

PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH BASIC EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN BRACED STATES IN NIGERIA: WAY FORWARD

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Abstract: *The basic educational system in Nigeria is facing a number of challenges in terms of inappropriate human, capital and material resources, among others to inculcate and advance knowledge. Inadequate attention to tackle these problems will make products of these primary schools unable to proceed to secondary schools if at all they proceed, in most cases become secondary school dropout. And these are the caliber of people who in most cases indulge in vices in the country. The purpose of this paper, therefore, was to identify the immediate and remote solutions to the problems. A descriptive survey design was employed using South-South Nigeria as a case study and secondary based data were collected from the six ministries of education, one each from every state. The findings revealed that the problems of primary school educational system in Nigeria can be eradicated by adequate funding of schools, use of trained and enough teachers, provision of facilities and infrastructures in schools, provision of teaching and learning resources, the use of tablet P C, the use of audio visual classroom lessons in schools, use of recommended text books for all levels of education and adequate supervision of examinations at all levels of education. Solutions to overcome educational problems were proffered to improve the standard of education in Nigeria.*

KEYWORDS: *Education, knowledge, skills, race, standards, resources. challenges*

Introduction

Education is defined as the process of teaching, training and learning, especially in schools or colleges to improve knowledge and develop skills. Education is one of the most important aspects of life that boost man to greater height. The education of man begins right from childhood and the first education a child gets is from his/her parents. It is common knowledge that a newly born child will surely learn to speak from its immediate environment. The education of such a child started at that instant.

The importance of education to human beings cannot be overemphasized. Globally, education is considered as a human right that should be accorded to all human beings in the face of the earth. In facts, this was the reason why many international human right bodies considered education as a fundamental human right. Primary aim of education in Nigeria is to affect knowledge and skills through learning for the development of individuals and the society irrespective of race, religion, and tradition, political and cultural background. However, poor (human, learning, capital and material) resources have seriously battered the quality of education. Inadequate attention to tackle these educational problems will result to high rate of school dropout, unemployment and greater difficulty in improving production to enhance the economy of the country. Udofof, (2005)

The first and perhaps one of the greatest challenges facing Nigeria educational system at the primary school level that is making it difficult for good quality education is inadequate funding by federal, state and local government. This has gotten to the extent that funding has been in response to conditionality imposed by international financial institutions (IFTs). In 1997 and 2000, statistics shows, that federal government expenditure on education was below 10% of overall expenditure. It noticed that, the national expenditure on education cannot be computed because various states expenditure on education cannot be determined, in relation to UNESCO recommendation of 26% of national budgets. A sustainable amount of fund must be allocated to education; state like Jigawa gives special consideration to educational sector. In year 2013 the government has appropriated billions of naira to educational sector with the hope of reinforcing the Universal Basic Education (UBE). In the same vain all states in the federation are expected to do so to revamp the educational system of Nigeria.

Another powerful tool that can serve as agent of transformation is the universally accepted principle that no nation can rise above the quality of its educational system without good teachers in schools at all levels of education. It is also true that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teaching force. Education unlocks the key to modernization, but the teacher holds the key to that door. Teachers according to Coombs (1970) are the hub of any educational system. Upon their quality and their development depend the success of any educational system. The

teacher determines the quality of the educational system. He translates educational policies into practice and all educational programmes, he translates into action. If the teacher is adequately prepared, he will be an asset to the nation. On the importance of teachers, Hondersfield and Shinnet (1961) were quoted by Ukeje (1996) that: "Without adequate number of inspiring, well-informed teachers fully prepared to meet their responsibilities in our schools, we cannot have good education; and, without good education, we cannot hope for long to meet successfully the challenges of a changing world".

Good teachers are therefore needed for good education which in turn is indispensable for social change, social transformation and national development (Ajayi, 2007).

Hitherto, the minimum qualification for teaching in primary schools was the Teacher's Grade II certificate obtained from a five-year post-primary school course in the Grade II Teachers College and which has been cancelled some years ago. The NCE is obtained after a three-year post secondary school teacher education programme in a College of Education (COE). At present, there are 83 of such institutions running the NCE programme in Nigeria, including some polytechnics, enrolling about 400,000 and graduating about 60,000 students yearly.(Ajeyalemi, 2009). The Universities are responsible for training teachers for the Senior Secondary at post- Basic level. This may be through a four-year post secondary or three year post-NCE or GCE "A" level for the award of B.A. (Ed.), B.Sc (Ed.) or B.Ed. degree certificate in a Faculty or Institute of Education.

The National Universities Commission (NUC) is the regulatory body for the universities as the Nigerian National Colleges of Education (NCCE) is for the COE's .They have Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards for Education and other courses. These Higher Educational Institutions that embark on the teacher education programmes, according to Okebukola (2005) and Jekayinfa (2008) are expected to: - produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our education systems; - encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers; - help teachers to fit into the social life of the community and society at large and enhance their commitment to National objectives. - Provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to any changing situation not only in the life of their country, but in the wider world; - Enhance teacher's commitment to the teaching profession. Recent studies have however shown that most of the graduates from Colleges and Faculties of Education in the country are incompetent in the knowledge of subject matter content as well as in teaching, including communication skills (Ajeyalemi,2002; Okebukola, 2007). The courses they offered for the teacher education programmes emphasize more of theory than practical, especially lacking in teaching skills acquisition through adequate teaching practice.

The report generally discovered that the Education graduates have no visible strength. Based on the above revelation about the quality of Education graduates, it is therefore necessary to do a brief preview of the curricula of the Higher education institutions offering Teacher Education programmes in Nigeria. Highlight their weaknesses and offer some suggestions or propose some innovations to be introduced in the curricula so that their products will be able to face the challenges posed by globalization. The present curricula of Teacher Education Programmes in Nigeria Till just of recent, NCE programme was not interested in the production of primary teachers but for qualified teachers who are non-graduate who will face the lower level of the schools. This has for long been a shortcoming in the curriculum of the COE. However the NPE (1998) provides that NCE would become the minimum qualification for teaching in the country. This implies that all teachers must possess the NCE before they can teach even in primary schools. This in essence means that the curriculum of the COEs would have to be restructured to suit the requirements of primary education.

Very little attention is paid to the primary sector which has need for more of NCE. The curriculum of the COE has been seen to favour more, the preparation of the teachers for the lower forms of secondary school and the upper classes of primary school as specified by the objectives of their establishment (Ukeje 1996, NPE 2004). teachers. It was only recently that Primary Education Studies (PES) was introduced into the curriculum of the COE as an option for student intending to teach at the primary school level. Out of about 83 COE in the country, only one is exclusively devoted to training primary school teachers. This cannot adequately meet the needs of Basic education which is a global imperative.

Therefore, as part of the challenges created by global imperatives such as the provision of Basic education, there is the need to develop more effective Basic teacher education programme in colleges and faculties of education in the country bearing in mind that this is the foundation of the entire education system and it needs a very solid foundation. Presently, higher educational institutions preparing teachers in Nigeria are highly deficient in the preparation of teacher for the professional task of teaching. The programmes are deficient in the preparation of teachers for the modern day realities (Adepoju, 2008). Institutions offering teacher education programme often lay too much emphasis on theory at the expense of practice (Adepoju & lawal 1991; Osiyale, 1991; Uche & Onyemerekayg 1998; Okeke 2001, Falayajo 2004; Ajayi 2007). Falayajo (2004) summarized the deficient nature of

the present teacher education in Nigeria universities thus: The big problem really is that our teachers are no longer well trained to do the work they are expected to do in school. This calls for a complete restructuring of the education of teachers. Duration of the Teacher Education Programmes (TEP) According to Ajayi (2007), the duration of our teacher education programme has to be increased if we are to really be recognized with other professions. Presently, the TEP in the country has the least period and perhaps the worst type of training among all professional groups. They also have the worst internship programme (Ajayi, 2007). It is a known fact that to become a lawyer, a student is expected to be trained for a minimum of five (5) years in the university excluding one year in the law school where he is exposed to the practical aspect of his/her profession as well as further theoretical work. A student reading medicine spends a minimum of six (6) years excluding one year of housemanship. Similarly, to be a pharmacist or Accountant, students have to spend about five (5) years in the higher institution plus one full year of practical. But in education, the degree student spends four (4) years including the internship or the TP period. The NCE student spends three (3) years including TP. The duration of the Teacher Education Programme is absurd and has to change. The new NUC Benchmarks Minimum Academic standard which suggests a five (5) years teacher's education programme including one full year of teaching practice should be implemented.

The Admission policy presently, in our teacher education programmes is ridiculous and too low for a teacher to write home about. And this needs innovation. The NCE programme requires five (5) passes of which three (3) must be at credit level at one sitting or four (4) credits at two sittings; in some universities, the faculty of education give consideration to candidates who have three SSCE credits and two NCE merits. According to Okebukola (2005), this consideration should be scrapped. Most students admitted to the TE programme are sandwich/part time students and Okebukola (2005) emphasized that over 60 % of the poor quality teachers in the primary schools system are trained through sandwich/part time programme, and he recommended that in order to improve quality, the number of such candidates should be reduced drastically. In prescribing admission criteria for a programme of TE, it should be borne in mind that the job of teaching is very delicate and sensitive (Obameata, 1996; Falayoso, 1998). If teachers are not well prepared for the job, it can spell doom for a nation. Teaching Practice/Internship aspect of the Teacher Education Programme Presently, the TE curriculum in the country provides for a mere three (3) months or 12 weeks of teaching practice in both the colleges of education and the universities. This internship or teaching practice period, according to Ajayi (2005) and Okebukola (2005), more often than not, is not properly organized. There are inadequate supervision both from the cooperating schools and the teacher training institutions themselves. Besides, Ajayi lamented that more attention is devoted to only teaching as if that is all there is to teacher preparation during the internship period. Other co-curricula activities are not catered for. Many people, Obanyan, (1982); Akande, (1985); Obameata, 1996; Afe, (2002); and Falayajo, (2004) are also of the opinion that the present approach to teaching Practice in Nigeria TEP is far from the ideal.

Courses .

Teachers are expected to be first and foremost subject specialists who should be authorities in their different disciplines. Presently, the curriculum of TE programme is jam-packed with too much of education courses at the expense of the courses that the students will teach after leaving the training institutions. For example in a four year teacher education programme which requires 120 total number of credits for graduation, education courses alone take up to 47 credits. This is on the high side at the detriment of the teaching courses. Okebukola (2005) had advocated for a reduction in the load of education so as to increase the load of teaching subject courses. In view of the shortcomings of the present Teacher education curriculum in the country, the following innovations are suggested so that the teacher education programme should be able to meet the challenges posed by global imperatives, such as the implementation of the Universal Basic Education which cannot be properly done without competent teachers.

Problem of the Study

The fallen standard of education and the state of academic decay from the lower academic sector to higher levels of education, un conducive learning environment, lack of teaching and learning resources as well as shortage of teachers in schools in Nigeria calls for immediate solution (Adesina, 2011))

The problem of educational development in the world is not only in Nigeria but affects all other developing countries. This generally emanate from the responsibility and control, the conflict between the Federal, State and Local Government in the management of education at various levels of education, which is one of the greatest problem of educational development in Nigeria. Take for example, the control of primary education is neither fully in the hand of federal government, nor state or local government this a great barrier for effective educational development the unstable condition of service of teaching staff in Nigerian primary schools has drastically crippled the educational system. The question is why instability? The answer is that, the condition of service does not favour them to stay in the profession as such looking always for alternative. If the government is committed to overhauling

the whole system by massive provision of teachers at all levels of education, provide infrastructures to allow a conducive learning environment, provide teaching aids and good condition of service to teachers (100% Teaching Inducement Allowance-TIA) etc in addition to adequate funding of the system. This courageous effort will uplift the standard of education in Nigeria. (Arong and Ogbadu, 2010).

Another problem of Education in Nigerian schools is the politicization of Education; that has seriously affected the development of education. Arong, and Ogbadu, (2010). Today many educational institutions are opened and run in many states on political ground or other flimsy reasons. In Nigerian schools admission in primary schools is sometimes influenced by tribe and politics, these in most cases influenced academic performance of the child.

The critical condition of education in Nigeria will not yield us good, it has been documented that with this current trends, the target of achieving universal basic education will not be attained in states by 2020 and this is an indicator that there will be 47 million children out of school in 2020, 19 million of them in sub-sahara Africa. This shows that, about 46 countries in the world are going backwards or will not meet the 2040 target. UNESCO (2009). Also, in most of the public schools in Nigeria, there are very poor educational facilities. For example, in a school where there are no chairs, tables and even a chalkboard, the only thing teachers would do is to lecture and dictate notes to over a fifty pupils in a class. The classroom would be too congested thereby making the environment not conducive for learning and also putting the education of the children at jeopardy. Teachers always complain of poor wages and salary given to them by the government, which is true. In such a situation, we see teachers going on strike, which is not meant to be heard of. There are even cases whereby some teachers would just stay in a class without teaching anything. Such actions of theirs put the education of the pupils in such school at risk. Some parents are in the habit of spending the money to be used to enroll their children in schools on clubbing, partying, fashion and what have you? (Adavbiele, 2008). And in any good school, students would not be allowed into the school premises if their school fees have not been paid. The education of these children is at risk; A times such parents keep on telling their children that education is the best legacy without even giving them a taste of sound education. These are the issues that give birth to vices in the society and in most cases such children would surely end up with bad habits like armed robbery, prostitution etc. Nigeria has a lot of problems facing the educational sector which must be corrected. Our educational problems do not however undermine the fact that education is the best legacy.

The economy is solely based on crude oil revenues. The nation's inability to diversify the economy is intrinsically linked to its dysfunctional education system and currently the government's budgetary allocation to education falls short of the UN stipulation as a result of economy melt down.

Equally, not long ago, teachers and lecturers embarked on industrial action to agitate for either increase in their salary or the implementation of a new salary scale, which led to stoppage of academic activities. As a consequence, the school calendar was altered, and the students stayed longer in schools than stipulated. As a way out, the issues that cause teachers to embrace industrial action instead of using other alternatives to settle their problems with government should be addressed. But it is an open secret that teachers' welfare is at the root of the strike actions. So, government and private school owners should not treat teachers' welfare with levity. Teachers groom our future leaders. A poorly remunerated teacher can't perform optimally. So, these are the problems bedeviling Nigeria's education system.

Methodology

A validated data collected from ministries of education was used to examine the challenges retarding the standard of primary education in Nigeria. Information from Lecturers in public universities, and teachers in primary schools were used across the brace states in Nigeria from all the educational sector familiar with the challenges facing Nigeria educational system and its impact.

The data consists of three main parts number of primary school per state as at 2014 braced states in south Nigeria, primary school enrollment in braced states as at 2014 in south Nigeria, in the number of teachers per group in primary school in braced states, allocation of expenditure to primary schools and the problems associated with them. In the analysis phase of the study, frequencies, percentages and means for each item were calculated and presented in tables.

Results of the Study**TABLE 1: NO. OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PER STATE AS AT 2014 IN THE BRACED STATES IN SOUTH NIGERIA**

STATES	PUBLIC SCHOOL	PRIVATE SCHOOL	TOTAL
BAYELSA	537	116	653
RIVERS	899	451	1350
AKWA IBOM	1,152	644	1,792
CROSS-RIVER	1,027	432	1,459
EDO	1,049	604	1,653
DELTA	1,240	512	1,752
TOTAL	5,904	2,759	8,659

Source: State Ministries of Education, 2014

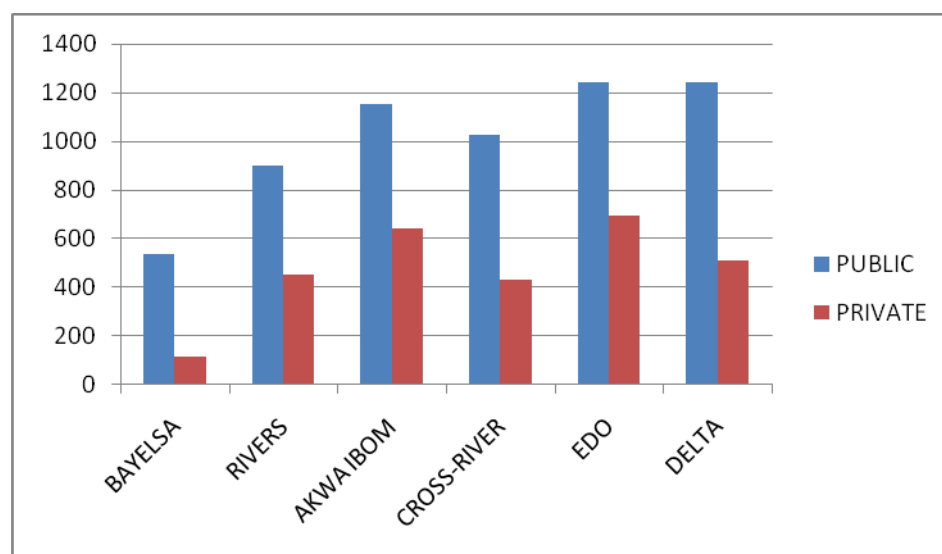
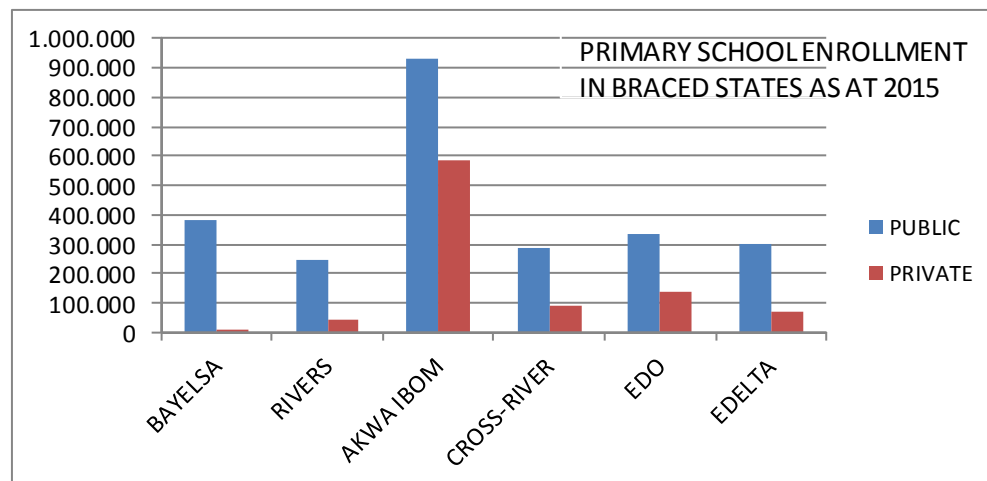


Figure 1: NO. OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS PER STATE AS AT 2014 IN THE BRACED STATES

TABLE 2: PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IN BRACED STATES AS AT 2014 IN SOUTH NIGERIA

STATES	PUBLIC SCHOOL	PRIVATE SCHOOL	TOTAL
BAYELSA	384,990	10,059	395,049
RIVERS	244,684	45,373	290,057
AKWA IBOM	931,337	586,505	1,517,842
CROSS-RIVER	286,010	91,809	377,819
EDO	332,971	137,068	470,039
DELTA	304,235	72,472	376,707
TOTAL	2,484,227	943,286	3,427,513



Source: State Ministries of Education, 2014

Figure 2: The following braced states are arranged according to their level of enrolment starting from AKWA IBOM, BAYELSA, EDO, DELTA, EDO, to RIVERS,

TABLE 3: NO. OF TEACHERS PER GROUP IN PRIMARY SCHOOL IN BRACED STATES

STATES	ENROLLMENT	NO. OF TEACHERS	AVERAGE PUPIL PER TEACHER
BAYELSA	384,990	2,539	151
RIVERS	244,684	16,198	15
AKWA IBOM	931,337-PUBLIC	15,242	15
	586,505-PRIVATE	8,250	71
CROSS-RIVER	286,010	-	-
EDO	322,971-PUBLIC	12,565	26
	137,078-PRIVATE	3,121	44
DELTA	304,235-PUBLIC	13,141	23
	72,427-PRIVATE	-	-
TOTAL	3,270,227	71,056	

Source: State Ministries of Education, 2014

TABLE 4: ALLOCATION OF EXPENDITURE TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS

STATES	TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE (N, Billion)	EDUCATION EXPENDITURE (N, Billion)	PRIMARY SCHOOLS SHARE OF EDUCATION BUDGET	% OF EDUCATION TO TOTAL CAPITAL BUDGET	% OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS BUDGET TO TOTAL EDUCATION BUDGET
BAYELSA	142,522,975,286	23,738,979,952	6,172,843,903	4.3%	26%
RIVERS	323,775,074,364	64,000,000,000	36,024,000,000	11%	56%
AKWA IBOM	341,556,700,000	19,700,000,000	1,205,000,000	5.76%	6%
CROSS-RIVER	87,815,706,965	7,700,000,000	435,000,000	8.8%	5.4%
EDO	86,417,406,045	7,700,000,000	1,108,200,000	8.91%	14%
DELTA	256,371,486,458	30,165,156,594	15,760,876,851	11.77%	52%
TOTAL	1,238,459,349,118	153,004,136,546	42,631,843,903		

Source: State Ministries of Education, 2014

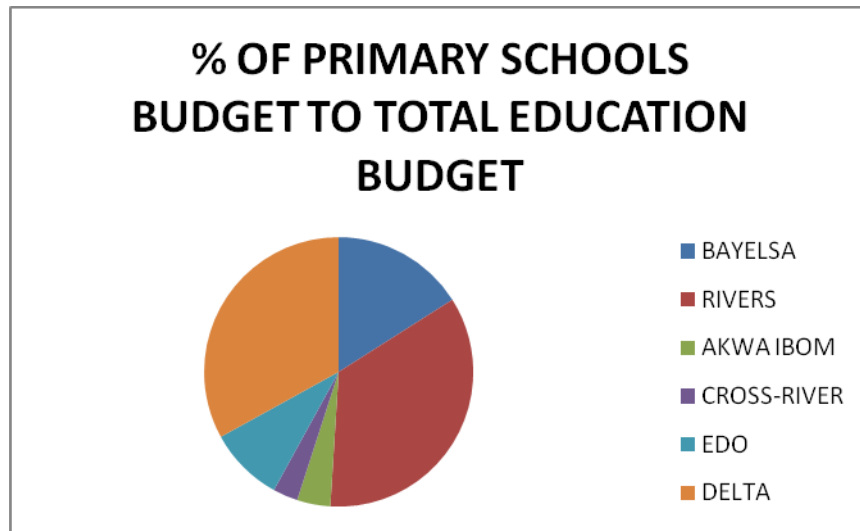


Figure 3:

TABLE 5
Investment on education for selected nations and commitment index to education 2015

Country	Year of Independence	Education Budget (Five year Mean) 2011-2015(USD).	National (Million)	Population
Malaysia	1957	14.02	30.62	
Nigeria	1960	1.85	184.45	
Cyprus	1960	-	1.17	
Kuwait	1961	5.65	4.01	
Jamaica	1962	0.28	2.80	
United Arab Emirate	1971	13.36	9.29	
Qatar	1971	3.10	2.30	

Amount budgeted for education in Nigeria, creates a the tendency to get carried away, forgetting about the value and exchange rate of the Naira. Table 5 clearly shows our very low commitment to education in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The results and findings are presented in tables and charts in separate sections. First, the analysis of the data obtained from the six braced states in part. In the each section, the results are categorized according to the challenges.

The problem of educational development in the world that is not only in Nigeria is that of responsibility and control, the conflict between government and private ownership of schools. Another is the primary school enrolment between private and public schools having a difference of 3,145 in the BRACED STATE in Nigeria between public and private schools. BAYELSA has the lowest with a population of **653** and AKWA IBOM with the population of **796** has the highest population of pupils in Nigeria. Federal, State and Local Government in the management of education at various level is one of the prominent problem of educational development in Nigeria. Take for example, the control of primary education is neither fully in the hand of federal government, nor state or local government this a great barrier for effective educational development at basic level.. The number of primary schools per state as at 2014 in the braced states in south Nigeria is represented in a chart above.

Based on the information on the chart above, pupils enrolment in AKWA IBOM are 931,337-PUBLIC and 586,505-PRIVATE which is relatively high compared to other Braced states in Nigeria. In Nigeria today, one should not be taking of unavailable teachers but instability. The unstable condition of teaching staff in Nigerian primary and secondary schools has drastically crippled the system. The question is why instability? the answer is that, the condition of service does not favors them to stay in the profession as such looking always for alternative. Alternatively, inability to give professional on the job training made some unable to go on e-teaching in this present dispensation. The findings of Okebukola's (2004) study also highlighted after graduation. These include: - Inadequate exposure to teaching practice (lack of practical skills); - Poor classroom management and control; - Shallow subject-matter knowledge; - Inability to communicate effectively in English; - Lack of professionalism (launching back to greener pastures); - Lack of self-reliant and entrepreneurial skills; - Poor attitudes to work.

In Nigeria, teachers always complain of poor wages and salary given to them by the government, which is true. In such a situation, we see teachers going on strike, which is not meant to be heard of. There are even cases whereby some teachers would just stay in a class without teaching anything and if they are queried, they would say "Nigeria education is bad, we are not paid good salaries". Such actions of theirs put the education of the students in such school at risk. Some parents are in the habit of spending the money to be used to enroll their children in schools on clubbing, partying, fashion and what have you? And in any good school, students would not be allowed into the school premises if their school fees have not been paid. The education of these students is at risk; such parents keep on telling their children that education is the best legacy without even giving them a taste of sound education.

Spending on Education emphasizes heavy funding of political management i.e. structures of education; bureaucratic education i.e management structure and teacher emoluments. Federal government expenditure on education was below 10% of overall expenditure. It noticed that, the national expenditure on education cannot be computed because various states expenditure on education cannot be determined, in relation to the UNESCO recommendation of 26% of national budgets. A sustainable amount of fund must be allocated to education, state like Jigawa gives special consideration to educational sector. In year 2013/14 the government has appropriated billions of naira to educational sector, the governor is really committed to educational development of his state, the effort which is worthy of emulation by the braced states. Teachers embarked on industrial action to agitate for either increase in their salary or the implementation of a new salary scale, which led to stoppage of academic activities.

FINDINGS

The findings revealed that the problems of primary school educational system in Nigeria can be eradicated by adequate funding of schools at all levels of education, use of trained teachers, provision of facilities and infrastructures in schools, provision of teaching and learning resources, the use of tablet P C, the use of audio visual classroom lessons in schools, use of recommended text books for all levels of education and adequate supervision of examinations at all levels of education. Solutions to overcome educational problems were proffered to improve the standard of education in Nigeria. The nation's inability to diversify the economy is intrinsically linked to its dysfunctional education system and currently the government's budgetary allocation to education falls short of the UN stipulation as a result of economy melt down.

CONCLUSION

This paper explored the problems associated with the educational system in primary schools in south-south Nigeria and sustainable socio-economic renaissance with special focus on strategies for reversing rapidly declining educational standards and stemming the tide of educational failure. It is, of course, tempting to assume that the most expedient approach to achieving and strategies discussed here would be the wholesale importation of a Western educational system. That would, undoubtedly, be impractical in Nigeria. As experts argue, policy-makers in developing countries should be cautious about adopting externally generated approaches in addressing perceived deficiencies in their education systems. Thus, transforming the educational system within the braced states calls for adequate funding of schools, use of trained and enough teachers, provision of facilities and infrastructures in schools, provision of teaching and learning resources, the use of tablet P C, the use of audio visual classroom lessons in schools, use of recommended text books for all levels of education and adequate supervision of examinations at all levels of education. Solutions to overcome educational problems were

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