



TEACHERS' AVAILABILITY, SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN BAYELSA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract:

The study is predicated on the assumption that teaching manpower is critical to education service delivery which is a vehicle for effecting sustainable growth and development of any society. The study therefore analyzed teachers' availability, supply, and distribution in public primary schools in Bayelsa State. The study was descriptive adopting ex- post facto research design. The population of the study comprised all 3,571 teachers distributed across the 547 public primary schools in Bayelsa State as of the 2022/2023 academic session. It was a census study; therefore, a sample was not made. A checklist titled: Teachers Availability Distribution and Supply Checklist (TADSC) was used to collect data for the study. The data collected were analyzed using percentages and histogram charts. Findings from the study revealed that the enrolment of pupils in public primary schools was generally low and varied by local government area. It was also found that teachers were not adequately supplied while the available ones were not equitably distributed across the eight local government areas. Lastly, the results of the findings showed that the existing public primary schools in the State require adequately qualified classroom teachers for effective pedagogical-related assignments. Arising from the findings, it was recommended that the State government should provide existing public primary schools with basic teaching and learning facilities including qualified and adequate teaching manpower; rural communities should be provided with basic amenities while rural allowance/incentives for teachers should be increased to promote high teacher retention in local and rural areas; teachers should be redistributed across schools and local government areas for equity, fairness, and effective utilization by

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relevant authorities like the State Universal Education Board {SUBEB} and the State Ministry of Education.

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1. Introduction

Teachers are critical human resources needed in any educational industry for the actualization of its aims and objectives. The pupils in a school are the raw materials that the teachers process, transforming into educated individuals in mind, character, knowledge, and skills acquisition needed for the transformation of society in growth and development.

According to Harbinson (1973:26):

“Human resources constitute the ultimate bases for the wealth of nations, not capital nor income, nor material resources. Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production, but human beings are active agents who accumulate capital, exploit material resources, build social, economic, and political organizations, and carry forward national development.”

The attainment of the goals of primary education in Nigeria, Bayelsa State in particular is dependent on the demand and supply of teachers who are major resources needed for the primary education production function.

Primary education is of great significance to the entire educational system – primary, secondary, and tertiary. It is the pivot for the success or failure of other educational ladders. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2013) remarks that the primary level of education is critical to the success or failure of the whole system. It, therefore, implies that the failure of primary and basic education in its goal attainment could pose a potential danger to other levels of education and the general well-being of society.

The National Policy on Education (FRN 2013) states the goals of primary education inter alia. To:

- inculcate permanent literacy and numeracy, and the ability to communicate effectively;
- lay a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking;
- give citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society;
- mould the character and develop sound attitude and morals in the child;
- develop in the child the ability to adapt to the child’s changing environment;
- give the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable the child to function effectively in society within the limits of the child’s capacity;

- provide the child with basic tools for further educational advancement including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality.

To achieve the laudable goals of primary education across every gamut of Nigerian society, professional and quality teachers are needed.

Ugolo (2010) asserts that:

“The teacher is the pivot upon which qualitative teaching and learning lie, and therefore without adequate supply, students may ascend a base to the apex climb of the structural continuum of the educational pyramid without a corresponding acquisition of the knowledge, skills, and competencies schools are expected to transmit.”

The effectiveness and efficiency of primary schools in relation to the goals of primary education can be appreciated by the percentage of teachers demanded and supplied at the primary level of the child's learning stage and the distribution pattern of the available teachers. Various researchers and educational practitioners have emphasized the need for an adequate number of qualified primary and basic school teachers in Nigeria. According to Eno–Abasi (2015); Akpotu (2018); Bawit (2015); and Egboro (2020), the availability and adequacy of teachers play a pivotal role in the attainment of educational objectives especially the quality of the child's learning outcome.

However, the issue of basic secondary teachers' availability in Nigeria has remained a critical issue in the educational history of Nigeria. For instance, Ajayi (1998) decried the paucity of teachers at the basic junior secondary schools in Kwara State. Many States in Nigeria today are faced with a similar situation of inadequate supply of qualified teachers in public and private schools which might endanger the right of the child to free and quality education for a meaningful and useful living in the society as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration of Article 26.

Teachers' distribution is the systematic deployment of employed teaching staff to schools. The parameters for teachers' distribution could be based on availability, demand for teachers, and the approved standards (Adeyenin, 2009; Eloho & Romina, 2003). The National Policy on Education (NPE) 2013 recommends pupils pupil-teacher ratio of 1:35 in public primary schools.

Ingersoll (2007) posits that the supply of teachers is the quality and quantity of qualified teachers that the various teacher training institutions can turn out for employment. Ibadan (2010) opines that teacher supply is the actual number of teachers employed by the government and school proprietor which is contingent on the economic situation. He added that the current economic problem in Nigeria has worsened the supply of teachers in Nigeria.

In the opinion of Eloho and Romina (2023), teachers' distribution is influenced by the factors of pupils' population, politics, and availability of finance. It therefore suggests that the supply of teachers is based on the number employed and the commitment of the government to the provision of free, qualitative, and accessible primary school education,

of which the function of the distribution pattern of the service teachers matters. This is not without the consideration of school enrolment. In Nigeria, the prescribed pupils' teacher ratio is 1:35 in public primary schools. The implication of this is that teachers' distribution in the form of deployment, posting, and transfer should be rational, fair, and equitable. The United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organizations UNESCO (2013) and OECD (2018) decry the inequalities in the distribution of teachers in developing countries and sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria inclusive.

2. Statement of the Problem

Bayelsa State, South-South Nigeria is an aquatic geographical entity. It is sparsely populated but it is one of the economic main stays of Nigeria. It has huge deposits of crude oil and other aquatic resources of great economic importance to the State and the country in general. However, Bayelsa State is one of the educationally disadvantaged States in Nigeria. Despite the efforts of the government to accelerate the socio-economic development of the State through aggressive education development at all levels and regular capacity building of the teaching workforce, especially at the State Basic Education, Primary Schools still seem to be plagued with the problem of inadequate supply and poor distribution of the available teachers.

Critical stakeholders like parents often complain about the shortage of teachers in rural schools. To redress this situation, the government embarked on the redeployment of professionally trained teachers from civil service to classrooms, yet the problem persists. What is however not known is whether the available teachers in public primary schools are not adequate or the distribution of the teachers is not equitable. It is against this background the study investigated the teachers' availability, distribution, and supply in public primary schools in Bayelsa State.

2.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to assess teachers' availability, distribution, and supply in public primary schools in Bayelsa State. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- 1) assess primary school enrolment pattern in the state;
- 2) analyse the equitable distribution of available teachers in Bayelsa State; and
- 3) analyse the required categories of teachers needed in the state.

2.2 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1) What is the enrolment pattern in public primary schools in Bayelsa State?
- 2) What is the total number of teachers and their distribution supply gap in Bayelsa State public primary schools?
- 3) What are the required teachers by status in Bayelsa State public primary schools?

3. Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design of ex-post facto approach. This is because the study collected data that was used to describe the existing teaching manpower situation in public primary schools in Bayelsa State. The researchers did not manipulate any variable but merely described the existing situation after the collection and analysis of relevant data. The population of the study comprised the 3,571 teachers distributed across the 547 public primary schools in Bayelsa State as of 2021/2022 academic session. It was a census study.

A checklist titled: Teachers' Availability, Distribution and Supply Checklist (TADSC) was used to collect data. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics {percentages and histogram chart}.

4. Results

Research Question 1: What is the enrolment pattern in public primary schools in Bayelsa State?

Table 1: Enrolment pattern of public primary schools by Local Government in Bayelsa State

LGA	No. of schools	Enrolment	Percentage
Brass	43	8,096	7.42
Ekeremor	90	16,472	15.10
Kolokumo / Opokuma	24	3,954	3.63
Nembe	60	11,716	10.74
Ogbia	73	5,955	14.63
Sagbama	62	12,142	11.13
Southern Ijaw	134	20,430	18.73
YELGA	59	20,291	18.60
Total	547	109,056	

The analysis in Table 1 shows that there are 109,056 pupils enrolled in 547 primary schools as of 2021/2022 academic session in the six local government areas in Bayelsa State. The enrolment pattern shows that Kolokumo/Opokuma, Brass, Nembe and Sagbama local government areas have the least number of pupils enrolled in public schools. Their percentage enrolments as shown in the table are 3.63, 7.42, 10.74, and 11.3 respectively. Although Southern Ijaw had 20, 430 pupils representing 18.73 it had the highest number of public primary schools {134}. One would expect a higher enrolment of pupils in schools. Perhaps, the terrain of the local government which is mainly high sea could be responsible. Yenogoa local government had the second highest percentage enrolment at 18.60 in 59 schools, representing 20,291 pupils in schools. This is followed by Ekeremor (15.10%), and Ogbia Local Government (14.63%). Generally, the enrolment pattern of pupils in the public primary schools by local government is not evenly distributed as expected. The low demand for primary education in the State could be the result of the predominant rural migrant communities in the riverine State of Bayelsa.

Research Question 2: What is the total number of teachers and their distribution supply gap in Bayelsa State public primary schools?

Table 2 presents an analysis of available Teachers Distribution and Supply Gap in Bayelsa State. A total of 3571 teachers were available in schools in (the 2021/2022) academic session while the total required teachers ought to be 4,221 against 3,571 based on pupils- the teacher ratio of 1:35.

Table 2: Available Teachers' Distribution and Supply Gap Analysis

LGA	Total No. Available	Total No. Required	Remark
Brass	323	362	Short supply (39)
Ekeremor	665	472	Short supply (39)
Kolokumo/Opokuma	269	162	Excess supply (107)
Nembe	275	409	Short supply (134)
Ogbia	692	514	Excess supply (178)
Sagbama	560	503	Excess supply (37)
Southern Ijaw	361	982	Short supply (621)
YELGA	426	585	Short supply (159)
Total	3,571	4,221	

This suggests that there was a general shortage of teacher supply in public primary schools concerning pupils' enrolment. The analysis in Table 2 further reveals that there exists inequity in the distribution of the available teachers in schools and by extension in the local government areas in Bayelsa State. For instance, Kulokumo / Opokumo, Ogbia, and Sagbama local government areas have an excess supply of teachers ranging from 107, 178, and 57 respectively. Conversely, Ekeremor, Nembe, Southern Ijaw, and Yenegoa local government areas have a shortage of teachers' supply of 39, 39, 134, 621, and 159 respectively.

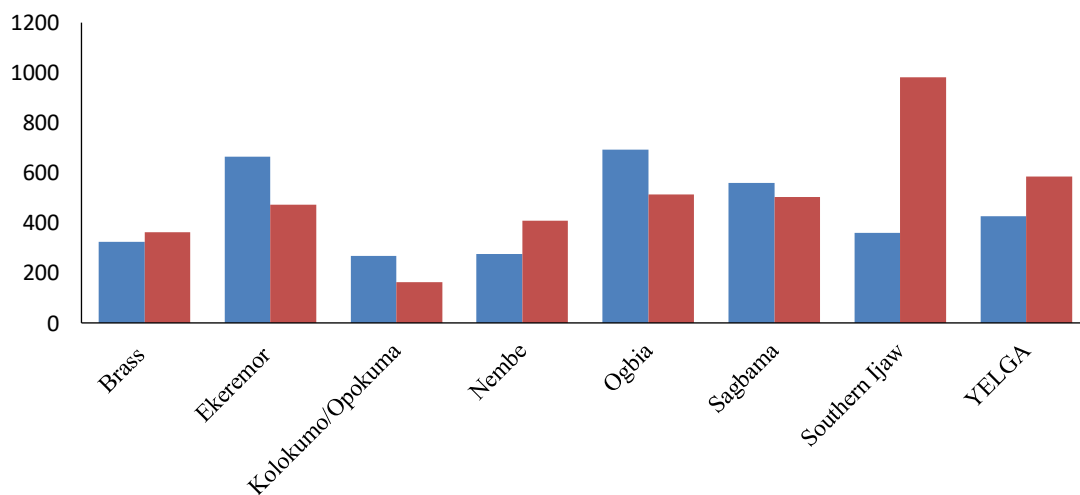


Figure 1: Supply and Distribution of Teachers by Local Government Areas in Bayelsa State

Figure 1 further shows the distribution of available teachers in the state by local government area. The analysis suggests that the distribution of available teachers was not equitable but a function of many factors. Location of schools, political influence on choice and preference of a school by teachers could largely be responsible for the skewed distribution of the available teachers in the state primary schools.

Research question 3: What are the required numbers of teachers by status in Bayelsa State?

The analysis in Table 3 reveals that primary schools have 3,571 teachers in stock while the total requirement is 4,221, indicating a shortfall of 650 (15%) teachers required to be added to the existing stock to achieve adequacy in quantity. It is also observed that many schools have a low population because schools are dotted here and there in several small villages including migrant fishermen settlements. Specifically, 208(38%) schools have less than 100 pupils enrolled, and another 208(38%) have only 100 – 180 pupils enrolled, implying that as many as 416(76%) public primary schools have very low enrolment.

This situation implies increased teacher requirements because each school must be supplied with a minimum number of teachers to teach the six-year primary school curriculum in this 21st century irrespective of pupil enrolment. These peculiarities accounted for the need for more teachers even though the observed teacher-pupil ratio of 1 – 31 was very adequate. In effect, the T/P ratio can only be utilized effectively to determine teacher requirements when school enrolment is more than 200 children in order not to undermine the curriculum in low-population schools.

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**Table 3: Required Headteachers, Assistants and Classroom Teachers in
Public Primary schools in Bayelsa State based on population criterion parameters**

S/N	Range of school enrolment	No. of schools	Approx. no. of classrooms	Range of class sizes	Head T.	Asst. Head Teachers	No. of classroom teachers	No. required per school	Total no. required
1	99 & Below	208	6 & Below	Appr 20 & Below	1	-	5	6	1,248
2	100 – 180	208	6 & Below	20 – 30	1	1	5	7	1,456
3	181 – 240	68	7	30 – 35	1	1	7	9	612
4	241 – 320	38	10	30 – 35	1	1	9	11	418
5	321 – 400	10	12	30 – 35	1	1	13	15	150
6	401 – 550	5	16	30 – 35	1	1	17	19	95
7	551 – 640	5	19	30 – 35	1	2	19	22	110
8	641 – 800	4	23	30 – 35	1	2	23	26	104
9	801 & Above	1	24	30 – 35	1	2	25	28	28
Total requirement of teachers		547				349	3325	-	4,221
Total no. of available teachers		547							3,571
Approx. shortage		547							650 (15.4%)

5. Conclusion

Teachers' availability, adequacy supply, and distribution are fundamental and indispensable to the effective attainment of the cardinal goals of primary education. However, in Bayelsa State, public primary schools are in short supply and the available teachers are not equitably distributed. Also, in Bayelsa State, public primary school enrolment is relatively low. This has a major implication for the effective planning and administration of primary education in the quest to achieve sustainable development of the State through quality basic education delivery.

5.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are therefore made:

- 1) The existing public primary schools should be provided with basic teaching and learning facilities including qualified and adequate teachers to make the schools attractive to learners.
- 2) Aggressive advocacy for free and compulsory basic education through all forms of media, including social media by the government should be embarked upon
- 3) School managers and the State government should guarantee both parents and pupils adequate security of lives and property. This will induce high pupils' enrolment to public primary schools which appears to have been lost to private schools.
- 4) The government should strive to provide basic social amenities in rural communities. Rural allowances and incentives for teachers should be increased. This will encourage high retention of teachers posted to rural communities.
- 5) Professionally trained teachers serving in other ministries, agencies, and parastatals should be redeployed to schools in a bid to address the perennial problem of teacher shortage in public schools.
- 6) The available teachers should be redistributed across schools and local government areas based on school population for the purpose of equity, fairness, and utilization of teaching manpower by school inspection, supervision, and monitoring quality assurance department of the State Universal Basic Education (SUBEB) and the Ministry of Education.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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