



Funding of the Education Sector: Panacea for Effective Secondary School Education in Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

The paper examined funding as panacea for the growth of secondary education in Rivers state. It is a position paper. Education is regarded as a human industry with sophisticated nature, hence adequate funding of the sector is a necessity for both human and social development. Unfortunately, one of the problems facing education in Nigeria, and Rivers State in particular is the issue of underfunding. The paper focused on the following key areas; concept of education funding (ii) sources of secondary education funding (iii) effects of secondary education funding in Rivers State and factors Militating against proper funding. These concepts, especially sources of education funding in secondary schools in the state has witnessed a gradual degradation of infrastructures, in man power development, instructional materials and access to quality education. Presently, the government spending on education is below the 26% recommendation of the UNESCO inspite of the strategic role of secondary education. Drawing on the outcomes of the discussions, the paper suggests that 26% annual budget of the government should be allocated to the education sector, government should give approval to school managers to explore other alternative sources of financing secondary education with the aim of achieving educational goals, Government should develop a realistic secondary education data-bank as this will help in adequate planning, and funding of this level of education. Also all stakeholders must become involved in the financing of education especially secondary education, parents and guardians, the society in general, private sectors and non-governmental organisations.

Keywords: Education, Funding, Development

INTRODUCTION

Education places an indispensable role in the development and functioning of every society. This explains why government all over the world engage in the provision and management of education for its citizens especially in formal settings. Education has been described as a process of acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes, abilities, competence and the cultural norms of a society by people in order to transmit it to the younger generation that will enhance perpetual development of the society. Therefore the invaluable roles and contributions of education in the development of an individual and society cannot be over-emphasised.

Thus, many nations including Nigeria take education as an instrument for promotion of national development as well as effecting desirable social change (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). This perhaps might be responsible for the growing concern of all stake holders in education concerning education funding and the changes that are likely to affect it as well as the implication of such changes will have on the management of education sector, especially the secondary education.

The first sets of secondary schools education in Nigeria were established by the Christian missionaries according to Fafunwa cited in Nageri (2016). The broad aims of secondary education as contained in National policy on education (NPE, 2013) shall be to prepare the individual for

1. Useful living within the society; and
2. Preparation for higher education

It went further to state the specific objectives of secondary education as follows:

- i. Provide an increasing number of primary school pupils with opportunity for education of higher quality, irrespective of sex, social, religion and ethnic background
- ii. Diversify its curriculum to cater for differences in talents, opportunities and roles possessed by or open to students after their secondary education
- iii. Equip students to live effectively in our modern age of science and technology
- iv. Develop and project Nigeria culture, art and languages as well as the world cultural heritage
- v. Raise generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour and appreciate those values specified under the broad national aims and live as good citizens.
- vi. Foster Nigerian unity with emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity and inspire its students with a desire for achievement and self improvement both at school and in later life

A typical secondary school in Nigeria is made up of a principal, assisted by academic and non-academic staff, as well as students in level 1-3 of junior secondary schools and 1-3 in senior secondary schools. Every educational institution has access to human, material and financial resources. Human resource is arguably schools most valued resource, while financial resource is regarded as next to human capacity in terms of importance. It is imperative to note that no institution can effectively function without adequate provision of funds. Thus, it is increasingly clear that adequate funding of education sector is pivotal to economic development of any nation. Every successful economy is rooted in the education system of the nation and how well the education system is able to provide the right and needed skilled labour to increase productivity in the job market is made possible by the volume of financial resources injected into the system. Both in developed and developing nations funding of education particularly secondary education has emerged as a major topic of debate in recent times. To this end, education at secondary school level requires adequate funding for the achievement of its major goals. The particular way secondary education is financed largely determines the quality of its products. There is no doubt that the level of development of any nation is a direct reflection of her educational system.

Consequently, education as a capital intensive social service requires adequate funding from all tiers of government for the successful implementation of its programme (National policy on Education, 2013). The purchase and maintenance of equipment, staff salaries, allowances, provision of infrastructural facilities, training programmes, provision of security services and other internal projects to be undertaken in the institutions are made possible through funding. That is to say, that funding is the life wire of any successful organisation and the crucial role that money plays in every organisation cannot be undermined if such institution intends to actualise its objectives. This is in agreement with Ebong (2006) who stated that money is the fuel and lubricant which propels any organization. Labo-Popoola, Beeto and Atanda (2009) said that inadequate resources and instructional materials such as text books, laboratory equipment, audio-visual aids, ICT among others in public secondary schools have in itself posed serious challenges to the successful implementation of school programmes as a result of inadequate funding. This, Osita (2007) suggested that funding of educational sector should be a collective responsibility of all stake holders in Nigeria.

It is inevitable to successfully run any organisation without finance. Funds are needed for the long and short terms management of activities such as putting up infrastructural facilities, furnishing schools and offices, paying of academic and non-academic staff, maintenance, equipping and man power training etc, and when these materials are lacking in schools, teaching and learning are hampered. Therefore, provision of quality secondary education is important in generating the opportunities and benefits of social and economic development as envisaged in vision 2030. The educational needs for secondary education have increased due to the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1999 and the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme. This requires the government to commit more resources towards secondary education sub-sector in recurrent and physical infrastructure expansion.

Indeed, in Rivers State and Nigeria at large secondary education derives its major funding from grants or the annual allocation from government. But unfortunately, allocation/grants to education sector has been consistently below 26% annual budgetary allocation recommended by United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), in spite of the strategic role of secondary education in the training of middle level man power for the development of the economy (Ige, 2013). There is no arguing the fact that lack of sufficient funding jeopardises the survival of an enterprise. Thus, Adesina cited in Ogbonnaya (2010) summarised the importance of adequate funds in the implementation of educational programmes when he stated that:

“The cost of goods and services embedded in the school system is a sufficient justification of the emphasis commonly placed on school finance. The magnitude of the number of employees, the buildings, equipment and supplies used in the school, accounting and principles of financial resources allocation are to the educational administrator. From the point of view of a nation’s economy, education is both a producer and consumer. It draws erroneously on the economy and it contributes erroneously to it”.

It is therefore pertinent that in our bid to grow the general economy and sustain development through quality service delivery, stakeholders in this sector should step up action and support government in facilitating positive move towards ameliorating the age long woes of this sector.

Concept of Education Funding

Funding may be described as the act of providing funds for business activities, making purchases or investing. Generally it is regarded as the act of providing money for the execution of a given project by an organization.

Education funding is synonymous with the introduction of western education into Nigeria by the missionaries in 1800s. Between 1842 and 1872 the funding of education was purely on charity, in other words, schools were funded by the missions through Sunday church collections and donations from parent churches overseas. Ukeje (2002) stated that the Christian missionary society that first introduced western education into the country financed education then through church collections and free labour from their members. Other sources of funding were from the government directly and through grant-in-aid; voluntary agencies, through fees and church collections and the communities through free labour, provision and maintenance of school buildings and staff quarters etc. Thus, by this time, the principle of shared responsibility in education funding has been established. This situation is in no small measure affected the expansion of education in the country both in quality and quantity. It was not until the year 1872 that the colonial government in Nigeria became actively involved in the issue of education funding, when it made a grant of thirty pounds (£30:00) to each of the three leading missions namely Christian Missionary Society (CMS), Wesleyan Methodist and Roman Catholic Missions, then operating educational institutions in Lagos.

The grant-in-aid was increased to three hundred pounds (£300:00) annually in 1874 to six hundred pounds (£600:00) in 1876, Fufunwa cited in Afolayan (2014). These periods marked the beginning of the scheme of grants-in-aid to education by the government. From 1876-1882, the colonial government interest began to increase not only in the area of funding but also in policies, which also led to educational ordinances of 1882, 1887, 1916 and 1926 respectively, which were also known as education codes. From 1901-1952 the nation witnessed more of education financing by the missions and voluntary agencies. According to Adesina in Afolayan (2014), the 1926 education ordinance or code actually laid the foundation of Nigeria education system.

The national policy on education (2013) stated that education is an expensive social service that requires adequate financial outlay from all tiers of government for a successful implementation of educational programmes. Thus, quality education at all levels requires quality resources and consequently adequate funding. To this end, education especially at the secondary level needs adequate funds, if it is to achieve its major goals. Education been the largest single industry in Nigeria, and the cost of financing the system has continued to increase as a result of increase in human population which also necessitated an increase in its demand. The financing of education should be a joint responsibility for the Federal, State and Local

governments. However, it is increasingly clear that adequate funding of the sector is pivotal in the process of economic development of the nation. The purchase and maintenance of equipment, payment of staff salaries and allowances, provision of instructional materials, training programmes for staff, provision of security personnel and other internal products to be carried out are made possible through funding. Inadequate funding has been the major problem confronting education in the country and government alone cannot provide the needed funds especially secondary education on the bases of free and compulsory education for every Nigerian child. Therefore, parents, community, non-governmental organisations, donor agencies all have a role to play in order to move the education sector forward.

Sources of funding secondary education in Rivers State

The national policy on education states clearly that education in Nigeria is no more a private enterprise but a huge government venture that has witnessed a progressive evolution of government's complete and dynamic intervention and active participation (FGN, 2013). From the above statement, the government of Nigeria in principles, assumed sole proprietorship of education funding. The underlying rationale for public funding of education is to equip people with the requisite knowledge, skills and capacity to enhance the quality of life and increase productivity and capacity to gain knowledge of new techniques for production so as to be able to participate evocatively in the development process but unfortunately, the government allocation to the sector has been consistently below the 26% budgetary allocation recommended by United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

Education funding in the country is a crucial national problem. The political, social and economic factors which currently have significant impact on the world economy, have necessitated the need to diversify the sources of education funding, mainly because reliance on only the government allocation can inhibit educational growth. Adesanya cited in Ubogu and Veronica (2018). Thus, the sufficient funding by government suggests the need to seek alternative sources of funding such as tuition fees which hitherto was prohibited by government, if institutional performance in teaching and learning are to be enhanced.

Currently, secondary education in Rivers State is tuition free and it is principally financed by the state government. Worst still, the state allocation to secondary education is usually very slim and this does not encourage successful achievement of secondary education goals in Rivers State.

Also, education has been the largest single industry in Nigeria today, the cost of financing it has continued to increase with the increase in human population which has also led to a great increase in demand for education. And since government alone cannot maintain and sustain the policy of no tuition fees, there should be a shift in the bearing of cost of secondary education from substantial reliance on annual budget allocation, educational trust fund and education tax to being shared as well by parents and students. Okuwa and Daroodu cited in Ubogu and Veronica (2018).

In furtherance of this, Okoroma (2000) enumerated the followings as main sources of financing education; government subventions, donations and endowments, school fees/charges, education tax fund (ETF). Multi-national companies support, internal donor agencies, community based funding and institution generated funds etc. Other sources of funding secondary education are; school commercial activities, fund raising, support from alumni associations (old student association) such as annual conventions, dinner, school extra-curricular activities i.e. school prize giving day, sports levy, admission fees, library fees, school farms such as poultry farms and in addition to school equipment leasing and education task fund intervention among others. Adewunnu and Ehiamekalor cited in Nwakpa (2016) listed other sources through which money can be realised to run secondary education to include; Parents Teachers Association (PTA), use of direct labour, payment of extra lesson, proceeds from school activities, appeal fund raising and community involvement, donations, old student associations and non-governmental organisations. Also, supporting this view of funding of secondary education, Ndu, Oche and Okeke cited in Nwakpa (2016) indicated that one of the sources of fund for educational development is community fund raising. Okunamiri in Nwagu (2001) opined that education could be financed through the followingsources; educational levy, donations, rental, old student financial assistance, registration fees etc.

Accordingly, Charles cited in Gongera and Okoh (2013) identified the following sources of revenue for secondary education finance as levies, PTA levies, money realised from school farms, endowments, donations, local fund raising and rentals etc. To buttress this, Adewunmu and Ehiamentor cited in Nwakpa (2016) stated that inadequacy of financial resources will certainly have effect on both the state and its local governments. The fact that the state government cannot adequately fund the secondary education implies that the school managers must work for other sources of fund available to their schools. They stated that the alternative sources through which money can be realised to run secondary schools include; Parents Teachers Association (PTA), use of direct labour, payment of extra lessons, proceed from school activities, appeal fund raising, community involvement, donations, Old Student Association and through governmental organisations (NGO). In sum, a proper utilization of the discussed alternative sources of financing secondary education in Rivers State by the school management will take care of the inadequacy (ies) in the funding of secondary education. This is so because provision of good quality secondary education is a critical tool in generating opportunities and benefits of social and economic development (World Bank report, 2005). Educating people means putting opportunities into their hands and it is recognised as one of the best anti-poverty strategies. It is also one of the best ways of ensuring a nation's economic prosperity and competitiveness.

Effects of secondary education funding in Rivers State

Provision of funds to secondary school system is a significant factor that determines the extent a school system can creditably carry out its services. In a public secondary school the personnel provides the driving force that directs or manages the resources, while fund procures both the personnel and the enabling environment that prompts the system to attain its goals. Thus Ebong (2006) observed that money is the fuel and lubricant which propels any business or social organisation activity to be financed. It is needed for putting up infrastructures, furnishing the schools and offices, payment of salaries, maintenance of equipment and other ever growing needs added to the school functions by society as training on the job or in-service course for the required manpower.

The introduction of free and compulsory education by the Rivers State Government in the face of underfunding has also constituted a big challenge to school administration; as a result there has been some level of uncontrolled surge in students' enrolment such that the school administrators are struggling to cope. To worsen it all, the Rivers State Government and including the Federal Government of Nigeria have in fact not been able to comply with the United Nations educational scientific cultural organisation (UNESCO) recommendation that at least 26% of every country's annual budget be spent in education (Okocha, 2008).

Also, lamenting on the poor quality of education funding in public schools in Rivers State, the Executive Governor of the State Barrister Nyesome Wike stated that

“For far too long we have failed to work the talk on the poor quality of education that is in our public school system especially at the basic level, which continued to fail and dash the hopes of parents. To this end, we have allocated the sum of ₦30 billion Naira to the ministry of education for 2017 budget estimate to invest in providing educational infrastructures and improving the quality of education in the state” (vanguard, 28 December, 2016).

The Rivers State budget estimates in 2017 confirmed the state of education funding in the state as a paltry sum of thirty billion naira (₦30 billion) Naira only was allocated to the education sector, a mere 6.38% of total budget of four hundred and seventy billion (₦470 billion) Naira only. This prompted Nwangwu (2005) to state that the foundation of education is frail when education is not well funded and the products of such education are weak intellectuals. It is observable traits in Rivers State that public secondary education is faced with inadequate resources and instructional materials such as textbooks, laboratory equipment, audio-visual materials among others and these have in itself posed serious challenges in school administration in Rivers State. Olembo and Cameroon cited in Gongera and Okoth (2013) indicated that school principals face increasing administrative difficulties as a result of underfunding.

These include inadequate and badly constructed buildings, shortage of books and equipment, lack of proper furniture particularly desks, untrained and half trained teachers who seldom stay long in the profession, overcrowded classrooms, poor communication and few supporting services especially health services.

The UNESCO recommendation of 26% of the annual budget to education is never implemented in Nigeria, talk less in Rivers State. Secondary education in Rivers State is grossly funded and this is manifested in poor quality of education, inadequate provision of human and material resources in schools. It is now a known fact that secondary education in Rivers State is practically for the children of the poor parents. The inability of secondary education in Rivers State to achieve its goals has encouraged the proliferation of private secondary schools in the state with its own attendant problems. To ensure that the public secondary education in the state is not allowed to collapse completely, due to poor funding, government should devise alternative sources of funds to finance secondary education in the state. In the same vain, Fafunwa cited in Okoroma (2002) worrying about the situation of infrastructural decay in secondary schools across the country, observed that Nigerian secondary schools were faced with acute shortage of equipment, facilities and instructional materials, noting that similar implementation problems beclouded the UPE scheme. The unavailability of adequate funding of secondary education in Nigeria has been noted by Taiwo in Okoroma (2002) when he stated that the premises, building, furniture and equipment of a school are its materials and resources, when they are suitable, adequate and functional they facilitate school administration and the curriculum and also raise the tone and spirit of the school. This paper upholds that there is significant relationship between implementation of adequate funding and quality of secondary education. It simply means that the more funds are spent in secondary schools the more the quality of the schools and its products, and the less funds that are spent the less quality of the schools.

There are abundant literatures to prove the various ways injection of insufficient funds tells on the quality of school system. Insufficient funds hinder the provision of infrastructural facilities, laboratory equipment, computers, power plants and other stationeries. Lack of these facilities in any secondary school frustrates effective school administration and ultimately aborts educational goals. In Rivers State of Nigeria, the situation may not be different. On this note, Arye and Jenker cited in Anero (2017) observed that the problem in many developing countries is that the government lacks either the financial resources, or the political will to meet their citizens' educational needs, school attendance, especially for girls is far from universal, and many children drop out of school before completing their primary and secondary education. Many children who attend school receive an inadequate education because of poor funding culminating into poorly trained, under paid teachers, overcrowded classrooms and lack of basic teaching tools such as textbooks, chalkboards, pen and papers. Among other sources, a recall of the finding in Nigeria; consultations of improved primary education (1999) becomes relevant in this context. It has this to say as cited in Anero (2017) that the school environment was found to be far from conducive to learning, pupils safety, security and health, classroom space was inadequate meaning that many children are either instructed in the open air or share classes with up to four other classes as well as being insufficient in numbers, classrooms are generally in poor state of repairs. There is little or no funding to meet maintenance or running costs or to obtain supplies of instructional materials and other education inputs. Teacher effectiveness and student learning were found to be further limited by the inadequate supply of materials. The headmasters and principals have no funds to respond to minor maintenance problems or to purchase supplies and incidentals. Therefore, the role of secondary education is vital to the development of the state and the success of secondary education is hinged on adequate financing.

Factors militating proper funding of secondary education in Rivers State

Educational funding in Nigeria today is a crucial national problem. The demand for education is so high because education is not only an investment in human capital but it is also a pre-requisite for economic development (Ubogu, 2011). Several factors constitute challenges in education funding of secondary education in Rivers State in particular and Nigeria as a whole. One of these factors is: Inadequacy of

funds by government. Government investment in secondary education falls short of public expectations. The percentage revenue allocation to the sector has been grossly low or inadequate. Relying on the benchmark advocated by United Nations educational scientific cultural organization (UNESCO), it is still implicit that the education sector still faces the problem of inadequate funding. A sensory look or analysis into the 2017-2020 budgetary provisions for education in Rivers State showed that in 2017 (6.38 %), 2018 (9.8 %), in 2019 (NA), and 2020 (3%) of the state budget went into the educational sector.

This issue of poor funding of education sector, for which the UNESCO and other stakeholders have consistently advanced for an increase have not been adhered to. But it is not news that, for so many years after the UNESCO recommendation, Nigerians are told that the solution for proper funding for educational sector is not in view. For example, on the 4th of October, 2002, the Chairman House of Representatives committee on education, Dr. Matazu was reported to have stated that allocation of 26% of annual federal budget as recommended by UNESCO is not feasible, he said that UNESCO's suggestion is laudable but would not be implemented because, other sectors of the economy needed equal attention (Amaele, 2006).

Thus, Rivers State as one of the states within the Nigeria Federation, that has been termed educationally disadvantaged and almost at its precipice, owing to a myriad of problems bedeviling the education sector will have to wait for a long time to actualize its dream of adequate funding. Morphet cited in Afolayan (2014) argued that the financial provisions for education established the limit with which schools and educational institutions must operate; they also determine the quality and quantity of education it provides. The success of any school rests on the resources made available to it since other vital elements in the school can be obtained if adequate funds are made available. Certainly, it is evident with the view above that if secondary education in Rivers State is to meet up the genuine desires and needs of the state, it must be adequately funded and prudently managed by the government and school administrators. Also, a lot of reasons have been advanced by experts in education as militating poor funding of secondary education in Nigeria, which includes lack of genuine focus in secondary education by the government. This implies that adequate attention is not given to education resulting to careless and unrealistic budgeting provisions; ineffective methods of fund disbursement, management of funds by school principals, inadequate statistical data in terms of students enrolment, number of classes and facilities, inconsistencies in policy formation, recession and sharp practices by school administrators in unending importation and inflation (Obi, 2014). Government faces budgetary constraints with the finance ministry claiming that there are no funds to employ more teachers and meet the physical infrastructural development. To buttress the above fact, since 2013, no single teacher had been employed by the Rivers state government to replace aging and retiring teachers in the service of the state, hence this has left all the schools in Rivers State without enough teaching and non teaching staff.

Although with the demand for public education and training the government budget has been stretched so much, that the government in a way has intensified partnership in educational funding with various stakeholders and groups. Adewale, Ajayi and Enikanoselu cited in Ubogu (2018) were of the view that education in Nigeria has been experiencing financial crisis, and there is less money to spend on primary, secondary and tertiary education by the various governments due to low revenue accruing to the government. While there are increasing complaints about the underfunding of the educational sector, the government accuses the education sector of inefficient utilization of available resources.

CONCLUSION

Financing education in the country today is a crucial national problem, and the future of any country lies in the quality of its education. It is very clear; we cannot have quality education at any level without adequate funding of the sector. Secondary education plays a strategic role in preparing the individual for a useful living within the society; and preparation for higher education. It also serves in the training of middle level manpower for the development of the economy.

It is disheartening that studies show the existence of quality secondary education in Rivers State, as observed in the increased number of secondary schools and student intakes but very low quality in terms

of output produced. The fact remains that secondary education in Rivers State has continued to experience loss of facility, deterioration of equipment and plants and uncompleted projects as a result of financial crisis facing the system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Twenty –six percent (26%) annual budget of Rivers State government should be allocated and properly managed for education sector as UNESCO demands.
2. All stake holders must become involved in the financing of education especially secondary education- parents and guardians, the society in general, the private sectors and non-government agencies.
3. Government should give approval to school managers to explore other alternative sources of financing secondary education with an aim of achieving educational development goals.
4. Government should develop a realistic secondary education data-bank as this will help in adequate planning and funding of this level of education, for its success has a lot of positive implications to the state.

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