
FINANCING QUALITATIVE SECONDARY EDUCATION FOR ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *This study focuses on the financing qualitative secondary education for administrative effectiveness in Nigeria. The National Policy of Education gives all children in the country equal opportunity for education at all level-primary, secondary and tertiary education for sustainable National Development in Nigeria. The content of the secondary school curriculum in Nigeria when compared to what obtains in more highly developed countries of the world shows that the quality of educational achievement in Nigeria is low at a time while the educational qualification of teachers is improving. This is why the focus is shifting from the personnel (teachers) resource to another factor which has the abilities to affect the provision of other resources in the production function-financing. Financing patterns by government is a shared responsibility of the three tiers of government and need to establish a minimum standard for secondary education which each state government must maintain for effective school administration. This standard would cover the areas of infrastructure, facilities, teacher qualification and numbers. Non-governmental source of financing includes: the alumni association, private sector participation, the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) and internal or self-generated funds. Alternate financing of secondary school include: Pay As You Earn (PAYE), property tax, rates, education levies, school fees, registration fees, endowments, donations, commercial activities. All these put together make for effective and efficient school administration aimed at effective teaching and learning process. In conclusion, government cannot fund secondary education alone and therefore needed the private and non-governmental agencies to assist in the funding. It was therefore recommended among others that the PTA and non-governmental agencies should be sensitized to assist in the funding of secondary schools so as to acquire new facilities and the maintenance of existing ones.*

Keywords: Financing, qualitative secondary education, administrative effectiveness, shared responsibility.

INTRODUCTION

In the 1999 constitution of the Federal Reputable of Nigeria, all children in the country are equally important and are entitled to the same quality of education. Both the condition and the National Policy on Education emphasized egalitarianism as a national philosophy. By this it is the duty of the nation at various levels of governance to ensure qualitative education for all citizens.

Nigeria has adopted education as an instrument for National Development and has declared her intention to develop an educational system that is relevant to the needs of both individuals and society "in consonance with the realities of our environment and the modern world (FRN 2014)

The National Policy on Education went further to state among other things that:

- Education shall continue to be highly rated in the national development plans
- Universal Basic Education in a variety of forms ... shall be provided for all citizens
- Modern educational techniques shall be increasingly used and improved upon at all levels of the educational system
- The education system shall be structured to develop the practice of self-learning.

The policy recognizes the importance of language and technology as means of monitoring interaction and national unity.

Hence at the secondary school level the policy emphasized:

- The provision of a diversified curriculum to take care of different abilities
- The development and promotion of Nigeria languages
- The provision of trained human resources in the areas of science, technology and commerce at sub professional levels; and
- The provision of technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural industrial, commercial and economic development.

The first three years of secondary education generally referred to as the junior secondary school (J.S.S) is identified as a sector that should be both pre-vocational and academic in nature, and made both compulsory and tuition-free. The subjects offered as classified in Group A, (core courses) namely: English, French, Mathematics, language of the environment (L.I) and one major Nigerian language (L2), Integrated science, social studies and citizenship education and introductory technology are compulsory to all students while the students are free to choose at least one subject out of Group B (Pre-vocational electives) agricultural science, business studies, home economic, local crafts and computer education which are to be practice-oriented. Apart from this, students are expected to take at least one subject from the following pre-vocational electives group C, namely: Religious Knowledge, Physics, Health Education, Fine Arts, Music and Arabic. The overall picture is that seven subjects are compulsory while 2-5 electives could be taken from subjects in groups B and C.

At the senior secondary school (SSS) level, students take seven compulsory subjects listed as:

1. English Language
2. French Languages
3. Mathematics
4. A major Nigerian Language
5. One of Biology, Chemistry, Physics or Integrated Science
6. One of literature in English, History, Geography or social studies; and
7. A vocational subject (home economics, agriculture etc).

A student is expected to take a minimum of one and a maximum of 2 from a list of 18 vocational electives and 17 non-vocational (Excerpts from FRN 2014: 17-21).

The Challenges

The goal statements and policies herein in this paper are both lofty and desirable. The scope and content of the secondary school curriculum in Nigeria is comparable to what obtains in the more highly developed countries of the world. The quality of learning tools and the curriculum for acquiring necessary knowledge, skills, values and attitudes for the future of the youths and the overall development of the society is very good as specified, but the implementation is a far cry from that

shown on paper. In reality the class-rooms, play grounds, laboratories, workshops, libraries and other learning environments fail to help the realization of high curriculum achievement.

The Federal government in collaboration with UNICEF and UNESCO monitored learning achievement in 1996 using primary four pupils, nationwide. The report of the findings shows that most children in primary 4 are not acquiring the essential learning tools and the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that are critical to their future (Falayajo, 2007). The national mean score for mathematics was 32.2 percent, with urban centres averaging 35.0 percent while their rural counterparts scored 30.32 percent. The Literacy test was rather disastrous, as the national mean for English was 25.2 percent, a score regarded by Okebukola (2010:17) as “representing performance at purely chance level”. Here, urban pupils had a score of 28.8 percent while rural schools had an average score of 22.6 percent.

This level of performance naturally is carried into the secondary school and so, teachers start off with weak materials and because of obvious problems, finds it difficult to turn them into high fliers. Nwana (1992) reported a study carried out at the secondary school level under the auspices of the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC). The study covered a five-year period(1987-1991) using results of school certificate results published by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) covering twelve subjects predominantly representative of major candidates, offering English Language, Christian Religious Knowledge, Islamic Religious Knowledge , Geography, Government, Economic Economics, and West African History. Nwana (1992:4) reported that the typical performance across the twelve subjects judging by either arithmetic mean or the mode lies between a mere pass and outright failure. The report goes on to state that the pass and fail grades together account for a little over 8 percent of the performance while the fail grade accounts for a little over 50 percent of the performance. Thus, it concludes that passing grades (1-6) account for a little below 50 percent of the performance.

From all indications the quality of educational achievement in Nigeria is low at a time the educational qualification of teachers is improving. Nigeria has made some determined efforts to upgrade the quality of teachers and teaching in the country. The national policy, states the goal of teacher education as among other goals:

- Producing highly motivated conscientious and efficient class-room teachers
- Enhancing teachers commitment to the teaching profession; and
- Providing teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment.

The policy also states that the minimum qualification for entry into the teaching profession shall be the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). Some states of the Federation have already achieved this and can now boast of this minimum and with bachelors’ degree masters degree and even doctorate degree holders operating at the primary and secondary school level. In spite of this, many children graduate from the primary school do not have the ability to read and write and this is carried into the secondary school where they end up being failures. If teacher quality is improving while pupil achievement is on the decrease, something must be basically wrong somewhere. This is why the focus is shifting from the personnel (teacher) resource to another factor which has the abilities to affect the provision of other resources in the production function-FINANCE.

Financing Of Education In Nigeria

Historically, education in Nigeria had never been adequately financed. Western education was introduced by the missionaries in the country in 1840. The mission funded it to the best of their ability and introduced teaching subjects considered necessary for their own immediate needs. The missionaries were interested in evangelization, so they taught reading to facilitate the use of the Bible for religious knowledge. The colonial masters needed interpreters, so English became important while to the British

businessmen who were interested in trading activities, arithmetic as a school subject was imperative. The curriculum of the early schools hinged on English, Arithmetic and Religious and Moral instruction. The missions were supported by their home missions and the colonial government showed no interest in assisting in the funding.

However, after 30 years of sole-funding and management of education by the missions, government showed interest with a token intervention of £300 permission as grants-in-aid. As the colonial masters were not so much interested in transferring training and knowledge to the people, they considered it good enough to allow the missionaries to continue their good work of serving the needs of the British government, traders and missionaries. The quality and conditions of education remained poor, as the missions depended heavily on the capacity of their home missions for charity.

Hamza (2003:40) observed that the authorities (government) later in the 19th century recognized that good quality education was an expensive business and so laid down the policy that government and voluntary agency funding would be argument, however marginally, by user fees and charges. From then on, the payment of fees at all levels became the practice until some regional governments (Western Region under Obafemi Awolowo and Eastern Region under Nnamdi Azikiwe) in the 1950s made some efforts to provide free basic education for the people in order to accelerate personal and national development.

These projects could not last because of the huge financial burden government could not bear. From that point, educational funding became both erratic and inadequate. The cost of education is much more than the payment of workers' salaries and wages. It includes the construction and maintenance of buildings and grounds, and the purchase of equipment and materials, as well as the provision of all the things necessary for installing the education programme and some welfare programmes for students and workers.

The wide range of subjects offered at the secondary school level, (at least 12, seven core and 5 electives) makes it imperative that schools have various types of laboratories, workshops and studio for the development of the various skills. Unfortunately, the facilities for most of the subjects offered are inadequate and so teachers adopt a theoretical approach even in subjects listed in the national policy as requiring practical approach. Even the school libraries, where they exist are of a poor quality. No wonder, a former minister for education declared that the education sector was in a "rot" and deserves the declaration of a state of emergency (Birna, 2008).

A cursory look at the Nigerian educational system will show the sorry situation of the school (primary and secondary). David-West (2012) asserts that the school building which should attract and be a source of pride to the students is nothing but walls; tables and desks without any teaching aid to facilitate effective teaching and learning process. Teachers therefore resort to rote learning, dictating long notes that students copy and memorize. Learning has been made so theoretical that students have little or no opportunity to reason through the content material with their teacher, see and handle the things they learn about or even to experiment with objects in their learning environment. The students do not have opportunity for daily home work, or even for learning the basic rudiments of reading. Most Rivers State Secondary Schools, even those in urban areas cannot be assured of electricity supply so they cannot get the benefit of radio or television lessons, or have electricity for their technology classes. Qualitative education requires adequate provision of good structures and learning materials both of which are lacking in Rivers State schools.

Financing Pattern By Government

Nigeria sees educational funding as a joint responsibility of the Federal, State and Local Government. It is a shared responsibility of the three tiers of government even though the constitution places the management of primary education in the hands of the Local Government. Secondary education is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments. It is obvious that as all the states are

not equally buoyant, the provision of funding cannot be the same across the nation to provide equally for qualitative education. It is therefore desirable for the Federal Government to establish a minimum standard for secondary education which each state government will try to maintain. This standard would cover the areas of infrastructure, facilities, teacher qualification and numbers. A National Secondary Education Commission (NSEC) may be put in place to monitor performance. Realizing the great burden this will place on the states, the Federal Government can take on statutorily some areas of funding and leave the rest to the state. It is proposed here that the Federal share of the costs be in the area of workers' salary and wages, provision of electricity, water and telecommunications, lack of which has dealt a heavy blow on the quality of education in Rivers State.

Pandit and Mohammed (2001) had identified that educational costs can be categorized into institutional private/household and social costs. In our context, household costs include feeding, transportation, books, uniforms, income foregone and other personal school equipment and kits. This paper focuses attention on institutional costs which include personnel costs, teaching materials, library, laboratory and workshop equipment and all consumable items of stationery and instructional materials, electricity, water telecommunications etc. The institutional cost rightly belongs to the proprietor which for public schools is the government. Unfortunately, Rivers State has a record of inadequate and inaccurate statistical data, even in the area of education. This is partly why a lot of our educational plans fail.

The Universal Primary Education (U.P.E) as well as the UBE failed mainly because there was no accurate data on the number of classrooms, the teachers needed and even the actual cost implication of the project. It is therefore necessary for government to first identify the cost of secondary education so as to have a rough idea of the funds needed for each item of institutional cost. For this, cost assessment, it is necessary to assess the cost of the ideal standard and not just the cost of what is on the ground. The estimated unit cost should then be multiplied by actual school enrolment, as a guide to government budget. According to the Blueprint on implementation of the National Policy on Education, the unit cost of secondary education in Nigeria in 1978 was N5,000, this estimate which reflects the under-funded status of secondary education must have multiplied a hundred fold to reach a half a million naira mark, considering the inflationary trend since then. By 1978, the Basic Travel Allowance (BTA) was issued at the banks at the rate of One Naira to the dollar which now sells for Three Hundred and Sixty Naira and even more in this country. The situation clearly shows that with the best of goodwill government allocation to the education sector cannot easily provide quality education to the people. Serious efforts must therefore be made to evolve financing patterns that can increase government revenue for secondary education delivery. Government generates and raises money for funding education directly and indirectly through the people and this is why it is argued that education cannot really be a free commodity somebody pays for it either directly or indirectly. Okoroma (2000) outlined alternative financing of secondary school which includes: Pay As You Earn (PAYE), property tax, rates, education levies, school fees, registration fees, endowments, donations, commercial activities. Education is often the largest single industry and need to be adequately financed. Exploring the alternative pattern of financing make for effective secondary education delivery.

Non-Governmental Sources of Financing

In 1993, the Federal Adviser on Education, Professor Ben Nwabueze systematically invited the general public to discuss the issue of funding of Education in Nigeria. The groups invited include the traditional rulers, leaders of towns unions, religious groups, alumni associations, Parent-Teachers-Associations etc. This call was in recognition of the assistance each of these groups can give in raising funds for education.

(a) Local Communities

Adeyemo (2009:93) cites the 1976 Local Government Reforms as stating that 'the school system should belong to, and be part and parcel of the community which they serve and so, government should enlist an interest of communities in all developmental schemes of the community including financing and implementing community projects like education of the youths. The Local Communities should be made to realize that they are the "Public". Many Nigerians believe that the term "public services" means services rendered by the political system with the exclusion of the generality of the people. A change of attitude is required, such that people take interest in, and responsibility for all those things referred to as "public". It is this negative attitude that has made many politicians as well as public office holders "Looters" and "Raiders" instead of "Builders" and many citizens disinterested in taking care of public affairs.

(b) The Alumni Association

Associations and relationships formed at the secondary school level last till old age and many continue to cherish the foundations laid for them at school long after they have left school. These feelings have led to the formation of old students which have been maintained world wide as alumni associations especially at college and university levels.

(c) Private Sector Participation

The private sector includes the commercial and business concerns as well as some non-governmental organization (NGOs) at home and overseas. They play philanthropic roles and so no prescription of responsibility can be made for them. The chief executive of the school needs to use public relations strategies to solicit for assistance from as many of these groups as possible. One big obstacle to this is the policy of government that all monies generated by government functionaries must be paid into government treasury. Criticizing this policy Igwe (2001:231) observed that:

"When institutions are forbidden to keep or raise their funds, or when they are denied the freehand to spend such funds on their own identifies areas of needs, education is deprived of funds people are willing to give to an identified school."

(d) The Parent-Teacher-Association (PTA) and Funding

The PTA is the over-flogged "victim" in funding secondary education in Nigeria. Many people think the role of the PTA is to provide whatever government or whoever built a school is unable or unwilling to provide. They have provided school structures, hostels, examination/multi-purpose halls, classrooms libraries etc. The contributions of the PTA in funding education is enormous inspite of the fact that the role of the PTA is not to become principally a fundraising body.

(e) Internal or Self-generation Funds

A secondary school can generate a lot of funds internally and if authorized, can use it to significantly improve the quality of values systems, attitudes and academic achievement of the students. Many of the schools are not neatly laid out and have foot paths crisscrossing the fields and lawns. Many do not have conveniences that are well maintained, thus compelling students to avoid using them. Most schools-rural and urban do not have pipe-borne water, electricity and other facilities, thus making student-personnel management difficult. If only school heads are authorized to generate and use internally generated funds for the general upkeep of the school, things will be a lot better for it is the man on the spot that knows where it pinches most. Money for such needs can be generated from many internal sources like:

- Hawking permits for those who may want to sell snacks at break time to students
- Shop rentals for those whose schools lie in busy parts of the town such that the school can build shops along the perimeter fence walls
- Renting school facilities like halls, open fields, musical bands etc out to the public for programmes after school hours and/or during vacations

- Sale of crafts and arts or confectioneries prepared by students during practical lessons
- Service offered to people who need such services as catering or serving as ushers at social functions
- Sale of agricultural products
- Cultural performances like musical, dramatics, calisthenics, drama or dance
- Organizing funds-raising activities like bob-a-job, parents day, open day, home coming etc and

(f) Soliciting for endowments from philanthropist, NGOs and philanthropic organizations.

CONCLUSION

With the recognition that there is real need to improve the quality of secondary education in Rivers State and with the recognition that even with all good intentions, government alone cannot single handedly fund qualitative education with the present financial arrangements. It is time to review the system of funding secondary education. It proposes an adjustment in government sourcing as well as an active participation of both the local communities and the individual schools for effective secondary education delivery.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made:

1. Secondary education should continue to be tuition-free as already stated by government
2. Parents should continue to take care of the private/household costs of secondary education while the government takes care of the institutional costs
3. All tiers of government should continue to take care of funding education with the Local Government taking the responsibility for institutional costs at the primary school and that state government do so at the secondary level
4. The Federal Government should carry the responsibility for worker's salaries and wages as well as for the supply of basic amenities like electricity, water and telecommunications all of which are seen as necessities and not luxuries
5. The Federal Government should set up a National Secondary Education Commission (NSEC) with responsibility for setting a minimum standard for all secondary schools in the country and monitoring to ensure compliance to the national minimum standard
6. As all states are not equally rich, the Federal Government should work out an equalization formula for achieving the minimum standard while the richer states can exceed it. The equalization formula should be channeled through the NSEC to ensure that only states who qualify for it and who apply the funds to the stipulated task will receive further grants. The equalization formula should take into consideration actual pupil enrolment as well as the number and quality of teachers employed
7. The State governments should have the primary responsibility of meeting all other institutional costs without prejudice to any assistance from non-governmental agencies or organizations
8. Non-governmental agencies and organization should be sensitized to assist in the funding of education

9. The local communities through the traditional rulers and town union and other local leaders should ensure access to the school and also assist with other facilities that can enhance the qualities to their school
10. The alumni associations can do a lot to bring in facilities to their alma mater. While it may not be feasible to prescribe a fixed role for this group, they should be encouraged to identify with the school and attract funds and facilities to it whenever they are in a position to do so
11. The PTA, the “old reliable horse” should be encouraged to continue its good works, providing directly and indirectly some physical structures and other needs to the school. The PTA can do a lot of public relations job for the school and reach out to philanthropists at home and abroad to come to the aid of the school financially
12. The school heads need to be given adequate power and authority to beef up their efforts at generating funds internally without sacrificing the moral and academic education of the students. They should be given the authority to raise funds and power to apply the funds judiciously to solving the needs of the school
13. There is need to improve patriotism and integrity on the part of the nation’s leaders to serve as an example to the middle level managers in all sectors of the economy especially in the education industry to be prudential in handing funds meant for public interest.

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