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Private schools in Katsina metropolis: Profit making or social service (1980- 2017)

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Abstract

The paper critically examines private schools in Katsina metropolis: profit making or social services. Through careful examination of primary and secondary sources, this paper, among others things looked into the history and nature of private schools in Katsina, its impacts in terms of social service and revenue generation. In the process, the paper revealed that private schools were out for both social service and profit making since every business require breakeven for profit, investment and re-investment. The paper further revealed that private school serve as an instrument through which government policies were tested or made. The paper also made recommendations in achieving efficiency in private school industry as a process for national development.

Keywords: Private school; Profit Making; Social Service; Education

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1. Introduction

The persistent and wide-spread loss of confidence in public primary and post-primary schools in Nigeria owing to mismanagement of allocated resources, to falling academic standards, poor planning and consistent lack of investment in the education system, inadequate manpower in quality and quantity coupled with the inability of the three tiers (federal, state and local) of the Nigerian government to meet up with the educational demands of her citizens as well as the parental demand for standard education at whatever cost, economically and otherwise and regardless of who is providing it, call for the proliferation of more and more privates primary and post-primary (most especially in the metropolitan areas, urban centres, semi-rural and rural areas).

1.1. Private initiative in private education in Nigeria

Private initiative in Private Education in Nigeria could be traced to the mid-nineteenth century up to the latter part of that same century. As at the time in question missionaries and churches played dominant roles towards the development and administration of education by establishing the first primary school which was established in Badagry in 1843 by Methodists missionary society and then in 1847 the Anglican Communion also established chains of schools (Odeleye, et al., 2012, p. 224). By 1859 the first Secondary School, CMS (Grammar School) was opened in Lagos by Christian Methodist Missionaries (Mijinyawa, 2009, p.8).

It is pertinent to note that, the effort of these missionary bodies; Church Missionary Society (CMS) Roman Catholic Missions and Wesleyan Missionary Society from that 1843 to the eve of Nigerian independence and beyond had led to the educational advancement and management. It will interest us to note these missionary bodies were able to achieve that with the funds they obtained through grants from the missions, contributions from groups and individuals outside the country and voluntary donations by local Christians and children's parents as well as the children's fees (Taiwo, 1994 p.43).

1.2. The emergence of private schools in Katsina metropolis

Additionally, with regard to Katsina metropolis, the capital of Katsina State and the central focal of this paper, they had a fair share of the experience of mission schools which were Babban Ruga Primary School (1937) established by Christian Missionary Groups (Sudan Interior Mission [SIM] in Katsina Emirate along with Babban Ruga Leprosarium which was recognized and used by the colonial government to address the social challenges prevalent in the society such as leprosy scourge, agriculture etc. (Umoh, 2010 pp. 17-18) and then, St. Johns's Primary school (1943) by Anglican Church (1936) and which the school became a full fledge primary school in 1956 with the registration No. KAT/KAT10ZKEA (History of John's Church, 2010 pp. 6-17). The school was the best in the whole province during the Independence Ceremony of 1st October, 1960. Sarkin Yaki Katsina was quoted to have said to the Head Teacher-Mr. Okolo "I am proud of your school being the best in town" (History of John's Church, 2010 pp 16-17). These schools contributed in the educational development of Katsina. Thus, their ownership and funding had remained with missions not until after the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), Government through Policies took ownership, control of administration and

mass provision of education that marked the end of these schools along with renaming. So, this marked end of the first phase of private schools in Katsina.

Nevertheless, the second phase of the establishment of private school in Katsina came up in March 1980 which justifies the reasons for the starting period of the paper. This, individualized Private school by name Auntie Ramatu College started its Nursery in March 10, 1980, with 17 children, and progressively in 1985 established their post-nursery classes (primary 1 & 2). Her first set of pupils to graduate in 1989 got admission in top 17 post-primary schools in Nigeria including King's College and Queen's College, Lagos (Biography of Auntie Ramatu's Voice, 2005 p.5). In October, 1987 came another famous private school of its time; Kiddies International School Katsina which came a month after the creation of Katsina State (by the Federal Government in September 23, 1987) to accommodate the influx of civil servants, provision of affordable education as well as to improve on the educational standard. Only Auntie Ramatu College could not meet all the education demands, and some parents were not satisfied with the kind of service rendered by the public schools (Bala, 2011). Thus, that same year there was the emergence of ECWA Primary School being the first mission school in the second phase of the history of private schools. Therefore, the number of private schools continues to increase in number.

Historically, from 1980 to 2017, there were over 120 Private Primary and Post-Primary Schools in Katsina metropolis. Their proliferation to extend was as a result of government acknowledgement of private ownership in education which could help in the attainment of the following goals as argued by Akintayo and Oghenekowho (2008 p. 509):

- 1- Qualitative research and development;
- 2- Access to advanced educational needs for technological development;
- 3- Efficiency in resource generation through partnership and cooperation;
- 4- Enhanced capacity-building relevant for the needs of the economies;
- 5- Moderation of university carrying capacity for observation of qualified and trainable human resources and
- 6- Combating the threats of the global challenges of illiteracy, poverty, disease, war and insecurity (p.509).

In a broad sense, government acknowledged private school considering the fact that, shouldering the responsibilities of education cannot be done by government alone, the roles and duties of the private initiatives must be welcomed. Thus, coupled with the fact that, Laws and Education Ordinances of 1908, 1916, 1926, 1942, 1948, 1952 and Ordinances of Education Act (No. 26 of 1957), the 1966 and 1982 military governance dimension to educational management and control in Nigeria, and then Military Government Declaration- concurrent legislated list (F.G.N 1999) all did not succeed in transforming the educational system of the country.

Therefore, involvements and participation of private educational sectors and their high rate of proliferation lead to the question of whether they are established for profit making or social service.

At this juncture, it is important to note that, according to Agi (2013, p.344):

Private schools can be categorized according to fee regimes, as Low Fee Paying (LEP) and High Fee Pay (HFP). The fee regimes are directly determined by owner's defined standards and characteristics and not subject to government regulation. Fee payment determines access and sometimes quality of programmes available in each school. Private schools are run on the basis of cash for provision mostly (ESSPIN, 2011).

1.3. Materials and methods

This paper was a qualitative study. The data for the study were collected from primary and secondary sources like oral interviews, books, theses and articles related to the topic. The major reference materials used in this paper were from disciplines of history, and education which tend to expatiate and elaborate on Agi's (2013, p.344) point of views on whether private schools in Katsina metropolis are established for profit making or social services in Katsina or they were established for both reasons.

2. Profit making of private school and social service provision

Furthermore, haven seen the background of private initiative in private education in Nigeria, at this juncture, it is important to note that, private primary or post-primary school whether owned by an individual, group of individuals, cooperate individuals, faith base organizations (religious bodies), voluntary agencies or Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) are basically out to provide social service at the same time to make profit.

2.1. Funding and profit making of private school

Beyond reasonable doubt, Private school is a lucrative business enterprise whether is a Low Fee Paying (LFP) or High Fee Pay (HFP) that require breakeven. In Katsina metropolis, for any proprietor of private school to establish a school, he or she must have a land on which he or she build the school or have rented as a temporary site, and likewise, haven registered with the State Ministry of Education (MOE), State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Local Education Authority (LEA), Primary Health Care (PHC) and Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), as well, opened an account with a commercial bank with the sum of ₦ 1, 000, 000 (for primary) and ₦ 3,000, 000 (for post-primary) for the upkeep of the school. Since its source of funding at the start does not come from any of the three tiers of government but from personal savings, assistance from friends, taking soft loans from banks, contribution from co-operative societies, among others (Wycliff, 2012 pp. 94-104). While for mission schools it comes through charity donations, aid-in-grant from churches or mosques and at times from members of such religious institutions or organization who love education.

More so, when the private school have fully gain ground (had been well established), its sources of funding comes mostly from philanthropists and community members who are committed to reviving education service delivery in Nigeria, then deduction of teacher's salary (defaulters), loan deduction from

teachers (interest), school fees, school form, Parents Teachers Association (PTA) levy/donations (which could be in form of cash, text books and school bus), speech and prize giving day, donation from parents, and then profit made from sales of school uniform, sandals, sport wears, text books, exercise book, sweater and head-warmer. Followed profit obtained from registration of pupils/students for Common Entrance Exams, Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE), National Examinations Council (NECO), and then charges on primary school Testimonial/Certificate, Junior Secondary Certificate (JSCE)/ Senior Secondary Certificate (SSCE) Testimonial, JSCE/SSCE Statement of Results/Certificates, Transfer Certificate and lot more (Wycliff, 2012 pp. 94-104).

Therefore, from the aforementioned sources of funding, it is clear that proprietor of private schools make profit at the same time think of different ways to generate income since it is evident that for any proprietor to set up a private school he or she knows that availability of funds is necessary for its maintenance. And it will not be out of place to point out that, the operation of private school requires capital and profit for investment and re-investment.

Moreover, from the income generated, every year these schools are required to pay different sort of taxes to the Federal, State and Local Government, among which are teachers tax, annual registration of business premises, in addition to payment of staff monthly salary, school rent -for those who were not operating their school in their permanent site at the same time continuing building their permanent site while operating at the temporary considering the time frame given to them by ministry of education. So, from the issue of funding and profit making of private school, we can argue that, for any proprietor to earn profit in this business enterprise there are lots of sacrifice to make and there is danger in every success.

2.2. Private school and social service

It is on this note that, this section deals with private school and the provision of social service. Since the establishment of these schools was to complement government efforts in the improvement of education in the country, it was on that process that private schools provide the following social service.

2.2.1. Standard education

Standard education is one of the social services provided by private school through the provision and delivering of high standard, quality and quantitative education. With the deplorable state of most public schools at all levels, private schools as stakeholders emerged to complement the efforts of government. In doing that, the private school were able to revive the education standard especially through building of schools, provision of conducive atmosphere for effective learning, quality learning materials, quality teachers, good administrative set-up, proper supervision and monitoring, disciplinary measures among others. This added to reduction of high rate of illiteracy among school children (population), decongestion of children population in classes, as well rescuing them from failure to read and learn which in turn inculcate a habit of learning and reading, an essential success trait in our competitive society. More so, even in the provision of the standard education, the proprietors of these school always think of major things to do towards the improvement of the standard of services provided to the pupils/students and also ways to attract more

parent in enrolling their wards in the school. This is because, aside from home; the school is the next institution where a child can learn basic life values and effectively socialize (integrated into the society), and as such they grow/rise to become responsible citizens and leaders; being well cultured will always stand up to their economic, social, civic and political obligation as good ambassadors of the state.

2.2.2. Scholarship

The second social service provided by the private school is in the area of scholarship. These private schools give pupils/students scholarship to study particularly the children of the less privileged; orphans, widows, and widowers. Apart from that, parents who have 4 to 5 children in that same school, 1 out of the 4 or 5 is usually placed on scholarship (tuition free), to enable them afford the payment of school fees. While in some cases parent that have 3 children, 1 of 3 children pay half of the school fees. Such compassionate act, is to encourage parents to enrol more of their children in school at the same time helping the government in reducing the rates of unschooled population and likewise towards the attainment/realization of Universal Basic Education (UBE) Millennium development Goals (MDGs) goals tagged for vision 2020 of Nigeria.

2.2.3. Employment opportunities

Another area is in the provision of employment/job opportunities to many graduates of higher institutions of learning and much more fundamental those who are trained as professional teachers which the government failed to employ into public schools and ministry of education. It is a clear indication that private schools have prevented quite a number of Nigerian working population from wasting the knowledge they had acquired in higher institution of learning at the same time played a key role in the reduction of job seekers and ratio or high rate of poverty and the reduction in crime rate of unemployed citizens who engaged in criminal activities and social vices in Katsina State and Nigeria as a whole. Moreover, country with reduced crime rate will be able to progress and develop. Thus, this employment provision, paved way for the government to generate revenue through taxes paid by the teachers and as well as taxes, levies and registration fees imposed on private schools by the local, state and federal government which is collected through its agencies.

2.2.4. Consultancy service and career guidance

Apart from the employment opportunities, private schools serve as an avenue for consultancy service (education clinic) and career guidance. For instance, before the state government of Katsina introduce Pre-Nursery and Nursery 1 & 2 some years ago, they consult proprietors of different private schools on how to go about it. Today government schools have Nursery section. Then, in terms of career guidance, private schools guide the pupils/students and their parents on the career their children/wards can pursue; whether Arts, social sciences or science subject/discipline since the school had been monitoring the children performance especially those that pass through the school from Day care to Nursery, primary and secondary school. This career guidance prevents students from making wrong choices on what to study after graduating from secondary school

2.2.5. Inculcation of moral attitude

Another key role in the area of social service is in character formation/inculcation of moral attitude in children and habit of discipline. For instance, the children are taught how to talk or speak to people, dress, living a healthy life among other things usually done through various programmes organized by clubs and societies. For instance, quiz and debates, Safety Clubs, Drugs and Abuse Clubs, Forester Clubs, HIV/AIDS Clubs, Charity Clubs; where children are taught to love and support the orphans, homeless, destitute, mad and sick people as well promote peace and orders.

2.2.6. Infrastructural development

In the area of infrastructural development, private school had contributed immensely toward development of Katsina. Especially in the landed properties; these schools bought and build their permanent site to accommodate the increase in population of pupils/students in the metropolis. Apart from that, this also is of great economic significance to Katsina indigenes who own lands and the state government. This is because, it was as a result of the patronage of proprietors demand for land that landed properties have constantly appreciated. The period under review (1980 – 2017) witnessed a sharp and drastic increase in the price of land in Katsina metropolis from ₦ 500, 000 to 1, 000, 000 naira. This is to the extent that whenever *Katsinawa* knew that the person buying the land is using it for school, they made the price high and double compare to somebody who intend to building residential house. Thus, the building of the school contribute to the urban development of the metropolis and source of revenue to the state government and then source of income to the Katsina people who gave their premises as rent to proprietors of these schools which the schools in turn pay them in thousands and millions.

2.2.7. Inter-Group relation

Another social service provided by private school in Katsina is that of inter-group relations among pupils and students of different family background; religion, ethnic or language group and lot more. It is only in such schools one can see people of different identity in one particular classroom compared to most public schools in Katsina State that has been populated with mostly Hausa and Fulani with minimal number of other language group, this has indeed make private school a place of peace and unity of Nigerians and building of patriotism. This is because, they will grow to become classmate, friend, inter-marry and have a broader knowledge of interacting with various Nigerians. Consequently, these key role played by private school in this aspect in Katsina State and Nigeria as a nation could not be denied by parents, representatives of local, state and federal government as well all shareholders and stakeholders of education.

3. Challenges in funding private schools

Despite the various source of income private school generate, it still faces challenges which often cripple its operation in making profit and maintenance of the school. These challenges identified are as follow:

- 1- In prompt payment of school fees and running of school fees (debt) by some parent to another school
- 2- Increase in rent by owners of the building the proprietors of school use
- 3- Heavy Levy/Taxation/Registration; Increase of levy and multiple taxes by the three tiers of government and her agencies on private schools
- 4- Difficulty in access to soft loan from commercial banks

Couple with these challenges, private school are associated with other issues as ESSPIN (2011) Report reveals:

- Financed privately
- Managed and run privately
- Operate in environment less the standard of Public Schools
- Process of Personnel recruitment / quantity /quality of personnel strictly restricted
- Conditions of service strictly restricted
- Monitoring/evaluation system largely unknown
- Admission criteria/process determined by school
- Teacher development/Training largely unknown
- Quality assurance measure largely undisclosed
- Government recognition largely unknown for many private schools
- All year round admission
- Indiscriminate registration of candidates for certificate examinations
- Ready platforms as –Miracle Centres||
- Limited/Non availability of facilitates e.g. laboratories, libraries, demonstration farms, play grounds, etc.
- Irregular school attendance by pupils

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, in as much as private schools are established the central goal is not basically tied to profit making but to supplement the government own schools through the provision of standard education and social services which are the pivot and catalyst for sustainable national development and likewise human capital or resource development in not only Katsina but Nigeria. However, private school owners knowing the fact that they run the school as private property often pay little attention to the primary aim of establishing the business by mismanaging the business which makes it difficult for them to cater for the welfare of the teachers, and in most cases lead to the collapse of the schools or institutions.

5. Recommendations

For private maintenance of the profit and provision of social service, the following recommendations need to be taken into considerations, thus:

- 1- Government should reduce the rate of levy and taxes imposed on private school so that these schools can improve the quality of social service they give to the society since their central role is complementing government efforts in the educational sector.
- 2- Government should create enabling environment for private schools so that they can mobilize resources to develop their infrastructure and human resources
- 3- Owners of private school enterprise should pay attention not only to profit making but also the laws governing the operation of education industry.
- 4- Private school proprietors should come up with social responsibility plan.
- 5- Private school proprietors should not make money making as the bed rock of establishing school.
- 6- Parents should always pay their children/ward school fees and any outstanding as at when due. This will help proprietors in meet up the infrastructural development and quality of services demand by stakeholders in the industry.
- 7- UNESCO, Government of Nigeria, Proprietors of private school owners and relevant stakeholders should collaborate with one another to ensure that private school education is affordable to common citizens. This will ensure full realization of the United Nations Conventions in EFA Goals, MDGs and the UBE Goals in Nigeria.
- 8- Since some percentage of private school owners are not educationist. Government should critically verify before given licence/provisional approval to anyone who wants to operate school in Nigeria.

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