

Proliferation of Unwholesome Private Primary and Secondary Schools and Quality Education in Nigeria: Implications for National Development

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Abstract: *The Proliferation of Unwholesome Private Primary and Secondary Schools without fulfilling the basic requirements for establishing private schools to ensure quality education for national development is a common phenomenon in Nigeria. With this in focus, therefore, the paper examined the following subtopics: chronicles of private primary and secondary education in Nigeria, reasons for private sector involvement in education in Nigeria, basic requirements for establishing private primary and secondary schools and quality education, relevance of primary and Secondary education to national development, proliferation of private primary and secondary schools and quality education in Nigeria, and implications of proliferation of unwholesome private primary and secondary schools in Nigeria for national development. It was therefore concluded that quality education is germane to national development. And that government should be pro-active in preventing any member of public with the intent of establishing a private school without the basic requirements from doing so, and at the same time educate them on the need to put the provision of quality education ahead of economic benefits.*

Keywords: *Proliferation, Unwholesome, Quality Education, National Development, Substandard School, Mushroom School*

1. Introduction

The Federal Government of Nigeria in the National Policy on Education (2014) recognizes education as an instrument for national development which shall continue to be highly rated in the national development plans because education is the most important instrument of change; any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution. It is in the recognition of this that the Federal Government of Nigeria places high premium on both the primary and secondary education in the country because they are the foundation of education, without which the goals of university education to develop intellectual capability of individuals for national development could not be achieved. This is clearly stated in the National Policy of Education (2014) where it is stipulated that since the rest of the education system is built upon it, the primary level is the key to the success or failure of the whole system, while the broad goals of secondary education is to prepare the individual for useful living within the society and higher education.

In order to make the goals of primary and secondary education attainable in the country, government at all levels (Federal, State and Local governments) regulates and controls their establishment and operation. The purpose of this is to ensure that quality education is provided at the primary and secondary levels for national development. As a matter of fact, quality education at the primary and secondary levels of education is the foundation for and access to national development. Therefore, where quality education is undermined, national development becomes elusive.

The history of private involvement in education industry in Nigeria started during the early missionary era in 1843 with the first primary school founded in Badagry-Lagos by Methodist Church. Since then there had been some couples of both the primary and secondary schools established by the missionaries, individuals, communities and government across the country until 1970 when government took over all schools from private proprietorship and in 1976 declared universal free primary education (UPE) for the whole country (Enahwo in Ogbiji & Ogbiji, 2014). Following the astronomical rise in school enrolment on account of the UPE programme and the fall in standards of our public secondary (and primary) schools as a result of poor founding, government again deemed it necessary to involve private participation in education to stem the tide (Ogbiji & Ogbiji, 2014 and Kalama, Etebu, Charles and John in Mfaiga, 2018).

The idea to involve private participation in education industry by the government of Nigeria is clearly expressed and documented in the National Policy on Education (2014) which reads thus:

for primary schools:

“Government welcomes the contributions of voluntary agencies, communities and private individuals in the establishment and management of primary schools alongside those provided by the state and local government as long as they meet the minimum standards laid down by the Federal Government.”

for Secondary Schools:

“Government welcomes the participation of voluntary agencies, communities and private individuals in the establishment and management of secondary schools. State governments shall prescribe conditions to be met by the communities and others wishing to establish secondary schools.”

Apart from the fact that these two clauses seek the involvement of private participation in the establishment of primary and secondary schools in Nigeria, they also express the need for quality education in the system by the private sector through the expressions such as “minimum standards laid down” and “conditions to be met.”

In line with the minimum standards laid down and conditions to be met, many private primary and secondary schools have been established and licensed to operate in the country. Based on their outstanding performance and the quality education being provided, it should be observed that the private primary and secondary schools in Nigeria enjoy good patronage by parents despite the huge amount being charged for school fees. Also, some research findings have revealed that the academic performance of students in private schools is better than the academic performance of students in public schools (Uyi, 2012 & Afolabi in Ehigiamusoe, 2012). As a result of this, many parents prefer private schools to public schools for the education of their children.

However, parents’ patronage and preference of private schools has led to the proliferation of unwholesome (substandard, unregistered, mushroom and illegal) private primary and secondary schools across the country. Reports from the national dailies, research findings and personal observations have revealed that the private schools in this category lack the basic minimum requirements (such as qualified teachers, infrastructural and instructional facilities) for the establishment of private schools in Nigeria. Hence, many private schools operate under uncompleted buildings, residential buildings and unconducive environment with unqualified teachers. Owing to this fact, the quality of education in private schools operating under this condition has been undermined. Therefore, the proliferation and existence of unwholesome private primary and secondary schools in Nigeria serves as a threat to quality education required for national development.

2. Chronicles of Private Primary and Secondary Education in Nigeria

Education as a powerful investment in human capital and national development in Nigeria was at first the initiative of the private sector. It was introduced in Nigeria by the Christian Missions in 1843 after the abolition of the Trans Atlantic slave trade in Europe in 1807 and before the Universality of education by the United Nations in 1948 (Ogbiji and Ogbiji, 2014 & Ayeni, 2016). According to Ayeni (2016). The first nursery school was established by Mr. and Mrs. De Graft in Badagry in 1843 as an affiliate of the Methodist Church. This was followed by the establishment of C. M. S. Grammar school in Lagos in 1859. Although the Koranic private schools in the north predated the introduction of western education in Nigeria, the Muslim Missionary Societies, notably Ansar-Ud-Deen and Ahmadiyya later established schools (NBF News, 2009 & Ayeni, 2016). Prominent among the Christian Missions in the establishment of schools in Nigeria were the Church Missionary Society (CMS), the Roman Catholic Mission (RCM), the Methodist Church and the Baptist Church (Ogbiji & Ogbiji, 2014). The lists of the schools established by these Christian Missions are as follows:

Institution	Location	Date Founded	Agency
Methodist Primary School	Badagry-Lagos	1843	Methodist Church
CMS Primary School	Abeokuta	1846	Church Missionary Society
Duke Town Primary School	Calabar	1846	Church of Scotland Mission
CMS Grammar School	Lagos	1859	Church Missionary Society
CMS Teacher Training College	Abeokuta	1849	Church Missionary Society
St. Gregory's College	Lagos	1876	Church Missionary Society
Methodist Boys High School	Lagos	1876	Methodist Church
Roman Catholic Mission Primary School	Lagos	1868	Roman Catholic church
Methodist Girls High School	Lagos	1879	Methodist Church
Baptist Primary School	Ogbomosh o	1854	Baptist Church
Hope Waddell Training Institution	Calabar	1895	Church of Scotland Mission
St. Andrew's College	Oyo	1896	Church Missionary Society
Baptist Training College	Ogbomosh o	1897	Baptist Church
St. Paul's College	Awka	1904	Church Missionary Society
Oron Training Institution	Oron	1905	Primitive Church

Adapted from Ogbiji & Ogbiji (2014)

In order to have control on education in the British colony of West Africa, the 1882 Education Ordinance was formally pronounced in Nigeria by the colonial government. Schools were thereafter classified into government and private schools. The government schools were totally financed through public funds, but the private schools only received little aid from the public fund. The ordinance also provided

for annual evaluation of pupils, methods of granting teachers certificates, a system of the grant-in-aid and the establishment of a General Board of Education with the power to establish local boards. More foreign teachers were employed, more schools were established and financial encouragements were given to the missions, voluntary agencies and private individuals to establish more schools (Daniel-Kalio, 2018).

According to Daniel-Kalio (2018), the ordinance was cumbersome to implement in Nigeria because the curriculum, the method and the medium of communication were too foreign for a Nigerian child. So the missionary schools started facing a lot of challenges as they grew in number. There was therefore, need to review the 1882 education ordinance to make it environmentally relevant. This gave rise to the 1887 Education Ordinance. Meanwhile, the 1887 ordinance outlined the principle of partnership in educational provision between the government and the missionary agencies. This created problems for the Christian missions as they were no longer able to easily satisfy the required standards/conditions of qualifying for grants-in-aid, they were therefore forced to improve the standards of their existing schools. Missionary bodies were no longer able to easily establish new schools due to the high standards required. This affected the opening of new schools and resulted in creating a further gap between the government schools and assisted (private) schools (Adiele, Obasi & Ohia, 2017 and Daniel-Kalio, 2018).

By the year 1914 when both the Northern and Southern Protectorates were amalgamated, there were a total of 59 government and 91 mission primary schools in the South; all 11 secondary schools except for King's College, Lagos were run by Missions (National Bureau of Statistics, 2015). Following this development, the British government observed that there were many mushroom primary schools operating in the Southern Nigeria. So the British government adopted a new education policy for British West African colonies in 1926 to control the existence of mushroom primary schools in the Southern Nigeria (Daniel-Kalio, 2018). Due to the pressure on the need to have more secondary schools across the Federation, additional schools were created by local efforts after the amalgamation (National Bureau of Statistics, 2015). Among such schools established by local efforts (individuals, groups and communities) included Aggrey Memorial College, Arochukwu established in 1931; Ilesha Grammar School, Ilesha established in 1934; Ibadan Boys High School, Ibadan established in 1938; Ibibio State College, Ikot-Ekpeme established in 1949; and Urhobo College, Effurum established in 1949 (Nairaland Forum, 2018). Since then the private sector's involvement in education delivery across Nigeria had been on the increase until 1970 when government took over all schools from private proprietorship and in 1976 declared Universal Free Primary Education (UPE) for the whole country (National Bureau of Statistics, 2015 & Enahowo in Ogbiji & Ogbiji, 2014). For the first time, the long history of private schools existence was disrupted for some time. According to Daniel-Kalio (2018), the Universal Primary Education was introduced to accelerate school enrolment and national growth.

Due to inadequate planning and the astronomical rise in school enrolment, the UPE programme failed to achieve its goals. Besides, the enormous responsibility Federal Government of Nigeria took in respect of the UPE programme could not be sustained. The financial burden became too great that government began to shy away from its undertakings (Gusau, 2008). Consequently, there was shortage of teaching materials in schools, teachers' salaries and approved allowances were unpaid for months and as a result schools were closed as teachers went on strike in many states in Nigeria (Ayeni, 2016). As a face saving measure the then Obasanjo administration placed primary education under joint control of states and local governments in the 1979 constitution, where local governments had direct control over primary schools (Gusau, 2008).

During this period, Private sector operators interested in establishing and running schools came out to pursue their interest because it was

obvious that the financial burden was becoming unbearable for the affected governments (Ayeni, 2016). The UNESCO resolution in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990 that mandated all the countries of the world to pay greater attention towards improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills further gave impetus to the private sector involvement in education enterprise as the Federal Government of Nigeria was encouraged to voluntarily involve the private sector. The government decision to do this was articulated in revised National Policy on Education 1998 for both the primary and secondary education in the country (Gusua, 2008 & Ayeni, 2016). Since then, there has been a continuous increase in the number of private primary and secondary schools established most especially by individuals and missionaries in the country.

3. Reasons for Private Sector Involvement in Education in Nigeria

The introduction of formal education in Nigeria by the missionaries was with a purpose. According to Daniel-Kalio (2018), the Christian missionaries introduced western education so as to gain access and to enable the people to learn to read the Bible in English and the local language. Gardening and agriculture, as well as training local schoolmasters, catechists and clergymen were part of the activities of the missionaries. The main purpose of introducing western education through the establishment of missionary schools was basically to propagate Christianity. With this purpose in mind, the missionaries established schools indiscriminately to suit their specific needs. There was no uniformity in terms of curriculum of instruction not to talk of the standard to maintain because there was no regulatory body to oversee the establishment of schools and supervision of same. The administration and management of education was left in the hands of the missionaries until 1882 (Odeleye, Oyelami & Odeleye, 2012) when the colonial government began to show interest in the type and quality of education offered by the missionaries. It was then that the colonial government mandated the missionary schools to produce the clerks needed for the growing administrative requirement and expanding commercial enterprises in Nigeria (Daniel-Kalio, 2018) through various education ordinances being enacted. So, all the schools established during these periods were for propagation of Christianity, administrative and commercial reasons.

The periods between 1914 when the northern and southern protectorates were amalgamated and 1960 when Nigeria gained her independence witnessed the establishment of schools by private individuals, groups and communities. Such schools (mostly secondary schools) were established in order to make secondary education available for people at the local or community level. School fees were moderately charged like the missionary schools to provide basic educational needs (Odeleye, Oyelami & Odeleye, 2012). This was the situation until 1970 when government took over the privately owned schools in the country and in 1976 declared Universal Free Primary Education (UPE) which eliminated school fees. The UPE programme which took off with much promise, failed to achieve its goals of eradicating illiteracy largely due to inadequate planning, which is a consequence of lack of adequate data (Imam, 2012). However, the UPE programme brought about a rise in school enrolment which made government to realise that educating the entire citizenry was a daunting task that required the involvement of the private sector as well (Ogbiji & Ogbiji, 2014). Due to this reason and the intention of government to fulfil the goals of primary and secondary education, government once again involved the private sector to establish schools to provide educational opportunities for students. Hence, Adebayo in Uyi (2012) declared that privately run schools are now being looked upon to correct the ills and lapses by the long years of government involvement in running of schools. So, private schools were established in order to increase access to education due to the rise in school enrolment.

Therefore, operating licenses were granted to private individuals between 1980 and 1990 indiscriminately by government (Etubu, Charles & John in Yawe, 2014). Since then there has been increasing interests to provide educational services at both primary and secondary levels by private individuals and missionaries. This is largely due to the fact that these private institutions, which cut across all levels of education from nursery, primary, secondary, to tertiary education, are today the preferred choices of many parents. Besides, it is believed that private institutions have variety of curricular, which enable students acquire right skills during schooling (Gabriel, 2018). According to NBF News (2009), the belief is widely held that private primary and secondary education assures placement in choice higher education institutions and courses.

So, many parents prefer private schools to public schools even though they are being charged higher school fees than the public schools that are almost tuition-free. This makes private school business lucrative and profit oriented. It is not surprising; therefore, that many private schools are today established for economic benefits. Omede (2015) observes that the original intention of genuine private practitioners in education should be to intervene and redeem the collapsing public institutions rather than for the economic benefits that seems to be the most driving force for many of them. But Sani (2018) declares that the intention of the private schools is not monetary gain as such but providing educational opportunities for all to seize, leading to a keen spirit of competition with a view to concretizing quality standards. While these intentions are some of the reasons for private sector involvement in primary and secondary education in Nigeria, the findings of the research conducted in Ondo State by Ayeni (2016) reveal that the entrepreneurs were largely motivated to the school business by factors that included the desire to operate business venture (57%), raise education standard (100%), fill educational gap (75.5%), financial capacity (65.3%) and provision of employment opportunities.

4. Basic Requirements for Establishing Private Primary and Secondary Schools and Quality Education

Just as a building is not built on nothing but on the foundation already built, the basic requirements for establishing private primary and secondary schools in Nigeria are required as the foundation of quality education. This is to assert that the provision of quality education is achieved with the fulfilment of the basic requirements. Therefore, the basic requirements for establishing primary schools (as applicable to private ones) according to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FGN) (National Policy on Education, 2014) include the following: school library; basic health scheme; counselling; educational resources centre; and special teachers of particular subjects such as Mathematics, Science, Physical education, Language Arts (in relation to English, French, Sign Language and Nigerian Languages) Librarian, Music, Fine Arts and Home Economics. Other requirements emphasized by the ministry of education comprise three VIP toilets; playground; two hectares of land; three classrooms 9m by 12m in size; big assembly hall; administrative block; water utility; and farm land (Odunsi, 2018).

In the procedure for the establishment and operation of private schools (Primary and Secondary) in Nigeria by the Federal Ministry of Education, it is indicated that all private schools in order to be established and operate, an approval by the Ministry of Education and culture must be given. The procedure includes choosing a name of private school and registering in to the registry of companies; premises; staff of the private school (qualified headmaster/headmistress as well as teachers); and curriculum programme, among others. Meanwhile, the basic requirements as indicated above can be categorized into three factors as related to quality education. They are physical facilities (quality environment for teaching and learning), educational facilities (quality tools for teaching and learning), and qualified teachers (quality teaching). These three factors contribute significantly to the quality of learning

outcome (of the child pedagogically, cognitively, mentally, developmentally, potentially and socially) by which quality education is determined or achieved. Hence, Eze (2009) defines quality education to involve healthy learners, healthy environment, content that is reflected in relevant curriculum and materials, process through which trained teachers are child-centred and beautiful outcomes are achieved. More comprehensively, Slade (2017) affirms that a quality education provides resources and direct policy to ensure that each child enters schools healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle; learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults; is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community; has access to personalized learning and is supported by qualified, caring adults; and is challenged academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment.

According to the Education for all Global Monitoring in Grima (2008), two principles underline the definition of quality education: the first identifies learners' cognitive development as the major explicit objective of all education systems. The second emphasizes education's role in promoting values and attitudes of responsible citizenship and in nurturing creative and emotional development. It is in the recognition of this that the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon set the sustainable Development Goals (SDGS) process in motion in 2012 by declaring that every child must be in school, and the quality of those schools must improve so that students are prepared to be productive citizens, ready to lead the future (Slade, 2017). This is to emphasise the fact that quality education is the right of every child. The Article 29 of the convention on the Right of the Child echoes this that, the states are requested to recognize that education should be directed at developing the child's personality and talents, preparing the child for active life as an adult, fostering respect for basic human rights and developing respect for the child's own cultural and national values and those of others (United Nations, 1989 in UIF, 2004).

In pursuance of quality education, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) (National Policy on Education) states that, for philosophy (of education in Nigeria) to be in harmony with Nigeria's National goals, education has to be geared towards self-realization, better human relationship, individual and national efficiency, effective citizenship, national consciousness, national unity, as well as towards social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological progress. In order to achieve this, it further states that, accordingly education and training facilities shall continue to be expanded in responses to societal needs and made progressively accessible to afford the individual a far more diversified and flexible choice. Hence, with these policy statements, it shows that the basic requirements for establishing private primary and secondary schools in Nigeria are fundamental to the provision of quality education.

5. Relevance of Primary and Secondary Education to National Development

Education either formal or informal is fundamental to the development of any nation. According to Ikechukwu in Evans-Obinna and Ndieze (2017), education is seen as the light that drives away the darkness of ignorance and enables mankind to find its way through the tortures and labyrinth of development and civilization. This explains why the nations of the world have come to embrace education as a powerful instrument for national development. Hence, education in Nigeria is an instrument "per excellence" for effecting national development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014) (National Policy on Education). In the light of this, the Federal Government of Nigeria places high premium on primary and secondary education because of their relevance to national development.

5.1 Primary Education

According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) (National Policy on Education), primary education is the education given in institutions for children aged 6 to 11 plus. It further says that since the rest of the education system is built upon it, the primary level is the key to the success or failure of the whole system. While this is indisputably true, Adesina (2011) asserts that the primary education serves as the foundational level of all other education by providing the children with a good preparatory ground for further education. Corroborating this assertion, Akande in Adesina (2011) regards primary education as very vital and fundamental to all types of education any person can receive in life. Meanwhile, the goals of primary education in Nigeria as stated in the National Policy on Education (2014) are to:

- a) Include permanent literacy and numeracy, and ability to communicate effectively;
- b) Lay a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking;
- c) Give citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society;
- d) Mould the character and develop sound attitude and morals in the child;
- e) Develop in the child the ability to adapt to the child's changing environment;
- f) Give the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within these limits of the child's capacity
- g) Provide the child with basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality.

It should be asserted, therefore, that the goals of primary education in Nigeria stand for the foundation of national development. In the words of Osuji and Alugbuo in Opoh (2014), these objectives made the primary education the concern of all and sundry, and it has become obvious that the foundation to build the future of Nigerian nation anchored on it. In support of this view, Opoh (2014) declares that the place of primary education is very paramount because it is the foundation of adults' contribution to developmental processes. In other words, basic education makes a child a better adult. This implies that the process of making a person an adult who is able to contribute to national development begins with the basic (primary) education of the child. In essence, primary education is offered in order to prepare an individual for adult life intellectually, physically, morally, socially, professionally and emotionally so as to become a useful citizen to him/herself and community at large. Thus, primary education is therefore a reservoir of knowledge and a citadel of learning basic skills for national development and a child necessity for the transformation of any society (Opoh, 2014).

The fact that primary education is a huge investment in Nigeria for national development is demonstrated in the Universal Primary Education (UPE), Universal Basic Education (UBE) and other programmes being put in place to increase access to primary education at the local level and subsequently increase school enrolment. This is to enable every child acquire basic knowledge required for an informed decision and proper understanding of their environment. According to Adesina (2011), the effectiveness of investments in health and sanitation depends on good basic knowledge among villagers. The effectiveness of extension services for poor farmers depends on their capacity to understand what is being explained to them. The basic education acquired at the primary level also has an impact on broader workforce outcome such as participation in the formal labour market, work in more modern sectors and (particularly for women) the ability to earn regular income from work and contribute to national development (Jaiyeoba in Adesina, 2011).

5.2 Secondary Education

A major factor that necessitates the acquisition of Secondary education in Nigeria is that the education being provided at the primary level is proving to be insufficient for a child to acquire

permanent literacy, communicative, and numeracy skills expected from him/her at the end of the training (Ige, 2013). Hence, as an intermediary step between primary and tertiary education, secondary education serves as a preparatory phase for youth before they enter the work place, helping to equip a largely adolescent population with the skills, aptitudes, and social values for a productive and healthy adult life (James Jacob & Lehner, n. d.) According to Tabotndip (n.d.), the secondary education is meant to prepare the beneficiaries towards useful living within the society and higher education for those willing and able to withstand it. Consequently the secondary level of education is not only a bridge between the primary and the tertiary level of education; it is also a means of living and fitting well into society for those who may not aspire further.

In Nigeria, the specific goals of Secondary education are to:

- a) Provide all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of sex, social status, religious or ethnic background;
- b) Offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles;
- c) Provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades;
- d) Develop and promote Nigerian Languages, art and culture in the context of world's cultural heritage;
- e) Inspire students with a desire for self- improvement and achievement of excellence;
- f) Foster National Unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity;
- g) Raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour, appreciate those values specified under our broad national goals and live as good citizens;
- h) Provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014)(National Policy on Education).

Meanwhile, the relevance of secondary education to national development is clearly articulated in these goals. According to Taiwo in Tabotndip (n. d.), secondary education is of great importance to the nation because it is a source of mid-level manpower production that is necessary to sustain and improve the economy. Giving credence to this, James Jacob and Lehner (n.d.) declare that secondary education is widely believed to provide the optimum setting to prepare young people, predominantly adolescents, for healthy and productive adult lives, including participation in social, political, and economic spheres. In addition, for countries to compete in the global economy, a significant number of their citizens needs a secondary education in order to acquire the specific skills and aptitudes necessary for an increasingly technology driven market place. As a means to an end, the secondary education is a dependable source of man power supply for specialized skilled production at the tertiary level. This will increase the nation's production and hence the entire economy (Tabotndip, n.d.)

6. Proliferation of Unwholesome Private Primary and Secondary Schools and Quality Education in Nigeria

The proliferation of private primary and secondary schools in Nigeria is widespread across the states and local governments of the federation. Towns and villages are not left out as private primary and secondary schools are located almost everywhere. While it is a good development to have private primary and secondary schools springing up everywhere to provide educational services to citizens, increase access to education and boost school enrolment, it becomes worrisome that most of these private primary and secondary schools are unwholesome (substandard, unregistered, mushroom and illegal). This brings to question the quality of education in the private primary and secondary schools under this category since they often lack the

basic requirements for establishing private schools which are fundamental to the provision of quality education.

Meanwhile, in Cross River State, statistics from the ministry of education (2013) show that there were several unapproved private schools in existence in the state. The growing trend in the boom in private secondary education is not only applicable to Cross River State. Other state in Nigeria like Akwa Ibom, Delta, Edo and Lagos show similar trends. For example while there are 374 public secondary schools in Delta State the Private ones are 438. In Edo State there are 487 public secondary schools and 512 private secondary schools (Ogbiji & Ogbiji, 2014). Adeyemi (2016) reports that the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) is the hotbed of substandard and illegal private schools in Nigeria. While it is believed that there are over 2,000 private schools in the nation's capital, the Department of Quality Assurance, DQA, of the Education Secretariat, which has the statutory mandate of inspecting, evaluating and monitoring all schools within the territory, has only 434 schools on the approved list. According to him, the sad story of education in the FCT is that the area councils and even the metropolis are populated with primary schools. These types of substandard schools exploits the huge gap between demand and supply as it relates to quality primary education, while preying on parent's unwillingness to send their children to public schools which are mostly in a bad state. He however reports that most states of the federation are plagued by an increasing armada of substandard private schools churning out half-baked students in millions.

Most of these private primary and secondary schools regarded as illegal, substandard, unapproved or mushroom private schools are so called because they lack the basic requirements for establishing private schools. According to Osakwe and Onyiuke in Ogbiji and Ogbiji (2014), the new crop of private schools which are owned mostly by individual investors are fraught with inadequacies ranging from insufficient and substandard accommodation, lack of adequate facilities for teaching-learning, teaching staff insufficiency to poor curriculum implementation. In his research findings, Onuka in Ogbiji and Ogbiji (2014) finds out that in Oyo State, Nigeria, private primary and secondary schools were lacking in quality of teachers, facilities and management. He found out that 60 percent of teachers in private schools were unqualified, 80 percent of the buildings were inadequate and 73 percent of the schools were lacking in sport facilities.

Various reports from the national dailies about the proliferation of unwholesome private primary and secondary schools in Nigeria indicate that most of them are substandard, unapproved and illegal. Awodipe (2016) reports that most of the private schools visited by The Guardian operate in flats, rooms or worse still, wooden sheds haphazardly put together. Most of them have no compound, no fields and laboratories of any kind. Morning assembly is held in the passage and sports wears are just worn on certain days without any real sport or play-ground. He further reports that nearly every street in Lagos parades a plethora of schools in almost every building with students and under-qualified teachers and very poor teaching and learning environment with scant regards to safety and environmental laws. The case is similar in Oyo State. Bulk of the private schools are positioned in residential apartments; insecure locations, and are without qualified teachers, thus churning out bud products with no value to the society. Investigations evince that many of these private schools operate without names or any signboard in order to beat government officials charged with monitoring them (Odunsi, 2018). Corroborating this, Adeyemi (2016) reports that schools of this ilk are usually established in uncompleted building or residential apartment. Due to the space constraint, these schools are devoid of the minimum basic amenities needed for the normal and safe functioning of a school.

However, it should be observed that the proliferation of many poorly equipped and managed private primary and secondary schools in Nigeria poses a challenge to quality education. It is arguably acceptable that most of the unwholesome private schools being

established increasingly are devoid of basic requirements for establishing private schools in Nigeria, and that the basic requirements are fundamental to the provision of quality education. Based on this premise, quality education has been undermined by this category of private schools. Hence, Ndukwe (2014) declares that the problem with the schools is that most are unregistered, a development that leaves them out to continuously undermine quality academic standards. Oliomogbe (2018) reports that, worried over the low quality of education in private schools, the Delta State House of Assembly has unveiled plans to clamp down on unapproved and unregistered private educational institutions in the state. They maintained that there must be rules and regulations as the indiscriminate establishment of private primary, secondary institutions posed a serious challenge to standards.

In their research findings, Yawe and Akigbir (2014) reveal that proliferation of nursery schools does not significantly impact on the provision of teachers. The desire to maximize profit also necessitates hiring quacks normally untrained teachers so that meagre amount of money could be paid to them. According to them, this also mars the preached quality. Another of their findings also reveals that proliferation of nursery schools does not significantly impact on the school environment. According to them, the quest to maximize profit is sacrificed for huge financial investment which would have yielded that desired quality in terms of providing basic facilities. The study conducted by Ayeni (2016) reveals that many of the proprietors (of private schools) were incapacitated by paucity of funds, which has been largely responsible for inadequate learning resources and infrastructural facilities. Many private schools were short-staffed while some teachers were overloaded and made to teach subjects outside areas of specialization. The salaries given to teachers were considered inadequate. Hence, Ayeni asserts that the impact of these inadequacies have become visible in student's low academic performance in the Senior School Certificate Examination. In order to cover up for the quality education that has been undermined by them, the private schools results to examination malpractice. Thus, Mfaiga (2018) reveals that the proliferation of schools has a significant influence on examination malpractice in private secondary school in Benue North-West District.

7. Implications of Proliferation of Unwholesome Private Primary and Secondary Schools in Nigeria for National Development

One of the strongest contributing factors to development is citizen's access to quality education most especially at the primary and secondary school levels. This is to assert that quality education is germane to national development. In this line of through, Ezeanya (2016) argues that the quality of education received by the citizens determines the level of development of any nation. In other words, the success and development of nation is greatly hinged on the quality and effectiveness of her educational sector. Meanwhile, as national development of a nation is determined by the quality of education received by her citizen, so also the basic requirements for establishing private schools determine quality education. This is to say that where the basic requirements are not provided or inadequate, quality education will be undermined and this will have negative impact on national development.

In Nigeria, the proliferation of unwholesome private primary and secondary schools which are devoid of basic requirements for establishing private schools poses a serious danger to quality education. The implications of this for national development if not checked are among the following:

- i. **Dearth of Skilled Manpower:** is a situation whereby skilled manpower is in short supply particularly in the scientific, engineering, technical, managerial, educational, medical and other key areas required for national development. According to Emeghara (2013), human resources constitute the ultimate basis of production activities. Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production. Human beings, on the other hand, are active

agents who accumulate, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organisations and carry forward societal development. In short, human resources often used interchangeably with manpower are a nation's most critical and valuable resources. As a matter of fact, the importance of manpower to national development underlies the goals of primary, secondary and tertiary education in Nigeria. This is to ensure the continuous production and supply of skilled manpower needed in all sectors for national development. But if this important aspect of production is in short supply, all other aspect of production will be affected and this will impede national development in all its formations.

- ii. **Poor Quality of Graduates:** For national development to be achieved and steady, Nigeria needs quality graduates from her tertiary institutions. The making of quality graduates starts from the primary and secondary schools, hence the need to provide quality education for school children at these two important levels of education in order to produce quality graduates for efficient productivity and development. Meanwhile, there have been reports on the poor quality of Nigerian graduates that 30% of them are not employable and could not take up employment opportunities because they are lacking in basic skills and knowledge required by industry (Francis, 2015). According to Adeyemi (2016), this is due to the bad education foundation laid in their basic and senior school years. So, poor quality of education is characterized by misplacement of values and educational goals. One can notice that, the poor quality of Nigerian graduates is instrumental to her importation of every essential item needed for survival of her people and society (Thom-Otuya & Inko-tariah, 2016). This is a bad signal to economic development which will certainly clog the wheel of national development.

- iii. **Poor Economy:** Inflation, joblessness, poverty and poor standard of living are some of the effects of poor economy which impact negatively on national development. For a nation to boast of good economy, there must be constant supply of skilled manpower and quality graduates from her tertiary institutions to drive the economy. Short supply or lack of these two factors will result to poor economy which will impede national development.

- iv. **High Crime Rate and Social Unrest:** are inimical to national development. No nation can harness her both natural and human resources for possible national development where there is high prevalence of crime and where social unrest flourishes. Citizens result to crime and indulge themselves in all kinds of social unrest because of poor economy that has rendered many of them jobless, poor and idle.

8. Conclusion

It has been argued that quality education is germane to national development. For quality education not to be undermined, the basic requirements for establishing private primary and secondary schools in Nigeria need to be provided. There is no doubt that the private schools have contributed immensely to the development of education in Nigeria and impact positively on national development through the provision of quality education. But it should also be observed that the proliferation of unwholesome private primary and secondary schools without the basic requirements for establishing private schools poses a serious danger to quality education which will impact negatively on national development. In order to forestall this and salvage the education industry from poor quality education that will only produce poor quality or half-baked graduates, government should be pro-active in preventing any private individual, group, community or missionary with the intent of establishing a private school without fulfilling the basic requirements from doing so. Also, it appears that private individuals are interested in establishing schools in Nigeria because of economic benefits. Government should educate members of public

interested in private school business on the need to put provision of quality education ahead of economic benefits.

9. References

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