

Research Article

Challenges and Prospects of Funding Secondary Education for Sustainable Development in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study assessed challenges and prospects of funding secondary education for sustainable development in Rivers state. The study concluded that principals should keep proper records of school finances so as to avoid problems of underfunding and there should be education funding standard and budgets which should not only be made but also implemented. Some of the suggestions made were that the government should continually fund the educational sector, provide a mechanism to check the school administrators on the disbursement of fund and the administrators should devise a means that will help them in managing the funds made available to schools.

Keywords: Funding, Education, Sustainable Development.

Introduction

Education plays a vital role in the attainment of national goals and objectives because it enhances the development of the individual's cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. It is based on this; the Federal Republic of Nigeria took education as an instrument par excellence for actualizing national development (Ajeyalemi, 2009). The most crucial problem of secondary education today has been identified as underfunding by the federal, state and local governments. That is why United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural organization, UNESCO (2005) recommends 26% of a nation's budget to finance education. It is very unfortunate to note that various authorities and stakeholders in education still plead with the government to properly fund the educational sector. For effective national development and sustainable development in Rivers State, there is need for continuous and appropriate funding of education.

It is as a result of the premium placed on education that the Federal Government of Nigeria organized the first ever national curriculum conference in education in 1969 (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 undergone several revisions in 1981, 1996, 2004, 2008 and 2013. Since the implementation of the National Policy on Education in 1981, there have been a lot of innovations and reforms in Nigeria's education system.

Unfortunately, education in Nigeria despite these reforms and the continuous huge investment by various regimes of government has not sufficiently lifted the nation from the setback of technological, under – development, political instability and social decadence (Nwagwu, 2010). Most of these reforms and innovations are not well implemented because of insufficient funds. For effective sustainable development and achievement of national development goals in Rivers State, there has to be proper funding of education.

Okorosaye-Orobite (2005) posits that education is a process, a product, and a discipline. As a process, it is the activity of preserving, developing, and transmitting the culture of a people from one generation to another. As a product, it refers to change, whether overt or covert, implicit or explicit, which education is expected to bring about. He further stressed that the product of education is the educated man, who in the African context is one who shows evidence of a well-integrated personality; he is economically efficient, socially and publically competent, morally acceptable and intellectually and culturally sophisticated. It is on this basis that the funding of education cannot be over-emphasized because without education, sustainable development cannot be achieved. Secondary education is the second rung of the Nigerian education ladder. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) defined it as the education received after primary education and before the tertiary stage. It stated that the need for secondary education is to prepare the individual for useful living in the society and higher education.

On the specific objectives of secondary education, section 5(22) stated that it shall:

- 1) Provide all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of higher level irrespective of sex, social status, religion or background.
- 2) Offer diversified curriculum to cater for the difference in talents, opportunities and future role.
- 3) Provides trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional levels: and so on.

Hence Secondary education is one of the social welfare services the government of any nation owes its citizenry. The provision of these services can only be calculated in monetary terms to make people aware of their full impact (Ebong, 2004).

According to Ogbonnaya (2012) *fund* is defined as the total amount of money that is saved or made available for specific purposes. There are two sources of fund; the short term and long term sources. The short term sources of funds are funds needed for a short period of time. It must be raised within the shortest possible time in order to be useful to the school or educational institutions. Funds are of different forms such as physical cash, credit facilities, allowances or discount received, differed expenses, and undistributed profits amongst others. When there is delay in raising fund, it will no longer be beneficial to the educational administrator.

Short term sources of funds are grouped into internal and external sources. Internal sources of fund are the ones available within the organization e.g. retained earnings, depreciation etc. while the external sources of funds are those outside the school or educational institution which requires contact with other external bodies e.g. UNESCO, UNICEF etc., loans from commercial banks, exchange programmes embarked upon by different institutions.

Maiyashi (2003) agreed that good education funding is necessary for economic growth and suggested that the government should let people realize that it cannot do it alone. Maiyashi further submitted that the government has not performed up to expectation in terms of funding education in Nigeria, since the federal government has not allocated up to 17% of its annual budget in any given year. He advised that the government should create awareness and avenues for communities to assist in financing education. Noting that African citizens must continue to demand education as a right from their government. According to him Education must be well funded if we want economic growth.

Federal Government Budgetary Allocations to Education Sector from 1960 to 2013.

Year	Allocation as percentage of total budget	Year	Allocation as percentage of total budget	Year	Allocation as percentage of total budget
1960	6.02	1979	3.70	1998	10.27
1961	6.15	1980	4.95	1999	11.12
1962	5.19	1981	6.45	2000	8.36
1963	3.43	1982	8.09	2001	7.00
1964	3.65	1983	4.04	2002	5.9
1965	3.57	1984	4.49	2003	1.83
1966	4.23	1985	3.79	2004	10.5
1967	4.88	1986	2.69	2005	9.3
1968	2.84	1987	1.69	2006	11.00
1969	2.20	1988	2.40	2007	8.09
1970	0.69	1989	3.55	2008	13.0
1971	0.53	1990	2.83	2009	6.54
1972	0.62	1991	1.09	2010	6.40
1973	0.88	1992	3.86	2011	1.69
1974	2.96	1993	5.62	2012	10.00
1975	4.57	1994	7.13	2013	8.70
1976	8.71	1995	7.20		
1977	3.12	1996	12.32		
1978	11.44	1997	17.59		
Sources: Central Bank of Nigeria (2013). Statistical Bulletin and Information (as cited in Kpolovie and Esezi 2013).					

From the table above, it is noted that from 1960 to 2013, the Nigerian government has not budgeted up to 26% of its annual budget to the education sector according to the UNESCO (2005) and this is in support of Maiyashi (2003) position on the allocations of Government budget to Education. Owoye (2010) posits that the objectives of education in any country represents the country's statement of intentions regarding what aspect of its social, economic and political needs and aspirations can or should be addressed by the educational system. In order to meet the needs of the society and needs of individuals, be it social, economic or political, the educational system has to be properly funded so as to achieve the objectives of education which are acquisition of skill/ knowledge, attitudes and permanent change in behavior of individuals in the society that brings about development. Sustainable development is a difficult concept to define and one of the original descriptions of sustainable development is credited to the Brundtland Commission (1987) which defined sustainable development as the development sustainable that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

This implies that sustainable development is the means of satisfying the desires of the present by not affecting the satisfaction of tomorrow's desire. Sustainable development is generally thought to have three components; environment, society and economy. The well-being of these three is intertwined, not separate. For instance, a healthy, prosperous society relies on a healthy environment to provide food and resources, safe drinking water and clean air for its citizens (Mckeown, 2002). Sustainable development is a construct which envisions development as meeting the need of the present generation without compromising the needs of the future generation. This implies that while education meets the needs of the present, it

does not compromise the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs. It is only when proper arrangements are made to increase the number of literate people in a society that sustainable development can continually be achieved and educational programmes and institutions are the gate way to achieving this. It is also an approach that combines the development needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability of the future while also maintaining ecological integrity (Osuji, 2004).

Sustainable development can also be defined as making assumptions for a better tomorrow in which the society will be developed and the needs of its citizens being met without depriving the society of its present development and achievement of the needs of its citizens. In order words, sustainable development cannot be achieved if the educational system is not properly funded. The authors of this discourse therefore reiterate that since education serves as the main instrument for achieving sustainability, it should be given the necessary attention.

The challenges of funding education according to Moses, (2014) includes; failure of implementation, overdependence on oil revenue, lack of accountability, indiscipline and corrupt leadership, diversion of funds, inefficient management, inconsistency of administrators and instability of policy and strategy. These challenges are discussed below.

The challenges of funding education includes failure of implementation, implementing the ideas of sustainable development depends on the active position and awareness by the broader population which requires educational and outreach activities, targeted work by the media and social advertising. Culture (including cinema, pop music and literature), natural and cultural heritage sites should play a special role to set sustainable development as a priority for the broader public.

It is believed that crude oil appears to be the main stay in the Nigerian economy. It is no secret that government and other stakeholders in Nigeria makes budgets annually based on the revenue from oil. Therefore the implication is that where there is a fall in oil revenue, the funding of education will be seriously affected because of the attention that have been given to the oil and gas sector in Nigeria which has caused so much problem in the society. It was on news that most western countries have diverted their attention from Nigeria's oil sector to other countries in Africa which has posed so many problems in the country. This has affected the funding of many educational programmes in Nigeria.

Another challenge is Lack of accountability: Hoy & Miskel (2013) defined accountability in education as the acknowledgement of the responsibility of schools for a thorough and efficient education of their students. Based on the definition above lack of accountability results when an individual doesn't have the ability or cannot be responsible for his action when it is demanded of him to give account, In the educational sector when the administrator and other members of staff accounts for the students' outcome in terms of learning outcomes then accountability is said to have taken place but its failure results to lack of accountability. Furthermore, indiscipline and corruption has eaten deep into the fabrics of Nigerian society. In fact, indiscipline and corruption are today found in the industrial sector, in the health institution, in the government agencies and parastatal and even in educational institution that were known for order and decorum.

In the ministry of education, some officials are known to embezzle funds for specific projects in school. There are others who divert funds meant for education to other channels. For instance, some officials divert funds earmarked for erection of classroom blocks into games

and sports. Some others are known to insist on gratification for every task accomplished or any project to be undertaken. Some administrators receive gratification for the award of contract concerning the construction of science laboratories or the procurement of teaching equipment. Diversion of funds meant for education to other sectors is another challenge: some authorities divert funds meant for educational sector to other sectors of the economy. During Obasanjo's regime, funds meant for education were diverted to Ajaokuta steel company, for the development of basic infrastructures to the detriment of education sector. Recently, it was alleged that some State Primary Education Board (SPEB) officials earmarked for the management of primary education for personal purposes. During the military régimes, funds meant for the payment of teachers' salaries and allowances in most states were used for prestigious projects by some military administrators. These are just examples of ways in which funds for education are diverted into other sectors of the economy.

Inefficient management is another problem in the funding of education in Nigeria a situation where administrators leave what is necessary in their line of activities or a situation where they spend much resource in course of an action that is using much resource to accomplish a task.

Many developing nations of the world including Nigeria face problems of political instability. There are frequent changes in government as a result of corrupt politicians or the selfishness of some military personnel who always refuse to relinquish power. Each government that comes into power initiates its own programmes. Nigeria, for instance, has had a chequered political history since independence. At one time it is a civilian government and at the other, it is a military government. More often than not, the emphasis of those who come to power is never on education but on prestigious projects, which drain the economy of the nation. For instance, under the civilian regime of President Shehu Shagari (between 1979 and 1983) the Ajaokuta Steel Complex was constructed to the detriment of many education projects. But the previous military regime of Rtd. (Gen) Olusegun Obasanjo had commenced the Universal Primary Education Scheme (1976), the project could therefore not be sustained. Also when a previous government has penchant for education, the incoming one may not. This obviously affects funding.

Instability of policy and strategy: A stable policy is a firmly established course of action adopted by an individual, a group, an organization or nation to accomplish set objectives. On the other hand, an unstable policy is one that changes frequently. One can state without fear of contradiction that there are lack of stable policies in education in Nigeria. Some specific examples here will suffice. In 1976, the Universal Primary Education Scheme was in vogue. This affected the 80's; the emphasis was on the 6-3-3-4 system. Today, the emphasis is more on science and technical education. In 1982, the emphasis in most states in Nigeria was on the importation of introductory technology equipment. It is obvious that lack of stable policies in education will affect funding adversely. This is because the government that comes into power chooses its own policies project or programmes and funds such to the detriment of the ones enunciated by its predecessor. For sustainable development to be efficient through education which is the means for its achievement, it is necessary to assist the government in funding education. Therefore, for this to be effective, the government should provide the enabling environment towards encouraging private sector investment in basic education. (McKeown 2002). Such assistance can come from international bodies, regular contributions from communities, contribution of equipment and classroom from large corporations.

Commenting on proper record keeping, avoiding wastages and leakages, Nnabuo in Olawolu and Madumere-Obike (2011) posits that school records are documented information (data) about human resources and facilities that exist in a school. School records are also known as documents or accounts of activities or events about persons and facilities in the school that serve as references for the future. Record keeping is a fundamental activity in the school system and without it there would be no accountability.

According to Opinimi (2007) the reasons why school records are kept is to serve as point of reference when the need arises to:

- a) Explain any event in the school
- b) Tell the history of the school
- c) Assess the pupil's performance and progress
- d) Compare standard of performance
- e) Estimate resources needed for the years ahead
- f) Account for the school's spending
- g) Make suitable plans for school expansion. etc.

As long as school records are kept, there is need for them to keep a financial record book. This means that school must device means of keeping proper records of all school transactions as this will enable them provide detailed statement of their income and expenditure. Onye (2006) opined that the school head who handles a lot of money in the course of the year should keep a strict record of cash book so he can give proper account of them.

Implementation of budgets will also assist in proper funding of education. Adesina in Ogbonnaya (2012) defined a school budget broadly as an outline of the plan for financing the school system for a given period. In other words, school budgets are based on programmes and activities of a school's fiscal year or a specified period of time. They usually contain details of carefully prepared estimates and balances for the periods for which they are calculated. Given the importance of budgeting in education, the principals should not take it with levity because it could make or mar effective administration. Budget acts as the bridge between the plan and the action. Ogbonnaya (2012) stressed the purposes of budget as follows:

- 1) School budget forecasts the activities, services and programme, which an appropriate governing council (e.g. board of governor) has approved for a given period usually a one year period.
- 2) School budget shows what revenue is to be anticipated and from what source this is to be derived.
- 3) School budget shows details, statement and estimates the expenditure of the various items of the school system as a whole.
- 4) School budget shows what other contributions and pressures on the budget that are anticipated during the financial year e.g. the pressure of inflation and how the school intends to raise more money over and above its original budget or how it intends to adjust itself to the situation.
- 5) School budget must be prepared in such a way that it can be executed by anyone, even from outside the school system. In this way the school budget aids the administration of the school programme in accordance with the accepted financial plan. It is not enough for budgets to be made, they should also be implemented.

Having an education funding legacy is also necessary for effective funding of education which is a medium through which sustainable development can be attained. The policy and strategy of government need to focus on providing the incentives and the enabling environment, generally, for the private sector to supply education. The role of government would include the provision of appropriate legislative and regulatory framework, as well as the provision of infrastructure and fiscal incentives e.g. tax breaks.

Conclusion

- 1) Principals should keep proper records of school finances so as to avoid problems of underfunding.
- 2) There should be education funding standard and budgets should not only be made but also implemented.

Suggestions

The following suggestions were highlighted based on the findings of the study.

- 1) The government should continually fund the educational sector, for sustaining the development of the state because adequate and continuous funding of schools will speed up the development of the country.
- 2) The government should provide a mechanism to check school administrators on the disbursement of fund for effective administration of schools.
- 3) Administrators of schools should devise a means that will help them in managing the funds made available by the government for sustainable development in the country.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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