

# **APPROACHES FOR ENHANCING PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION IN THE FUNDING OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN DELTA STATE, NIGERIA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of this study was to examine the approaches for enhancing private sector participation in the funding of secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. Three research questions were reviewed and two hypotheses were tested. Data were collected through the use of structured questionnaire. The statistical method used for the analysis is the t-test. The results reveal that the private sectors recognize the educational enterprise as an expensive social service. The study finds that the abhorrent policies of the government towards the private sector prevent them from funding secondary schools. It is recommended that policies be devised by the State government to encourage the participation of the private sectors in the funding of secondary schools and that the private sectors should be more involved in the promotion of education by contributing towards the renovation of school buildings; and, the provision of instructional materials.*

**Keywords:** *Methods, Promoting, Private Sector, Funding, Nigeria Education*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Secondary education occupies strategic position in Delta State because of the important role it plays in preparing the students for useful living in the society and for higher education. The State government manages and provides funds for secondary education (Onwusoanya, 2005). To ensure that secondary schools achieved what they are set to achieve. The attainment of High standard should be the strong point of the schools (Olanrewaya, 2005). Education is a key contributor to development and the crucial role of the private sector cannot be overemphasized. Some organized private sectors are playing active and valid role in developing various programmes in the key focus area of education as well as complimenting the efforts of the government by participating in the funding of secondary education in Delta State.

This is because the greatest potential for development lies in education which spawns human resources, social and economic development (Oyagbola, 2006). The funds provided to secondary education by the government are used to pay teachers salaries and allowances, procures instructional materials, and equipment and other facilities. Morris (1990) observes that funds are one of the improved factors for realization of educational objectives. According to Tella (2002), it is clear that government can no longer single handedly fund educational institutions in the country. Tella is of the opinion that there is over reliance on government to provide solutions

to problems facing secondary education in Nigeria. The consequences are that the schools are grossly neglected because they are not in position they ought to be. Ogbuoji (2006) opines that government is finding it difficult to effectively fund education because other section of the economy is competing with education for attention. Adegbite (2002) notes that, the private sector should act as catalyst in complementing the efforts of government in terms of funding to ensure a qualitative and quantitative education for all and to achieve the objective of equal opportunities to all citizens. The private sector should participate in education beyond their contribution to the education tax fund as education for all is the business of all sectors of the economy. As earlier noted, the private sector would have to play major role in helping to formulate strategies and monitoring of the implementation of programmes to ensure the overall education of the populace irrespective of age and cultural background (Charles, 2002).

In Delta State, parents, local communities and individuals assist in the funding of secondary education (Ogbonnaya, 2001). Local communities often raise funds to provide facilities in schools such as the building of new classroom blocks and dormitories. Anazonwu (2002) reported that most parents and local communities Assists schools that have resource problem. It could be noted that the most serious problem facing secondary schools in Delta State as is inadequate funds as suggested by Ogbonnaya (2000), Okafor (1998) and Azunna (1997). The funds provided by the State government are never enough. Fagbeni (1986) states that the fallout from inadequate funding of secondary school education in most States in the country includes difficulty in the provision of instructional materials, payment teachers' salary and provision of equipment for teaching in the schools. The problem of funding is the most persistent and thorny issue militating against the school's capacity to maintain quality services in Delta State.

Since the State government finds it difficult to provide the resources and materials to schools, it is obvious that if funds are inadequate, the broad aims of secondary education will not be realized. This perhaps is one of the reasons why the State government encourages private sector participation in its funding of secondary schools. Patrick (1983) explains that the private sector is part of the country's economy owned, operated and managed by private individuals. In Delta State, the private sector includes business organizations, industries and firms owned and managed by individuals or group; they include banks, insurance companies, engineering companies, agro and chemical industries, and schools. Aside from the provision of funding by the private sector; they give financial donations, provide infrastructure and other materials to schools. The private sector does not only participate in school funding; it also employs the services of secondary schools leavers as typists, clerks and sales agents.

The government educational grants have been the major source of funding secondary schools in the past few decades; however, it has been very unsatisfactory and unreliable in recent times. The need has risen for the private sector and

philanthropic organizations that may be interested in education to assist in providing laboratory equipment, books and capital projects for the educational institutions (Archibong, 2002). Kamanu (2007) suggests that one of the best ways the private sector can contribute to nation building is by providing the children with quality education so that they too can play great roles in national development. The private sector should take it as a special responsibility to provide the type of physical and social environment that are ideal and supportive of learning.

The private sector could give the nation's educational sector a face lift, by providing the right infrastructure and environment conducive enough for learning as governments cannot alone solve the seemingly intractable problem facing the education sector. Ezekwesili (2007) and Pitan (2006) opined that governments need to create avenue for the private sector to render meaningful financial support to secondary education. The private sector can contribute in providing necessary facilities for academics and extra-curricular activities required to develop the intellectual abilities of students in urban and rural secondary schools. Han (2006) observes that the private sector should play a crucial role in improving the quality of education and producing competent human resources for the benefit of the nation and its economy. In addition, Oduleye (2000) opines that the private sector roles in the secondary schools would help to improve the standard of performance of students in external examinations.

Secondary schools in Delta State of Nigeria have suffered neglect over the years due to inadequate funding. It is the responsibility of the government to adequately fund education by paying salaries of teachers and accord educated people due recognition in the affairs of the State, and rehabilitate dilapidated infrastructure in all educational institutions. The United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization (2002) on funding of education has recommended that 26% of the budget of developing countries should be devoted to education. Our educational sector apparently has suffered the greatest neglected over the years. The infrastructures are in total decay and in some areas, non-existent, thus creating a very unhealthy environment for effective teaching and learning (Ekwelem, 2004). Tahir (2003) posits that a lot of problems are now confronting education sector. Among them are inadequate funding, resources mobilization, inadequate educational tools and materials and learning resources.

The infrastructures are in total decay and in some areas non-existent, thus creating a very unhealthy environment for effective learning. There is nothing to suggest that the secondary schools have received any serious or meaningful attention from the government. Classrooms are without desks and seats for students, very many school buildings are uncompleted. The school libraries, laboratories and workshops are not adequate and are poorly equipped; in the schools where the facilities could be seen, there general lack of teaching text books, instructional materials, well built science laboratories with modern technology, libraries, classrooms, workshops comparable to those of the secondary schools in the industrialised

countries. It is common to find as many as 100 students in a classroom/laboratories designed for 30 to 40 students.

In the prevailing circumstance, it is undeniable that good teaching and learning are compromised. The standard of education is falling because government cannot effectively fund the resources needed by the schools. Ezekwesili (2007) observes that the State of public school system is degenerating to a state of emergency. The educational sector of the economy of Nigeria is generally experiencing numerous problems which require urgent national priority attention. Critics have argued that at least seventy percent of the schools are in degrading condition. The deterioration of the urban and rural public secondary schools is evidence to show that the government lacks the capacity to cope with the demands and challenges of maintaining a viable and high quality secondary education system. The main purpose of the study is to evaluate the extent of the funding problems of secondary schools and to discuss the significance of the effectiveness of joint co-operation between the public and private sectors in the funding of secondary schools in Delta State of Nigeria. The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What specific projects in secondary schools should be funded by the private sector?
2. What are the constraints to private sector participation in funding secondary education?
3. What policies should be initiated by the government to increase private sector participation in funding secondary schools?

Below are the tentative answers to the research questions.

- (a) There is no significant difference between the management and subordinates as regards the policies initiated by government to increase private sector participation in funding secondary schools in Delta State.
- (b) There is no significant difference between the management and subordinates as regards the constraints to private sector participation in the funding of secondary schools in Delta State.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study used the quantitative method involving the deployment of questionnaires; the respondents were drawn from staff and subordinates of all the private registered firms in the State, including the chief executives, chief accountants and administrative managers. The population of this study is 298 public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. In addition, all the management staff and subordinates of all the 191 private registered organizations in Delta State, Nigeria, which include chief executives, chief accountants and administrative Managers.

The stratified random sampling technique was employed based on the fact that these organizations are located in 70 urban and 30 rural areas respectively. From the location, 100 schools were stratified in the study. In selecting the management staff and subordinates, only the chief executives, chief accountants and administrative

managers were used from each organization. Structured questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was made up of two sections with structured questionnaire by which the respondents were expected to score the items on a four-point Likert scale with 4-points being the highest level of perception and 1-point being the lowest (4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1:** The Priority Rating of School Funding by Mean and Standard Deviation

Projects	Mgt Staff (n=100)			Subordinates (n=100)		
	X	SD	D	X	SD	D
Construction of classroom/admin offices	3.2	1.29	High	3.17	1.17	High
Donation of monies for procurement of I.T and other technological Equipment	2.1	0.83	Low	2.16	0.84	Low
Donation of Books, office/sports equipment	3	1.18	High	3.36	1.28	High
Provision of fund for school Services	3	1.181	High	3.08	1.21	High
Award of scholarship to Students	3.35	1.31	High	3.28	1.29	High
Renovation of school Buildings	3.28	1.29	High	3.25	1.25	High

**Source:** Survey 2010

Table 1 presents the result of the evaluation of the type of projects in secondary schools that are likely to be funded by the private sectors. It shows that out of six items on specific projects be funded by private sector, items 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 were rated high by the both categories of respondents. It is therefore the opinions of the respondents that private sector should build classrooms and administrative block, provide office and sport equipment, ward scholarship and renovate school buildings. However, both categories of respondents responded negatively to item 2, this shows that the private sector doesn't have to import technological and science equipment for the schools.

**Table 2:** The constraints to private sector participation in funding education

Constraints	Mgt Staff (n=100)			Subordinates (n =100)		
	X	SD	D	X	SD	D
Obnoxious policies of the State	3.60	0.56	High	3.53	0.55	High
Lack of private sector interest	3.36	0.54	Low	3.44	0.54	High
No special provision to private sector	3.04	0.48	High	2.98	0.47	Moderate
Effects of educ. tax on funding of schools	3.32	0.52	High	3.36	0.52	High
Inability to generate revenue	3.33	0.52	High	3.25	0.51	High

**Source:** Survey 2010

Table 2 presents the result of the evaluation of the consistency and constraints of funding of secondary schools by the private sectors. It further shows that both categories of respondents responded positive to all the items, except item 9 which was rated high by Management Staff and moderate by the subordinates. It has a mean score of 2.98 and a standard deviation of 0.047. Therefore, the constraint to private sector participation include: obnoxious policies of the State government, lack of interest, lack of special provision to fund school, inability to generate fund and the fact that private sector pay education tax.

**Table 3:** The policies to induce private sectors funding

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Policies	Mgt Staff (n=100)			Subordinates (n=100)		
	X	SD	D	X	SD	D
Allocation of funds into education by the government	3.64	0.57	High	3.60	0.57	High
Requiring private firms to attach importance to school funding	3.44	0.54	High	3.23	0.51	High
The enforcement of government education policies to coerce compliance by private sectors	2.99	0.51	Moderate	2.91	0.46	Moderate
Requirement for proof of compliance	3.81	0.60	High	3.37	0.59	High
Strict government observance of the defaulting private sectors	3.00	0.47	High	2.99	0.47	Moderate

Source: Survey 2010

Table 3 presents the result of the evaluation of the policies likely to induce and facilitate the funding of secondary schools by the private sectors. Items 12, 13, and 15 were rated high by the entire groups of the respondents. Item 14 was rated moderate by both respondents and item 16 was rated high by the management staff and moderate by their subordinates.

**Table 4:** T-test Analysis of the Difference between the mean scores of management staff and subordinates on the constraint to private sector participation in funding schools.

Groups	N	X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-critical	Decision
Mgt. Staff	100	31.29	4.90	198	0.08	1.96	Accepted
Subordinates	100	31.19	4.87				

On table 4, the null hypothesis one which states that there is no significant difference between the management of staff and subordinates as regards the constraints to private sector participation in the funding of secondary schools in Delta state, was accepted because the calculated t-value of 0.08 is less than the t-critical value of 1.96 at 198 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. There is therefore no significant difference between the mean rating of management staff and their subordinates on the constraints to private sector participation in the funding of secondary schools.

**Table 5:** T-test Analysis of the difference between the mean scores of the management staff and subordinates on the policies initiated by the government to increase private sector participation in funding secondary schools.

Groups	N	X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-critical	Decision
Mgt Staff	100	25.60	4.04	198	0.08	1.96	Accepted
Subordinates	100	25.29	3.95				

On table 5, the result of the t-test revealed that there is no significant difference between the opinions of the two categories of respondents between the mean scores of the management staff and subordinates on policies to be initiated to increase funding of secondary schools in Delta State. The null hypothesis two was accepted because the calculated t-value of 0.08 is less than t-critical value of 1.96 at the 0.05 level of significance and at 198 degrees of freedom.

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## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the study demonstrate that the private sector should be involved in the building of classrooms and administrative blocks including the provision of fund for school services, and procurement of books and facilities reinforcing Ajabade (1989). The study finds that the participation of the private sector in the funding of secondary schools in Delta State is very low. The reasons for this low participation are linked to the attitude of the government towards the private sector and the lack of interest on the part of private sector because it views education as non-profit investment. There is also evidence to suggest that the government is not adopting policies that encourage the private participation in school funding. It illustrate that the creation of awareness in the minds school administrators regarding the state of financial affairs of the schools is vital.

Consequently, there is the need to initiate policies to engender the private sector participation in the funding and provision of resources for the secondary schools to ensure achievement the national educational objectives. Since the stakeholders have continued to decry this state of affairs, the study has identified the strategies for increasing private sector participation in the funding of secondary education in Delta State, Nigeria. In consideration of these findings, it is therefore recommended that: The State government should therefore explore ways and means of enlisting the assistance and cooperation of the private sector in the funding of secondary schools.

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