbajo, Ifo, St. Anthony Grammar School (1954), Esure, Odogbolu Grammar School (1957), Odogbolu, Ijebu-Ife Community Grammar School (1980), Ijebu-Ife, and Army Day Secondary School (1997), Owode Yewa. Enrolment ranges from 2,511 in AUD Comprehensive College, Ota

Table 2. Enrolment in Selected Public Secondary Schools in Ogun State.

Schools/Colleges	Location	Year Estd.	Av. Enrol.
Abeokuta Grammar School	Abeokuta	1977	1207
Ijebu –Ife Comm. Gram. Sch.	Ijebu –Ife	1989	287
Lisabi Grammar School	Abeokuta	1943	2143
Our Lady of Apostle	Ijebu–Ode		2020
Nazareth High School	Imeko	1967	520
Muslim High School	Shagamu	1957	1484
Community High School	Ilaro	1980	411
Ijebu – Igbo Girls Grammar School	Ijebu–Igbo	1955	489
Community Secondary School	Ipokia	1980	475
Orile Keesi Grammar School	Olodo	1979	252
Imotu Commercial Academy	Ifonyintedo	1979	346
St. Anthony's Grammar School	Esure	1954	2434
Army Day Secondary School	Owode Yewa	1997	321
Baptist High School	Ilaro	1976	343
St. Kizito High School	Iwopin	1961	790
N.U.D Grammar School	Igbogila	1979	341
Alaye High School	Ayetoro	1980	693
Mushin Community High School	Ijebu Mushin	1964	823
Methodist High School	Arigbajo	1965	1864
Owu Community Comp. High School	Elere Adubi	1977	400
AUD Comprehensive College	Ota	1980	2511
Ijebu – Ode Grammar School	Ijebu – Ode		2245
Sango Ota High School	Sango	1980	1166
Molusi College	Iwoye	1949	2119
Igbesa High School	Igbesa	1980	531
Methodist Comp. High School	Ago – Iwoye	1955	261
Anglican Grammar School	Okenla Ifo	1976	1002
Odogbolu Grammar School	Odogbolu	1957	547
Itele High School	Itele	1978	789

Source: Ogun State Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Abeokuta.

to 252 in Orile Keesi Grammar School, Olodo. Those in the urbanized centres like Abeokuta, Sagamu, Sango, Ijebu-Ode, Ifo and Ota enrolled over 1,000 students: Abeokuta Grammar School established in 1977 enrolled 1,207 students on the average. Average enrolment in Lisabi Grammar School, Abeokuta established in 1943 is 2,143. See Table 2. 1,864 is the average enrolment in Methodist High School Arigbajo, Ifo. Molusi College, Ijebu-Igbo and AUD Comprehensive College, Ota had 2,119 and 2,511 respectively.

The schools have between three to ten classes of each stream in both JSS and SSS in their sections. Worse of all, two to three classes are crammed into a classroom, that is, for lack of space.

On the whole, less than 25% of the schools visited enrolled less than 400 students on the average. There is none of the schools that are less than twenty five years old. The latest was established in 1980 except Army Day Secondary School, Owode Yewa, established in 1997. But, generally:

They are relatively few and the number is unable to accommodate the large number of enrollable children across the state;

Most of the structures, classrooms, laboratories, furniture and others were found to be too old and in states of disrepair;

Commitment and dedications of the school management, teaching and non teaching staff are appalling,

The schools' environments look unkempt – they sometimes look like old cemetery;

Teachers are characterized by **laissez faire** attitudes to the teaching services;

The public has encroached into the premises and unauthorized structures have sprung-up creating unwholesome school environment;

School buildings have got dilapidated with visibly broken walls and leaking roofs;

Teachers engaged in other businesses - trading, contract execution, lessons out of school etc other than the teaching services they were engaged to perform;

Respect for the government polices and programmes are lacking in a large number of schools; and

One cannot really distinguish between the students of some of these schools and mere local craft apprentices on the streets and at odd times.

Table 3. Technical Colleges in Ogun state

Name	Location	Year Established	Average Enrolment
Government Technical College	Abeokuta	1957	1500
Government Technical College	Ajgunle	1980	503
Government Technical College	Aiyetoro	1979	400
Government Technical College	Igbesa	1981	450
Government Technical College	Ijebu Igbo	1979	250
Government Technical College	Ijebu Ode	1959	700
Government Technical College	Ilara Remo	1980	500

Source: Ogun State Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Abeokuta

Also Table 3 shows the Technical Colleges by locations, years of establishment and average enrolments. There is one each at Abeokuta, Ajgunle, Ayetoro, Igbesa, Ijebu-Igbo, Ilara-Remo, Ijebu-Ode and Ilaro - making seven. All are owned by the State Government. The oldest being Government Technical College, Abeokuta (1957); and the youngest was established in 1981. That is, Government Technical College Ayetoro. The largest enrolment is at Abeokuta (1500) and the smallest, 250 at Ijebu-Igbo. They are equipped to meet the standard of effective teaching and learning in technical colleges (Ademefun, 2002). Though the schools have long been established, equipped and old experiences are resident there, virtually nothing to show for the long years of establishment, experiences, the equipments, the facilities and amenities.

The consequences have been very grievous; the physical environments perpetually remain ugly. Above all, the final results are very poor and discouraging in most of the schools and colleges, (Ogundele, 1995 and Oke, 2006). Invariably, the more privileged members of the communities take to alternatives: Private Schools. Also the community dwellers in the new suburbs can only afford to send their children/wards to nearby schools located around them in the new suburbs. Exceptions are those that can afford exorbitant fees and levies charged by the private schools.

The then state governor, Chief Olusegun Osoba, (2002) has this to say:

The state government is willing to provide the right qualitative and quantitative education for its citizens but the policy is being hindered by non availability of adequate funds to prosecute most of these laudable educational programmes. Despite the fact that the state devotes a substantial part of its annual budget (nearly 25%) to the education sub-sector, other competing social demands ... and commitments have always been limiting the extent to which investment in these vital areas would go.

It is obvious from above that the Government could do better but it was incapacitated. The highlighted shortcomings affected the work force and the entire system. Ademefun, (2002) has this to say:

Lecturers as well as teachers were on strike while many of their students have become

motor boys, road side food vendors, vehicle mechanics and petty hawkers, eking out a living and generally being.... nuisance to everybody and to themselves too.

He went further to lament about the dilemma of the parents and teacher thus:

The parents had not been paid salaries for months, and they could not afford the compulsory education support levy. The teachers were undaunted in their resolve to stay out of school. There seem to be no end to the impasse. Education became an albatross. Those at different levels of education saw nothing but an uncertain future"

Specifically, he condemned the role of the past military administrations in the state with the followings:

"The military governments left behind a huge debt running into hundred of millions of naira in backlog of salaries and allowances to serving teachers spanning from primary to tertiary levels of education"

Similarity, in a ministerial report, Fayomi (2002) in his words expresses that:

...inspite of the good intention which were cardinal to the establishment of the educational programs, the plans were not rooted in the social and political needs of the country ... because of the apparent lack of definite focus, some of these programmes failed to produce the desired results and they become the target of public criticisms....

All of these were pointers to the facts that the governments could not cope; and why private efforts have to come in. It was fully realized that government alone could not cope, thus, the government soft pedalled. Private individuals and groups were then allowed to make contributions towards provision of education.

To this effect, Ogun State Government reeled out guidelines, laws and requirements for establishment of private schools in the state.

Guidelines, Laws and Requirements

Hitherto, it was all government affairs, except few missionaries and private individuals. However, in 1975, government took over all schools and colleges. But in less than three decades, the governments were tired of

Table 4. Zonal Distribution of Private Secondary Schools.

Zone	No of schools
Abeokuta South	12
Shagamu	9
Abeokuta North	2
Ikene	7
Ijebu North East	1
Ijebu Ode	7
Yewa North	2
Ijebu East	3
Ijebu North	3
Yewa South	4
Ado – Odo/Ota	15
Ifo	28
Remo North	2
Ogun Water Side	2
Obafemi Owode	6
Odogbolu	2
Ipokia	2
Ewekoro	2
Imeko/Afon	1
Odeda	1
Total	111

Source: Ogun State Ministry of Education, Abeokuta.

carrying the burden. Invariably since early 1990s as the government could no longer cope with the number of pupils graduating from primary schools, private individuals and groups were encouraged and licensed to establish schools and colleges. The Guidelines have to do with the durations, establishments, sites, physical facilities, school populations, fees, inspections, funding and staffing.

In order to implement the objectives, the strategy pursued is that “education at this level shall be functional and comprehensive. School drop-outs shall be prepared for vocational training,” (Nigeria, 1981, Oyekan, 2000 and Ajayi 2004).

Aside the aforementioned, the following are the requirements for establishing private secondary schools:

- Zonal Education Officers’ Report of Inspection;
- Official Form duly completed;
- Official Receipt of the Form bought and completed;
- Receipt of Inspection Fee;
- Tax Clearance Certificate for three years;
- Sketch Map of the area/ approved survey plan of Permanent Site;
- Scheme/ Syllabus/Time Table of the school;
- Approved Building Plan of Permanent Site;
- Letter from the Land Lord for use of the building (in case of temporary accommodation);
- Photocopy of credentials for teachers and proprietor(s);
- Education Levy for three years;
- File jackets (not less than ten pieces);
- Letter of inspection of the building from the Health Department of the Local Government where the school is sited ; and

Statement of Bank Account of the school.

Private Contributions

There were one hundred and eleven (111) approved Secondary Schools across the State as at May 2002. See Table 4. There were 14 registered private schools in Abeokuta metropolis: 12 in the South and 2 in the North. Ifo had as many as 28, Ado-Odo/Ota 15, Shagamu, Ikene and Ijebu-Ode 7 each. The least, 1 each is in Odeda and Imeko/Afon Zones. Between May 2002 and the end of 2006, the number of schools had geometrically increased in these zones. Probably there may not be any Zone with less than five registered schools by the end of 2006. Probably there may not be any Education Zone that has less than 10 registered schools by 2010.

Interestingly, there are unregistered schools. These were found scattered all over the state too. Among the registered schools randomly selected for further examination, average enrolment between 2002 and 2006 is not less than 188 in any school, in any year, Table 5. It is as high as 1,008 in Adeola Odutola College (co-educational), Ijebu-Ode and 840 in Our Lady of Apostle Girls’ Secondary School in Ijebu-Ode. Regal College, Shagamu; Topmost College, also in Shagamu; Corona Secondary School, Agbara; Greenland Hall, Agbado; The Bells Secondary School (Ota); Taidob High School (Abeokuta); Aiyetoro Model School (Aiyetoro); and Seico International Secondary School (Ikangba) all had, on the average, well over 300 students registered per year.

Table 5. Average Enrolment in Selected Private Schools

School/College	Location	Average Enrolment
Loral Secondary School	Igbesa	214
Holy Child Comprehensive High School	Owode	208
Adeola Odutola College	Ijebu Ode	1008
The Bells Secondary School	Ota	966
Rose Private School	Ojodu	984
Greenland Hall	Agbado	385
Our Lady of Apostle Sec. Sch.	Ijebu Ode	846
Topmost Model School	Shagamu	388
Ayetoro Model College	Ayetoro	484
Learning Land College	Sango Ota	246
Taidob High School	Abeokuta	532
Vital Link International Academy	Ifo	188
Seiko Inter. Sec. School	Ikangba	341
The International School	Ago-Iwoye	284
Trinity International College	Ofada	216
Regal College	Sagamu	310
O&A Academy	Ikene	228
Babcock University High School	Ilishan	241
Faith Comprehensive High School	Ogere	222
Mercy Model Sec. School	Ijebu Igbo	204
Auntie Kemi Model College	Ilaro	216
Onigege Ara College	Ishara	271
Pathfinder College	Ibiade	189
Corona Secondary School	Agbara	498
Oreofe Model College	Alagbole	210

Source: Field Work and Ogun State Ministry of Education, Abeokuta

They are actually complementing by absorbing those children the parents can afford the cost of private schools, thus inadvertently reducing the burden on public schools. Not only that, they have contributed to the physical development of the locality they are found. They have also engaged large proportion of those members of the community skilled and unskilled (cleaners, artisans, Assistant Teachers and others) that would have been wondering about the streets and roads. These include the teaching and non-teaching staff in all of the schools and colleges.

Unlike the public schools, they locate in the old and new suburbs of the cities and towns. At the old suburbs, it is usually old family buildings that are renovated to provide six to eight classrooms including the Principal's Office and probably two toilets; no more, no less. They have no space for so many other structures such as for games and sport fields, school farms, geographical garden, and others; nor opportunity for any expansion.

The rural areas are devoid of the private schools. First, the private efforts in the industry are not just for services but for commercial purposes. The threshold cannot be met in the rural areas. Secondly, the rural dwellers cannot, or may not, be able to afford the costs of establishing schools. Like the public schools, the set-up respects the education policies, laws and guidelines to some extent:

The 3-3 system is defined and the programmes are run as such;

Efforts are made to confine a class of students in an apartment "with minimal interference from another;

Teachers are recruited and made to run the school programme according to the syllabi and schemes of work;

Both JSS and SSS usually locate within the same premises and under the same management – The Principal, being the Chief Executive Officer;

Students dress in uniforms which vary from school to school but the choice is that of the pioneering management and or the proprietor/ proprietress;

Eight periods (of forty minutes each in the morning and thirty minutes in the last three periods after long break) are observed daily;

Extra-curricular activities are mandatory but the extent of participation depends on the local management;

The schools run three terms of between twelve and thirteen weeks in a session with a mid-term break of two days per term;

Extra classes are organized to be able to assist the students particularly the final year students to enable them cover the syllabi;

The teachers are more committed, devoted, loyal, sincere, focused and hard working;

Teachers, in most cases, are made to teach the subjects in which they specialized during their trainings;

The physical environments of the localities they are located have been developed in terms of physical structures, access roads, ornamental plants and others; and

Conferences/workshops/ seminars/trainings and others are sometimes organized to update and upgrade the teachers which in turn means national capacity building and national transformation.

There are some variations among the schools and colleges, however. Often the attempts are to outwit each other in organizations, structures, systems and performances and to maximize their maximum profit. These thus lead to some aberrations and albatrosses noticed here and there across the state:

They charge exorbitantly beyond economic rates;

They have lost focus in the implementation of curricula and programmes.

Schools' curricular have been modified by different schools and in different ways to show and claim supremacy over others;

The curricular are sometimes extended beyond the WASSCE and NECO requirements;

Students are admitted under age and subsequently graduated as such, this invariably poses developmental threat in the later life of the children; and

Formal laboratories, studios, workshops, libraries and others are neither in existence nor in use in nearly all of them and teaching and learning were done in abstract.

A confidential report of an Inspector of Education to one of the schools reads:

.... very poor environment; only one toilet for both male and female students. No separate conveniences for teachers. Crèche, Nursery and Primary are in the same block of seven rooms (not standard classrooms). The Secondary School (Junior and Senior Sections) occupies two of the seven rooms. No separate classes for each class of the Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary no Laboratory, no Playing Field, no Geographical Garden nor School Farm...The corridor serves as Staff Room.... Poor ventilation, noisy Environment....

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Inspection Department, Abeokuta (2009)

Honestly, to say that over 86 % of the schools are glorified Primary Schools is to overstate the obvious. There are rots in them; and they do not meet the standard of any average Secondary School as stipulated by the Federal and State Ministries of Education. Unfortunately, they are government approved. They are copy-cats: Often, they import the principles of teaching and learning as obtained in the advanced industrialised countries. But they cannot fit in because of the background and general environment, (Ademefun, 2002 and Oyekan, 1999 and 2000). However, some of the

schools stand out in terms of physical structures, curriculum implementation, moral standards, and extra-curricular activities. All ancillary facilities and amenities for effective teaching and learning are adequately provided. The Bells Secondary School, Ota; Greenland Hall, Agbado; Babcock University High School, Ilisan; and The International School, Ago-Iwoye are in this group. The school environments are commensurately relatively precise, clean and well organized. The teachers and students are well kept and decent.

In some of the Educational Zones like Ifo and Ado-Odo/Ota, the private schools are more in number than the public schools: As soon as their Primary Schools progress to Primary Five or Six, the Secondary arm are introduced with or without additional classrooms.

DISCUSSION

Secondary Education System has come a long way. There have been contributions from missionaries, Federal and State Governments and Private individuals and groups. The public schools take absolute directives from the Ministries of Education and every resource including manpower is provided directly and indirectly through the Ministries of Education. This probably explains why the little resources have to be spread so thinly on the needs. One cannot jettison the efforts and contributions of private individuals and groups. They are contributing significantly to the development of their respective local communities, the state and the nation generally. The registered private schools are almost as many (and sometimes more) as the number of public schools in some Education Zones. The impact of the Federal Government is not remarkable.

The schools have not been exposing the children enough to diverse curriculum, professional training and industrial experiences in both JSS and SSS. Whereas, the design of the policy and the curriculum did not expect drop-outs but there are those roaming the streets and growing up to become Area Boys (hoodlums).

Proprietors are not genuinely interested in the education of the children but the financial returns. They have neither knowledge nor skills of either teaching profession nor administration of schools. They also take advantage of the cheap labour readily available all over. Mostly, they recruit NCE, HND and ND holders. Experience and teaching qualifications matter least to them. The State Government has taken the right step by upgrading the State College of Education to a degree awarding institution. This is aside the full fledge Institute of Education in the State University. There is also a Federal College of Education in the State. Enough manpower should be readily available, therefore. Neither the recommended number of classrooms nor the required

land space is met in nearly all the schools. The fees charged are outrageously high compared to the services rendered. The amenities and facilities are inadequate

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Proliferation of schools and colleges need to be checked: Instead of mushroom schools established here and there, proprietors should be encouraged to pull and harness resources to form larger forces and better services rendered as it is in the banking industry in the country today.

Following from above is the need to put in place checks and balances in the implementation of policies, programmes execution, systems administration, structures and organizations of the schools. There must be control on the fees and levies charged. Thorough inspection of schools and colleges by the Ministry of Education is imperative. It will check excesses in unauthorized expansion of curricular and exaggerated extra-curricular activities.

The environment and background should dictate the choice of method of teaching and learning and the entire materials that will be applied in the processes. Libraries must be well equipped and students should be tutored and advised to make maximum use of the library facilities. There should be a Guidance and Counselling Unit in each school to enhance the students' intellectual tempo and conceptual understanding as well as academic achievement and vocational inclination towards their chosen subjects and careers. Children resuming and graduating under age should be discouraged as it may affect the mental capability of the children later in their lives. The Federal Government should establish more schools and colleges to assist the state and private efforts to cater for the teeming school age population.

School owners should be advised to run their schools as team players devoid of master-servants relationship. The Ministry of Education may have to design a programme that will bring to speed, in schools management, the potential proprietors and head teachers. There must be unique things that must attract students and parents but values in the face of money should not be neglected because values drive the business.

In conclusion, Governments should never aspire to take over schools again: The burdens are beyond the capability of the governments. Incidentally, the school age population kept on growing. Private individuals and groups should be encouraged and if possible supported to establish schools and colleges to be able to cater for the teeming population. Since this group of children can proceed to Technical Colleges, this paper is calling on the private sector to establish Technical Colleges and Trade Centres where middle level manpower will be trained.

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