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## **Funding Initiatives for the Management of Compulsory Secondary Education in Owerri Education Zone of Imo State**

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### **Abstract**

*This study examined the funding initiatives for effective management of compulsory secondary education in Owerri Education Zone of Imo State. The purpose of the study was to investigate the present funding strategies by the state government and to find out the possible funding initiatives for the management of compulsory secondary education in Owerri Education Zone. Three research questions were raised to guide the study. A structured questionnaire named FUNDIFFMOSEQ was used to elicit the opinions of the respondents mainly teachers and principals of schools. The data generated were analyzed using mean ratings. The results show that: the present funding measures are grossly inadequate, the funds allocated to education are not adequately utilized, and more funding initiatives have not been explored and exploited. Based on these findings the following recommendations were made viz: the state government should introduce education levies,*

*payable by all adults, increase budgetary allocation to education, and evolve measures (checks and balances) to curb financial malfeasance by school administrators*

The quantity, quality and the efficacy of the educational system, largely depends on the level, the appropriateness and the management of the financial provision. According to Okunamiri in Nwagwu, Ehiamentolor, Ogonu, and Nwadiani (2001:230)

*Educational financing refers to the process of sourcing, allocating and managing public school revenues in the production of educational services for the attainment of educational objectives. It helps to determine the extent of the number of employees and other resources needed in the services*

During the colonial era, the system of grants in aid was codified and systematized in the first Nigerian Education ordinance of 1882. The ordinance made provision for grants in aid to be based on these criteria.

- i. Organization and administrative efficiency
- ii. Individual passes at the annual examination per subject.
- iii. Average daily attendance
- iv. Capitation grants for building and maintenance

From these criteria it could be seen that as early as 1882, educational financing in Nigeria was from the following sources.

- v. The government directly and through grants in aid
- vi. The voluntary agencies through fees and church collections.
- vii. The communities through free labour and provision and maintenance of school buildings and staff quarters. In other words, the principle of shared responsibility in educational financing had been introduced in the system as early as 1882. Grants-in aid to voluntary agency secondary schools was also based on the same principles of examination performance, average daily attendance and organization efficiency. During the thirties, forties, and fifties, a major factor in the financing of education was the contribution by private voluntary agencies, town and tribal unions, and parents. Tribal and town unions and individuals provided scholarships particularly for higher education overseas while private voluntary agencies provided primary and secondary schools to meet the increasing demand. By 1936 the Aggrey memorial Grammar School Arochukwu founded on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1932, became the first indigenous private proprietary secondary school in the country. In the year 1942 the battle for grants-in aid to private schools was carried to the floor of the legislative council by the Honourable E.S Ekeh, third Lagos member. He proposed a motion as follows

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*Be it resolved that the time has arrived for Government to consider the financial position of private schools in Nigeria and grant recognition to them by way of payment of grants for the upkeep and maintenance of these schools Ocho, (1972:23)*

It is to be noted that in this issue of grants-in-aid the colonial Government tried to distinguish between schools built by communities in response to community needs as against those built by individuals which they considered were profit motivated. However the main purpose of this policy was to frustrate the efforts of private Nigerians to expand educational opportunities. As stated by Onwueme in Nwagwu, Ehiametalor, Ogunu, and Nwadiani (2001:13)

*Free education especially at the primary school level has been experimented upon in Nigeria in the 1950s, and in 1960s. The universal primary education of the 1950s was under the aegis of western and Eastern regional Governments while that of 1976 was the sole effort of the federal military government.*

This singular effort of the Federal Government was in line with the United Nation's charter on Human Rights declared in Article 26 that Universal Primary Education was the right of every child. The charter declared among other things that:

1. Every one has the right to education. This shall be free at least in the elementary and primary stages.
2. Elementary education shall be compulsory while technical and professional education shall be made generally available.
3. Higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
4. Parents have a prior right to choose the level of education that shall be given to their children.

At the continental level African leaders under the auspices of UNESCO held a conference at Addis Ababa in 1961 where they declared education as a potent instrument for accelerated development in the continent and enjoined member states to make education universal, free and compulsory for the citizenry. They even went further to set 1980 as the target deadline for full universalization of primary education (Nalletamby, 1980). In the past, government education policy of free education was often not streamlined as regards the agency whose responsibility it was to fund education. The UPE schemes of the 1950s and 1970 were the sole responsibility of the regional and Federal Governments respectively. Significantly, the free education schemes were haphazardly pursued as the programmes which were expected to be free and compulsory were neither totally free nor even compulsory because of financial constraints. As noted by Nwagwu (1984:50)

*After only one year of funding the UPE scheme the federal military government unexpectedly announced in 1977 that states and local*

*governments were to shoulder most of the financial burden since all it had done was to help them launch the UPE scheme.*

Education experts have in the past proffered suggestions with regard to funding of education, in Nigeria, and in line with that Taiwo (1982:175-176) stated that:

1. Federal Government should be responsible for the provision of buildings and furniture, teachers' salaries and allowances and payment for the teacher training programme.
2. State governments should be responsible for the provision of equipment and libraries.
3. Local Government should assume responsibility for non teaching staff salaries, textbooks and maintenance of buildings.
4. Parents should provide writing materials and clothing for their children.

Furthermore, Decree 31 of 1988 which established the primary Education Commission offered the formula for funding of primary education, giving local government 50% State Government 30% and federal government 20% of the financial responsibility. Even, Decree 3 of January 1999 made 100% funding of primary school the responsibility of Local Government Councils (Uyanga, 1993:94-95). Precisely in September 1999, the Federal Government of Nigeria under the leadership of president Obasanjo initiated an education programme which was named Universal Basic Education (UBE). The aim of this programme is to offer universal, free, and compulsory education to school age children of six to fifteen years old. The programme is expected to span from primary school through junior secondary school (JSS).

**Problem:** In all attempts at funding education since independence it seems that the Federal Government cannot fund education alone especially the Universal Basic Education of the present dispensation. In Imo State most specifically, towards the end of the former administration, the State Government announced the offer of free primary and secondary education in the state. The consequences are quite obvious because with the dwindling oil revenue, and poor revenue base such a giant educational provision is bound to collapse. The problem of this study can be summed up with this question: What are the funding initiatives for the management of compulsory Secondary Education in Owerri Education Zone of Imo State?

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to find out the funding initiatives for the management of compulsory secondary education in Owerri Education Zone of Imo State. The study also investigated the present management strategies employed by the State Government in the funding of secondary education in Owerri Education Zone.

To guide this study, three research questions were formulated viz:

- i. What is the state of funding compulsory secondary education in public secondary schools in Owerri Education Zone of Imo State?

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- ii. How adequate are the present funding measures utilized for the provision of compulsory secondary education in public secondary schools in Owerri Education Zone of Imo State.
- iii. What funding initiatives could be adopted for the management of compulsory secondary education in Owerri Education Zone of Imo State?

**Methodology**

The design of this study is a descriptive survey and only the opinions of the respondents were elicited.

**Population:** The population of the study is made up of 2500 teachers in both junior and senior public secondary schools 33 principals (Junior secondary school), and 33 principals (senior secondary school) as shown on the table below.

**Table 1 (Respondents)**

S/No	Category	Number
1	Teachers	2500
2	Principals	66
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2566</b>

**Source:** SEMB Owerri

**Sample:** Ten percent (10%) of the target population was selected for this study using purposive sampling technique. This is presented on the table below.

**Table 2: Sample for the Study**

S/No	Category	Number	10%
1	Teachers	2500	250
2	Principals	66	6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2566</b>	<b>256</b>

The researcher used a structured questionnaire named Fundifemoseq (Funding initiatives for the effective management of compulsory secondary education in Owerri Education Zone of Imo) to elicit the opinions of the respondents on the funding initiatives for the management of compulsory secondary education in Owerri Education Zone of Imo State.

256 copies of the instrument were administered by personal delivery and all the copies were returned.

**Data Analysis**

Mean ratings of the respondents were used to answer this research question.

**Research Question One**

What is the status of funding public secondary schools in Owerri Education Zone of Imo State?

**Table 2: The Status of Funding Secondary School Education in Owerri Education Zone of Imo State.**

S/No	Present Funding Measures	Percentage of Availability	Remarks
1	School fees	55%	Inadequate
2	PTA levies	20%	Inadequate
3	Imprest from state Government	10%	Inadequate
4	Community levies	15%	Inadequate
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Decision Rule:** Any funding measure below 60% is inadequate

**Source:** SEMB, Zonal office, Owerri

The table above shows the percentage scores of the present funding measures, and the various remarks. Provision of funds for effective management of secondary education has been a serious problem in Owerri Education Zone and the entire Imo State. This is evidenced by the large scale of infrastructural decay and dilapidation of structures in this education zone.

### Research Question Two

How adequate are the present funding measures utilized for the provision of compulsory secondary education in public secondary schools in Owerri Education Zone of Imo State?

**Table 2: The Mean Ratings of the Respondents on Adequacy of Utilization of the Present Funding Measures for the Provision of Compulsory Secondary Education in Owerri Education Zone?**

S/N	Funding Measures		4 Very adequately Used	3 Adequately Used	2 Inadequately Used	1 very inadequately Used	Σ	$\bar{X}$	Decision
1	Payment of fees	N	20	28	50	161	256	1.6	Accept
		NX	80	75	100	161	416		
2	Imprest from government	N	20	30	50	156	256	1.7	Accept
		NX	80	90	100	156	428		
3	Donations from public spirited persons	N	30	36	90	100	256	1.9	Accept
		NX	120	108	180	100	508		
4	Community levies	N	26	34	80	116	256	1.6	Accept
		NX	104	37	160	116	417		
5	Proceeds from agriculture	N	31	30	90	105	256	1.9	Accept
		NX	124	90	180	105	499		
Pooled Mean (PM)						8.7			

The table above shows the mean scores for all the items. The pooled mean (PM) is 8.7 which is below the sum of the theoretical mean 12.50. This indicates that the present funding measures are not adequately utilized for the provision of

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compulsory secondary education in public secondary schools in Owerri Education Zone of Imo State.

**Research Question Three**

What funding initiatives could be adopted for the management of compulsory secondary education in Owerri Education Zone?

**Table 3: The Mean Ratings of the Respondents on the Initiatives for Providing Compulsory Secondary Education in Owerri Education Zone.**

S/N	Funding Measures		4 Very adequately Used	3 Adequately used	2 Inadequate used	1 very inadequately used	Σ	$\bar{X}$	Decision
1	Increasing allocation to Education	N NX	28 112	32 96	80 160	118 118	256 488	1.9	Accept
2	Involvement of all religions bodies	N NX	32 128	48 144	78 156	100 100	256 528	2.1	Accept
3	All adults to pay Education levy	N NX	30 120	36 108	90 180	100 100	156 508	1.9	Accept
4	Increasing agricultural investment	N NX	31 124	30 90	90 180	105 105	256 499	1.9	Accept
5	Judicious use of funds	N NX	20 80	30 90	50 100	156 156	256 428	1.7	Accept
6	Taxation of all companies in the zone	N NX	30 120	36 108	90 180	100 100	256 508	1.9	Accept
Pooled Mean (PM)						11.4			

The table above shows the mean scores on all the items. The pooled mean (PM) is 11.4 and this is below the sum of the theoretical mean of 15. This indicates that all the funding initiatives have not been fully explored and exploited for the benefit of education.

**Discussion**

The fundamental goal of the financial reforms, initiatives and revenue diversification has always been to reduce dependence on government and to increase the proportion of fundable resources within the school system. For any Nation to develop technologically it must make good her education system. The problem that bedevils Nigeria’s education system most has been that of under funding.

As observed by Amadi in Babalola, Akpa, Ayeni and Adedeji (2007:550)

*The present state of education in Nigeria is regrettably one that does not cheer any body up nor inspire one with confidence. From the primary education to the tertiary level, it is a tale of woes. The whole system has collapsed. The pre-primary level is only available to the super-rich in the urban centres. The declaration of universal free and compulsory Basic education with advocacy programmes for enrolment has naturally increased enrolment and compounded the problems. Insufficient classrooms, or no classrooms for pupils, no desks, no instructional materials, no learning resources such as playground, limited teachers, many of them are unqualified. Secondary education is not better in terms of these problems and apathy.*

In Owerri Education zone, there is a widespread of infrastructural decay and dilapidation in the secondary schools. The present funding measures leaves much to be desired. Nigerians thought that the democratic dispensation since 1999 would have been better for our schools, since education is seen as a veritable tool or means of bringing about socio-cultural and economic mobilization.

In research question two, the results show that the present funding measures are not adequately utilized for the provision of compulsory secondary education in Owerri Education Zone of Imo States.

As observed by Taiwo (1982) the state governments should be responsible for secondary education in the provision of equipment and libraries. However, this responsibility is not currently being met because of lack of finance. Libraries (if any) have scanty books, scientific equipment and reagents are lacking, teachers are demoralized and discipline in many of these schools is poor. Also Amadi in Babalola et al (2007:551) stated that:

*There are so many examination malpractices that one cannot easily vouch for the authenticity of certificates. The quality of education on the average has fallen. Those who pass English and Mathematics at the West African school certificate for SS 3 are on the average much below 40% of those who entered for the subject. Too many of the students offer purely academic subjects at WAEC simply because there are no teachers and equipment to teach the technical streams. As a result the economy is not getting the right mix of manpower supply.*

Research question three indicates that some (if not all) the funding initiatives have not been explored and exploited for the proper management of compulsory secondary education in Owerri Education Zone. The options such as increasing allocation to education, sale of bonds to members of the public, involvement of religious organizations, payment of education levies have not been explored. Also, administrators should be compelled to use school funds judiciously and reduce frequent virement of funds

In line with this finding, Amadi in Babalola et al (2007:551) stated that, *One of the most serious problems facing the whole educational system is a very large under funding syndrome. Even the bit of money made available is*



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*often mismanaged. Such is the grim state of affairs now that the future will need some drastic paradigm shift.*

Education is supposed to be given the highest budgetary vote of any nation especially where it incorporates research and development. Oluleye (1976) stated that in the early years after independence when the regional governments were administering educational policies in their areas, education used to get a bigger share of government expenditure, close to 50% of the budget. The military regimes seem to have dealt the greatest blow to education in this country because of its proliferation of higher institutions, educational share of the national budget alternated between 20%, 25% and 30% of the National budget (Nwachukwu, 1999).

### **Conclusions**

The conclusions can be derived from the findings of this study. The purpose of universal, free and compulsory secondary education is to offer every Nigerian child the opportunity to go to school and receive education as a right as enshrined in the National policy.

*Nigerian philosophy of education therefore is based on the integration of the individual into sound and effective citizens and equal educational opportunities for all citizens of the nation at primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system (FRN, 2004)*

Free education means that the financial burden of school attendance is lifted to a great extent off parents. The State Government, Federal Government, educationists and educational planners, all stakeholders, need to work together to manage compulsory secondary education in Nigeria, and Owerri Education Zone in particular for positive results.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers recommended that:

1. The Imo State Government should increase budgetary allocations to Education in line with UNESCO recommendations of 26% for all countries.
2. Introduce payment of education levies by all taxable adults in Owerri Education Zone and other Zones.
3. Explore and exploit measures such as: increasing school revenues through agricultural investments, community levies, donations from churches and public spirited individuals, increased taxation of all companies in the zone and prudent management of resources to avoid financial malfeasance by school administrators.

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