

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR  
TO THE PROVISION OF ACCESS TO PRIMARY EDUCATION IN  
KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA**

BY

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**Abstract**

This paper examined the contribution of the private sector to the provision of access to primary education in Kaduna State. This was done through an analysis of Kaduna State Annual School census report (2010). The analysis sought to determine the access to primary education the private sector has created; access it has created for female children; access created in rural and urban local government; and the comparative performance of government and the private sector in creating access. Results revealed that private schools exist in all the twenty three local governments of the state, but at varying degrees; access created for the girl child is relatively small; most (73%) private schools are located in seven urban local governments and access created by the private sector is less than 20% of the existing access to primary education. It was recommended that the private sector should be more committed to creating more access at an affordable cost.

Key words: Deregulation, Private sector, Primary education

## 1. Introduction

When in the 1970s the Gowon administration nationalized private institutions, the education sector was not left behind. Mission schools which hitherto could only get grant-in-aid were taken over in various parts of the country and education became largely government affair. But as years rolled by, and with increased demand for education at all levels, it became clear that government alone cannot provide adequate access to education. Thus like any sector in Nigeria, the education sector was deregulated. (Fafunwa 1974, NPE 2004, Arewa House 2006, FRN 2000)

Dictionary defines deregulation as amendment or making of another regulation in respect to an existing issue or programme. Fidelis and Aiya (2007) see deregulation as meaning to do away with regulation concerning financial markets and trade. But Ajayi and Ekundayo (2008) see deregulation in the economic sense as freedom from government control. Akinwumi, Isuka and Agwaranze in Ekundayo (2008) further assert that deregulation is the removal of government interference in the running of a system. Thus rules are relaxed or held constant so that the system would decide its own optimum level through the forces of demand and supply. Essentially, deregulation means the withdrawal of government controls in the allocation of resources and production of goods and services.

With regards to the education sector, deregulation means breaking government monopoly of the provision and management of education by giving free hand to private participation in the provision and management of education in the country. Deregulation of education is seen as a means of helping schools to become self-managed, creating increased access, minimize the problem of scarce resources, enhance efficiency and create job opportunities (Ajayi and Ekundayo, 2008) In view of these, the Federal Government of Nigeria saw the need to deregulate and attract the private sector to invest heavily on education. In the National Policy of Education (2004:43) government admits that:

*The financing of education is a joint responsibility of the Federal, State and Local Government and the private sector. In this connections government welcomes and encourage the participation of local communities, individuals and other organizations.*

With regards to primary education, the NPE (2004:10) states that:

*Government welcomes the contributions of voluntary agencies, communities and private individuals in the establishment and management of primary schools alongside those provided by the state and local government as long as they meet the minimum standards laid down by the federal government.*

These assertions have pointed to the fact that the provision of access to education, primary education in particular is the joint affair between the public and the private sectors, and no longer the government alone. But the question that comes to mind is how much access has the private sector created for primary education in Kaduna State; a state in the north with relatively high concentration of private organizations? The paper therefore sought answers to the following questions.

1. To what extent has the private sector created access to primary education compared to the public sector in Kaduna State?
2. How much access has the private sector provided for female children in Kaduna state?
3. How much access has the private sector provided in the rural areas compared to the urban areas of Kaduna State?

To provide answers to the research questions, the primary schools statistics of Kaduna State as provided by the state ministry of education and other supportive documents were analyzed and discussed.

## 2. Extent to which the private sector has provided access to primary education compared to the public sector in Kaduna state.

Table 1: Total Public and Private Primary School Enrolment by Local Governments in Kaduna State.

Local Government	Public		Private	
	Number of public schools	Enrolment	Number of private schools	Enrolment
Birnin Gwari	182	45671	08	594
Chukun	223	23498	202	22078
Giwa	198	45180	22	3164
Igabi	281	66263	43	6373
Ikara	137	37259	8	781
Jaba	100	31249	12	1004
Jema'a	125	44694	43	5496
Kachia	283	44005	45	9133
Kaduna North	41	3742	167	22819
Kaduna South	36	35715	111	20478
Kagarko	210	34679	16	1442
Kajuru	136	28289	13	1272
Kaura	102	13896	17	1297
Kauru	257	42964	20	4107
Kubau	256	45732	22	1387
Kudan	89	23288	4	116
Lere	268	67266	28	4302
Makarfi	117	29481	9	730
Sabon Gari	54	33498	67	13010
Sanga	193	48871	13	1313
Soba	208	51874	1	200
Zangon Kataf	284	43940	24	2697
Zaria	117	71955	79	14474
Grand Total	3947	979659	974	140066

**Source:** Kaduna State 2010 Annual School Census Report

As can be observed from Table 1, the private sector has established primary schools in all the 23 local governments of the state. A total of 974 primary schools have been established with an enrolment of 140,066. This is to say that if such private schools were not established about this number of children in the state might not have been in school or might have been forced to school in very distant or congested schools.

By creating access for the 140066 pupils, the private sector has taken away the burden of providing schools for such children by the government. It has also minimized accusation of non access that would have been leveled against government. In essence, the presence of the private sector in primary education has expanded access to primary education Kaduna State.

A close look at table 1 also shows that just as there are differences in the number of public schools in the various local governments, so also there are differences in the number of private schools established and the enrolment recorded. With the exception of Sabon Gari local government, the number of public schools and their enrolment in each local government were higher than the private schools. Cumulatively, there were 3947 public schools with a total enrolment of 929,659 pupils, while the private schools were only 974, with a total enrolment of 137,866 pupils. This shows that out of a total of 4921 primary schools in the state the private sector had only 19.79% (974). And out of a total enrolment of 1,119,525, the private schools enrolled only 140,066 (12.51%). The figure indicates that although there are private primary schools across the local governments, the public sector still dominates this level of education in Kaduna State, controlling over 80% of the schools and number of pupils enrolled.

### 3. Enrolment in primary schools by gender in public and private schools

**Table 2: Public and Private Primary Schools enrolment by gender.**

Gender	Public schools enrolment	Private schools enrolment	Total enrolment	% of private
Boys	538 322	70,006	608,628	11.50
Girls	441337	6,986	511,197	13.67
Total	979,659	139,866	1,119,525	12.4
Percentage of female	45.05	49.94	45.66	

**Source:** Kaduna State 2010Annual School Census Report

Table 2 shows that out of a total of 979, 659 children enrolled in public primary schools, 441,337 (45.05%) were female. Out of the 139,866 pupils enrolled in private schools, 69, 860 (49.94) were females. This indicates that in both the public and private primary schools, the female enrolment was less than that of the male. But one also notes the fact that out of the total of 511,197 females that were enrolled in both public and private schools, only 69,860 (13.67%) were enrolled in private schools. This is to say that of all the female admissions, the private schools contributed only about 14% of access provided. This shows that the private sector caters more for the males than the females

#### 4. Provision of private primary schools in urban and rural areas.

In Kaduna State, only seven of the twenty-three local governments can be classified as urban. They are as shown on table 3- Chukun, Jema'a, Igabi,,Kaduna North, Kaduna South, Sabon Gari, and Zaria. The others are basically rural.

**Table 3:** Distribution of Private Primary Schools in Urban and Rural Local Governments

	Urban			Rural		
	Local government	Number of schools	Enrolment	Local government	Number of schools	Enrolment
1	Chukun	202	22,025	Birnin Gwariqw2	8	594
2	Jema'a	43	5,496	Giwa	22	3,164
3	Kaduna North	167	22,819	Ikara	8	781
4	Kaduna South	111	20,478	Jaba	12	1,004
5	SabonGari	67	13,010	Kachia	45	9,133
6	Zaria	79	15,475	Kagarko	13	1,272
7	Igabi	43	6,373	Kaura	17	1,297
8				Kauru	20	4,107
9				Kubau	22	1,387
10				Kudan	24	116
11				Lere	28	4,302
12				Makarfi	9	730
13				Sanga	13	1,313

14				Soba	1	200
				Zangon Kataf	24	2,697
<b>Total</b>	6	712	105,726	17	264	32,097

**Source:** Kaduna State 2010 Annual School Census Report

As seen on the Table 3, out of a total of 976 private primary schools in Kaduna State, the six urban local governments have 712 (72.95%) an enrolment of 105,726 being 76.82% of the total enrolment of 137, 623. This shows that though the private schools are scattered in all the twenty three local governments of the State, they are more concentrated in the urban areas. This could be partly explained by the large concentration of the State population in the urban areas. But more importantly, the fact that the urban population is more prepared to pay a higher amount for the access to private schools.

## 5. Discussion

In line with the deregulation policy of the federal government, the National Policy on Education accepts the fact that government alone cannot fund or run primary education. Thus it stated among others that

Government welcomes other contribution of voluntary agencies, communities and private individuals in the establishment and management of primary schools alongside those provided by the state and local governments.

Responding to the deregulation, many individuals sprang into the establishment of nursery, primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. The private sector has been able to create access to primary education in virtually every local government of Kaduna State. However, the access varies from one local government to the other. The local government with the highest number of schools is Chukun, with 202 schools, but the highest enrolment exists in Kaduna North with population of 22, 819. Other local governments with high enrolment are Kaduna South (20,478), Sabon Gari (13,010),

Zaria (15,475), Kachia (9133), Igabi (6,373) and Jama'a (5,497). In all, one notes that the highest concentration of access is in the urban areas while the rural areas have been left with relatively few schools. As earlier observed, seven of the twenty three local governments alone had about 73% of all the private primary schools in the state. This suggests that the private sector participation is biased against the rural areas.

In an attempt to understand the trend, two factors seem to stand out very clearly i.e. the high concentration of population in the urban areas, and the positive attitude of urban dwellers to private schools, despite the relatively high school fees.

On the issue of creating access to the girl child, the private sector has created some access in the state. Out of the total female enrolment of 511,197, the private schools enrolled only 69,860 (13.67%) Though a step forward, it shows that government carries the burden of educating the girl child at the primary school level. In other words, there is still much to be done by the private schools to further enhance the education of the girl child in Kaduna State..

Looking at the overall access provided by the private primary schools compared to what the government is providing, it is clear that government still carries most of the burden. Out of a total of 4921 primary schools in Kaduna State, only 974 (12.51%) are private and out of the total enrolment of 1,119,525 only 140,066 are enrolled in the private schools. Bearing in mind the dwindling resources of government and the increasing demand for access to good primary school education, as provided in the National Policy on Education(NPE:2004), the need for the private sector to be more involved in creating access to primary education in Kaduna State cannot be over emphasized.



## **6. Conclusion**

In Kaduna State, the private sector has responded positively to the deregulation of primary education and has succeeded in providing primary education for male and female children across the state. But the access so created is largely in the urban areas. This has denied rural areas the benefit of accessing private schools. Indeed, for primary education to become fully accessible, more private hands need to engage themselves in providing the facility at costs affordable to rural population. In doing this, some increased attention should be paid to the rural areas and the enrolment of the girl child.

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