

EDUCATION FINANCING IN NIGERIA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSES OF PRE-SAP AND POST-SAP EPOCHS

Eme, Okechukwu Innocent & Ike, Festus Odili

Department of Public Administration and Local Government
University of Nigeria, Nsukka & Institute of Management & Technology, Enugu

Abstract

Before 1986, African governments invested heavily in education and studies show that in Nigeria and other countries in Africa, this was the period of the most rapid expansion of education. The economic crisis of the 1980s led to the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) with prescription from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank for reduction in public investment in education. In reality these policy led to decrease in public expenditure on education, increased participation of the private sector, commercialization of education and stagnation of salary of teachers in the face of inflation leading to decline in the quality of education. One other way that has led to declining quality of education is the neglect of tertiary institutions in Nigeria especially as from the mid-1980s. This study assessed comparatively Nigeria's budgetary allocations to the Education sector from year 1980 to 2016. Simple percentage method was adopted in the empirical investigation. This has led to decay in the educational sector of the country. Data used are Federal Government Recurrent Expenditure from 1980 to 2016 sourced from Central Bank of Nigeria CBN Statistical Bulletin (2000 - 2011), Budget allocations from the Budget office (1980-2016). The study showed that Nigeria's budgetary allocation was less than the 26 percent recommended by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in the years under review. The study also discovered that the allocated funds were not fully implemented by the relevant agencies. For this to be corrected, the study recommended among others that, the country should implement at least the 26 percent target in its yearly budgets, more funds should be allocated for capital projects and there is the need for recommitment and fiscal discipline in the formulation and implementation of budgets.

Keywords: Education Crisis, Budgetary Allocation, Infrastructure Decay, Industrial Actions

Introduction

Education is the hub to human existence and development. It is through education that values are transmitted across generations. Education enables society to create and domesticate knowledge. In the kind of knowledge driven society that the global village we call the world has turned into, any society that endangers its educational system, endangers its future. The university is the most important institution for the creation and dissemination of knowledge. However, the university

is an expensive institution to run. Every society has to decide for itself how to run its universities. One extreme position in terms of university funding is for the direct beneficiaries of university education to bear the full cost of such education. The other extreme at the other end of the funding spectrum is for government to bear the full cost. In between these two extremes are various funding options involving the direct beneficiaries, government and third parties or cost-sharing.

Nigeria's public education institutions have, for quite some time now, become a sorry sight. This has been occasioned by the seemingly endless list of heart-rending challenges. Several challenges are besetting the education sector with various policy documents detailing the way forward on education. Some of the challenges facing the transformation of Nigeria's education sector include: access and equality, standards and quality assurance, funding, resources mobilization and utilization. This accounts for substandard facilities like classrooms, lecture halls/theatres, laboratories, workshops, staff offices, recreational facilities, hostels, e-learning facilities, studios and workshops. There is also the perennial, unattractive remuneration for the community members comprising both the academic and non-academic staff. The absence of appropriate welfare package adds up to the problems.

Proprietors of the public education institutions at the federal, state and church councils with education regulatory agencies do not help matters either. They overreach themselves by going beyond their briefs to create obstacles towards effective university management and that of other tertiary institutions. Even the National Universities Commission (NUC) appears not to be up and doing in fully discharging its regulatory role at the public institutions under its care.

At a recent interactive media chat in Abuja on the state of Nigeria's education, startling revelations were made, especially on how budgetary allocations are squandered on flimsy excuses, and on how internationally set standards are grossly undermined by official corruption. This paper takes a critical look at the growing divide between fiscal projections and the development of the education sector before 1999 and post-1999 epochs. In this paper, we will attempt to highlight the various education finance options, and within the context of the Nigeria's stage of development, make suggestions on the way forward. To this end, section two will deal with the issue of education finance. Section three will highlight the general principles of education finance in Nigeria. In section four, an attempt will be made to discuss in summary fashion the funding options adopted by other countries. Section five will present a brief history of education funding in Nigeria, while section six will address funding imperatives for Nigerian public universities. Section seven will end the paper with conclusion and recommendations.

Education Finance: A Comparative & Thematic Exposition

Government funding of education has been inadequate. The funding of education is shared among different levels of government and supplemented by funds from other sources such as businesses, community organizations, and levies charged to parents. The revenue collected through fees constitutes an insignificant proportion of the revenue of the institutions. Inadequate funding of education has been one of the

most significant causes of the low quality of much of the education offered at all levels. Funding allocations have been in flux during the last decade. Overall, there has been a drop in the funding level of education.

Education finance is one of those academic fields which lie on the borderline between economics of education and education law. It is concerned with the income and expenditure of authorities of educational institutions and with the adjustment of expected income and expected expenditure. Ogbonnaya (2000) described education finance as the process by which tax revenues and other resources are derived for the establishment and operation of educational institutions as well as the process by which these resources are allocated to institutions in different geo-political zones in the polity. The scope of education of education finance they include among the following: imprest, payment vouchers, finance virement, bank statements, cash management and financial control; taxation budget, classification of government expenditure, capital and recurrent expenditure, role of government and non-government agencies in the funding of education and sources of funds and problems of funding educational programmes in Nigeria.

The practice at the beginning of every financial year is that the Federal, State and the Local Government announce the estimated revenue and expenditure for the year based on projected estimate of the income accruing to them. The actual revenue may be more or less than the initial estimated revenue and this will necessarily affect expenditure. Some state ministries of education and/or their agencies particularly those in the Northern part of Nigeria give grants to secondary schools in their areas of jurisdiction. The grants are used for the payment of teacher's salaries and allowances, the provision of school uniforms, textbooks and instructional materials. However, for most secondary schools in the Eastern part of the country, this is not the case. One major question about financing education is who should finance education? The argument has always been whether the cost of education should be borne by government or by individuals receiving education. There has been a lot of debate about cost of education especially on who should bear the cost. The debate can be reduced to three contending perspectives. These are the Capitalist, the Socialist and Mixed –economy that is situated between the two extremes. The first perspective argues that cost of education should be borne essentially by parents with government providing the enabling environment. That is individual beneficiaries are fully responsible for funding his or her education. They are of the view that education should be subjected to free market forces. This group posits that families and individuals ought to pay fees in order to access nominally available public services, otherwise these services would not be available or their quality would become unacceptably low (Tomasevski, 2003). To address the problem of quality, institutions were encouraged to charge fees that are moderate.

The major setback with this view is that those who are poor will not be able to pay and they will be denied access to education (Sule-kano & Edeh, 2007).

The second thesis argues that education is a right, which must be funded by government. This perspective is pure socialist solution and is the case where government funds education fully. They argue that there are enough resources in the

world to fund at least basic education for all children. They posit that the problem of inadequate funding is as result of corruption, misplaced priority, inequality and poor policy choices. This thesis adds that education should not only be free but also compulsory. They are of the view that government should bear all the costs because even if the direct costs of education are borne by government, the indirect costs (such as uniform, transport and school meals) may be beyond the capacity of the family while the opportunity cost may be impossible to bear. This view equally believes that education is a human right issue that should be accorded to all human beings solely by reason of being human. There are a lot of international and domestic human rights instruments that provide for education as a fundamental human right. These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981) and the Child Rights Act (2003). Scholars such as Subrahmanian (2002, & Okowa,2011) among others are the major defenders of this view. For this school of thought, there is a relationship between education and development and as such education is a key index of development.

Specifically, the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria provides as follows: Government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy, and to do this end Government shall as and when practicable provide-

- a. Free compulsory and universal primary education.
- b. Free secondary education;
- c. Free university education (FRN, 1999:Section18(c)).

In pursuant of this part of the 1999 Constitution, all governments at the federal, state and local governments should vigorously and progressively drive Nigeria's educational funding towards the minimum bench mark of 26 percent. It would then be relatively easy to define what other stakeholders have to contribute. Given the foregoing, it is important for the government to up her education allocation to 26 percent. This perspective equally posit that no right could exist without corresponding government obligation and that government is obliged to make education available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable.

The third group while coming from the rights based approach like the second Socialist perspective posits that education is a right and government must not only endeavor to remove all the barriers to education but must also take steps to utilize to the maximum of its available resources to achieve progressively the full realisation of the right to education and other social and economic rights. The International Donor Agencies and International Development Partners namely the DFID (UKaid), USAID, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), China International Development Agency (CHIDA), Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), and the British Council assist Nigeria in the implementation of the programmes and projects. Nigeria receive generous support from them and one major significant development was the admission of Nigeria into the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) which enabled her to receive a grant of 100 million US Dollars (FGN,2015).

According to Igbuzor (2006), in order to promote the International rights based approach, which emphasizes the participation of citizens, led to the convocation of the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 which clearly in Article 1 that every person – child, Youth and Adult – shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic needs. This declaration was reaffirmed at the World Summit for Children also held in 1990, which stated that all children should have access to basic education by the year 2000. The World Summit for Children placed a lot of emphasis on raising the levels of female literacy. In a bid to achieve education goals, the Dakar World Education Forum was held as a follow-up meeting to the WCEFA where new sets of goals were set to be attained by the year 2015.

Two of the Dakar goals (Goals 2 and 6) address the issue of quality education. Similarly, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted in September 2000 at the United Nations Millennium Declaration has two of the eight goals devoted to education. They are goal 2 (to achieve universal primary education) and goal 3 (to promote gender equality and empower women), (United Nations, 2000). As noted above, the right to education is enshrined in many international human rights covenants. Similarly, the right of all Nigerians to education has always been provided for in Nigerian constitutions. Specifically, the 1999 Constitution provides in Section 18 that:

- (1) Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels.
- (2) Government shall promote science and technology.
- (3) Government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy, and to this end, Government shall as soon and when practicable provide:
 - (a) Free, compulsory and universal primary education;
 - (b) Free secondary education;
 - (c) Free university education;
 - (d) Free adult literacy programme (FGN, 1999).

This perspective also argues that there are three layers of obligations in matters of social and economic rights: obligations to respect protect and fulfill. The obligation to respect requires states to refrain from interfering with social and economic rights e.g. refrain from forced eviction. The obligation to protect requires states to prevent violations by third parties, for example, ensuring that private employers comply with labour standards. The obligation to fulfill requires states to take appropriate legislative, administrative, budgetary, judicial and other measures towards the full realisation of such rights (Igbuzor,2006).

In view of this thesis, one of the major fallout from the vision is to guarantee the well – being and productivity of the people; since education is key in the realization of national set goals like building human capacity for sustainable livelihood and national development and ensuring the maximum development of the potentials of individual in a knowledge driven society. The provision of infrastructure, increasing enrolment figure, enhancing capacity and competence of

teachers, enforcing guidelines for standards and education quality assurance, was seen as highly imperative, and was therefore featured in the vision. Furthermore, in the former President Jonathan's Transformation Agenda, education was regarded as a tool for the transformation of the Nigerian society and allocations are made for the years of the implementation of the Agenda.

Although scholars and policy analysts are not in agreement on cost sharing arrangement for education, there are certain costs that must be borne by government if we must achieve universal access to education as posited by Action Aid (2003). In a cost tracking workshop, organised by them from 13-17 October, 2003, in Johannesburg, development practitioners drawn from Africa, Asia Europe and Latin America discussed issues of cost of education and recommended a cost sharing formula among the various stakeholders of education. To this end, participants allocated various costs of education to the community, government and private sector. The workshop concluded that all stakeholders have some responsibilities to ensure that children are supported to acquire quality education. The issue of who pays for what should be critically examined within particular context. Communities need to understand the various dynamics involved in national budgeting to adequately mobilize them to make demands while the role of Action Aid and benchmark organizations will be to facilitate this process (Igbuzor, 2006). Among the major exponents of this view include Nigeria- UNESCO (1999), Babalola (1998, Omole, 2012, Odebiyi & Ania, 1999, World Bank, 1988, & Babalola & Sikwibe, 2000).

Supporting this perspective and since education is on the legislative concurrent list, responsibility is shared between the federal, state and local governments. However, the federal ministry of education (FME) plays a dominant role in regulating the education sector, engaging in policy formation, monitoring of implementation, and setting and maintaining standards. The ministry is also responsible for collecting and collating data for purposes of educational planning and financing; maintaining uniform standards of education throughout the supervisory role of the inspectorate services department within the ministry; harmonizing educational policies and procedures of all the state of the federation through the instrumentality of the national council on education; effecting co-operation in educational matters on an international scale and developing curricula and syllabuses at the national level in conjunction with other bodies.

A Comparative Analysis of Education Allocation between Pre-SAP era & Post-SAP era

Since the Presidency signed the 2016 budget estimates of N6.06trillion out of which N500billion was proposed for education, some observers have contended that the vote still fell short of UNESCO's 26 per cent recommendation and was not likely to effect change in the troubled sector. The trend of course is far from encouraging considering the deplorable state of our education system. Nigeria needs to improve the current allocation to shake off the ignoble state of the system by applying the funds largely to significantly improve facilities for teaching and learning, teacher quality and welfare and curriculum delivery. We need the funds to

break down obstacles to access of over 10 million out-of-school children. We need the funds to improve school safety. We need the funds to improve reading culture among our youths and for overall improvement in the quality of delivery of education. The allocation for education only gives a narrow view of the anticipated picture of funding education in Nigeria in 2016.

In consideration of the resources invested by government in education, it is clear that Nigeria is failing to invest the maximum of available resources for the progressive realization of the right to education. This is evident when FGN education investments are compared to the resources other nations with less endowments than Nigeria put into education. This is a failure of the fulfillment obligation. The four cardinal parameters of the right to education are availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability. Putting low investment in education within a historical perspective, Eme & Ugwu (2016) posited that in the 1960s and 1970s, African governments invested heavily in education and studies show that in Nigeria and other countries in Africa, this is the period of the most rapid expansion of education. The economic crisis of the 1980s led to the introduction of structural adjustment programmes (SAP) with prescription from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank for reduction in public investment in education. As Bonat (2003) adds that:

The Bank did not suggest that public spending on education should be boosted at the expense of servicing external debts. The World Bank prescribed adjustment, revitalization and selective expansion policies in order to address the education problems...The purpose of adjustment was to “alleviate the burden of education and training on public budgets.” Because the Bank expected continuing structural adjustment to further erode public spending on education, it recommended adjustment to diversify sources of educational finance “through increased cost sharing in public education,” and the “encouragement of nongovernmental supplies of educational services.” The Bank recommended “increased user charges” in public education, especially for tertiary education. The Bank also recommended “containment of unit costs” “especially in utilization of teachers” (low pay policy for teachers), lowering construction standards for educational infrastructure, and benefiting from “the tendency of students to repeat grades or drop out of school (Bonat,2003:7).

In reality these policies led to decrease in public expenditure on education, increased participation of the private sector, commercialization of education and stagnation of salary of teachers in the face of inflation leading to decline in the quality of education. One other way that has led to declining quality of education is the neglect of tertiary institutions in Nigeria especially as from the mid-1980s. It has been documented that:

The World Bank has, since the mid-1980s, canvassed the position that Nigeria and African countries do not need higher education but only training of its youth in basic education and technical education. The UBE is predicated on the same assumption. Pay less attention to university education and fund UBE. Leave universities to private hands; re-introduce the 1986 Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) formula of cost recovery, rationalization, and commercialization and public universities will die a natural death. But UBE will survive because the World Bank will fund it. This is the illusion of the decade (Fashina,2003:23).

Studies have therefore shown that education capital expenditure has declined sharply since the 1980s, and by 1988, the real value of capital expenditure on education was less than 17 percent of the average value of the 1980s (Civil Society Coalition for Poverty Eradication (CISCOPE) (2005). This trend has continued and the budgetary allocations to education have been less than 10 percent of the total federal budget from 1995 to 2006. It is interesting to note that while the expenditure on education has remained low, the average expenditure on administration was 21 percent of the total expenditure between 1995 and 1999 but grew to 31 percent between 1999 and 2003(Civil Society Coalition for Poverty Eradication (CISCOPE) (2005). Evidence and records from the Central Bank of Nigeria support this rise and fall of budgetary allocation to the sector before 1999.

Table II: Federal Government Expenditure on Education (1980 – 2004) in N Million

Year	Allocation to Education			Total Budget			Share of Education in Total Budget (%)
	Recurrent	Capital	Total	Recurrent	Capital	Total	
1980	1597.2	952.6	1549.8	15661.0	10681.1	26342.1	5.88
1981	543.7	440.9	984.6	4846.7	6564.2	11410.9	8.62
1982	646.7	488.4	1135.1	4859.5	7998.0	12857.5	8.83
1983	620.8	346.6	967.4	5278.8	6807.3	12086.1	8.00
1984	716.3	144.9	861.2	11331.7	4634.6	15966.3	5.39

1985	669.5	180.7	850.2	11237.8	6516.4	17754.2	4.79
1986	652.8	442.0	1094.8	5635.9	5445.9	11081.8	9.88
1987	514.4	139.1	653.5	10749.2	4759.4	15508.6	4.21
1988	802.3	281.8	1084.1	13708.6	6582.2	20290.8	5.34
1989	1719.9	221.9	1941.8	20810.0	6309.4	27119.4	7.16
1990	1962.6	331.7	2294.3	27208.4	9055.6	36264	6.33
1991	1265.1	289.1	1554.2	25580.5	9591.1	35171.6	4.42
1992	1676.3	384.1	2060.4	36060.0	15975.9	52035.9	3.96
1993	6436.1	1563.0	799.1	93500.5	18600.0	112100.5	0.713
1994	7878.1	2405.7	10283.8	79200.0	31000.0	110200	9.33
1995	9421.3	3307.4	12728.7	108936.6	44559.0	153495.6	8.29
1996	12136.0	3215.8	15351.8	141000.0	48000.0	189000.0	8.12
1997	12136.0	3808.0	15944	160733.2	115990.0	276723.2	5.76
1998	13928.3	12793.0	26721.3	182542.1	185375.0	367917.1	7.26
1999	23047.2	8516.6	31563.8	221119.3	136984.2	358103.5	8.81
2000	44225.5	23342.6	67568.1	353126.5	311608.8	664735.3	10.16
2001	39884.6	19860.0	59744.6	579329.1	438696.5	1018025.6	5.87
2002	100240.2	9215.0	109455.2	867336.5	321298.1	1188734.6	9.21
2003	64755.9	14680.2	79455.2	984268.0	241688.6	1225956.6	6.48
2004	76527.7	9053.1	85580.8	1062691.4	314649.6	1377341	6.21

Source: Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletin Vol. 15, December 2003

In the table above for instance, education budget between 1980 and 2004 indicate that the nominal value of budgetary allocation to education fell from N1549.8 million in 1980 to N1135.1 million in 1982. It however fell further to N850.2 million in 1985 before climbing to N1094.8 million in 1986. During the years of Structural Adjustment Programme, SAP, specifically between 1987 and 1992, there was a sharp increase in the educational expenditure as it rose from N653.5 million in 1987 to N2294.3 million in 1990. It is pertinent to note that the political crisis of 1992 and 1993 brought about a sharp decline in the education expenditure in Nigeria. Between 1991 and 1993, public expenditure on education had sharply fallen from N1554.2 million in 1991 to as low as N799.1 million in 1993 (Adebiyi and Oladele, 2005).

Subsequently, public expenditure on education in Nigeria recorded an unprecedented increase between 1994 and 2002 rising from N10283.8 million to an all time high of N109455.2 million in 2002 before declining to N79455.2 million in 2003 and N85580.8 million in 2004. It should be noted that the above trends of public expenditure on education in Nigeria could be best described as haphazard and inconsistent which largely depends on the policy thrust and political will of the government of the day. More worrisome, however, is the fact that the increase in the public expenditure on education does not translate into a substantial increase in the share of the education in total budget. For instance, despite the fact that educational expenditure fell from N1549.8 million in 1980 to N984.6 million in 1981, the share of

education rose from 5.88% in 1980 to 8.62% in 1981. Similarly, despite the fact that public expenditure on education rose to N109455.2 million in 2002 (indicating more than 10 times the 1994 figure of N10283.8 million), the share of education fell from 9.33% to 9.21% between 1994 and 2002 (Okuneye, Maku, and Ayinla, 2008). Disheartening however is the fact that between 1986 and 1990; and between 1990 and 2002, the share of education in GDP of Nigeria averaged 1% and 0.72% respectively (Adebiyi, 2004) and 3% of her total expenditure on education between 1986 and 1992 (Olaniyi and Adam, 2003).

In Post- military era in 1999, the status of education allocation did not change. A look at the World Bank (2012) report of the annual budgetary allocation to education by some countries in Africa is saddening. Nigeria ranks last at 8.4% and Ghana ranks highest at 31.0%. This is from a country that prides herself on being the Giant of Africa. Several smaller African countries are allocating more to their educational sectors, than Nigeria, the second largest and the most populated country in Africa. A minimum budgetary allocation of 26% was recommended by UNESCO and Nigeria lags behind, averaging a meager 9%. This shows how seriously the government takes education.

Grants and foreign aids have not also alleviated the plethora of issues battling the education sector. The Nigerian government has not put in place appropriate policy measures that would monitor the maximum and effective utilization of foreign aids. The United States has supplied Nigeria with foreign aid for years, with little to show for the effort. Foreign aid mostly goes into the hands of corrupt bureaucrats who just end up siphoning the money away into their own pockets.

For instance, between 1999 and 2016, the cumulative government’s budgetary allocation to the education sector was grossly inadequate to address the problems in the sector. The table 111 below summarizes the year – by – year allocation to the sector between 1999 – 2016.

Table 1:

Year	Allocation in billion	Percentage
1999	N23.047	11.2%
2000	N44.225	8.3%
2001	N39.885	7.0%
2002	N100.2	5.9%
2003	N64.76	11.8%
2004	N72.22	7.8%
2005	N92.59	8.3%
2006	N166.6	8.7%
2007	N137.48	6.07%
2008	N210.00	13%
2009	N183.36	13%
2010	N249.08	12%
2011	N356.51	-

2012	N400.15	8.43 %
2013	N427.52	8.7 %
2014	N493.45	-
2015	N292,242,784,654	-
2016	500bn	-

Sources: From the authors and collections from the Budget office, CBN &NBS

According to Okezie(2014) while citing a publication by the Centre for Social Justice titled: Right to Education in Nigeria, posited that the financial projections that were made for capital projects in Vision 20:2020 for instance and the education sector budgets 2009- 2013 showed a gross disconnect, as it recorded a shortfall of over N346.8billion. Similarly, a review of the fiscal projections of the transformation agenda and education sector budgets also reveals a shortfall of N28.7 billion. Furthermore, the financial provisions in the transformation agenda and the SURE-P made provision for vocational education and implementation so far, has not been encouraging(Federal Ministry of Education,2014).

An analysis of the budgetary provisions for the year 2009-2013 showed that the budget was suffused with recurrent expenditure while capital expenditure received an average of 18.1%. This is below expectations in Education for all fast track initiative benchmark of at least 20% of the sector budget being allocated to capital projects. On the average, over the 2009-2013 periods, only 55.4% of the total released capital budget for the sector was utilized for projects. This shows low absorptive capacity on the part of the federal ministry of education. Further, the average utilization rate vis-à-vis the overall education capital budget was 44.7% over the period. The percentage of capital budget released on the average was 60.15% and the percentage of capital budget cash backed amounted to 57.22%.Also, on the average, only 63.1% of the cash backed funds were utilized in advancing the right to education (Federal Ministry of Education,2014).

Thus, the problem is not only centered on the amount provided to the sector, but also the poor releases and poor implementation of the budget. The federal government made available a total of N289.36billion for basic education through Universal basic education (UBEC). UBEC also made matching grants to states and a total of N43.077billion was un-accessed by states as at September 30, 2013. This is attributed to the fact that states were expected to provide 50% of the funds to be matched and to account for previous disbursements before accessing new tranches of funds. Between 2010-1012, the tertiary Education fund made available the sum of 259.4billion for various interventions in tertiary institutions. In general, Nigeria did not meet the 26% budget benchmark set by UNESCO for education funding (Okezie, 2014).

As a result of unparalleled decadence in the education system, the Obasanjo government decided to improve the situation in all federal tertiary institutions. The government encouraged universities, colleges, polytechnics, and research institutes to partner with the private with the private sector for funding as it was realized that government alone could not fund education. As the largest employer of the products

from such tertiary institutions, the private sector was encouraged to contribute to the training of its potential employees. In line with this, the 102 Federal Unity Schools were made to have their status changed by the public-private partnership initiative. A process, “Adopt-a-School Initiative” was introduced by the then minister of Education, Dr Oby Ezekwesili. This was done to allow some corporate organizations to discharge their social responsibilities by adopting some public schools and partnering in revamping the education sector as being done in some developed countries (Omolewa, 2008). The programme worked to some extent. A lot of Nigerian banks, companies, and non-governmental organizations adopted some schools and provided them with infrastructure and state of the art equipment.

Unfortunately, the PPP initiative received much criticism from many Nigerians. Besides this, the programme was introduced to secondary education barely six months to the expiration of the administration. Hence, not much was achieved through the initiative at the secondary school level. The government on its own failed to provide necessary orientation to the unity school teachers, parents, and the public on the need to embrace the reform process. Hence, people viewed the idea as a way of denying the children of the masses access to education.

Apart from the public-private partnership initiative in funding tertiary education, the government of Obasanjo encouraged schools, colleges, polytechnics, and universities to look inward for fund generation. Schools were allowed to charge reasonable amount as tuition and accommodation fees in order to cope with the financial challenges. The Obasanjo government also increased education funding and its budget for education in its bid to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) Agenda. As reported by the former minister of education, Oby Ezekwesili who posited in 2007 that:

...between 1999 and August 2006, the ETF allocated a total of N81.6 billion to universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education while the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) also disbursed N15.7 billion to states between 2005 and January 2006 and N7.56 billion between July 2006 and January 2007... from 2000 till date, education budget increased thus: N23.6 billion in 2000; N56.84 billion in 2001; N82.12 billion in 2002; N78.95 billion in 2003; N90.77 billion in 2004; N120.03 billion in 2005; N167.31 billion in 2006; and N189 billion in 2007 (Ogungbe,2011:83).

Although the quotation above depicts about N23.95 billion annual increases in education budget in the Obasanjo years, the government did not at any time achieve the minimum 26% of total annual budget for education as recommended by UNESCO. It could be seen from tables 1&11 that the estimates are not consistent and do not show either an increasing or decreasing trend over the years. This patterns

show that education funding was being done in an inconsistent manner depending on the interest of government in office. It also shows that there was no constituency and continuity of programme of action by the successive governments. The expectation is to see a pattern that will show an increase over the period as an indication of a growing economy.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Education is central to human existence and development. It is through education that values are transmitted across generations. Education enables society to create and domesticate knowledge. In the kind of knowledge driven society that the global village we call the world has turned into, any society that endangers its educational system, endangers its future.

Education institutions are the most important institutions for the creation and dissemination of knowledge. However, these institutions are expensive institutions to run. Every society has to decide for itself how to run its education institutions. One extreme position in terms of funding is for the direct beneficiaries of education to bear the full cost of such education. The other extreme at the other end of the funding spectrum is for government to bear the full cost. In between these two extremes are various funding options involving the direct beneficiaries, government and third parties.

In this paper, we attempted to highlight the various options, and within the context of the country's stage of development, make suggestions on the way forward. The first major conclusion from this study is that world-wide, it is the norm for governments to be heavily involved in the funding of education. The second conclusion that has emerged from this study is that in general, government funding of her education institutions has not matched the growth of enrolment and these institutions have therefore been forced to increasingly look elsewhere for their sustenance. This has meant a steady increase in tuition fees for those institutions that charge such fees and the introduction of tuition fees for those that did not. This is despite the fact that the price of crude oil rose to an unprecedented level in the Obasanjo and Jonathan years, the governments did not consider using part of the excess crude oil revenue to provide free education at all levels for Nigerians.

Nevertheless, the Obasanjo government has left the education sector much better than it met it. In terms of quality and quantity of access to primary, secondary, and tertiary education; teacher motivation; quality control; and infrastructure development, Nigeria has made much progress. Before 1999, the Nigerian education system was in a state of decay; there was high rate of illiteracy; the condition of school infrastructure was appalling; teachers were poorly trained and paid; the rate of drop-out was very high; and universities were without qualified lecturers (Lawal, 2008). In spite of all, it should be noted that every human society is aspiring for continuous improvement. A society that expresses complete satisfaction with its education may go back to its knees (Obanya, 2008).

Federal Government funding of federal government owned education institutions has not matched the growth of these institutions and there is a clear

imperative for the government to increase such funding to at least match the minimum of 26 per cent of the federal budgets as recommended by the UNESCO. This is more so as the 1999 Constitution has free university education as a major ultimate national objective. It has also been established in this study that the cost of providing good quality education to all qualified candidates is so much that government alone cannot do the job as the amount involved is more than the whole federal budget. Clearly, it is imperative that other stakeholders have to contribute. However, in order to properly assess the required contribution of non-government stakeholders, government has to do its part by allocating a minimum of 26 per cent of her budget to education. There is also the need for government to promote fiscal discipline.

Returning education to its pride of place requires the absolute commitment and sincerity of purpose of all the stakeholders including the proprietors, management, staff, students, host communities, catchment areas and the citizens. However, critical to an enduring, stable public education system is collective bargaining and keeping faith with all agreements, especially by the proprietors. When agreements are disobeyed, it weakens the desire to enter more, and so subjects the education system to perennial crises. The Nigerian public education system must have square pegs in square holes ably supported by government. It is hoped for instance that the full implementation of the blueprint of resuscitating public universities submitted by the Committee on Needs Assessment of Nigerian Universities (CNANU) inaugurated in 2012 by the federal government will be the starting-point of a comprehensive turn-around of the public education system.

The federal government should strive to progressively achieve the 26% UNESCO benchmark in education funding, so as to ensure availability, acceptability and adaptability of education. The disbursement of extra budgetary interventions such as TETFUND and NDDC funds should also be made to increase progressively. Government should also take steps to meet the minimum capital expenditure investment of at least 20% as recommended in the Education for all fast track initiative benchmark and thereafter progressively increase it to 40%. A special education infrastructure funds should also be provided to bridge the infrastructure deficit and improve teaching skills through enhanced training skills acquisition by teachers.

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