

Understanding Education Finance for Socio-economic and Political Emancipation

By

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Abstract

It is no longer news that the future of any country depends on the quality of its education which is a key instrument to civilization and development. Education remains the major tool for individual, national, socio-economic development, and eradication of poverty. For effective and efficient implementation of the aims, goals and objectives of the education at all levels, there should be adequate funding of the system. Unfortunately, one of the major problems facing education in Nigeria is the issue of underfunding. One of the reasons for this is the negative influence of politics on education. This has led to slow pace in the development of the educational system in the last few decades. In view of this, the study is set to examine various challenges of education finance in Nigeria, looks into major and alternative sources of finance in education and recommendations is made on how best education finance could be managed for socio-economic and political freedom (Emancipation) in Nigeria.

Keywords:- Emancipation -Education Finance -Development

Introduction

Education all over the world has been receiving a lot of attention from concerned individuals; the government, parents and other interested people do ensures more is given to the development of the educational sector in order to achieve its predetermined goals and objectives. It is no longer news that the future of any country depends on the quality of its education which is a key instrument to civilization and development. Education remains the major tool for individual, national, socio-economic development, and eradication of poverty. It constitutes foundation of meaningful socio-economic, political growth and development of any nation. No wonder the federal Government of Nigeria adopted education as an instrument per excellence for affecting national development (Ajeyalemi 2009). It is as a result of the premium placed on education that made the federal government in 1969 to organize the first ever national curriculum conference in education (Ikpeze 2010). The outcomes and resolutions of that curriculum conference gave rise to the national policy on education which was first published in 1977 and has been revised in 1981, 1996, 2004, and 2008 respectively; which all involved a huge

amount of funds, and how best the educational system could be managed to support the sustainable development of the country. The implementation of the national policy on education in 1981 gave rise to a lot of innovations and reforms in the education system of Nigeria. For effective and efficient implementation of the aims and objectives of education, there should be adequate funding of the system. Unfortunately, one of the major problems facing education in Nigeria is the issue of underfunding; the effect of enormous resources invested in education seems not to be felt. One of the reasons for this is the negative influence of politics on education which seem to have led to slow pace in the development of the educational system in the last few decades.

Because there is continuous rise in the demand for education, needed funds to meet the demand have been increasing simultaneously, though no amount of money is enough or not enough in financing education; it depends on individual's taste, choice and available resources at hand. Education generally seems to be underfunded which calls for educational managers, government and economist to always source for viable sustainable source(s) of educational finance. For some years now in Nigeria, there is government monopoly in the provision and control of public educational finance. Unfortunately, government can no longer bear the burdens of education alone. Specifically talking about educational finance the following questions come to mind:

- Is education worth paying for?
- Who then should pay for education?
- How should it be paid?
- How much should be paid?

Funding of Education in Nigeria

The allocation to Education in the National Budget in the 20th century has been encouraging, even though it is not enough. Allocations for 2003, 2004 and 2005 financial years were 7%, 12% and 11% respectively. These rates do not include funding for the Universal Basic Education (UBE) and Education Trust Fund (ETF), which had separate allocations because of the tasks and technicalities involved. For 2006, 11% was budgeted, which also excludes UBE and ETF allocations. Adewale, Ajayi and Enikanoselu (2006) maintained that education in Nigeria has been experiencing financial crises. Money spent on primary, secondary and tertiary education is not enough which usually leads to shortage of workforces and tools in the educational system of Nigeria. Concerned educational personnel and citizens complain about the underfunding of the educational sector while the government from their own end accuses the sector of inefficient utilization of available resources. This has been a bone of contention between the two parties over the years which calls for serious attention. The allocated education funds are said to be distributed among primary, secondary and tertiary educational levels in the fraction of 30%, 30% and 40% respectively. The public funding includes direct government expenditures in the

form of subsidies to households such as tax reductions, scholarships, loans and grants. It also includes payment from Education Tax Funds (ETF) mainly for capital expenditure (Rowell, & Money, 2018).

Finance at Levels of Education in Nigeria

There are four major levels of Education in Nigeria, namely:

Early childhood (Pre-Primary Education): The 2008 National Policy on Education (NPE) gives the school-going age at the pre-primary level or early childhood education to be between the ages of 3-5 years. Education at this level is usually free in nature; the funding is mainly done by government and little upkeep funds from the parents or guidance to ensure their pupils are healthy and safe to cope with the early stage of education in school.

Basic Education: Basic Education comprises Primary and Junior Secondary Schools Education, with learning spans of nine (9) years. Basic Education under the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Law is compulsory, universal and free. Primary Education in Nigeria is the education given in institutions for children between the ages 6 to 12 years and is for duration of 6 years. Primary education under the UBE law is free. Junior secondary school education consists of both pre-vocational and academic education, forming part of Universal Basic Education; it is free, universal and even compulsory. The finance of education here is usually been done by the government. And that's why it seems to the masses as free education.

Senior Secondary Education: Senior Secondary Education which is for those who have successfully completed their Junior Secondary education and they wish to proceed and broaden their knowledge towards future academic pursuit is been finance mostly vested on the parents and government.

Tertiary Education: This is education given after secondary education in Universities, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics, and Monotechnics, including institutions offering correspondence courses. Finance here is usually from individual/private costs, household costs, and government.

Sources of Finance in Education

Government Subventions were put in place to meet the demand for education making financing education responsibility of government of many developed and developing countries mainly because of the benefits from it. Traditionally, education is public goods in many countries. It is also seen not only as social service but a productive investment. Consequently education has always been a budgetary priority in most countries. There is usually allocation of budgets to education sector by the government each year distributed to each state in form of grants. Government subventions for education are never enough because education in Nigeria is underfunded by the government. E.g. no enough of facilities for schools and the

available ones are not properly utilized. This could be attributed to the economic meltdown the nation is experiencing. As a result of the government underfunding education, the burden of finance is on parents. Though education is profitable, but if you invest much in education, it may affect other sectors. In advanced countries such as Japan, a large proportion of education finances come from taxes. Though in Nigeria tax is not much like this, and the little earn from few ones paying tax is not enough to cater for the demands for education.

Parents bear a huge burden of education finance through development fees, tuition fees, and other contributions including living costs. In Nigeria, parents play a vital role in financing the education of their children even if they have to borrow from friends, relatives or money lenders. Parents bear a large proportion of the cost of university education. In Nigeria, because of the subsidized tuitions, students in federally owned universities usually do not pay huge tuition fees like those in state or private owned universities. But at the end of the day, they are all subjected to one year NYSC program and end up in the same labor market. Furthermore Nwadiani (2000) opined reasons why parents should bear a larger part of the university education cost and payment of tuition fees for their children. He said some measures of values in the form of status, pleasure of security are gained by parents when their children enroll in universities. If this is the case, they should pay tuition fees. Parents' payment of tuition would act as an incentive to students to be more committed to their studies and avoid academic wastage (failure, repetition, withdrawal) as the value of the cost keeps them on the reminder (Nwadiani, 2000). He explained further by saying parents of university students are likely to be more affluent than average citizens and thus better able to pay a bit more (as alternative to still higher taxes). It will encourage universities to contain costs by keeping them down to attract students. Related to this is that, payment of tuition by parents would lead to cost recovery and above all consumers of university education are obliged to pay for the service thereby promoting equity.

Scholarships and bursaries various forms take up payment of a child for some period of his or her education. Scholarships are used to encourage people from educational disadvantage areas, scholarships are limited in terms of the number of learners usually involved. According to Callaway and Cirusone (1968), in the South, fees were charged but a good number of the students were on government scholarships and fee remission was a common practice. Though it is not too popular in recent; owing to the economic meltdown of the country. Federal, state, interested wealthy persons and educationally committed local governments' awarded bursaries to students. A lot of students relied on bursaries for the financing of their education. Also over the years bursary awards were poorly managed. A case study of July 20, 2020 probe into the Niger Delta region of Nigeria where the extraction of crude oil is dominant, the scholarships and bursaries available for indigenes from these communities to support them in acquiring standardized education home and abroad were poorly managed by the personnel of the commission, thereby leading to the

underfunding of students with scholarships under the scheme (Premium times, 2020). During the second and third republics, bursary award was highly politicized. It became an instrument of getting votes from citizens. In the early 80s there were warning signs that the end of bursaries award was near because many levels of government could meet their bursary obligation to the deserving students; with this before the mid 80s bursary awards became history in Nigeria, and since then till date, acquiring scholarships and bursaries have is highly competitive in nature.

Some agencies in Nigeria, both governments' initiated and private owned such as banks are in charge of granting loans to the public and individuals who needs it, in order to further enhance the development of education. Since education is a home of further research to aid the sustainable development of every nation, research grants are usually been granted to interested researcher with little or no interest while return it over the agreed period of time. In some cases like research loans are been given out for free. For example TETFUND research grants are available for academic staffs of higher institutions yearly. NGOs and some foreign bodies such as UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank and the likes have over the years been instruments to the finance of the educational sector in Nigeria.

Free education over the years has been the major means in which most of the governments of the African countries use to reduce the cost of education. In January 1955 the then Western Region lunched her Free Universal Primary Education (FUPE). Eastern Region and Federal Capital Territory of Lagos introduced Free Primary Education in 1957 and in the following year tuition free was introduced in the east respectively Unfortunately these method has not worked because the more the government is willing to render free education the more the population and the enrolment in schools keep rising. Suddenly not too long, all these programs collapse. Because while trying to run a tuition free education, some other costs such as school facilities are borne by the learners without anyone bearing the cost. Though in the latest time free education is not what it used to be in Nigeria. There seem to be no more free education because somebody somewhere has to pay for it.

Note: no matter the cost placed on education, the money can never be enough because education is a dynamic phenomenon with different units and perspectives. Therefore all hands are to be laid on desk to ensure the continuous rise in the demand of education is met daily. At this there should room for alternative sources of finance because any attempt to reduce the finance of education will surely affect the standard of life.

Challenges of Funding Education in Nigeria

For effective and efficient implementation of the aims and objectives of education, there should be adequate funding of the system. Unfortunately, the issue of underfunding seems to be one of the major problems facing education in Nigeria.

Ibukun (1997) lamented that there is growing shortage of funds and learning resources in the university system. According to Oyeneye (2006), and Adegbite (2007), the major challenge facing the management of university system in Nigeria is inadequate funding. Ajayi and Ayodele (2012) argued that there was an increase in the proportion of total expenditure devoted to education, but this has been considered to be rather grossly inadequate considering the phenomenon increase in student enrolment and increasing cost, which has been aggravated by inflation. Ajayi and Ekundayo (2006) opined that the Nigerian government over the years has not been meeting the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommendation of 26% of the total budget allocation to education sector. Aina (2017) posited that government priority to education is still very low. All these expose the extent to which the government itself is contributing to the financial mess of her education system.

Records have shown that the Nigerian Government has tended to embark on ambitious education programs in spontaneous response to oil booms. In 1973-1979 Nigeria experienced the first oil boom as a result of the Arab oil embargo against the U.S.A. In 1990, a second oil boom was because of the Gulf war and the United Nations trade embargo on Iraq and Kuwait. A third oil boom started from 2003 during Chief Olusegun Obasanjo Era fuelled mainly by galloping economic growth and attendant high energy demand in several emerging economies, spectacularly, China. It was in response to the windfall revenues resulting from the 1973-1979 oil booms that the Nigerian Government in 1976 introduced the Universal Primary Education. This laudable program caused a dramatic expansion in the demand for educational services at the primary level. But the financial resources became inadequate and unfortunately there was collapse of oil prices which the country has not recovered from till now.

As stated by Federal Republic of Nigeria in Collaboration with International Labor Organization (ILO) Action Program On Education, 2004-2005, with the theme: Teachers For The Future: Meeting Teacher Shortages To Achieve Education For All. Obstacles to sound financial bases for education and sound distribution of resources to teaching and teaching support functions are as follows:

- i. Inconsistent financial policy and late or non release of budget allocation;
- ii. The Nation's over dependence on oil income which is unstable and affects budgetary allocation to the education sector;
- iii. Under-funding of the education sector;
- iv. Inadequate data on the education sector; and,
- v. Misapplication of funds allocated to the education sector.

Laying emphasis on the above stated points; Nigeria has a country over the years do prepare budgets lately and the release of funds in usually at the late hours of each year, this has led to the underfunding of the education sector because the allocated funds may not be rightly used or may be used at unneeded time giving room for misappropriations and underutilizations of funds. The complete dependent on the

returns from the crude oil over the years has exposed us as a nation to underdevelopment because we move with the fluctuating trends of oil price in the world market. It is worse now that crude oil has refused to yield in prices.

The governments of Eastern and Western Nigeria, having introduced free primary education programs were confronted with increase in financial commitments without a proportionate rise in internal revenues (Idumange, 2002). They faced serious financial troubles. For example in 1957, over-all educational expenditures absorbed 43% and 42.6% of their total budgets, while recurrent educational expenditure alone took about half (49%) of the total recurrent budget in the East. In an attempt to meet this problem, the options open to these governments were very minimal. Along the line, the government of Western Nigeria was able to obtain help through the resources of the Marketing Boards. The government of Eastern Nigeria, on the other hand, had no option than to retreat temporarily from the full application of the free primary education scheme. Few years later the program was latter re-introduced, but the scheme was limited to the beginning classes of the schools. Both governments decided to reduce the proportion of their educational expenditures assigned as capital outlays. The percentage of total government expenditure represented by recurrent expenditure for education continued to grow; 47.3% for the West and 38.2% for the East, having reduced the number of pupils by raising the age of school entry to 6+, and thus reducing the primary school course from eight to seven years. Later in 1963 the two top primary classes were merged, leading to reduction in the length of the primary school course to the duration of six years. In an account of Olagboye (2004) the Western Region alone, for example, spent seven million pound sterling on the construction of buildings for the scheme, while annual recurrent expenditure rose progressively from the pre-UPE sum of a little over two million pounds in the 1953/54 fiscal year to a staggering 7.9 million in 1957/58. Mere this sequence the researcher said major reason for this change could be characterized with population explosion in school entry as a result of free education scheme which called for immediate attention. Human nature naturally desire and hunt after something free, so parents and interested individuals were inspired to send their children to schools for free education. Nevertheless, there is no education that is free in any part of the world; somebody somewhere must bear the cost.

At the end of the above periods, the total recurrent expenditures for primary schooling were shared by regional governments and local sources (local governments and direct payments of fees by households) in the ratio of 75:25. This represents a considerable swing from earlier times when local sources contributed the greater proportion of these costs. At the same time, recurrent expenditures for primary education compared with those for other kinds of formal education (secondary, teacher training, technical and vocational, university) at the regional level, were in the approximate proportion of 60:40, with some variation by region and for the Federal Territory of Lagos. By and large, therefore, the rising expenses of

primary schools have been met increasingly by regional governments' funds, with consequent reduction in the funds available for other purposes. (UNESCO, 1968)

According to Ajagbawa (2014), the unpleasant state of our higher education institutions, where there is lack of good teaching aids, the available ones are even outdated and obsolete facilities suggest that will require new financing models to escape this mess. The apparent shortage of fund available to the university system has been responsible for declining library, social and laboratory facilities in Nigerian universities in recent years. This in no small way makes the governance of the university system a huge task. It is crystal clear that government can no longer sustain the funding of higher education in Nigeria. On the other hand, citizens view free education as one of the very few means of the resource redistribution function in an environment of pervasive income inequality. On the basis of the deteriorating corruption index of the country, citizens insists on the judicious application of scarce funds to better quality education otherwise frittered away by corrupt government practices. Unfortunately we are in a country where snakes and monkeys now have access to public funds than we humans in which they can make way with billions and no one will question them; well maybe because they are animals. Even if there were to be purity in government and finance agencies in Nigeria, it would be impossible for government to exclusively fund education, in fact not in the phase of security challenges as a result of terrorist attacks and the little available fund in the treasury of the nation is use to ensure maximum protection of lives and property. Attesting to this on 18th of February 2018 Vanguard Newspaper tell the news of how a snake swallows 36 million naira in Jamb office, and on February 21th Premium times (2018) recorded case of a monkey that swallows 70Million naira in a farm respectively.

Lately it seem the rate of underfunding education in Nigeria is on the high side due to the economic meltdown the nation experience coupled with coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic challenges which exposes the Nigeria education system to a lot of setback because the nation wasn't prepared for such occurrence. This led to complete shutdown of schools at various levels in six (6) months without any progressive move in the system. To cope with the pandemic the alternative learning methods such as e-learning channels was taken to which is capital intensive in nature, unfortunately few out of the private schools in Nigeria where able to fit into the development while the government own schools couldn't. Attesting to this, Adalakun (2020), sited a case of Bowen University Iwo, Osun State that immediately swift to action at the beginning of the lockdown; the university's ICT unit developed a software to reach out to their students in their various homes, they teach and even conducted examinations as at when due. This software was able to view learners in the comfort of their homes, to detect the students face, and ensure nobody is helping them write their exams. Adalakun (2020) further explained that unfortunately the development of e-learning methods was unable to get down to government universities because the period of the pandemic lockdown came after the academic staffs of universities union declared indefinite strike action as a result of unmet demands from the government. Nobody knows the lasting effect covid-19

on the nation's development. Over the years there has been unending battles between the Federal Government and Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) which usually result to the shutting of the universities for weeks and months at times.

Premium time news paper reported that on May 18th 2020, the present administration led by President Muhammad Buhari in a move to attend to incessant demand of education, proposed in setting up more Federal Colleges of Education in different location in the country, but after this move, there arise the issue of where will the country get finance for the startup and smooth running of these colleges without borrowing from the external bodies now that the economy ship has hit an iceberg as a result of drop in the price of crude oil in the world market.

In an attempt to place Nigeria side by side with developed countries there was creation of new states in 1967 and 1976, with this more universities were created in some states, This limited the level of funding available to Nigeria's universities. Also there were moves to create more states in order to manage population explosion in Nigeria; this led to the creation of more universities in the respective states. A case study of Osun State created from the old Oyo State in 1991 which along the line Osun State with political influence created her own university (Osun State University). The implication this was the underfunding of Ladoke Akintola Univeristy Ogbomosho which is an institution owned by the two states; the university in the last five to six years experienced series of strike actions as a result of shortage of funds for the smooth running of the institution, the staffs were not paid their wages as at when due because there was bridge of agreement from each side of the governments. The challenges grew worse when Oyo state also built her own teaching hospital in Ogbomosho, leading to the diversion of funds meant for the upkeep of Ladoke Akintola University Teaching Hospital in Osogbo to the finance the new Oyo State teaching hospital in Ogbomosho. Education here was poorly funded. After concrete agreement between the two states, on the 20th November 2020, Nigerian University Commission transferred the full ownership of this university to Oyo State. (guardian.ng, 2020).

Sideways, there has been level of wastefulness that comes with free services, either on the side of the providers or on the side of the receivers which also can be seen in the educational sector and this defies state of development of the education sector and the country at large. For as long as education is free, the essential value attached to it may not be realized, besides education is never free in any place of the earth; somebody somewhere must pay for it directly or indirectly. There is a social expectation for acquiring education, thereby it is carried out to equip the benefactor with traits to support the sustainability of human race, and this is why education remains finance demanding in which an individual uses to help himself or being helped by others in order to acquire education to aid such individual to be taken from the state of unknown to known. Unfortunately with the consistent efforts of the government and concerned persons in ensuring education system of Nigeria is adequately financed, the economy of the country has been experiencing shortage of trained craftsmen and technically sound professionals who should handle the trends

to sustain the development of the country instead we now produce graduates who are unemployable to the economy system. This is termed as diploma diseases i.e. unskilled graduates that can-not defend their certificates as a result of being products of a sick education system that has been highly influenced negatively by politics. With this, education in Nigeria plays the role of underdevelopment and at the same time the role of sustainable development. Why is it so? Education is becoming a source of frustration because graduates are not well equipped to function in the current society. There is a disconnection in the development of Nigeria because education is no more giving what it's supposed to give to the people. But one day Nigeria will rise again. Affirming this Adedokun (2020) expressed that education is no more influencing the national development, many nations are moving ahead of Nigeria simply because we have abuse the so called education. An educated man is an expensive machine for the development of a nation. Average Nigerian student don't want to go to school because education has failed in Nigeria especially when millions of Nigerian graduates are been turn over to the labor market without available jobs.

Absolute reliance on external aid for education finance has been observed as placing recipients at the mercy of the donors. This is an unreliable source of education finance because economy of countries varies over time and location. Tamuno (1987) remarked that Nigeria's independence opened the field for educational endowments and technical aid from non-Commonwealth sources: notably, from the USA. For example in the early 1960s, University of Ibadan had strong support from such US-based Foundations as Rockefeller, Ford and Carnegie. The Nuffield Foundation and British Council also gave steady encouragement during this period. Western Europe was not left out: DAAD, the German Academy exchange Service also showed interest in technical aid.

Conclusion

The continuous increase in the under-funding of the educational system in the country has been rendering the education system incapacitated. Adepoku (2012) remarked that money is an absolutely input of any education system. It provides the essential purchasing power human and physical educational inputs. According to Saint et al (2003), the university system has not had the financial resources necessary to maintain educational quality in the midst of significant enrolment explosion. Odiya and Omofonmwan (2007) UNESCO recommended 26% of the total annual budget of a nation should be allocated to education although the Longe commission of 1991 observed that the percentage of budgetary allocation to education has never exceeded 10%.

There is evident reality of graduates not getting their desired jobs after so many years of sacrifices of time and resources in acquiring relevant knowledge to support the socio-economic development of the country. For many who have gone ahead doing something to keep themselves busy, it is highly advisable to choose alternatives that will be relevant to the socio-economic growth of the country at large. It is prominent to know that no matter the cost placed on education, the money

can never be enough because education is a dynamic phenomenon with different units and perspectives. The painful aspect of this is nobody knows how long this unpleasant situation will be, but one day as the faith of many Nigerians, who believed in positivity, Nigeria will rise again and attain the height of giant of Africa which it has always been before.

Recommendations

Based on the above conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

1. Governments should allocate more funds to the education sector so that there will be effectiveness in the developmental trend of the nation. The school managers and concerned personnel should also seek alternative sources of funds to add to what the government allocates to them. Apart from the release of fund, there is need for an adequate monitoring of the management of fund presently being allocated to the sector, as efforts should be increase to improve on what is presently being allocated to the system.
2. However, in the case of higher education system of the country it is expected of the government to put the university in a “catch up” state where they will be financed properly and adequately monitored. Any action short of that would be ineffective, unproductive and unsustainable, as the critical government intervention is a mere catch-up to the base level at which the higher education system should be operating. Everyone is mindful of the awesome responsibility of government today in curbing and handling the security challenges and other vital infrastructural demands of society but the education sector, more than any other sector, requires the most urgent attention for too many reasons that has attendant medium to long term sustainable developmental benefits.
3. All concerned sides must be ready to sacrifice, and imbibe best practices evolving across the world. Higher education which used to be the sole responsibility of government is no longer sustainable and indeed becoming unfashionable across the developed and developing world. It is the collective responsibility of all stakeholders, and the schooling outcomes we desire can only be achieved when higher education institutions are well funded. And how best do we achieve this? A middle ground of socialization of education as demanded by citizens and privatization as insisted by government may be possible ways to deal with this problem while at the same time, national objectives of technological growth is pursued for accelerated industrialization of the country.
4. There is need for all hands are to be laid on desk to ensure the continuous rise in the demand of education is met daily. There should be room for alternative sources of finance that can aid socio-economic and political freedom (Emancipation) in Nigeria because any attempt to reduce the finance of education will surely affect the standard of life.

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