

Adequate Financing of Secondary Education in Nigeria: A Panacea for Sustainable National Development

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ABSTRACT

Education as the bedrock in the development process has left a burning desire in every government to increase access to education for all her citizens. The direction of education toward national economic growth and development was an important basis for the introduction and adoption of the National Policy on Education with adequate provision for functional secondary education. The expectation has been that opportunity should be offered to the learners at the Junior and Senior Secondary levels of education in order to avoid wastage of talents. It is lamentable that the growth at educational levels were mainly in sizes and not in quality. However, this paper examined the philosophical basis of financing education, types of educational cost and the concept of efficiency in relation to secondary education in Nigeria. Suggestions were made for provision of greater access to quality secondary education towards the attainment of sustainable national development.

Keywords: Finance, secondary education, sustainable, development and Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

In many countries, education is viewed as a good investment in nation's development. The reason for this is that it is expected that the educational system will produce the quality and quantity of human resources required for the economy's growth using the right mix of inputs. Ibukun (2009) affirmed that no nation or society can rise above the quality of her education. It is a global assertion that education is the solid rock of national development. The immeasurable contribution of education in the development process has left a burning desire in every government to increase access to education for all her citizens.

The pace of educational development had moved faster than that of economic development worldwide; thus education budgets appear to be under pressure. Nigeria, like many other developing countries is not spared from the economic meltdown. There had been a sudden significant drop in oil revenue and a consequent reduction in the amount of resources available for distribution among the various sectors of the nation's economy. Despite the scarcity of resources, there is the need to expand and reform the educational system and ensure its quality in meeting the popular demand.

Increases in school enrolments are not only keeping pace with ever increasing populations but greater proportions of the school age populations are being enrolled in the school system each passing year. Increasing enrolments require increasing resource inputs. Teachers, administrators, textual materials and other equipment have to be supplied in great numbers hence, the financial outlays of education budgets keep rising in Nigeria which according to Aghenta (as cited in Adeyemi and Akpotu, 2009, p.138) had risen up to 40 per cent of the annual budget at state level and about 24 per cent at the Federal level. The increase in expenditure on education has resulted in greater awareness and interest in the quality of

education. Politicians, parents, educationists and all concerned individuals have been quick to comment on the issue of standards in education in Nigeria. Since expenditure in education is largely regarded as an investment, continuous appraisal to ensure both cost-effectiveness and prudence seems appropriate as in the commercial and industrial sectors.

Obviously, the enrolment pattern in the educational system follows the pyramidal structure of the nation's population distribution. The primary level has the largest enrolment, followed by the secondary level and then the tertiary level. This enrolment structure, no doubt, depicts the structure of our social demand for the various levels of education. The primary education level, being the bedrock of the child's basic education, is a very vital aspect of the nation's educational system that deserves to be handled with great care and caution. Any error committed in the organization and management of this level of education may reverberate on other levels and thus seriously mar the lives of the people and indeed the overall development of the nation. This is one good reason why all the stakeholders must show enough concern for those issues that concern the organizing and managing of our secondary education system.

The main focus of this paper is Senior Secondary Education which is the form of education the children receive after basic education and before tertiary stage (FGN, 2004). The broad goals of Secondary education is the preparation of individual student for useful living in the society and preparation for higher education with seven other specific goals logically presented. To achieve the goals, Secondary education was planned for duration of six years given in two stages, the Junior Secondary School (JSS) and senior secondary school (SSS). Each of the stages is of three years duration. The first stage: the junior secondary school level which was restructured to Universal Basic Education (UBE 7, 8, 9) was introduced with the enactment of the 2004 Act. This was done in order to attain The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 and the critical targets of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) which can be summarized as value reorientation, Poverty eradication, job creation, wealth generation and using education to empower people. The said Act provides the legal framework for the Universal Basic Education which makes Basic Education free and compulsory. The other stage is the Senior Secondary School (SSS). The Senior Secondary School is supposed to be comprehensive with basic subjects that would enable students to offer arts or science in higher education. The senior secondary school is designed to make graduate at this level employable.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF EDUCATIONAL FINANCING

Education is both private and social investment, which contributes to economic development and the cost of education to parents, the government and other stake holders is so high that one may not be wrong to wonder why so much should be spent on education. Nkinyangi (2006) opined that quality education is an unavoidable expense which must be undertaken by each and every country. Education is the only distinguishing mark between man and animals. It is therefore a necessity. The longer, the more appropriate and the more qualitative a man's education, and the more useful the man is to himself and society. Everybody benefits from the proper education of the child and conversely is also true; everybody loses from the improper education of the child. Man must therefore prepare to spend for quantitative and qualitative education. The expenditure must involve time, energy, money, materials and forgone earnings. Christian missionaries introduced the western system of school education into southern Nigeria at about the middle of 19th century. The cost of education was borne by the missionaries who taught the children free of charge, the community donate the land and supplied labour to put up structures, the parents who provided the uniform and writing materials and the pupils who helped to maintain the buildings and the grounds through their labour. When the school system started to expand, regular methods of paying the teachers were evolved. Some missions depended on their parent churches in Europe and America, some levied parents, some depended on Sunday collections and some used combinations of all the three sources.

The missionary bodies used the school system as the surest means of evangelization. The European traders found the products of the school useful in their trading activities and the colonial government employed the products of the school in its administrative system while parents and the communities benefited from the employment of their children in paid jobs by the missions, the traders and the government. It was therefore natural and justifiable for beneficiaries of the system are willing to bear the cost of educating the youths of the country. This indicates over the years as stated by Fafunwa (as cited in Akpotu, 2008, p.28) that education remains the largest devourer of tax payers' money.

The Role of Finance in the Achievement of Educational Objectives

Adequate finance is central to the achievement of educational objectives. Finance makes it possible to educate and train qualified teachers, provide relevant materials and equipment for teaching and learning. For children to benefit from teaching, they must be fairly comfortable in the classroom, have relevant books and writing materials. The teacher must be motivated and willing to teach. Nduka (2010) attributed the low standard of education in the country to poor funding by the government. He said the seven per cent of the nation's annual budget being allocated to education was not enough for the sector.

The sustenance of free qualitative education depends largely on adequate provision of physical and material resources in schools as well as utilities such as power, gas and portable water in schools. For secondary schools in Nigeria to perform their dual roles of absorbing the quality primary school products and supplying quality entrants for tertiary institutions the schools must be well funded. As succinctly put by Aghenta as cited in Akpotu (2008). The success of any secondary education depends upon the resources available to it. and the extent to which human, physical, material and financial resources are being allocated and managed towards the sustenance of qualitative secondary education

Types of Educational Cost

In broad usage, cost according to Aghenta as cited by Akpotu (2008) implies the resources such as money, materials and men used up for the operation of business enterprise. Cost in education represents the real resources in terms of money and sacrifices that are used up to produce an educated person. Costs in education are classified into social and private cost. According to Akangbou (as cited in Akpotu, 2007, p.27) social costs represent social investment or government expenditures on education while private costs are costs incurred by the individuals and their households. Social and private costs are further divided into direct and indirect costs. Direct social and direct private costs refer to the actual direct expenditures by governments and individuals or their parents in providing education.

Educational planners and managers are encouraged to translate all educational inputs in school operation into monetary value to make feasible, the quantification of the cost of producing a unit of graduate. In actual cost analysis, educational planners, like economist, use mostly, the unit cost concept as basis for measurement which will equally be used in this study. Unit cost analysis in education provides useful guide to educational planners as it gives an insight into pattern of educational expenditures. Psacharopoul and Woodhall (1997). At present, governments and individuals play active roles in financing education in Nigeria. Educational institutions are financed through payment of parents Teachers Association levies by parents, grant-in-aid through government funds, loans and proceeds from projects and activities initiated by educational institutions. Akpotu (2008) reported that there is a great variation in the contribution of the public sector and private sector from one nation to another and from one level of education to another which was later reaffirmed by Adeyemi (2009). For instance, in many states, the state government in addition to payment of teaching and non-teaching staff salaries also pays certain amount of money per student in all public secondary schools per session as grant-in-aid and parents pay PTA levy per session. Though, Famade and Abass (2006) argued that the government may seem to put a lot of money into the education sector but this they said were not enough to obtain, maintain and sustain needed human, physical and material resources. However, it astonishes that so little is known about the behaviour of educational costs, particularly by educational administrators and governments in developing countries. Ideally, decision to introduce new educational programmes, expansion of new ones and employment of new

teachers are supposed to be preceded by a careful analysis of cost function. Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1997) pointed out; such decisions in actual practice often represent political act of faith rather than a careful analysis of cost functions.

THE CONCEPT OF EFFICIENCY

An education system is said to be efficient if maximum output is obtained from a given input, or if a given output is obtained with minimum possible input. Inputs and outputs have somehow to be valued so that they may be aggregated; and usually prices are used to perform this valuation function. The problems of measuring efficiency in education, however, are considerable. They stem mainly from difficulties in measuring educational output, as well as from quantifying the relationship between inputs and outputs. How educational output is measured depends on the nature of the objectives of the educational system. Depending on the philosophical, political or analytical viewpoint adopted, the objectives may differ considerably. Educational statisticians and planners, whilst recognizing the diversity of the objectives of education, often need to measure the output of the school system in a simple way. One such approach consists of considering the output of a given cycle of education as the number of pupils who complete this cycle (the graduates). This, naturally, is a rather restricted definition since the drop-outs no doubt have acquired some of the skills which the system set out to teach them. In a more complete definition of output, the educational attainment of the pupils dropping out, as well as the level of educational achievement of the graduates should therefore be taken into account. Nevertheless, this way of measuring output still gives us some useful insights into the functioning of an educational system.

The goals of secondary education are to prepare the individual for useful living within the society and higher education. On one hand looking at the number of students that graduate from secondary schools every year, one may say that secondary schools are trying to fulfill these obligations. On the other hand, considering the quality of those students that graduate every year, it looks like secondary education is not realizing the goals and objectives for which it is set up. According to Oghuvbu (2008), the products of our secondary schools are not practically qualified as office assistance even when they are certificated. He stated that percentage dropout at primary school is higher especially in the rural areas. There are myriad of problems struggling to block the successful implementation of secondary education in Nigeria. Fafunwa (1991), Ibukun (2007) and Olaleye (2008) in separate studies have tried to pinpoint some of these problems. These problems range from inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, planning and implementation issues, lack of political will, curriculum and instructional materials issue, lack of continuing education for workers, evaluation and streaming problem to waste of precious time.

One major problem confronting secondary education in Nigeria is that total number of students enrolled in secondary school one for the academic session does not usually graduate from the secondary school at the specific period. Casual observation shows that there are cases of absenteeism, withdrawal and repetition of classes by secondary school students even many concerned citizens over the years have been crying over the low level of students' performance in the final senior school certificate Examination despite the commitment of both government and private resources. Some of these students repeat classes because of poor academic performance arising from long absence from school while some of these students eventually drop-out of school. Ajayi and Mba (2008) opined that the parents of these children and adolescents prefer to engage them in economic activities that will generate immediate income for the upkeep of the family. Some of the children may be exposed to money making ventures very early in life and thereby lost interest in schooling. Commenting on this Ajayi and Adeosun (2004) stated that the huge public expenditure on students who do not attend school regularly and those who drop-out from the school system affect internal efficiency of education.

Johnson as cited in Adegbemile (2014) opined that poverty of parents has elastic effects on their children academic works as they lack enough resources and funds to sponsor their education and good school, good housing facilities and medical care and social welfare services. Ipaye as cited in Adegbemile (2014) in the same vein reiterated the effects of poverty of the parents on the Nigerian child. According to him, poverty syndrome imposed by economic crunch, maladministration,

corruption and emergency closure of firms has imposed hardship among parents and workers. They in turn have not been able to provide adequately for the basic functional, social and academic needs of the students. Many students have thus abandoned school to engage in commercial sex or child labour to make ends meet to support self and others. By this, they spend much time on these acts than schooling; this has terrible effects on their academic performance in their schoolwork and public examination. Scale and Roechicke (2003), Oniyama and Oniyama (2005) suggested that family and structure of the family have a great role in children's performance in their academic pursuit. They hold that if the family has the resources, supports their children and create academic environment, children reared up in such families do better in their academic performance.

CONCLUSION

Education planners and policy makers need to improve the level of efficiency of secondary schools in the country from its present level for the attainment of sustainable national development at this period of transformational change since most secondary schools appear to operate below specified standard in turning out graduates for higher education. There is need for every secondary school to map its institutional values and goals within the framework of the National Policy on Education, taking into consideration the expected trends of development in their internal and external environment in promoting system efficiency thereby paving way for every secondary school to operate with minimal wastage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There should be proper funding of education by the government, non- governmental organization, no meaningful management and administration of any organization can take place without adequate funding.
2. The government needs to step up its poverty alleviation process by rendering assistance to parents through provision of free books, uniforms and free mid-day meals to secondary school students.
3. Teachers need to be motivated with the provision of all the necessary incentives such as adequate salaries, good working conditions and other fringe benefits that compare favourably with what their counterparts in other professions receive.
4. Teachers' participation in staff development programs such as exchange teaching, professional writing, visit to other schools to observe teaching methods and staff conferences on modern instructional strategies must be given prominent attention in secondary schools in the country.

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