



Funding in Nigerian educational system: Issues problems and challenges

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Abstract

Nigeria continues to invest in human capital, especially education, because it is generally believed that the future economic benefits driveable from education will far outstrip the present costs. This belief is further strengthened by her vision to become one of the highly competitive economies in the world as well as the published Global Competitive Index (GPI) in which more than 33 percent of factors that boost global competitiveness are education-related indices such as primary education, higher and training, technological readiness and innovation. This paper takes a look at the issues, challenges and possible solutions to educational funding in Nigeria.

Keywords: funding, educational, system, problems, challenges

Introduction

The educational sector in Nigeria consists of the primary, secondary and tertiary institution and there are some problems and prospects in financing the educational sector in Nigeria that we should know. You will realize that the educational sector complains of under-funding, while government accuses the sector of not efficiently utilizing the available resources. It's obvious that no amount of money is too small to fund education as education is broad, it spans a wide range, that's why it is very important. As days passes by, people would learn. Research is expected to be made in order to discover new findings and unfortunately only a small percentage of budget is placed for the purpose of education, that's why I am going to throw light on the problems and prospects of educational financing in Nigeria.

Problems of Educational Financing in Nigeria

Less is spent on Education in Nigeria

Unlike many developed countries in the world who invest mostly in the educational sector, it is quite fortunate that Nigeria doesn't finance the educational sector properly, if you look at what the federal government of Nigeria allocates to the educational sector, you will know that it's not enough to even sponsor the tutors and research that is expected to be carried out.

Nigeria should invest funds that are significant to the educational sector, so as to improve facilities for teaching and learning, the funds would also improve the teaching quality, welfare and curriculum delivery.

A recent research showed that over 10 million out-of-school children are available and there is need for proper funding so as to enable these children to be educated.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has recommended that at least 26 percent of what is allocated in a country's budget should be injected but in a developing country like Nigeria, we should strive to inject more into the educational sector in order to achieve the maximum capacity that is required.

If little is allocated to the educational sector in Nigeria, most of the country's challenges would not be solved.

There's a saying that education cannot solve all of society's problems but the truth is that without education there's no solution that is possible.

Corruption in the Educational Sector of Nigeria

When there is corruption in the educational sector, even if much has being allocated into the educational sector there would be no effect, as compared to when little is being allocated into the educational sector.

Corruption in the educational sector is one of the major problems of educational financing in Nigeria.

When there is corruption in education, it damages the whole system because it endangers a country's social economic and political future.

Whether the corruption practiced is directly or indirectly practiced such as parents paying bribes to teachers to enable their children get good grades or teachers paying bribes to government officials in order to be in a certain position, all these still has effect in educational sector.

Corruption in the educational sector could also mean a government school requesting money from the government in order to purchase some educational materials only to receive the funds and divert it for another purpose that does not satisfy the request.

Many educational institutions in Nigeria are fond of engaging in corrupt act and it's really eating deep in the educational sector and if it is not stopped it can destroy the entire educational system in Nigeria.

Less Contribution from the Private Sector

It is not only the job of the government to finance education in Nigeria, the private sector should see ways in which they could sponsor education in Nigeria.

It is noticed that most private companies spend more on things that entertain the youth and forget that if there are no people to fill in the space of the aging population in the working population, there would be setbacks.

It's only a few private companies mostly petroleum companies that offer scholarships to a few students in Nigeria and that's not enough.

The government cannot effectively fund federal schools, state schools, and schools in the local government, the private sector should contribute to the financing of the educational sector in Nigeria, even it means sponsoring a research, this will turn make the company have a good name in the ears of the public, due to the fact that they contributed in one way or the other in the educational sector.

Inadequate Funding of Educational Facilities/ Equipment

Whether from the classroom block to the classroom board, there has to be funds in order to meet up the requirement needed. The educational sector needs to be financed properly in order to meet up the requirement that is needed. In the past, people would boast that education was of a better standard, due to the reason that there were quality and devoted teachers who had the facilities and there was also good teacher to Students ratio with well-equipped laboratories, but nowadays you will find a school with 1,000 students with only 7 class rooms.

Irresponsibility among Individuals in the Educational Sector

When individuals who are in authority in the educational sector do not do what is expected of them, it brings in problems when financing facilities and equipments in the educational sector. Let me give an example, if 2 million naira was given to an educational director, in order to purchase equipment for a set of students, if the equipment is not purchased on time, it would affect the set of students. Educational institution are expected to be provided with basic amenities in order to meet up the requirement, so when an amount of money is given for the funding of anything concerning education, it has to be used judiciously, so that students would get all the requirement needed.

Inadequate Distribution among the Primary Secondary and Tertiary Institution

The government which is the major source of income to the educational sector claims to distribute funds among primary, secondary and tertiary educational levels in the proportion of 30 percent, 30 percent and 40 percent respectively, but there is less impact.

During the time when oil was the major source of income, little was invested in education and now Nigeria has to squeeze the little it has to invest in education.

Reasons for Poor Funding of Educational System in Nigeria

Chukwunenye (2005) ^[9] on her view outlined the following addition as reasons for inadequate funding of education in Nigeria of which Imo state is a part:

- a. Budget making: The expression of educational programmes in financial terms. Its unavailability, timely, preparation, accuracy, comprehensiveness and effective implementation results to inadequate funding.
- b. Poor statistics: lack of accurate data of student's personnel and facilities with details operational levels Linder adequate funding of education.
- c. Population Explosion: The rapid growth in population in Nigeria demanding for education, especially with accurate Census, leads to inadequate Funding. Ogbonnaya (2007) in Uwaoma (2009) rightly noted that the achievement of educational goals depends on

adequate Financial support and that the various government of the Federation cannot adequately fund educational institutions

Challenges of Fund in Nigerian Educational System

In the views of Ogbonnaya (2010), in adequate Funding of education results to ineffectiveness of school facilities shortly after their installation. Also that teacher quickly loose the specially skills and techniques where such are develop with such non-functional facilities. Structured and controlled teaching environment is a major criterion for formal education. Ogbonnaya also identified the following other consequences of inadequate funding in education:

- a. With growth in population overtime, the school structures like Classrooms, halls, libraries, workshop and recreation area, as well as lands mass become difficult to adopt to change in population, size and new school programme.
- b. The old age of these Facilities make them insecure and healthy to students and staff without enough funds for maintenance.
- c. Inadequate Funding also results to massive dilapidation of school facilities such as worn out paintings, leaking, roofs, windowless and door less Classrooms, halls and offices, unavailability of Science and technical equipment, as well as broken down school vehicles, no electricity and lack of modern teaching and learning aids.
- d. Hiring contracting of non-teaching staff for maintenance and replacement of non-functional school facilities is also a problems due to inadequate funding.
- e. Teachers' strike, incidences of strike action arising for non-payment of staff salaries, allowances promotion with attending salary increment, is a regular occurrence in Nigeria education system. Study is going on, the Academic staffs union of Universities in Nigeria are on strike over salaries and allowances issues of the government the government is complaining of inadequate funds to meet their demand. This, as is also the case with secondary teachers results to disruption of academic programme, extension of or incomplete academic calendar, increase in school drop outs increase in crime and delinquencies among Youths as well as drop in academic performance of students. These situations and problems have their historic records in Imo state education system.
- f. Employment of new specially trained personnel especially in the areas of science and technology is at zero level due to inadequate funding. A case where most secondary school in Imo has no subject teacher for computer studies, introductory technology, basic Sciences, further mathematics and Technical drawing is very unfortunate for a state pursuing economic and technological development.
- g. Professional development programmes for teachers which is a necessity for the development of education and improvement of students' academic performance, is not a recurrent cost in Imo state education Budget due to poor funding. The result is a crowd of teachers without professional skills, leading to decline in

education standard.

Solutions of Educational Financing in Nigeria

Proper Funding by the Government

Since it's just a prospect, we just hope that the federal government should be able to fund the educational sector properly. The National Council on Education (NCE) is supposed to constitute ministers and state commissioners of education who will sit in a round table to discuss and coordinate things that would promote educational growth and development in the country.

The financing of the educational sector in Nigeria should be a joint effort of the federal, state and local governments.

There Should Be Public Private Partnership (PPP)

If the government can partner with the private sector in order to make the educational sector better by financing it, it will make the educational system go well.

There are some sponsored preparatory classes that are organised in order to help students get some basic understanding of what they are to do.

That's why many experts have suggested that the government alone cannot bear the burden of financing the educational sector as no finance is enough for education.

When government and private individuals partner with the educational sector the sector would be properly financed.

Private Individuals Should Contribute to Financing the Educational Sector

One way that is good in financing the educational sector in Nigeria is by well-meaning Nigerians making efforts to finance it in any way they can.

A wealthy Nigerian can contribute his/her own quota, even if it means purchasing educational equipment for students.

Adequate Funding and Supervision

These are some of the prospects of educational financing that we have looked at, with this guide we have been able to look at the problems and prospects of educational financing in Nigeria.

Most of the problems are as a result of lack of funding, inadequate and proper budgetary allocation. To solve this problem, the government should provide adequate funds for acquiring quality training facilities, for renovating schools and also getting good infrastructure to ensure there is a conducive environment for teaching and learning.

Furthermore, the funds should be maintained and properly monitored to avoid mismanagement and embezzlement.

A Variety of Creative Funding Strategies that Nigerian Educational System May Utilize

According to Okojie (n.d.), Universities may utilize a variety of creative strategies such as the following:

- a. Alumni relations and Associations: These include alumni tracking, database provision for alumni, periodically contacting alumni – this maintains sense of belonging in alumni, and ensuring transparency and accountability through alumni representation.
- b. Consultancy services: Universities have enormous resource of knowledgeable competencies which could be along the lines of capacity building services, advisory/technical services, and management development services.

- c. Linkages/Partnerships: These may include philanthropist/donor agencies, collaborative research and development, or creation of departments to provide services such as Information Communication Technology (ICT).
- d. Small and Medium Scale enterprises: Shops or halls may be built up for rent; business outfits such as cybercafés, fee-for-service parking lots, laundry or cleaning services, transportation services, or student-work based programmes ventures may be leveraged upon.
- e. Manufacturing/Processing: Illustrations here could include fabricating tools from idle time of training foundries, processing of foods, and developing useable products from research results.
- f. Community participation: Host communities could donate infrastructures or land to universities as a result of some good community relations while the existence of a Parents Forum also provides an avenue for community relations.
- g. Other opportunities abound for fund generation e.g. Waste to wealth initiatives (recycling of papers, plastics, bottles, and foods).

In order to lessen the burden of funding university education almost alone by the government, other suggestions which have been made include: payment of tuition fees (currently in Nigeria, university owned by government is tuition free), graduate tax, checking fraudulent practices, commercial activities on campuses, commercializing accommodation, endowment funds, scientific breakthrough, consultancy, part-time programmes, staff exchange programme, loans, scholarship, tax-relief; vacation and part-time job (Udoh, n.d.).

According to Onuka (2008), suggested alternative sources of funding should include: Increased government subvention; Increased philanthropic gestures; More endowments; Re-introduction of moderate tuition; Property ownership; Development and sundry fees; Provision of research and invention (patent); Soliciting funds/fund raising; Revenue from increased public services by universities; Mounting of specialist training programmes; Improved alumni contribution; Involvement by the corporate world; Improved revenue consultancy services; and More investments by the universities /hiring out of facilities.

Okebukola as cited in Deji-Folutile and Oketola (2014).proposed four models of creatively sustaining funding for the Nigerian University system. The models are: Access-Equity-Cost-Sharing Model, Contextualized Formula-Funding Model, Performance-Based Funding Model, and the Host-Proprietor-University-User-Funding Model. The Access-Equity-Cost-Sharing Model demands the lowering of financial barriers to higher education while ensuring equity in sharing of the funding burden by different stakeholders based on ability to pay. The Contextualized Formula-Funding Model stipulates that universities should be funded based on a formula which factors in individual peculiarities and current state of physical development and a desire to encourage programmes in science and technology with potential to accelerate impact on Nigeria's socio-economic development. The Performance-Based Funding Model is aimed at rewarding universities for efficiency in teaching, research and community service and encourages

competition among universities which will stimulate the evolution of centers of excellence. The model makes funding allocation more transparent and more competitive through redistributive funding formulae mainly based on performance. The Host-Proprietor-University-User Funding Model implicates all beneficiaries of the location and service of the university in contributing to funding the university. It helps universities to be committed to their visions and removes the current corruption that appears to be the hallmark of what Universities are doing now.

The performance-based funding system is based on research journal publication, number of post-graduate students, students' population, number and quality of professors, teaching outputs, institutional outreach/ community engagements, amount of external grants attracted, and number of foreign students and staff in the university. The model has been identified as the best for public universities in the country because it is capable of promoting competition and enhancing growth and development of the Nigerian university system. The Contextual-Formula-Funding Model is feasible if Nigerians will not corrupt the scholarship process. The model is capable of promoting competition and enhancing growth and development of the Nigerian university system. This model will also encourage growing IGR in deficient campuses, although it requires commitment of all stakeholders especially the government.

The Host-Proprietor-University-Funding Model is seen to be excellent for the recurrent expenditure but university can only grow if sufficient funding is provided for capital. Contributions to capital development could include direct contribution by the stakeholders such that the proprietors will contribute 30 per cent, host -30 per cent, university- 30 per cent and user (students)- 10 per cent.

Conclusion

In summary; the success, development and sustenance of any education system cannot be guaranteed without adequate funding. A nation's overall advancement is a direct function of the quality of the educational attainment of its citizens and quality of education is dependent on sustainable funding. The financial constraints in Nigeria have made education to suffer as the Government has not been able to fund higher education effectively and efficiently due to politics, planlessness, prevalent economic crises, and corruption. The burden of providing university education in Nigeria is too much for the Federal Government alone. The society needs to get involved in the provision of university education because laudable objectives can hardly be accomplished if university education is not adequately funded. To sustain higher education in the country, all stakeholders- parents and guardian, the society in general, the private sector and non-governmental agencies must become involved in financing. African universities can be more active in getting funds from local institutions and philanthropic organizations.

The committed pursuit of alternative or creative funding strategies such as Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) offers the opportunity of not just enhancing good education quality but of training students to be hard-working, self-reliant, job creators and positive contributors to the socio-economic and political development of Nigeria after their university education. Clearly, charging tuition is a necessity for all of African higher education. IGR has a very significant role to play as a source of critical funding for all

categories of universities in Nigeria. Private sector participation in the provision and management of university education will ensure the production of quality graduates.

In order to bring the Nigerian University system out of the woods of underfunding, the following pertinent recommendations become important:

- a. All stakeholders must be involved in the provision of university education through integrated approach to University education finance.
- b. The burden of users' fees/other charges should be mitigated by making available targeted scholarship, and bursaries, loans or grants with emphasis on low and middle income households. Students from low and middle income households
- c. Should be engaged in income generating projects of their universities on part-time basis to generate funds for their education.
- d. National budget should be put in place with the education sector given priority to allocations of more funds into university education. An increase in the funding levels to universities is required to address current abysmal decadence. Federal and State levels Government should provide and release minimum of 25 per cent of national/state budget for education with minimum of 40 per cent of the education budget for universities.
- e. Knowledge, based on good research, is necessary if policies are to be thoughtfully planned and implemented. Locally-focused research and analysis will enhance the generation of sound or viable strategies to tackle challenges.
- f. Universities must increase their internally generated funding levels and make all stakeholders to share in the cost of education. It is important that funding for postgraduate training and research be enhanced.
- g. Accountability, transparency, due process and budget disciplinary tools are sine qua non to the management of funds in educational institutions. There should be good governance and effectively established mechanisms for checks and balances (e.g. internal and external audits). Universities should be prudent and honest in funds management (e.g. funds assessed from the Tertiary Education Trust Fund, IGR etc).
- h. Development partners should be encouraged as they have great potentials to bring in significant resources to the Universities. Well-to-do individuals should endow Universities and fund their researches.
- i. The legal provision of Section 10 (150e) of the 2013 National Policy on Education which directs that contractors, consultants and other service providers are to contribute minimum of 1.5 per cent of contract sum/fees to a Special Education Corporate Social Responsibility Fund for providing additional government funding support to education should be efficiently implemented for success.
- j. Truthfulness, dedication, focus, well defined vision and mission are all essential for success in quality educational funding.
- k. Universities should have an internal dynamism that ensures standard and builds into it a standard-maintaining paradigm. For example, brilliant university lecturers do not essentially depend on salaries. They are able to attract funding and grants.
- l. Governments should imbibe the culture of patronizing

their universities to encourage putting into realistic use ideas emanating from the ivory towers. Universities are supposed to have laboratories and equipment that hospitals outside can make use of and pay for. Like the American education system that is more pragmatic, Nigerian Universities must be able to solve problems and make money from their services and output.

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