

FUNDING AND QUALITY CONTROL IN EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

An educational foundation is an important segment of education that provides an opportunity for effective teaching and learning. It guides the teacher for proper conduct in the classroom and paves way for classroom management. For funding, Government at all levels should be involved in the funding of education and not only the Federal Government alone but all the stake holders. To ensure professional efficiency in teaching, the teachers should be motivated. Adoption of foreign educational policy has done more harm than good. One can say without fear of contradiction that what we have as our educational system still have some bearing of western influence which do not really conform with our culture. Constant changes of government have been identified as one of the factors responsible for frequent educational reforms. Lack of physical facilities has brought a lot of set backs to our education development. Money meant for a specific project should not be converted into private accounts. It has been observed that mission schools are not taking part in the UBE programme, Nigerians are watching with keen interest to see its success or failure.

Introduction

There is not iota of doubt that every nation has its own educational thinkers or philosophers whose ideas and contributions to educational issues are usually very useful and can hardly be relegated to the background in spite of the continuous coming on board of generations to generations. Plato, John Dewey, Aristotle, R.S. Peters, Rousseau and many other scholars across the globe have proven their worth in this wise. In Nigeria specifically, mention must be made of great educationists like Tai Solarin, Alvan Ikoku, Obafemi Awolowo, C.O. Taiwo, Fafunwa Babs, and many others whose enormous contributions to the educational sector can basically be described as a success story.

Enoch (1985) defines educational foundation as a disciple which enables us to understand the various areas that affects teaching and learning. It is imperative to note that educational foundations do not directly aid teaching nor do they directly facilitate learning in the individual, rather, they provide an opportunity for an individual to appropriate what conditions can affect teaching and learning.

This scholarly paper intends to bring to the fore some of the underpinning issues regarding funding and quality control in education in Nigeria. The paper will discuss issues like funding of education in Nigeria, educational reforms, the role of Educational Tax fund in funding of education in Nigeria, primary education and Government funding, contribution of UNESCO and quality education in Nigeria, curriculum development and quality education, staffing and quality education. The writer shall conclude this paper with a recommendation that would help in improving the funding and quality control in education in Nigeria.

Funding of Education in Nigeria

Prior to independence, education was partly in the hands of missionaries and voluntary agencies under government grants in-aids and policy. The role of the colonial government was more or less regulatory. Since independence the various regions (now State Governments) have made primary and secondary education a direct responsibility of the government. Several attempts have been made to introduce free education with varying degree of success. For example in the Western Region of Nigeria, Chief Obafemi Awolowo first introduced the Universal Primary Education in 1955 and that has in actual fact made a tremendous educational advancement in the West even up till today. The cost of education tends to escalate yearly so much that government has to reintroduce school fees in one form or another. Unlike the situation before Nigeria's independence, when much of our educational infrastructure was in the hands of non-governmental agencies and individuals, education in Nigeria has now become a huge government venture. The Nigeria educational system today is essentially a brainchild of government; the fact that the system is still undergoing some review.

Elezu (1988) states that, the Federal Government of Nigeria considers education to be (lie greatest investment that the Nigerian nation can make for the quick development of its economic, political, sociological and human resources. The Federal Government is therefore concerned with harmonizing educational practices throughout the Federation. It is generally agreed that the Federal Government is the overall make and promulgator of educational policy in Nigeria.

The aforementioned statement by Elezu therefore agrees with some of the reforms carried out by the Government in Nigeria. Educational system in Nigeria has witnessed a lot of changes or reforms. These changes or reforms come as a result of changes that are taking place as a result of instability of government. In 1976 under the Military Government, General Yakubu Gowon introduced the Universal Primary Education (UPE). The scheme brought about the expansion of both primary and secondary schools and of cause tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The programme did not last due to the hurried nature it was planned. Besides, mismanagement of funds was also one of the factors that made the programme unworkable.

Another educational reform was the National Policy on Education which was introduced in 1979 which gave birth to the 6 -3-3- 4 system of education. This programme (oo was beautifully planned but was not given enough time to see its success hence it was dropped.

President Olusegun Obasanjo during his civilian rule introduced the Universal Basic Education Programme (UBE) which can be likened to as a panel beating of the 6-3-3-4 system of education. This programme is yet to be a success story.

Nigeria's educational policy is an integral part of the general philosophy and objectives of development of the nation. The five national objectives of Nigeria as spelt out in the National Policy on Education (2004: 1) are as follows:-

1. A free and democratic society
2. A just and egalitarian society
3. United, strong and self reliant nation
4. A great and dynamic economy
5. A land of bright and full opportunity for all citizens

Another important segment of education is the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE). The Commission is mandated by the Federal Government to finance and manage or co-ordinate educational programmes of the Colleges of Education in Nigeria. The Federal Government of Nigeria expends a lot of funds towards qualitative education especially in tertiary institutions. The NCCE (2001) states that the National Commission for Colleges of Education should send its financial needs and estimates which will be collated and submitted to the Federal Government. The Commission receives the block grants from the Federal Government and disburses to the Colleges in accordance with the approved perimeters which includes

- > The National Policy on Students' enrolment
- > The growth rate of the colleges
- > Teachers/Students ratio
- ^ Goods and services
- ^ Teaching support unit
- > Library services
- > Staff development, research and utilities

Educational Tax Fund

The Federal Government in an attempt to sustain quality education in Nigeria provides special funds through Education Tax Funds (ETF) to tertiary and other educational institutions in the country. This is done annually in all the states of the Federation including the Federal Capital Territory.

Stated below is the sample of some selected states randomly taken which have benefited from the fund?

ETF fund allocation to some educational institutions in Nigeria for the year 2001.

State/Institution	Year	Amount Allocated
FCT University Abuja	2001	\$450,000,000.00
FCT College of Education Zuba	2001	N 24,000,000.00
SPEB	2001	N 16,000,000.00
EDO State		
Uniben	2001	N 60,000,000.00
Ambrose Ali State Uni	2001	\$4 60,000,000.00
Federal Poly Auchu	2001	\$4 20,000,000.00
Oyo State		
Uni of Tbadan	2001	N 60,000,000.00
Federal College of Agric	2001	N 7,500,000.00
Kaduna State		
Kaduna Poly	2001	W 20,000,000.00
Federal College of Forestry & Mechanization	2001	\$4 7,500,000.00
Kebbi State		
Federal Poly	2001	N 20,000,000. 00

Source: The Guardian Newspapers of 3rd and 4th July 2002.

The above shows a sample of ETF allocation to educational institutions in Nigeria in the year 2001.

Primary Education and Government Funding

Primary Education is the foundation of education as such, it must be taken very seriously by government at all levels. Therefore, adequate funds are required to achieve this development. Ogbonna (2000) summarizes the legitimate sources of financing primary education thus:

1. The Federal Government through the Local Government Councils shares the funds in the Federation Accounts.
2. State Government grants in-aid
3. Local Government Revenues such as taxes, licenses, rent on stores etc.
4. Parents/Teachers' Association (PTA) funds
5. Donations
6. Loans
7. External Credit facility, which includes the World Bank Primary Education Project.

The Federal Government again through the National Primary Education Commission expends a lot of funds in the management of primary education in Nigeria. Decree No. 31 of 1988 gave legal backing to the Commission in funding and control of primary education in Nigeria. However as a result of under-funding of primary education by the National Primary Education Commission, based on increased enrollment, restructuring of dilapidated school structures has affected the quality of education. The Federal Government then saw the need to involve the States and Local Governments Authorities in funding education. Decree No. 31 of August 1988 cited in Betian (2001) states some of the responsibilities thus:

1. To look into and give advice to the Federal Government on the funding of primary education in Nigeria and,
2. Collect the National Primary Education Fund and disburse to affected body assigned by each state including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Following this traditional functioning, National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) obtains and administers the primary education fund and releases same to Local Governments through SPEB now (SUBEB) some of this include; twenty percent for states that are educational less developed as enshrined in schedule 1 of the decree, fifty percent for states that are equal in education and thirty percent for enrollment.

Contributions of UNESCO and quality education in Nigeria

UNESCO has been actively participating and liaising with the Federal Government of Nigeria concerning education for about thirty something years now. By implication UNESCO's contribution to education in Nigeria dates as far back as 1960s. Apart from its individual contributions, it has worked closely with other United Nations Agencies like WHO, UNDP etc. UNESCO's first formal presence in Nigerian education began in 1960 during an inter-ministerial meeting held between April 28th and 29th 1960 since then UNESCO has not rested on its oars to giving quality education to Nigerians.

UBE Programme

The aim of this programme is to ensure that illiteracy is reduced to the barest minimum. The programme is been implemented in all the states of the Federation. It has been agreed by the National Assembly that the UBE scheme should be made flexible and decentralized to carry along all stake holders which includes state governments, local governments, nongovernmental organizations, community based organizations, development partners and the organized private sectors.

Curriculum Development and Quality Education

Nigerian school curriculum has continued to be adjusted in order to keep pace with the various challenges of societal advancement. The first curriculum was designed to enhance literacy. Thus: then was the necessity as literacy was considered to be a vital instrument for civilization. As time went on the curriculum was no longer very relevant to meet the needs of the community as a result, it was adjusted to integrate community skills with school work in order to ensure self reliance. According to (Ahaeza 1990), states with similar policies in some African countries like Burkina Faso and Tanzania emphasized rural education centres and education for self reliance.

Staffing and Quality Education

Adequate staffing is necessary for the attainment of quality education. Studies have shown that lack of competent and qualified personnel affect the quality of education. It should be noted that a country's educational standard should be determined by the quality of man power development and human resources available. Government effort in the promotion of quality education can be seen as stated below:

1. Stating NCE as the minimum qualification for Teaching
2. The resuscitation of the Grade II Teachers programme christened pivotal teacher training programme being currently run by Nigeria Teachers Institute for those involved in teaching profession.

However, this laudable objective of promoting quality education is met with some lapses.

Some of these lapses are as follows:

1. Lack of motivation on the part of the teaching personnel
2. Lack of adequate teaching personnel
3. Existence of unqualified teaching staff
4. Hurried nature of implementation of educational policies by the government.

Recommendations

The paper after critical examination of the work recommends as follows:

1. It is imperative that, government should adequately finance and control education in our country. The government here includes Federal, State and Local Governments. This is because education is very huge investment which if left in the hands of individuals will be very difficult to accomplish.
2. Education funding should be given urgent treatment.
3. All stake holders must be fully involved in the funding of education.
4. The provision of physical facilities is very essential in running of schools.
5. Adequate staffing should be properly enhanced so as to ensure efficiency and high productivity.
6. There should be a review of curriculum content in order to meet the societal needs of the people.
7. Educational reforms should be properly planned and allowed some time to survive.
8. Funds meant for a specific project should be prudently used and not to be converted to private accounts.

- Private organizations should be compelled to pay their education tax funds as at and when due to support the government.

Conclusion

This paper first took a look at the definition and importance of educational foundation. The paper attempted in its introductory stage to discuss the historical foundation of education in Nigeria by way of mentioning the names of eminent scholars and their contributions towards the educational development in Nigeria.

The discussion has been made on the part of government efforts in funding and control of education in Nigeria. Some of the lapses have been identified and the suggestions on how to avoid them have been brought to the fore. The paper also took a cursory examination of the main educational reforms and highlighted education as an indispensable tool in fostering national unity.

The paper in discussing the quality of education in Nigeria has been able to bring to lime light some of the importance of quality education by way of bringing diverse groups and people together. It is my earnest conclusion that quality education creates employment opportunities. The quality and quantity of man power is required for industrial and service organization.

In the final analysis, this paper has been able to bring out the issues confronting the funding and quality control in education in Nigeria and has been able to proffer solutions and recommendations.

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