

Education is the most powerful weapon
which you can use to change the world.
- Nelson Mandela

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TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION: 2000-2015

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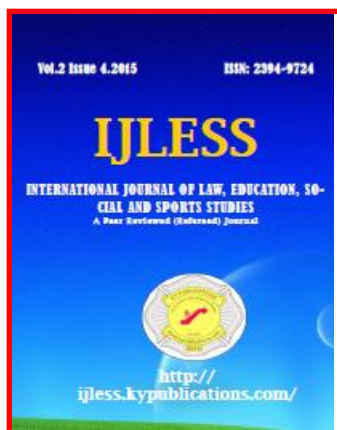
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ABSTRACT

Secondary school education is a critical aspect of every educational system for human development and a universal phenomenon. This study discussed some features of secondary school development that cut across the nine states of the Nigeria Delta from 2000 to 2015. The features include the structure, academic content, quality, return of school to Christian Missions, discipline and intervention by other stakeholders. All these forces engendered challenges that have shaped the development of secondary school in the Niger Delta region. Record keeping, re-orientation of the citizenry, establishment of floating schools and proper planning to mitigate inadequate provision of school buildings, qualified teachers, facilities and equipment were suggested to positively develop secondary school education in the region.

Key words: Trends, Development, Secondary School Education, Niger Delta Region

INTRODUCTION

Secondary school education in Nigeria occupies a critical space in the nation's educational system, being the midpoint between primary and tertiary education. Secondary school education prepares individuals for both tertiary education for those who wish to continue with formal education and for the acquisition of specialized skills in different academic disciplines. Others might seek employment in the world of work and or continue with skill development in non-formal institutions. It is plausible that the first tier of secondary school education (Junior Secondary School, JSS) which lasts for three years is made compulsory and an aspect of basic education partly for this reason.

The implication of this reality is that all tiers of secondary school education should be adequately provided for boys and girls in the urban, semi-urban and rural areas of Nigeria. They should also be of high quality so that beneficiaries actualize their potential and are fulfilled in life as they become functional citizens.

The Niger Delta region has one of the world's largest wetlands and the third largest mangrove forest and indeed the largest in Africa. The region features many rivers, creeks and lakes. Solid land for development is limited by these water bodies and mangrove forests and has implications for secondary school development.

Niger Delta region in the study period is made up of nine states, namely, Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers. This delineation is guided by the political definition of the region, occasioned by the basis for determining the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in the year 2000.

This discourse would then examine the trends in the development of secondary school education in the region since the twenty-first century, 2000 to 2014. How have the environment, economy, politics, human resources, educational policies, national, international and states interventions influenced the development of secondary school education within the study period. Are there any uniform practices among the states in the region? How have challenges encountered in the provision of this level of education been tackled? What are the prospects for this level of education in the region?

Secondary School Education

Secondary school education in the Niger Delta region (NDR) as in Nigeria is an integral part of Nigeria's secondary school spectrum and the entire educational system that is regulated by the National Policy on Education (NPE), the Universal Basic Education (UBE), Act of 2004, the West African Examination Council (WAEC), the National Examinations Council (NECO), the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), State and Federal Ministries of Education.

A two tier secondary school operates in Nigeria, viz, the junior (JSS) and senior (SSS) secondary schools of three years duration respectively. The JSS is part of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) that was introduced in the country in September, 1999. Consequently, the third millennium commenced in principle with a free and compulsory upper basic or junior secondary school education for the children in the Niger Delta Region and Nigeria as a whole. The implication is that as pupils complete primary school education (also free and compulsory), access for transition to JSS should be provided to accommodate them. By the provisions of the UBE Act it is only after JSS that an individual can leave school since education at this level is both for transition to SSS or terminal for the world of work. At this level or stage acquisition of basic literacy and numeracy is guaranteed for the individual to become functional within the society.

Other implications are that the number of secondary schools and enrollment would increase. Strategically, planning ahead of pupils graduation was imperative for access, quality and gender parity.

TABLE 1: TOTAL NUMBER OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS BY STATE IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION: 2000-2014

State	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Abia	174	174	182	283	231	231	231	653	653	653	499	na	na	na	na
Akwa-Ibom	171	171	258	464	325	325	326	608	608	608	546	na	na	na	na
Bayelsa	131	131	100	156	166	166	166	297	297	297	321	na	na	na	na
Cross River	195	195	239	514	251	251	251	487	487	487	953	na	na	na	na
Delta	425	425	421	558	613	613	613	1,066	1,066	1,066	362	na	na	na	na
Edo	293	293	285	652	540	540	540	918	918	918	302	na	na	na	na
Imo	133	133	186	369	456	456	456	380	380	380	389	na	na	na	na
Ondo	217	217	219	509	370	370	370	844	844	844	372	na	na	na	na
Rivers	207	207	256	220	310	310	310	800	800	800	327	na	na	na	na
Total	1946	1946	2146	3725	3262	3262	3263	6,053	6,053	6,053	6,053	na	na	na	na

Source: Adopted from Annual Abstract of Statistics, National Bureau of Statistics, Abuja

Na – Not-available

TABLE 2A: NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS BY STATE IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION 2000-2005

State	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Abia	107,383	100,897	99,201	142,508	124,176	123,684
Akwa-Ibom	196,096	104,221	155,571	206,085	196,447	196,447
Bayelsa	46,796	50,695	28,916	51,265	52,687	52,687
Cross River	74,101	85,000	107,236	115,748	115,992	115,992
Delta	194,023	293,353	241,090	272,361	259,369	259,369
Edo	255,168	328,229	258,630	267,572	175,818	175,818
Imo	87,680	93,137	122,749	193,758	176,713	176,713
Ondo	148,945	161,386	166,985	197,456	204,749	204,749

Rivers	168,081	182,907	201,811	225,362	227,049	227,049
Total	1,278,273	1,399,825	1,382,189	1,672,115	1,533,000	1,532,508

Source: Annual Abstract of Statistics 2006, National Bureau of Statistics, Federal Republic of Nigeria, December 2006

TABLE 2B: SUMMARY OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT BY STATE IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION: 2006-2014

STATE	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Abia	88,213	103,960	69,745	77,218	89,868	na	na	na	na
Akwa-Ibom	166,073	171,091	220,980	161,188	136,405	na	na	na	na
Bayelsa	51,828	54,097	65,967	34,333	69,072	na	na	na	na
Cross-River	59,452	79,479	80,882	90,651	88,065	na	na	na	na
Delta	188,023	155,483	197,013	207,673	226,023	na	na	na	na
Edo	94,207	44,574	131,611	56,363	142,558	na	na	na	na
Imo	114,523	141,594	267,458	308,642	143,676	na	na	na	na
Ondo	169,068	203,897	183,965	289,876	326,842	na	na	na	na
Rivers	185,430	170,412	131,761	393	na	na	na	na	na
Total	1,116,817	1,124,587	1,349,382	1,226,337	1,222,509	na	na	na	na

Source: Adopted from Annual Abstract of Statistic National Bureau of Statistic, Abuja.

na – Not Available

Tables 1 and 2 reflect the trend over the years in relation to number of secondary schools and students enrollment. Table 1 shows that from 2007 to 2009 the number of secondary schools increased and remained stable in Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Ondo and Rivers State. Imo State experienced a decline from the number of secondary schools recorded for 2005 and 2006.

However, the number appreciated by an additional nine schools to 380 that were there from 2007 to 2009. Bayelsa and Cross Rivers States had appreciable increase in 2010 while Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Edo, Delta, Ondo and Rivers States experienced decline especially that of Delta State which was drastic. The reasons for this decline were not provided. It is plausible that the shutdown of illegal schools and/or those not registered or did not meet State requirements for the establishment of secondary schools contributed to the decline in number of secondary schools in the region. For example the Delta State Ministry of Education in 2014 re-opened 28 schools that had been shut down in some rural and riverine communities after inspecting them (Delta State, 2014).

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS BY STATE IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION: 2000-2014

STATE	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Abia	144	222	240	280	499	na	na	na	na
Akwa-Ibom	58	120	na	na	615	na	na	na	na
Bayelsa	7	22	na	na	321	na	na	na	na
Cross-River	61	305	na	na	953	na	na	na	na
Delta	213	394	na	349	362	na	na	na	na
Edo	173	463	na	na	352	na	na	na	na
Imo	78	168	na	na	389	na	na	na	na
Ondo	102	206	na	na	372	na	na	na	na
Rivers	43	117	na	na	327	na	na	na	na
Total	879	2017	240	629	4190	na	na	na	na

Source: Adopted from Annual Abstract of Statistic, National Bureau of Statistic, Abuja.

na – Not Available

TABLE 4: SUMMARY OF PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT BY STATE IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION: 2000-2014

STATE	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Abia	43,828	97,211	8,451	6,374	12,384	na	na	na	na
Akwa-Ibom	32,190	102,489	16,856	14,114	11,921	na	na	na	na
Bayelsa	1,131	32,133	31,050	na	2,598	na	na	na	na
Cross-River	13,211	73,638	56,505	58,762	57,576	na	na	na	na

Delta	35,227	125,506	35,665	85,357	89,757	na	na	na	na
Edo	41,539	27,872	42,246	50,419	54,659	na	na	na	na
Imo	23,465	86,355	11,772	12,770	13,302	na	na	na	na
Ondo	19,252	121,273	38,286	na	218,025	na	na	na	na
Rivers	20,239	83,064	20,246	14,431	Na	na	na	na	na
Total	230,082	749,541	261,077	242,227	460,222	na	na	na	na

Source: Adopted from Annual Abstract of Statistic, National Bureau of Statistic, Abuja.

Na – Not Available

Table 3 and 4 show sustained increase in the number of private secondary schools in the region and fluctuations in enrolment respectively. Here, Cross River, Delta and Edo States maintained increase in student enrolment for 2006 in 2010. A reflection on the number of secondary schools and their student enrolment (given the data available) shows a deep quest and yearning for secondary school education in the period under study.

Academic Content

The Federal Government is mindful of the challenges of the twenty-first century which is dominated by global scientific and technological developments and particularly driven by Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Consequently, the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), a parastatal of the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) reviewed the secondary school curriculum so as to adequately prepare students for the millennium challenges. Four subject groups of the curriculum for the two-tiers of secondary schools are:

- English Studies, being the official National language and medium of instruction in schools. Literature-in-English is also inclusive
- Mathematics – this is fundamental for science and technological development and for everyday life.
- Nigerian Languages – Each school is free to select such Nigerian language to be taught.
- Basic Science and Technology (BST) – this group has many components that serve as themes and inclusive of Climate change, Disaster Risk Reduction Education and Consumer Education.
- Religion and National Values (RNV) – this group includes Social Studies, Civic Education and Security Education themes; preservation of the nations cultural heritage and fostering creativity; Consumer Education and Disaster Risk Reduction Education are infused into the Civic Education, Social Studies and Security Education themes.
- Cultural and Creative Arts (CCA) has tourism as one of its themes
- Arabic Language – this is optional.
- Pre-vocational Studies has many themes. Consumer Education is infused in this group.
- Business Studies (junior and senior) has Entrepreneurship and Consumer Education as themes. This group is important because it is desirable for every child to have some idea of Business enterprise
- French Language – this is considered as Nigeria's second official language because it would provide Nigerian children the leverage to interact and compete with people from the Francophone countries that surround Nigeria and to be functional at the global level (NERDC, 2013-2014).

Specifically, the following subjects are offered at the JSS (1-3) level:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Agriculture | 2. Arabic |
| 3. Basic Science | 4. Basic Technology |
| 5. Business Studies | 6. Christian Religious Studies |
| 7. Civic Education | 8. Cultural and Creative Arts |
| 9. English Language | 10. Entrepreneurship |
| 11. French Language | 12. General Mathematics |
| 13. Hausa Language | 14. Home Economics |
| 15. Igbo Language | 16. Information Technology (IT) |
| 17. Islamic Studies | 18. Physical and Health Education |
| 19. Security Education | 20. Social Studies |
| 21. Yoruba Language | |

At the senior secondary school level the curriculum is categorized as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| a) English Studies | b) Mathematics |
|--------------------|----------------|

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| c) Civic Education | d) Trade/Entrepreneurship Studies |
| e) Humanities | f) Science and Mathematics |
| g) Technology | h) Business Studies (senior) (NERDC, 2013-2014) |

The subjects taught at this stage adequately prepare students for continuous education at the tertiary level or for middle level manpower in the world of work. However, the challenge is in the availability of teachers for the various subjects, facilities and equipment. There are 13 subjects that the students should be taught at SS1 before they gradually specialize for any of Humanities, Science, Technology and Trade/Entrepreneurship Studies in SS2 and SS3. A list of their subjects is in appendix I. If students are taught all these subjects then secondary school education would be truly comprehensive and the reason for which the two-tier secondary school type was adopted. Every child would have the opportunity to study both practical technical and vocational subjects as well as the humanities, science and social science subjects. Unfortunately, since the introduction of the 3-3 secondary school type there is a preponderance of secondary schools devoid of the technical and vocational subjects components. The cost of providing facilities such as laboratories, workshops and equipment for such comprehensive education in all existing secondary schools and the ones that were to be newly established impinged on the realization of this aspect of the National Policy on Education (NPE). It is usually the vogue and trend that every State governor would establish new secondary schools without a deep reflection on the implication for facilities, teachers, equipment, furniture, infrastructure such as electricity and water, and so on.

Technical secondary schools and Vocational centres therefore continued to exist in order to provide the much needed trade and technical education. It is pitiable that despite the importance of these components the number of these secondary schools is few compared with that of non-technical and non-vocational oriented schools. Again, evidence does not abound that new technical and vocational secondary schools have been established by both government and private proprietors in the region within the study period Gabriel and Agundu (2004) noted that vocational education did not enjoy significant government and voluntary agencies strategic partnership in its development in Rivers State. This is also true of other States in the region. Infact table 5 shows the paucity of technical secondary schools in the region.

TABLE 5: NUMBER OF TECHNICAL SCHOOLS BY STATE IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION: 2000-2014

STATE	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Abia	5	5	5	5	5	5	na	na	na
Akwa-Ibom	5	6	6	7	7	7	na	na	na
Bayelsa	2	2	2	2	2	2	na	na	na
Cross-River	4	4	4	4	4	4	na	na	na
Delta	6	6	6	6	6	6	na	na	na
Edo	6	7	7	7	7	7	na	na	na
Imo	4	4	4	4	4	4	na	na	na
Ondo	6	6	6	6	6	6	na	na	na
Rivers	5	3	3	5	5	5	na	na	na
Total	43	43	41	46	46	46			

Source: Adopted from Annual Abstract of Statistic, National Bureau of Statistic, Abuja.

Na – Not Available

There are 37 subjects in the Trade/Entrepreneurship Studies group (see Appendix 2) which students should be taught before they finally choose to specialize in some of them, but this is not the practice particularly in the technical schools that should focus and emphasize the teaching and learning of these subjects. In Delta State for example, the following subjects are taught:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| a) Welding and Fabrication | b) Motor vehicle mechanic |
| c) Refrigeration | d) Electrical/Electronics |
| e) Catering and Hotel Management | |
| f) Plumbing and Automobile Craft Practice | |
- Delta State (2014).

This experience is true for other States in the region. It is not surprising that some State Governors have sponsored some youths for vocational training outside Nigeria. For example 250 youths from Bayelsa State were

trained in automobile technology, cinematography, photography, fashion designing and I.C.T. at the Amachree Royal Academy in Benin Republic in 2013. Before this batch, 200 youths too had been trained in the Agricultural programmes at the Songhai Integrated System also in Benin Republic. While studying outside Nigeria or the NDR is not to be discouraged, yet our institutions should be revitalized to expected standard that is comparable with those being patronized and for favourable competition at the global level. Bayelsa State from Table 5 has only 2 technical schools that can be revamped to train the youths in the subjects of the national approved curriculum. More youths would benefit from such training within the region than being limited to few due to financial constraints for study outside Nigeria. (One of Bayelsa State's technical school at Ekowe has been upgraded to a polytechnic).

There are 19 Federal technical colleges in the country and 6 out of these are located in the NDR. They are located at Ohanso in Abia State, Uyo in Akwa Ibom State, Tungbo in Bayelsa State, Ikare Akoko in Ondo State, Uromi in Edo State and Ahoada in Rivers State. This clearly depicts apathy and lack of political will which the State Governments have also emulated in not adequately providing for technical education. Technical education duration is for three years after which the students sit for the Federal Craft Certification Examination (FCCE) and National Business and Technical Board Examination (NABTEB). They also have the opportunity to continue tertiary education in Monotechnics and Polytechnics.

Employability skills are readily acquired in technical and vocational schools and this is critical for middle level manpower development in the region, particularly in Bayelsa, Cross River and Rivers States as well as among the Ilaje and Ese-odo people of Ondo State. It is disheartening to always hire labour from neighbouring countries for plumbing, tiling, masonry etc jobs whereas such skills can be acquired from the Trade/Entrepreneurship education that should be provided in Senior Secondary and Technical schools within the region. There should be both intensive and extensive enlightenment campaigns and a re-orientation of the larger citizenry to the importance of technical and vocational education for the region.

Quality Education

Free secondary school education was provided in the region by all the States. However, it is necessary to note that by the UBE Act 2004, JSS 1-3 education is free of charge and compulsory. Consequently, it is senior secondary school education that was provided free of charge by the various governments. The quality of education at this level has remained dismal (Niger Delta Citizens and Budget Platform, 2013) despite the renovation of schools, provision of furniture, construction of model secondary schools, perimeter fences, provision of school buses, payment of fees for WAEC, NECO, NABTEB and other national examinations taken by final year students of Junior and Senior secondary schools, construction of libraries and laboratories and supply of equipment among others by the various State government. It would appear that in the attempt to provide access to education for all, quality is compromised. First, schools are to be built to accommodate pupils leaving primary schools for JSS. Similarly, the drop-out rate at the JSS completion is not high as such there is need for more schools to accommodate more SSS students. In a bid to achieve this, it would appear that the following components of quality education are compromised:

- a) teacher-pupil-ratio; b) libraries and textbooks;
- c) qualified teachers; d) facilities such as laboratories and workshops; and
- e) equipment for all facilities.

Libraries

Among all facilities needed in the secondary school, the library cuts across all subjects needs for the students and teachers. Infact it is a resource centre that helps to develop an individual's study skills (reading in particular) and research attitude for lifelong learning. In this millennium, e-libraries should be provided alongside the traditional type. Ideally, there should be classroom libraries that is, corners or shelves with books for immediate classroom needs. Some schools in the region have buildings for libraries but not stocked with relevant books and adequate furniture. It is in some private schools that functional libraries are found. Arua and Chinaka (2011) study typically reflect the state of libraries in the region's secondary schools (both JSS and SSS). Out of 14 secondary schools in Umuahia North Local Government Area of Abia State only 5 had libraries, some with outdated books and some without furniture. Students study in them with their chairs or blocks (moulded with cement). How would the students imbibe the reading culture in order to positively engage their youthful energies? Again, only one school had one computer installed in a room adjoining the library. How many students would this cater for? According to Idiegbeyan-

Ose and Okoedion (2012) school libraries in Benin City had outdated books and unqualified staff as librarians despite their being under staffed. This study cuts across secondary schools established by Christian Missions, private individuals and government.

In Rivers, Bayelsa, Delta, Imo, Ondo and Akwa Ibom States the story is the same. Most secondary schools do not have libraries especially those in the rural areas. For those that have, relevant books are either inadequate or unavailable. I.C.T. resources are not available and they are sparsely furnished. Much attention should not be given to only schools (government and voluntary agencies owned) in the urban areas. In order to ensure quality education it must be acknowledged that it seems absolutely impossible for only government to provide it given the enormity of resources required. However, it is plausible that with adequate planning, consistent phased implementation and monitoring, much more improvement can be achieved in providing all indices of quality assurance in these schools.

Miracle Centres

The existence of "Miracle Centres" in the study period was one of the trends that negatively affected the development of secondary schools in the region. These centres, mostly private schools and many others in the rural areas in the region aid students by allowing them to cheat and score good grades in national examinations. No wonder Delta State categorically unannounced that these centres would be shut down (Niger Delta Vanguard.com, 2014). Gabriel (2006) wrote that Rivers State topped the list of states that were involved in examination malpractice conducted by WAEC and NECO in 2002. In 2003, WAEC derecognized 9 secondary schools as its examination centres in Rivers State but by 2004 there was an improvement as the State no longer topped the list but came third in malpractice in the country. For this reason some principals were relieved of their positions, some centres were shut down and relocated while the approval of some private secondary schools were withdrawn. For long term measures the Christian Action against Cultism and Examination Malpractice (CAACEM) was inaugurated on 25th October, 2003 to address these vices. Chaplains were also appointed to each of the 245 public secondary schools to regularly conduct prayers during morning devotion and to teach moral education to staff and students.

Illegal Schools

Part of maintaining discipline in the educational system and thereby promoting quality education is to shut down illegal schools. Delta State shut down 800 illegal primary and secondary schools (Premium Times, 2014) in 2014 in this regard. Why do parents register their children in illegal primary and secondary schools when public schools are tuition free? Does this action imply that the illegal schools provide better quality education and are more accessible? It could be explained that frequent strike embarked upon by teachers in public schools occasioned by irregular payment of salaries, delay in promotion of teachers, poor supervision of teachers and students among others partly explain why there is high patronage of illegal schools in the region. Unapproved secondary schools in Rivers State were closed in the 2004/2005 session and their list sent to the Ministry of Justice for prosecution. There were 500 illegal secondary schools in 2004 having not met the requirements of the Rivers State Education (Private Schools) Edict of 1985.

SPDC/Joint Venture Intervention

Education is one of Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) social investment areas through which access and quality secondary school education are promoted in the NDR. For example, seven host communities namely, Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, Edo, Imo and Rivers States benefit from annual secondary school scholarship scheme of SPDC during which an average of 2,600 students are awarded (SPDC Study and Scholarship, 2011). However, the pilot scheme which started in 2010 provided for only 60 students from public secondary schools in Rivers, Delta and Bayelsa States and were sent to three highly rated private secondary schools in Rivers State namely, Brookstone Secondary School, Jephtah Comprehensive College and Arch Deacon Brown Educational Centre (Daily Independent, 2013). Science quiz competition organized in Bayelsa State in 2011 was in collaboration with the State Ministry of Education, Intel Corporation, Science Teachers Association of Nigeria (STAN) and Cinfores. Four private secondary schools that competed with 17 public schools won the prizes (trophies and cash). The competition which commenced in 2009 is organized annually in order to make the students develop and sustain keen interest in science subjects. Through the Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU) students of Government secondary school Asarama in Rivers State were provided science equipment for their laboratory by SPDC which also renovates and constructs school buildings among others.

Other Intervention Agents

Other intervention agencies have also contributed to improving the quality of secondary school education in the region. In 2007, Delta State received the sum of 29.6 million naira from Educational Trust Fund (ETF) which was used to construct 3 blocks of 3 classrooms each in three secondary schools in the three Senatorial districts. Some of the money was also used to provide furniture for teachers and books for some libraries (Delta State 2014).

Chevron Western Operations prepared 20 schools in Delta and Ondo States for the secondary school national examinations by training their teachers and school administrators, provision of relevant educational resources for the students and conducting tests in relevant subjects for good performance (New Nigeria Foundation, 2014). This project was for two years from 2012 and contracted to New Nigeria Foundation (NNF).

Private individuals have also intervened in developing secondary school education in the region. In Delta State for example, a non-governmental organization, the Morgan Smart Development Foundation (MSDF) awarded scholarship to 17 indigent secondary school students in Warri so that they can also access quality education like children from rich homes. Awardees for the 2014/2015 session were 10 students for JSS 1 and 7 students for SSS1. The 2014/2015 award was the fifth in the series thereby bringing the total number of awardees to 78 (Odamah and Arue, 2015).

The Niger Delta Development Commission, (NDDC) has also intervened in infrastructural provision, construction of buildings, equipment of laboratories, supply of furniture and computers and organization of workshops for teachers in secondary schools in the region. Established in 2000, the regional development became its primary thrust. Only a few examples of their contribution would be mentioned here because of brevity. Computers and accessories were donated to secondary schools in Odukpani Local Government Area in Cross River State (govTECHnigeria, 2013). 700 units of junior secondary school kits for teaching science were donated to secondary schools in the region so as to provide a good foundation in the teaching and learning of science. In collaboration with the National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI) NDDC organized a train-the-trainers workshop for science teachers in Akwa Ibom State which included those from Abia and Cross River States too (Nigeria Masterweb Citizen News, 2013)

Teachers

The quality of and how disciplined teachers are largely influence the quality of education. To achieve educational goals the teachers must be dedicated to their duty and act in-locus-parentis to ensure that the students also benefit. 41 zonal, Chief inspectors of education and local government education officers were dismissed in Edo State over negligence of duty. This action was also to sanitize and instill discipline in the system. They did not regularly inspect schools and write reports that usually guide policy decisions for changes, reforms and improvement of education. Inspection reports and visits to schools help to improve teachers conduct as they go to school regularly, stay in school, work and write lesson notes and attend to students needs. It is no wonder that the Vice Principal of New Era College in Benin City was demoted from Grade Level 15 to 14 (the Nigerian Observer, 2013). The Edo State Governor, Adams Oshiomole disciplined these officers as a result of his findings from unscheduled visits to public schools in the State (Dave, 2013).

Related to discipline among teachers is the issue of avoiding being posted to schools in the rural and riverine communities. It is partly for this reason that those schools lack Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and English Language teachers in Delta State (Niger Delta Vanguard.com, 2014). Similarly, there are more teachers in secondary schools in Delta State urban and semi-urban communities than in the rural ones. Logically, such schools lack teachers in very vital subjects for science oriented careers (Oghuvubu, 2008). There are more female teachers in the urban and semi-urban schools than male teachers. One of the reasons is that women work where their husbands reside, majorly in the urban and semi-urban cities. Another major finding was that there were no teachers in most junior secondary schools in the rural areas. The situation in Bayelsa state is similar as there is an inequitable posting of teachers in favour of urban secondary schools. Most teachers posted to rural areas do not reside there but report to duty from their residences in urban centres (Bayelsa Parliament, 2014). Appendix 3 dearly shows this disparity. It is not also shocking that teacher absenteeism features in secondary schools in the rural communities. The lack of some basic amenities such as electricity, good drinking water and good roads makes these rural communities very unattractive to live in. there are communities that do not have basic health units and good houses for rent. Transport facilities are also

difficult in some areas. Extra incentive in the form of enhanced allowances, construction of teachers quarters among others can motivate teachers to remain in these rural and riverine communities.

Students and a few stakeholders have reacted against teachers negative attitude towards their job in Bayelsa State. Some lamented that many teachers in the urban cities such as Yenagoa trade and abandon their responsibilities to National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members posted to the schools without supervision (Utebor, 2015) if teachers behave this way in the cities then it is a foregone conclusion of what happens in the rural communities. It would also appear that discipline is not enforced to mitigate this bad behaviour of teachers in Bayelsa State. The Senior Special Assistant (SSA) to the Executive Governor on Education Inspectorate and Policy and also later with additional portfolio as chairman, Education Supervision Committee, Dr. Stella Peremoboere Ugolo (Mrs.) through both scheduled and unscheduled inspection visits reported that most teachers who came late to school or were absent did so with impunity because they did not see anything wrong in that. Many head-teachers opened and closed schools at the time they liked, not adhering to the official time. Teaching and learning were virtually at the lowest ebb while the state of infrastructure was poor. Her committee had to re-orientate the teachers to imbibe positive work attitude. That of changing lack of commitment of teachers, she said was enormous (Jeremiah, 2014). Making teachers to do their jobs conscientiously, and ending absenteeism by teachers and principals especially those who live in Yenagoa but are posted to schools in the rural areas are her major challenges.

In spite of this gloomy picture, is an individual's intervention in providing quality science education in the region through the training of the teachers. 50 secondary school science teachers were drawn from Warri South, Warri South-West and Warri North Local Government Areas of Delta State and trained in "Science Teachers Practical Skills Enhancement Programme" by the Tompolo Foundation in partnership with the College of Education, Warri (Sadhere 2013). The two weeks capacity building workshop was to equip the teachers with knowledge to stimulate their students in skills necessary for observation, asking of questions for them to develop and understand more science vocabularies. More of such interventions are needed all over the region rather than dependence on assistance from oil and gas companies. Indeed a multiplier effect resulting from this type of training would be more beneficial and should be sustained. Consequently, there is a need to evolve a synergy with other interventionists and the States Ministries of Education for a wider participating audience.

The Ably Challenged

There are schools for the ably challenged in the region but they are few. Government input in this area is poor. Most of the schools were established by Christian Missions. The state of schools for the ably challenged presupposes that there are more who are absorbed in schools for children without special needs and so promote inclusive education. Certainly the visually impaired, deaf and others need to be in a different setting for special attention.

Government intervention in this area in Rivers State commenced in 1985 and has remained the only school for educating the ably challenged from nursery to secondary school level. This school is to serve all those with such needs in the 23 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of the State. There are about three other schools as is usually the case, established by the Catholic Mission (Gabriel, 2013) but they do not provide secondary school education. As with most schools there is inadequacy of teachers and many subjects of the newly improved curriculum cannot be taught.

A list of the schools for children with special needs (Abyly challenged) are shown in appendix 4. States government and other stakeholders will do well to invest in this area. The Niger Delta Blind Students Association that was formed in July 2005 with membership from the 9 States in the NDR was able to procure secondary school scholarship from SPDC for all physically challenged students in Bayelsa State and the first university scholarship for blind students across the Niger Delta from Chevron Nigeria Limited (Ijaw Monitoring Group, 2009). These schools need equipment for recreation, technical and vocational subjects.

Return of Schools to Christian Missions

All the States in the region handed over secondary schools hitherto established by Christian Missions back to them in order to enhance quality education especially in public schools. This exercise was also carried out to boost good morals among students as well as make them imbibe the culture of hardwork, merit and excellence in intellectual pursuit. However, to assist them government still undertook payment of the teachers salaries as in Abia State (Ozuobi, 2014). By Edict No. 14 of 1971 (the Rivers State Education Edict of 1971) as in other parts of Nigeria

the State government took complete control of all levels of education. The nation was economically buoyant to undertake such huge responsibility but over the years, given the downturn in the nation's economy and government's inability to effectively manage the schools that also increased in number and enrolment the idea of returning some schools especially those established by Christian Missions became a subject of debate from the mid - 1990's. In Rivers State for instance, Gabriel (2005) wrote that the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) supported primary and secondary school teachers who embarked on strike over the issue of schools handover to Christian Missions. The Rivers State Education (Return of Schools) Bill of 2003 doused the crisis this issue generated as it guaranteed the interests of the various pressure groups concerned and was duly implemented. The thrust of the handover of schools to the Christian remained the need to restore discipline, order and good behaviour in the school system and moral instruction in the school curriculum.

Parts of the strategies for instilling discipline in schools in Delta State was the introduction of EDUMARSHAL. Its main focus was to prevent school pupils and students from loitering about during school hours and stoppage of the payment and collection of all forms of fees and levies by schools. In 2003 the National Orientation Agency (NOA) in Rivers State provided WAI (War Against Indiscipline) Brigade Boys and Girls who assisted members of a special task force to apprehend students who loitered about during school sessions. Such students were taken to designated police stations (Gabriel, 2006) from where their parents and guardians could get them back. This was to ensure that children were also monitored by their parents and guardians to attend schools on time and remain in school till the closing time. Aside from this was the construction of perimeter fences around the schools and gates to check uncontrolled movements. In recent times teachers commitment in Rivers State has contributed to students discipline. Students are no longer seen loitering about or engaging in cultism that was rampant. Government since 2008 made school heads responsible for instilling discipline or be demoted, removed from office or face stiffer penalties.

Challenges

Several challenges are encountered in the development of secondary school education in the NDR but some are difficult to change or be improved upon and they include flooding and coastal erosion. Bayelsa, Ondo, and Rivers States are the worst hit in this respect. Ese-odo and Ilaje Local Government Areas of Ondo State are bounded by the Atlantic Ocean in the South. The area has undulating low land surfaces and similar to some parts of Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers States. Ese-odo has a land mass of about 1,406.8 square kilometers while Ilaje has 708.3 square kilometers. The people live on stilts because 75 percent of their land mass is covered by water. Schools (primary and secondary) are built on stilts. Similarly, Bayelsa State has many fishing camps or villages (floating villages) built on stilt because these areas are flooded all the year round. In Delta State the riverine communities such as Patani, Kpakiamma etc share this experience. Gabriel (2004) argued in favour of providing adequate secondary schools for children in these harsh environments.

The idea is to establish floating schools in Houseboats that are stabilized under the river by steel pipes. Similarly barges can be used to build laboratories and workshops to teach clusters of such schools in the region. The migrant fisher folk wide spread in the rivierine parts of the region such as Oyorokoto and Bonny areas in Rivers State would also enjoy quality education. This is an area where collaboration between the states government and oil and gas industries is very much needed given its capital intensive nature. However, the region is richly endowed to cope with the funds needed if indeed it is to be accorded the priority it deserves. For example Ese-Odo and Ilaje LGAs produce crude oil in oil wells and fields that abound in both onshore and offshore. They have had the presence of oil companies such as SPDC, Chevron, Texaco Nigeria Limited and Consolidated Oil, Express Petroleum and Gas Company, Atlas Oil Company, Allied Energy Oil Company, Cavendish Oil Company and Esso-Mobil.

Houseboats can have libraries, computer rooms etc. The fact is that children in remote communities of Elem Bekinama and Elem Kalabari in Degema Local Government Area and other parts of the region would benefit from quality education (Gabriel, 2004). Brass, Ekeremor, Nembe and Southern Ijo LGAs with larger riverine areas are in dire need of these floating schools too. Their tidal terrain are 5589.20; 4549.50; 2755.20 and 5523 respectively and prone to flooding too.

Advantages of floating schools include the operation of flexible teaching hours to fit the occupation of the people when the tide is not favourable, movement from one village to the other and cost effective as one or two boat

housing laboratories, workshops, library, computer room and school clinic can cater for many clusters of schools. These rooms can also be used to retrain teachers, organize seminars and workshops among others.

Land restriction in the riverine communities limit recreational activities for the students and expansion of classrooms or buildings as the student population increases. Alternatively, storey buildings should be constructed so that needed facilities and offices can be provided.

Conclusion

Educational development is capital intensive at all levels and requires determination on the part of the proprietor to provide good quality. Secondary school education is critical to tertiary education and wage labour as such its quality should not be compromised. The UBE Act 2004 and Education for All (EFA) goals make at least junior secondary school education of three years compulsory in Nigeria. It behoves states in the NDR to implement same based on accurate population census of the number of children within that age bracket so that access to it is provided and guaranteed in all the NDR communities. This also has implication

For the employment of adequate number of qualified teachers in all subjects and on the recommended teacher-pupil ratio. following this are the challenges of providing adequate facilities such as libraries, computer rooms, recreational facilities, laboratories, equipment, classrooms, staff offices, potable water, electricity and so on. Similarly, these are also needed at the senior secondary school level.

Technical and vocational education as well as schools for the ably challenged have not been adequately provided in the region. This implies that many who fall within this category do not have access to secondary school education yet it is a fundamental right, basic education in particular. A synergy between government and other stakeholders is needed in this area and in other regular aspects of secondary school development. With a combined effort by stakeholders, scholarship, facilities, equipment and all subjects in the new curriculum particularly those for trade and entrepreneurship would be provided for human capacity development in the region.

The challenges of flooding and coastal erosion that have engendered the development of communities living on stilts make the provision of floating schools imperative. This again would ensure access to quality secondary schools to all children within those communities. It is then possible to address equal opportunity to access secondary school education.

At present, given the available data for the study period there are still lapses and inadequacies in providing many variables necessary for secondary school development. There should be continuity in doing this by new actors in government. Consequently, there should be proper record keeping for all these variables for quality education to serve as proper guide. How many teachers would be needed for each subject in each school? How many school buildings would be needed as a result of increase in enrolment? and so on.

From the perspective so far there is a great awareness among the citizenry of the need for secondary school education. This would spur government and other stakeholders within the region to sustain the development of secondary schools in the region.

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APPENDIX I

A LIST OF SUBJECTS TAUGHT AT THE SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Agricultural Science | 5. Auto body repair and spray painting |
| 2. Air-conditioning and Refrigeration | 6. Auto electrical works |
| 3. Animal Husbandry | 7. Auto mechanical works |
| 4. Arabic | 8. Auto mechanics |

9. Automobile parts merchandising	42. Health Education
10. Auto part merchandising	43. History
11. Basic Electricity	44. Home Management
12. Basic Electronics	45. Igbo Language
13. Biology	46. Insurance
14. Block laying, Bricklaying and Concrete works	47. Islamic Studies
15. Book keeping	48. Key boarding
16. Building Construction	49. Leather Goods
17. Carpentry and Joinery	50. Literature-in-English
18. Catering and Craft Practice	51. Machine Wood Working
19. Chemistry	52. Marketing
20. Christian Religious Studies	53. Metal Work
21. Civic Education	54. Mining
22. Clothing and Textiles	55. Office Practice
23. Commerce	56. Painting and Decoration
24. Computer and IT	57. Photography
25. Cosmetology	58. Physical Education
26. Data Processing	59. Physics
27. Dyeing and Bleaching	60. Plumbing and Pipe Fitting
28. Economics	61. Printing Craft Practice
29. Electrical Installation and Maintenance Works	62. Radio Television and Electrical Work
30. English Language	63. Radio Television and Repairs
31. Fisheries	64. Salesmanship
32. Foods and Nutrition	65. Store Keeping
33. French Language	66. Store Management
34. Furniture Making	67. Technical Drawing
35. Further Mathematics	68. Textile Trade
36. Garment Making	69. Tie and Dye Craft
37. General Mathematics	70. Tourism
38. Geography	71. Upholstery
39. Government	72. Visual Art
40. GSM Maintenance and Repairs	73. Welding and Fabrication
41. Hausa Language	74. Yoruba Language

APPENDIX 2

A LIST OF TRADE/ENTREPRENEURSHIP STUDIES TO BE TAUGHT IN SS1-3

1. Air conditioning and Refrigeration	13. Data Processing
2. Animal Husbandry	14. Dyeing and Bleaching
3. Auto Body Repair and Spray Painting	15. Electrical Installation and Work Maintenance
4. Auto Electrical Works	16. Fisheries
5. Auto Mechanical Works	17. Furniture Making
6. Automobile Parts Merchandising	18. Garment Making
7. Autopart Merchandizing	19. GSM maintenance and Repairs
8. Block Laying, Brick Laying and Concrete Works	20. Keyboarding
9. Book Keeping	21. Leather Goods
10. Carpentry and Joinery	22. Machine Woodworking
11. Catering and Craft Practice	23. Marketing
12. Cosmetology	24. Mining
	25. Painting and Decoration

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 26. Photography | 32. Store Keeping |
| 27. Plumbing and Pipe Fitting | 33. Textile trade |
| 28. Printing Craft Practice | 34. Tie and Dye Craft |
| 29. Radio Television and Electrical Work | 35. Tourism |
| 30. Radio, Television and Repairs | 36. Upholstery |
| 31. Salesmanship | 37. Welding and fabrication |

Source: NERDC (2012-2014) E-curriculum

APPENDIX 3**DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHERS IN SOME BAYELSA STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE URBAN AND RURAL COMMUNITIES.**

URBAN COMMUNITIES				RURAL COMMUNITIES			
S/N	NAME OF SCHOOL	NO. OF TRS	LGA	S/N	NAME OF SCHOOL	NO. OF TRS	LGA
1	CSS Igbogene Epie	64	Yenegoa	13	CSS Ologohe	4	Ogbia
2	CSS Okutukutu Etegwé	57	Yenegoa	14	CSS Akipeli	8	Ogbia
3	Central Epie Secondary school Opolo	53	Yenegoa	15	Amatugu CSS Igbedi	10	Kolokuma/Opokuma
4	OCHS Nedugo/Agbia	48	Yenegoa	16	GCSS Tamogbene	8	Ekeremor
5	CCSS Biogbolo/Yene Zuegene	46	Yenegoa	17	GSS Ekeremor	17	Ekeremor
6	CSS Agudama-Epie	43	Yenegoa	18	ICSS Letugbene	5	Ekeremor
7	Epie National High School Kpansia	42	Yenegoa	19	GSS Okpoama	21	Brass
8	CSS Kolo	44	Ogbia semi-urban	20	CSS Minibio	3	Brass
9	CSS Emeyal	42	Ogbia semi-urban	21	CSS Sangana	3	Brass
10	Mater Dei High School, Imiringi	38	Ogbia semi-urban	22	CSS Egwema	6	Brass

TRS - Teachers**ALL RURAL AREAS**

	NAME OF SCHOOL	NO OF TRS	LGA
23	GSS Akassa	5	Brass
24	CSS Ogbusuware	8	Sagbama
25	CSS Ossiamá	7	Sagbama
26	CSS Fantuo	4	Nembe
27	GGSS Nembe	8	Nembe
28	CSS Ewelesuo	3	Nembe
29	CSS Otumoama	3	Nembe
30	CCSS Obioku	3	Nembe
31	Nembe National Grammar School Nembe	11	Nembe
32	Akpalakpa Grammar School Ukubie	4	Southern Ijaw
33	GSS Amassoma (semi-urban)	38	Southern Ijaw
34	Southern Ijaw Secondary School Oporoma	13	Southern Ijaw
35	CSS Koluama 1	4	Southern Ijaw
36	CSS Ogboinbiri	7	Southern Ijaw
37	CSS Azuzuama	5	Southern Ijaw
38	CSS Ekowe	10	Southern Ijaw
39	CSS Eniwari	7	Southern Ijaw
40	GSS Opuama	6	Southern Ijaw
41	CCSS Kemeinama/Akpomugbene	6	Southern Ijaw
42	CSS Diebu	5	Southern Ijaw
43	CSS Igbomotoru	5	Southern Ijaw

KEY

- (1) CSS – Community Secondary School
 (2) GSS – Government Secondary School
 (3) GGSS – Government Girls Secondary School
 (4) CCSS – Community Comprehensive Secondary School

Source – Bayelsa Parliament (2014)

APPENDIX 4**SCHOOLS FOR THE ABLY CHALLENGED IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION, 2000-2014**

1	Hopeville Rehabilitation Complex, Uturu, Abia State. Established by the Marist Brothers (Catholic Mission). It provides Vocational training for the disable.
2	St. Loius Center Ifohu, Ikot Ekpene, Akwa-Ibom State Established 1983 by the Catholic Mission.
3	The Child Special School, Ikot-Ekpene, Akwa-Ibom State Established 1983 by the Catholic Mission.
4	Good Shepherd Special Education Center, Ogoja, Cross River State. Established 1985 by the Catholic Mission.
5	Alderstown School for the Deaf, Skinn Road, Warri, Delta State.
6	Anglican Girls Grammar School, Asaba, Delta State has a center for the blind. Established by the Government.
7	Unity School, Agbarho, Delta State has a center for the blind. Established by government.
8	Dom Domingos College, Warri, Delta State is for the deaf. Established by the Government.
9	School for the Handicapped Children, Benin City, Edo State.
10	Special Education Center, Orlu, Imo State.
11	Imo State Secondary School for the Deaf, Ofa-kala, Orodo. Established 1984 by the Government.
12	Special school for the Handicapped. Established 1985 by the Government. It is along Creek road, Port Harcourt, Rivers State.