

Re-evaluating the Factors Confronting Quality Education in Secondary Schools in Delta State

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Abstract: Since the return to democracy in 1999, Delta State is yet to achieve its grand quest of free quality education for its indigenes. Rather, the war against illiteracy, students drop-out, teachers strike actions and other insecurity challenge that distorts the realization of quality education in public secondary schools remains unabated. The study examined emerging and existing factors that confront the realization of quality education in secondary schools in Delta State. Methodologically, the study strictly utilized the documentary method and data were sourced through the secondary sources and analyzed in content. The study found that insecurity and global health crisis as emerging factors will worsen the existing leaning inequalities among secondary school students in Delta State. Also, if these emerging factors are not tamed, they will solidify with the existing factors to thwart government efforts towards achieving quality education in the State. The study recommended among others: that the ministry of Basic Education in synergy with other stakeholders should fence and provide security personnel to porous schools.

Keywords: Insecurity, Public Schools, Austere policies, Students, illiteracy, Delta State

I. INTRODUCTION

The quality of education that is obtainable in a given country can make or mar the quest for national development. This is because; education remains the only catalyst for national development. As such, the wheels of development and human civilization are largely connected to the contributions of the education sector around the world. Quality education to a very large extent, determine the level of development in a country's educational system in particular and in the level of a country's national development in general. Thus, a reduction in quality education will constitute a bane towards the realization of National Development and a defeat as regards the war against illiteracy and poverty

The education system in Nigeria in general and in Delta State in particular, is made up of public and private Schools. The public schools are managed and financed either by the Federal, States or Local Government authorities through tax payer's money. While, the private schools are those owned and managed in compliance to educational policies in Nigeria by either private individuals or religious bodies.

The Delta State vision for primary and secondary education lies in her capability to provide quality education, which lays

a solid foundation for good citizenry in every child (Delta Vision, 2015). On the other hand, the Delta State policy on education is aimed at eradicating illiteracy at all level through the free and compulsory education programme of the government at the primary and post-primary level.

In Nigeria, the Federal Ministry of Education is in charge of Unity Schools (Federal Government Secondary Schools). While in Delta State, the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education is responsible for the implementation of government policies and programmes as regards Secondary Education in Delta State. The ministry is mandated to take charge of overseeing the general administration of the school system in accordance with the goals and needs of the state in line with the National and international agencies like, Education for All (EFA), Millennium Development Goals (MDCs) and the Sustainable Development Goal (SDCs) etc as cited in Azukaego (2020).

UNESCO (2012) as cited in Abdullahi (2019) highlighted some indicators of quality education to include:

- *Quality process:* trained and well supervised teachers with the knowledge of good teaching methodology, classroom management and assessment of students to facilitate effective learning outcomes.
- *Quality learning environment:* provision of healthy environment, protection and safety as well as adequate resources and facilities
- *Quality content:* relevant curriculum needed for the acquisition of skills and knowledge
- *Quality learners:* healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate learners through the support of families and communities
- *Quality outcome:* acquisition of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes for the achievement of educational goals and objectives.

The above parameters given by UNESCO portrays the fact that quality education is all encompassing and as such, all stakeholders in the education system are involved as drivers of quality education achievement and its sustainability. Thus, quality education is that education that produces a complete person who happens to be a graduate of a particular educational institution and represents either the primary,

secondary or tertiary strata. He or she must have passed through the educational processes of teaching and learning and as such, having found worthy in learning through the instrumentalities of continuous assessment, and subsequent examination is hereby certified and worthy to defend such certification anytime and at anywhere.

Okonjo (2017) reacted to the declining quality of education in Nigeria by historically tracing its root cause to the 1960s, when the Overseas School Certificate was replaced with the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and the National Examination Council (NECO). The inability of the Nigerian government in general and Delta State in particular to eradicate illiteracy and leapfrog into the bandwagon of highly educated countries of the world, since graduating students are unable to compete favourably in the academic and labour global space.

This is why Nigeria is yet to catch up with America, Canada, and Singapore in terms of achieving 90-95% literacy rate. Between 2010, 2015 and 2019, the number of school drop-out is 10.5 million, 13.2 million and 14 million respectively likewise between 2018, there 15.4% and 89.6% increase in illiteracy rate in Nigeria. Also, between 2014 and 2018, there exit 65 million illiterates in Nigeria that can neither read nor write in English which is the official national languages in Nigeria. This is despite the free basic education policy in Nigeria in general and Delta State in particular that allowed secondary school expansion in order to facilitate access to education but failed in the area to eradicate illiteracy and school drop-out.

Thus, the study will fill the gap by re-evaluating those noticeable emerging factors that confronts the realization of quality education in secondary schools in Delta State, which other scholars gloss over.

The focus of the study is to unravel emerging factors that mitigates the realization of quality education in secondary schools in Delta State as well as proffer viable solutions to such challenges.

II. FACTORS CONFRONTING QUALITY EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN DELTA STATE

The following are the discovered emerging and existing factors confronting quality education in secondary schools in Delta State:

1. Insecurity
2. Unregulated mass media programmes
3. Government, parents and societal values and attitudes to education
4. Government Austere policies and programmes
5. Teachers welfare
6. Global health crisis
7. Government Policy Inconsistency

III. INSECURITY AS A THREAT TO ACHIEVING QUALITY EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN DELTA STATE

The insecurity challenges confronting Nigeria in general and Delta State in particular, is indeed a democratic deficit and a paradox towards the sustainability of democracy in Nigeria. Insecurity has been on the rise in the Nigeria education system. The unlawful adoption of the Chibok School girls at Borno State, by the Boko-Haram terrorist sect attests to such menace. Delta State is fast becoming an epicentre of insecurity. Many cases have been reported on kidnapped teachers, school administrators as well as students in the state as cited in the Pointer (2019). The rural areas of Delta State are in constant conflict with cattle headers, who tend to destroy farmer's crops and harm the community by vandalizing, killing and maiming public projects.

The Pointer (2019) reported a purported attack by unknown gunmen on teachers on 14th October 2019 at Isele-Azagba in Delta State. According to the report, a teacher by the name Mr. Oriahi was shot at the rib and consequently, gave up the ghost, when he resisted the forceful adoption by the unknown gunmen. Some of the community members that were interviewed stated that the porosity of the school made it easy for miscreants to easily penetrate and do whatever they felt like to both teachers and students. In the same vein, the school is not fenced and has no security agents watching over the lives of teachers, learners and school administrators as well as the properties in the school that are also prone to vandalism.

The Delta State government has always opted for State policing but the decentralization of the Nigerian Police at the State level is yet to be approved by an appropriate legislation. Nevertheless, the inadequacies of the centralized police force to operate effectively shows that in Nigeria, a police man is expected to police 6,000 civilians as against the UN recommended 1:400 civilians.

From the above, it is obvious that if the needed school facilities are vandalized due to insecurity challenges by many public schools in the rural areas, this will largely affect the academic activities of both teachers and students. For example, in Ngwu-Mixed Secondary School, Ogwashi-Uku, several people were caught selling vandalized books that were stolen at the library and some other teaching and learning facilities as they were about selling them to some book dealers in the market. The possibility of such unscrupulous act to manifest lies in the fact that the school is porous and not fenced. Often times, some members of the community or students cultist do end up vandalizing and destroying school facilities (Emordi, 2020).

Another case in point is the case that is related to Nshiagu College, a mixed secondary school in Ogwashi-Uku, Delta State. The purported school is currently enmeshed in the land grabbing squabbles between local youths with the aid of some community chiefs who are into the act of land sales as against the customary communal land tenure system of Ogwashi-Uku.

Also, the school is not properly fenced and as such, many porous roads exist within the school which allows many indigenes and non indigenes to grab the land which the community dedicated to the school for over fifty years ago.

Investigation report by the delegates sent by his Royal Majesty, Obi Ifechukwude Okonjo through his chiefs revealed that the school land survey documents are no longer within the reach of the school administrator's reach. On the other hand, this incident reveals how weak the Delta State government is in relation to ensuring the realization of the security of secondary schools, teachers and learners in the State. However, it should be noted that the purported school also serves as a field office for the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education at the local government level, with the Chief Inspector of Education in charge.

On the 10th of August, the Chief Inspector of Education in a discussion with the Palace Secretary, Prince Emordi Jude noted that she has written several letters to the commissioner of Basic Education but no positive feedback was received in terms of the State government taking the necessary actions in order to remedy the situation.

The State government through the Pointer newspaper however noted that the resources needed in order to fence all the school and provide the needed security personnel that would checkmate the ugly incidence of school facility vandalism, kidnapping and other security crisis is not viable. Rather, those members of the community are responsible for such insecurity acts. This is why many school administrators initiated the use of vigilante community policing architecture in conjunction with Parents Teacher Association (PTA) in order to secure some porous schools at the rural community level.

Figure 1: Private Building cited in Nshiagu College in Ogwashi-Uku



Source: Office of the Palace Secretary, Ogwashi-Uku Kingdom

Figure 1 clearly shows a building by an individual who bought part of the school land and currently building a house within the school premises. The palm tree stands to attest that

the land belongs to the school as it was donated by the late Obi of Ogwahsi-Uku in 2011.

Moreover, if teacher's lives are in danger due to incessant assaults by hoodlums, many teachers may not want to stay long in such schools whenever they are posted to such porous schools with insecurity challenges. Such a teacher is likely to work his/her way out of such school. This will further compound the crisis of teacher's shortage in such schools and in turn be a minus to the students who are studying in such schools.

IV. UNREGULATED MASS MEDIA PROGRAMMES AS A THREAT TO QUALITY EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN DELTA STATE

The unregulated mass media programmes in radio and televisions in Nigeria have a way of influencing negatively, the actualization of quality education among the secondary school learners in Delta State. Often times, some programmes that are aired in Mass Medias lack the needed ingredients to catalyze the needed zeal and reading culture among secondary school students. For example, there is a song that was titled school is scam. The song tends to make deride of those youths that went to school, upon graduation, ended up as educated unemployed drifters in the streets, looking for jobs that never existed.

Another illustration worthy to pinpoint is the current Big Brother Naija (BB Naija) television show. Such show has nothing in terms of cognitive, moral, political, social and economical values for the viewers whom most of them are the unemployed youths and secondary school students. The Big Brother Naija show is deeply rooted with immoral acts that deviate from societal values and expectations.

Nevertheless, most secondary school students are addicted to social media channels like: Facebook, twitter, michat, WeChat, WhatsApp, Instagram and other such social media platforms that encourage interactions between users and their family member, loved ones and strangers. The hours spent on these social media platforms if devoted in reading through other learning application software most students will perform well in the various external examinations.

V. GOVERNMENT, PARENTS AND SOCIETAL VALUES AND ATTITUDES TO EDUCATION AND QUALITY EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN DELTA STATE

Practically, Nigeria remains a post-colonial state, and as such exhibits the colonial capitalist economy logic of little in-puts for maximum out-put. This set of inherited values and attitudes as transplanted through colonial rule still persist till date. The researcher is of the view that the values and attitudes of the Delta Sate government in terms of providing quality education is a lopsided adventure. For example, schools in major cities and towns are well built, furnished and well maintained compared to schools in the rural areas and or the coastal areas. This is a replica and a continuation of the

colonial government lopsided methods of citing productive facilities in GRA (Government Reserved Areas). Again, the above lopsided development in the school system have hampered the teaching and learning activities of the rural learners compared to their urban counterparts and as such constitutes a kind of educational inequality.

In the same vein, societal values and attitudes are fast changing from rewarding hard-work and meritocracy to hedonism and cheap popularity through short-cuts to success. Also, compounding issues is the music industry which has failed woefully to sound the melody of discipline, morality and as an indispensable tool that is capable of confronting social vices in the society.

Since the society has replaced values and the right attitudes as regards the power of education as the only capable force that can unlock the doors of civilization, coupled with government lopsided and politically motivated interest in human capital investment, the results are manifesting in form of rising school drop-outs, falling quality and standard of education, unending war against illiteracy, mass population of graduates in secondary schools who cannot perform as a semi-skilled labour market or in the informal economy be it locally or internationally, and a large chunk of graduates who cannot compete favourably in the international labour market with their counterparts, depreciating standard of living, uncontrolled population explosion and unending insecurity challenges in Nigeria in general and Delta State in particular.

Currently, most of the boys who are into cyber fraud known as Yahoo-Yahoo are mainly secondary school drop-outs and university unemployed graduates. They engage in this unscrupulous act of defrauding innocent but greedy foreigners who fall prey to their false romance advances or business deals like diamonds, gold and oil well possession. This ugly and dangerous online adventure have transformed into the use of voodoo in order to get richer clients that are willing to pay without much resistance as cited in The Guardian (2020).

The researcher, in his observation as an assistant teacher under the N-Power Teach volunteer, serving at Ngwu-Mixed secondary school, Ogwashi-Uku noted that teachers in the school welcomed the first set of students who graduated from the said school but turned out to be cyber fraudsters who visited the school in exotic cars. The boys about five in number visited the school with Toyota spider vehicle and a Lexus jeep.

On getting to the school, they presented some drinks to the teachers whom were already standing at the front of the staff room to see the people in the exotic cars. After exchanging pleasantries and giving out the gifts they brought, they chanted the song that school is indeed a scam which agitated the whole students to jump out of their classes to sing aloud. In such a scenario, those students that witnessed such occurrence are likely to take their studies serious again after seeing their ex students who ought to be in the university for

further studies in luxurious cars. Thus, such a visit was uncalled for and if the school administrator was a disciplinarian, he or she would have contacted the Police to do their works by removing such bad influence from the school.

VI. GOVERNMENT AUSTERITY POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES AS A THREAT TO QUALITY EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN DELTA STATE

The introduction of austere policies like currency devaluation, fuel subsidy removal and the commercialization and privatization of the education system, reduction in the budgetary allocation to the education sector, scholarship shrinkages; these austere policies have resulted to the decreasing level of reading culture among students, high student drop out rates, unending war against poverty and illiteracy, and the dysfunctional state of most public secondary schools. For example, the 2016 fuel subsidy removal triggered a 300% increase in the prices of goods and services which resulted from subsidy removal induced inflation Obo et al as cited in Emordi (2019). This ended up moving the Nigerian federation into a recession which affected Delta State negatively, since the State was unable to settle workers salaries and relied heavily on the federal government for a bail out.

About 42% rural children unable to attend schools, this is twice the rate of their counterparts that live in the urban areas. In sub-Sahara Africa, the neo-liberalization of the education system has paved way for the introduction of school fees which consumes nearly a quarter of poor family income. This is because, they do not pay only school fees, but rather, indirect fees such as PTA levies at the secondary level, community development levies, departmental and faculty dues in the higher education level as cited in Habib & Ahmed (2012). The above remarks portrays the fact that austerity policies harm the poor and needy in the society and when such happens, the probability of their wards to access education is limited. In order to attest this fact, during the 2016 fuel subsidy removal and the subsequent economy recession that followed suit, the streets of Delta were littered with school age children hawking during school hours in order to survive the recessed economy quagmire.

UNESCO as cited in Zadgat (2015) posited that despite the high rate of enrolment during the early 1990s, the progress of the 1980s has not been attained in terms of access, quality and improvement in literacy level. Thus, education mostly during the 1990s was highly characterized with high student drop-out rate, excessive repetition and low completion rates. Access to basic education since the introduction of user's fees through the privatization and marketization of education in Nigeria, have gradually stagnated or in a diminishing state due to the shift in the fiscal burden from government to households.

Observation has revealed that since the economy of Delta State is driven by oil through the 13% derivation allocations, each time there is fluctuations per the prices of oil commodity

at the international market, government allocations to the education system is impacted negatively. In the same vein, most school administrators are faced with acute shortage of funds in order to keep the school system in operation, and as such, these school administrators are tempted to collect illegal fees from the students, a replica of fee hikes in the university system in Nigeria. Tables 1 and 2 shows government allocations to the Universal Basic Education Commission and also, some identifiable illegal levies collected in Secondary schools in Delta State.

Table 1: FG Allocations to UBEC, 2009-2018

Year	Amount in Billion
2009	N39.3
2010	N46.09
2011	N64.57
2012	N63.12
2013	N76.28
2014	N70.47
2015	N68.38
2016	N77.11
2017	N92.45
2018	N109.06

Source: Premium Times Newspaper 2019.

The data as portrayed in Table 1 shows some notable fluctuations in the federal allocations to the Universal Basic Education Commission. 2018 has the highest allocation of N109, 06 billion while the year with the least allocation was 2009 with the figure N39.3 billion. While between 2012 and 2016 in which fuel subsidy removal occurred, got N63.12 billion and N77.11 Billion respectively. The allocation in 2011 surpasses that of 2012 with N145 Billion. Likewise, 2017 and 2018 post fuel subsidy era was higher than 2016 with N15.34 and N39.95 Billion respectively.

Table 2: Identified Illegal Fees in Public Schools in Delta State

Fees Names	Amount
Examination	N500-N2000
Textbooks	N1000-N3000
Common Entrance	N7000-15000
Lesson	N500-N1000
Inter-House Sports	N100-N3000
PTA	N1000
NSSF	N1050-N2500
Electricity	N50-100
Security	N100-N200

Source: Authors Compilation

Some of these illegal levies are charged by school administrators in order to meet up with the financial

requirement for the day to day running of secondary schools in rural and urban part of Delta State during and after Fuel subsidy removal and poor budgetary allocations to the education sector of which both constitutes austerity measure. Thus, the more these austerity measures are implemented, the more students and their sponsors bears additional fiscal brunt.

Consequently, these austere policies resulted in the high patronage of Ponzi schemes such as MMM, ICHARITY, BET NAIJA by students and parents in order to survive the brutal economy as cited in Emordi (2019). Many students used money meant for their hostel accommodation, academic project to invest into such dubious schemes. While few benefited from the rob Peter to pay Paul scheme, majority loss some substantial amount of money leading to depression and high rate of suicides. Some secondary school students in Delta State are into online gambling like loto, bet-naija, and the likes in order to make some money for themselves so as to support their wrenched families.

Austerity policy mostly currency devaluation has sparked high patronage by many secondary school drop-outs, students and unemployed graduates in the area of cyber frauds popularly known as Yahoo-Yahoo which is an insidious fraudulent act of defrauding foreigners many thousands and millions of Dollars and Euros. These trends have impacted negatively on many students and unemployed Nigerian youths who now see cyber crimes as the only viable means to survive in Nigeria beyond the desert path to Europe that is more deadly than HIV AIDS. Thus, there is and would always be a continuous reduction in quality of education if these contradictions are left unresolved as cited in Emordi (2020).

VII. TEACHER’S WELFARE AND QUALITY EDUCATION IN DELTA STATE

Chukwuebuka as cited in Vanguard (2016) claimed that Delta State is one of the states that stood as a role model in terms of promoting and sustaining teacher’s welfare. He adds that Delta State has lived up to expectation by implementing the national minimum wages from 1999 to 2015. The above claim is not in line with the researcher’s observation. This is because, the recent implementation of the N30,000 minimum wage was partially executed in the education sub-sector of the State, since primary school teachers did not benefit under the new minimum wage dispensation.

Emordi (2020) averred that the inability of the Delta State government to settle the huge retirement benefits that has culminated since 2015 to date clearly shows the lackadaisical attitude of the Delta State government in terms of enhancing teacher’s welfare which is necessary for quality education. Furthermore, the introduction of the Pension reform act in 2004, which was subsequently amended in 2014, brought about a great shift from teachers welfare services that was taken care of by the previous Pension act to a new act whereby teachers have to save some part of their salaries

coupled with what the government will pay as a support in order to benefit from the new pension scheme.

The above situation portrays the fact that teacher's welfare is nothing but a lip-service. Teacher's at the secondary school level, after working for 35 years as middle income earners ends up retiring as dependent senior citizens who will rely on the mercy of the State government for their survival due to professional assaults received from the government who under pays them compared to medical doctors, nurses and engineers. They work under poor working conditions, face delays in salary payments coupled with poor implementation of promotion and end up retiring with a retrogressed economic, social and political status. These ugly trends have often resulted in many teachers turning positive to truancy and absenteeism which by extension, inhibits the realization of quality education in Delta State.

Reacting over the deteriorating teacher's welfare in the state, Vanguard (2016) observed that as of 2016, secondary school teachers were owed three months salary cumulatively, by the Delta State government. During the period in view, teachers' salaries were staggered through skipping of allowances base on months and grade levels. The Delta State government stated that the economy recession that occurred due to oil price fluctuations at the international oil market, and the incessant rate of currency devaluation and fuel subsidy removal, which paved the way for the lapses as regards the payment of teacher's salaries. The Nigerian Union of Teachers refuted such claims by the State government by citing Taraba a non oil producing state that was able to settle teacher's salary within same period.

The Vanguard (2016) further noted that the negligence of the government over teachers welfare have impacted negatively on the academic performance of students in Delta State. This is because, the 2016 WAEC performance of students in Delta State was adjudged poor, since Delta State took the 8th position and as such, fell below states like Abia, Anambra and Edo which took the first, second and third positions respectively.

Ogunmade, Onabu and Obi as cited in Vanguard (2016) are of the view that under-funding of primary and secondary schools in Delta State remain one of the major problems bedevilling the educational sector in Delta State. They suggested for the immediate recruitment of 10,000 competent teachers so as to relieve teachers who are over worked due to the increasing learner's enrolment rate which has surpassed the ideal ratio of a teacher to 25 students in a classroom. The former Senate President, Bukola Saraki urged the various governments at all level to prioritize the payment of teacher's salaries, as well as improving the general welfare of the teachers. For in them, lies the future of the Nigerian's would be leaders who are today's learners as cited in This Day (2016).

The implication of poor teacher's welfare on the realization of quality education in secondary schools can not be over-

emphasised. Without teachers to play the role of curriculum facilitator, moral, cognitive, affirmative and psychomotor development of the learners will be hampered.

VIII. GLOBAL HEALTH CRISIS AND QUALITY EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN DELTA STATE

The emergence of global health crisis has indeed crippled the wheels of human civilization. Covid-19 as a global health crisis was imported into the shores of Nigeria by an Italian citizen that works in Nigeria on February 27th, 2020. Before then, the World Health Organization (WHO) has listed Nigeria among States in Africa with high risk for the spread of the virus. The virus has spent over 6 months in Nigeria. The federal government has initiated several public policies against the further spread of the dreaded virus. A special taskforce was set up and the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control was given the mandate to conduct test, provide results and foster contact tracing with the Covid-19 Taskforce. Other policies include; market regulations and movement restrictions. Thus, only markets that offer essential services were granted permission to operate while all the citizens are to remain indoors except for those in security, health and other high ranking public servants reported to work.

Recently, inter state lockdown was lifted, but the use of face masks, physical and social distancing regular washing of hands were not relaxed. However, the Nigerian economy is already experiencing some shocks as oil prices dwindle around the world. In the same vein, there is likely to be population explosions as more sexual related issues keeps occurring on a daily basis.

Schools in Nigeria shut their doors at students for some months due to the global health crisis. Observations reveal that the coronavirus pandemic will worsen the crisis in the Nigerian citadel of learning. Before the advent of Covid-19 in Nigeria, schools in Nigeria are already in a dysfunctional state due to the incessant applications of neo-liberal reforms such as; introduction of tuition fee, scholarship shrinkages, privatization and commercialization of schools, cut down in government budgetary allocations to the educational system, removal of education and fuel subsidies, and the incessant devaluation of the naira, as well as cut down in teachers recruitments.

The outbreak of coronavirus, has clearly shown how behind Africa in general and Nigeria in particular are in terms of the utilization of digital educational technologies that are needed for teaching and learning to occur outside the school walls. As of April 2020, UNESCO noted that about 10 million students may never return to school when the coronavirus pandemic would be possibly over. A breakdown of this statistics will reveal further, that the African continent will have the highest share of students affected, mostly Nigeria, South Sudan, Mali, Niger and the rest. Before the Covid-19 crisis, about 258 million children and adolescents are already out of school in Africa.

Schools in Nigeria have shut their gates on millions of pupils and students. The way and manner in which the coronavirus operates shows that, only countries with a vibrant educational institution coupled with quality education as its hallmark, and having the mechanisms of utilizing education technologies in order to drive quality and equitable distance teaching and learning can stand the tempest of Covi-19 in the school system. Unfortunately, Nigerian public schools in general and Delta State in particular are yet to be on track in terms of outperforming other African countries like Ghana in this onerous task.

Currently, the fight against covid-19 has failed in Nigeria. Also, the continuous implementation of the public policies against covid-19 through a top-down approach is not yielding meaningful results as such; it is time to experiment the bottom-up approach. Likewise, the Covid-19 Taskforce in collaboration with the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) have failed to accentuate a strong synergy with the Nigerian Union of Teachers in order to determine which level of schools should open first, on what modalities and the next line of action. This constitutes a breach to the children's right to education that supersedes the global health crisis.

The Nigerian government have experimented some distance learning activities through the use of radio and television. Rich private schools engaged their pupils and students through the powers of ICT in education. The use of Google Class, Zoom and email-video distance learning mechanisms are quite expensive for the wards of the poor to access. It should be noted however, that the Nigerian power and telecommunication sectors are not yet matured enough towards engendering the full utilization of education technology in terms of distance teaching and learning in Nigeria. About 97 million Nigerians lack access to electricity. This constitutes a bane to effective utilization of distance learning through education technology in Nigeria.

Conversely, many parents whose wards attended private schools that adapted the distance learning through the use of Android smart-phones, laptops and desktop computers, and other E-learning software packages to facilitate such activities decried of power failure and poor internet connectivity as a bane to such distance learning activities. Some parents claimed to have spent between N3 to 7 thousand on data purchase within two weeks in order to stay updated. Others ventilated their anger on poor power supply which made them spend a lot to power their electricity generating sets for the needed hours on weekly basis. The children of the poor are then left to learn through 30 minutes learning exercises conducted in the radio and television three times a week. Some of the time frame for the programme may not be convenient for those schoolchildren in the rural areas whose parents are farmers and traders that must hustle day after day in order to survive.

In Nigeria, the closure of schools will further exacerbate the inequalities among the urban and rural learners under the

Covid-19 electronic lessons that are part of the distance learning approach initiated by majority of private schools and few public schools. Many schools were shut down for months and while the public schools teachers earned salaries while observing the stay at home public policy measures against Covid-19, their counterparts at the private schools were owed salaries spanning months. However, the federal government promised to compensate those private school teachers who are teaching in private schools that are registered and recognized by the government.

The issue above, as regards compensating private school teachers by the government is indeed a paradox. How can government compensate market failures each time the market flops? This was exactly what happened during the 2008 global financial crisis, when the United State Government ended up bailing many businesses in order to circumvent their closure. Also, when schools finally re-open amid the Covid-19 global health crisis, can the government of Delta State afford to pay hazard allowances to the teachers, when in effect the government is yet to activate the payment of the N30, 000 minimum wages to the primary schools teachers? Or will the Delta State government result to respond the same way the federal government did when doctors embarked on strike over unpaid hazard allowances?

The longer the global health crisis last, the wider the inequality between learners in public and private schools will worsen in terms of locations between city and local dwellers, accessibility to modern distance learning facilities, affordability and sustainability of such modern distance learning facilities. Also, the online learning programme does not take into consideration of students with special needs or those who are gifted and talented.

IX. GOVERNMENT POLICY INCONSISTENCY AND QUALITY EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN DELTA STATE

Most of the commissioners for Basic Education in Delta State are non-educationists and as such there is some policy inconsistency experienced in the state education system. For example, in 2015, the Delta State under governor Okowa's leadership, jettisoned the Education Marshal initiative of the former governor DR. Emmanuel Uduaghan claiming that it lacks legal backings in terms of recruitment and promotion of the officials that participated in the programme. The Education Marshal that was able to replace street culture that encourages student's truancy and absenteeism was stopped, instead of the government to reform it and strengthen it to perform better, Delta State that was the originator of such an innovative programme that accentuated her literacy rate to 97%. The achievements of the Education Marshals programme are epitomized in table 2 below

Table 3: Edu-Marshals Impact on Primary and Secondary Schools

School Category	Completion Rate
Early Childhood Dev. Education	75.8%
Primary 1-6	99.7%
Junior Secondary School	99.5%
Senior Secondary School	99.6%
Literacy Rate	97.0%

Source: United Nations 2013 Report on Delta State Development Performance

The data in table 2 shows an all round improvement in the Delta State primary and secondary schools education system during the era of the Education Marshals

Yet, the replacement of the Education Marshals with electronic attendance in order to checkmate teacher's truancy and absenteeism is also not working out as noted by Emordi (2020). Some of the shortcomings associated with this reform lies with the loopholes with this innovation in the education system in Delta State. First, the electronic attendance is needed in the morning and afternoon. Teachers are found to breach it by going out after the morning clock in then return for the afternoon or forfeit it all together. Second, most schools have no electricity supply. It is therefore left on the person in charge with the device to charge it and get it ready for another work day.

If there is no means of charging it due to power failure, or there is no enough network connectivity to enable it function, it will not capture teachers who are present for that day. Thirdly, the person in charge of the device is at risk due to insecurity challenges in the State. Besides, whenever the device is faulty it is returned to the company for fixing at Asaba and the said school will have to make use of manual attendance till such issues are resolved. Finally, since the introduction of the reform, Delta State is yet to top the first five position in students performance in WAEC till date. For example, between 2017 and 2018, her student's performance in WAEC is 64.86% and 51.83%, which shows a decline.

Judging from the above, if the state government had retained the Education Marshal Policy plus the introduction of Electronic Attendance, both policies will curb the incessant rate of teachers and learner's truancy and absenteeism which is a major bane towards the realization of quality education in public secondary schools in Delta State.

X. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has revealed that emerging factors confronting the realization of quality education in secondary schools in Delta State are already solidifying with pre-existing factors in order to deepen the crisis of declining quality of education in Secondary Schools in Delta State. Insecurity, unregulated mass media programmes and global health crisis are emerging factors that confronts the existing factors like government

austere policies and programmes, teacher's welfare policies and government policy inconsistency make up the already existing factors confronting the viability of quality education in secondary schools in Delta State. The inability of the government to checkmate these factors have resulted to school drop-outs, unending wars against illiteracy, teachers and students truancy and absenteeism as well as other noticeable quagmires in the public secondary school system in the State.

In order to salvage the public secondary schools in Delta State from the clutches of declining quality of education, the following are recommended

1. The government through the Ministry of Basic Education should re-introduce the Education Marshals programme through the application of the bottom-top approach. This will solidify the government electronic attendance innovation that is aimed at eradicating teacher's truancy and absenteeism.
2. The government should re-introduce the free education policy and remove the introduction of recognized levies that are imposed on students
3. The ministry of Basic Education in synergy with the ministry of works and other private partnerships should ensure that all public schools in the state are fenced and security personnel provided. This will ease the ugly incidence of insecurity in such schools without fence.
4. The Nigeria Union of Teachers should spread her coverage at the secondary school level. While fighting for a synergy with stakeholders in the education industry in order to map out modalities that are needed in enhancing teacher's welfare in the State.
5. Federal allocations in form of the 13% oil derivation should be channeled into education and health ministries rather than left in the purview of the governor. This will enable the stakeholders in those critical sectors to plan and execute policies and programmes that will enhance quality education. The federal government, law makers should also exercise some executive supervision coupled with legislative oversight functions.
6. The federal government and the legislatures should work in synergy to regulate the mass Medias in Nigeria, in terms of programmes that are aired in radio and televisions.
7. Learners and teachers that are outstanding in their performance should be adequately motivated. This will go a long way in entrenching discipline, hard-work and meritocracy in the school system
8. Government should increase the budgetary allocations to the education sector and invest heavily on educational technologies in case of the immediate or future global health crisis that might occur.

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