

PRIORITIZING EDUCATION BUDGET FOR FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract

This paper x-rayed the policy framework of education budget, the potencies of education in fostering social and economic stability and the situation analysis of education sector impairment in Nigeria. The potencies of education budget in fostering functional education for national development in Nigeria were highlighted. Situation analyses of the education sector impairments in Nigeria were reviewed. Issues hampering developments in the education sector in Nigeria were raised. Based on the issues and problems analyzed, recommendations were proffered and conclusions drawn.

Keywords: Education, Budget, Education Budget, Functional Education, National Development

Introduction

Education is the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes through teaching, learning, experience, training, observing, reading, travelling etc which help the individual develop as a useful and acceptable member of the community (Ezugwu, 2010). The guiding principle of education in Nigeria is the equipping of every citizen with such knowledge, skills, attitudes and values as will enable him derive maximum benefits from his membership of society; live a fulfilling life and contribute towards the development and welfare of the community (FRN, 2004).

Little wonder Nigeria has adopted education as an instrument par excellence for effecting national development. The attainment of excellence makes the pursuit of high quality education imperative. Quality education means how excellently the education is meeting the needs of the age and how relevant it is in terms of functionality, fitness and appropriateness to the needs of the society concerned (Obilor, 2012). Functionality in education will ensure that the recipients are equipped with the potentials and capabilities for self-reliance and economic security. The recipients will explore school-industry linkages or school-world of works relationships by transferring the skills acquired from school to industry. According to Fanfuwa (2013), education is central to the development of the economy. It makes provisions for the availability of manpower to all the sectors. The flourishing extent of every sector is dependent on the capacity of the human resource provisions by the education sector. It is such that when the available manpower is lacking in quality and quantity, the education sector is not geared to maximize its productive capacity. This could be the reason for the snail-pace development of Nigeria nation. Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today (Fanfuwa, 2013). Education in Nigeria has suffered serious set back as a result of neglect from those in authorities (Ibara, 2011). Government has not given due attention to the importance education deserves in terms of having the capacity or elixir to lift any nation from poverty and backwardness (underdeveloped status to a developed status). Corroborating this view, Odiaka (2013) opines that science education is the bedrock of technological breakthrough. Technological advancement is a must for any nation to rise above poverty and

backwardness. Technologically advanced countries of the world attained their status through consistent upward review of their education budget.

The budget, simply put, is a statement of income and expenditure and an indication of the government's expenditure priorities for the year (Odiaka, 2013). Besides, a budget is an estimate of costs, revenues and resources over a specified period, reflecting a reading of future financial conditions and goals. Being one of the administrative tools, budget serves as a plan of action for achieving quantified objectives, standard for measuring performance and a device for coping with foreseeable adverse conditions. In agreement with this notion, Oseni (2012) asserted that a budget is government document presenting the government's proposed revenues and spending for a financial year that is often passed by the legislature, approved by the chief executive or president and presented by the Finance Minister to the nation.

Education budget, therefore, is the translation of educational needs to a financial plan which is interpreted to the public in such a way that when formally adopted, it expresses the kind of educational programme the community is willing to support financially and morally for a one-year period. It spells out a comprehensive financial plan that involves planning for the needs of the school; seeking adequate funding for the programme; spending the received funds and evaluating the results of the process and programme (Chizea, 2009).

Effective education budget is potent for fostering functional education for national development as it is crucial for ensuring a high quality of education and for improving the literacy rate. Corroborating this assertion, Kupoluyi (2012) opined that a well functioning budget system is vital to the formation of sustainable fiscal policy and facilitates economic growth. Igbuzor (2006) also averred that in Nigeria, our economic growth and educational problems are exacerbated by the weak budget systems in all tiers of government and faulty budget choices.

Education Budget

Policy Framework

According to section 81 of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, the president shall cause to be prepared and laid before each House of the National Assembly at any time in each financial year estimates of the revenues and expenditures of the federation for the next following financial year. Procedures for the execution, monitoring and evaluation of FGN budget are clear through a comprehensive, integrated accounting system, which provides a reliable basis for assessing payment arrears in the treasury; standardized procurement and employment regulations which is open; department of budget monitoring and evaluation which monitors projects and reports and another department, which in conjunction with treasury monitors disbursement of funds and its application by spending ministries or agencies (Ekeoha, 2012).

Usually the government councils translate their services through budget as it has to do with financial plan or estimate of proposed income and expenditure for a particular period normally a year. It is the translation in financial terms of government policies; a fiscal estimation of what government plans to spend, where it plans to spend it on and how it intends to source the funds. It is the second most important document after the constitution in any nation. Budget undergoes some processes before it becomes both a law and an economic tool.

Budgetary process involves all centers, programmes and administrative units of an entity in the development of periodic budget. The process involves all the executive and legislative process, that is, collection of estimates from the various government departments to the defense before the

various committees of the legislatures and debates in the floor of the houses, the passage into law and the final implementation and monitoring (Chegwe, 2012).

Situation Analysis

Table 1 below unveils budget allocations to education from 1960 – 2016 in Nigeria.

Table 1: Federal Government Budgetary Allocation to Education Sector, 1960 – 2016

Year	Allocation as Percentage of Total Budget	Year	Allocation as Percentage of Total Budget	Year	Allocation as Percentage of Total Budget
1960	6.02	1979	3.70	1998	10.27
1961	6.15	1980	4.95	1999	11.12
1962	5.19	1981	6.45	2000	8.36
1963	3.43	1982	8.09	2001	7.00
1964	3.65	1983	4.04	2002	5.9
1965	3.57	1984	4.49	2003	1.83
1966	4.23	1985	3.79	2004	10.5
1967	4.88	1986	2.69	2005	9.3
1968	2.84	1987	1.93	2006	11.0
1969	2.20	1988	2.40	2007	8.09
1970	0.69	1989	3.55	2008	13.0
1971	0.53	1990	2.83	2009	6.54
1972	0.62	1991	1.09	2010	6.40
1973	0.88	1992	3.86	2011	1.69
1974	2.96	1993	5.62	2012	10.0
1975	4.57	1994	7.13	2013	8.70
1976	8.71	1995	7.20	2014	10.7
1977	3.12	1996	12.32	2015	10.9
1978	11.44	1997	17.59	2016	6.07

Source: Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletin and Information (2016), New York

Table 1 is the Kpolovie and Obilor’s identification of the Nigeria’s budgetary allocation to education from 1960 to 2016. A cursory look at the table reveals the steady rise and fall of budget allocation to education which was fairly stable within the periods 1996 – 1999, 2004 – 2008 and 2012 – 2015 respectively. Though fairly stable within these periods the budget allocation to education failed to meet the UNESCO requirement of a minimum of 26% of a developing country’s annual total budgetary allocation for education. This gross underfunding of the educational sector in Nigeria and the neglect of the maintenance of the physical facilities, instructional and living conditions have deteriorated in many schools, classrooms, libraries and laboratories (Nzeh, 2013). It is sad to note that this nation at 21st century is insufficiently prepared to cope or compete in the global economy, where growth will be based even more heavily on the clinical and scientific knowledge. Moja (2000) averred that over 60% of academic staff in the Nigeria university system is in the category of lecturer 1 and below; due to inter and intra-sector brain drain. The educational system suffers from deteriorating quality and insufficient investment to keep pace with the country’s burgeoning school-

age population. Education in Nigeria has suffered gross financial neglect to the detriment of the future children, youths and adults; and of the national development, as shocking revelations of annual budgetary allocations as low as 0.5% was found.

Policy Lapses

Some of the lapses that are common to policies guiding education budget allocation in Nigeria are as follows.

1. Education policy is not high on the agenda of government in Nigeria.
2. Incidental untimely budgeting and senseless fiscal choice have become the norm in Nigeria.
3. Failure of government to appreciate the fact that national development and security are hinged on the level of educational attainment of any nation.
4. Lack of indigenous education policy as historical analysis revealed that Nigeria adopted British system of education without considering the cultural values, environment and peculiarities of the country.
5. Non-involvement of the stakeholders in policy formulation process.
6. Lack of proper strategy for implementation.
7. Lack of political will, which is the key factor to government policy formulation strategies.
8. Lack of continuity occasioned by change in administration leads to policy adjustment.
9. The extant laws have not been able to address the important physical challenge.

Implementation Lapses

1. Inability to make timely and sensible fiscal choice.
2. Late submission of the budget to the National Assembly over the years has led to late commencement. Scarcely has budget implementation at the federal level commenced officially in January of any fiscal year.
3. There is high level corruption and mismanagement of budgeted funds at Federal, State and Local Councils.
4. There is no law in the country that encourages civil society participation in governance and access to information.
5. There is particularly no close monitoring of education budget execution.
6. Not up to 70% of the education budget each fiscal year is released for implementation.
7. There is gross under funding of education in Nigeria.

As a result, instead of a qualitative and functional education system, we have had a certification system in which in terms of facilities are better described as glorified secondary schools and in the words of Maduabum (1998), science graduates have learned about science and not science. Many have certainly being schooled but they are the victims of a system of schooling without education. Section 8, Item 69 (a) of our National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004:38) states that a greater proportion of expenditure on university education shall be devoted to Science and Technology. UNESCO recommends a minimum expenditure of 26% of annual budgets of developing nations. Be that as it may, Nigeria has the lowest expenditure on Science and Technology. Table 2 below shows that in Year 2000, Nigeria spent only 0.1% of the Gross National Product (GNP) on Science and Engineering research, which is the lowest in Africa and in the world.

Table 2: Expenditure for Scientific and Engineering Research and Experimental Development.

COUNTRY	OF GNP	COUNTRY	OF GNP
<u>Africa</u>		<u>Asia</u>	
Benin	0.7	India	0.9
Egypt	0.2	Israel	3.1
Mauritius	0.3	Japan	2.8
Nigeria	0.1	Singapore	0.9
<u>North America</u>		<u>Europe</u>	
Canada	1.4	France	2.3
Cuba	0.8	Germany	4.3
St. Lucia	2.9	Netherland	2.2
USA	2.9	UK	2.3
<u>South America</u>			
Argentina	0.4		
Brazil	0.4		
Chile	0.5		
Venezuela	0.3		

Source: UNESCO 2000 World Science Report

The prevailing situation does not augur well for Nigeria’s aspiration for scientific and technological advancement. We cannot hope to build a self-reliant nation which can take its seat in the world of technology given this under funding.

Situation Analysis

From the documentary analysis reviewed, Nigerian universities were not even found in the top best 6000 universities in the world. Nigeria’s educational system is broken, crippled by a complex bureaucracy, flawed policies in both the management and financing of school, and corrupt expenditure of school money; leaving it in need of sweeping reforms on the basis of utilitarian evaluation design. With a population that is growing at a rate of 2.6% and a funding rate for the education sector that does not have a clear pattern but which can best be described as declining, the future of Nigeria is gloomy. According to the World Bank (2012), poor financial investment has been the bane of Nigeria education system. Education has been in this funding crisis for many (56) years, and has culminated in shortage of materials and human resources in the system; lack of qualified teachers; high turnover rate of teachers, shortage of classrooms, poor learning environment, inadequate commitment from teachers, decline in the quality of education offered; insufficient admission space, brain drain, inadequate laboratories for teaching and research, shortage of book and journals and low remuneration. These problems are pronounced at each of the three levels of the educational system; primary, secondary and tertiary.

Over the years, the government’s budgetary allocations to education in Nigeria leave much to be desired. A cursory look at the table shows an allocation trend that is abysmally retrogressive – a trend that has the tendency to destroy all the goodness of education; a trend that negates the values education holds; a trend that is malicious to the citizens of this great nation, Nigeria; a trend that can be likened to a deliberate attempt to cripple education, and consequently our national development.

In a study by Kpolovie in World Bank (2012) depicted in table 3 below clearly showed that Nigeria’s 8.4% budgetary allocation to education is the worst among the 20 sampled countries by it.

Table 3: Annual Budgetary Allocation to Education by 20 World Bank Sampled Countries (World Bank, 2012)

S/	COUNTRY	BUDGET ALLOCATION TO EDUCATION	POSITION
1.	Ghana	31.0	1 st
2.	Cote d’ Ivoire	30.0	2 nd
3.	Uganda	27.0	3 rd
4.	Morocco	26.4	4 th
5.	South Africa	25.8	5 th
6.	Swaziland	24.6	6 th
7.	Mexico	24.3	7 th
8.	Kenya	23.0	8 th
9.	United Arab Emirates	22.5	9 th
10.	Botswana	19.0	10 th
11.	Iran	17.17	11 th
12.	USA	17.1	12 th
13.	Tunisia	17.0	13 th
14.	Lesotho	17.0	14 th
15.	Burkina Faso	16.8	15 th
16.	Norway	16.2	16 th
17.	Colombia	15.6	17 th
18.	Nicaragua	15.0	18 th
19.	India	12.7	19 th
20.	Nigeria	8.4	20 th (Last)

Source: World Bank 2012, 20 Countries Sampled for Education Budgets.

Comparatively, table 3 has unraveled that a country like Ghana occupies the first or very best position with 31.0% allocation to education; followed by Cote d’ Ivoire with 30.0% occupying the second position; Uganda with 27.0% (3rd position), Morocco with 26.4% (4th position); South Africa 25.8% (5th position), and so on against the expectation of Nigeria to be the 1st.

More shocking revelation is that between the ranks of Nigerian universities and those of other top most 2000 universities in the world, no single Nigerian university even made the list (Shanghai Ranking Consultancy, 2012). The Shanghai Ranking Consultancy (2012) shockingly revealed that even within the first 6000 best universities in the world, there is no single Nigerian university. This means that no Nigerian university qualifies to be compared at all with the best 2000 universities in the world. By world standards, the academic ranking of world universities showed that Nigerian universities are nowhere in the topmost 3000 universities; not even in the topmost 6000 universities globally (Shanghai Ranking Consultancy, 2012). Even in Africa, where Nigeria erroneously refers to herself as the ‘giant of Africa’ the Nigeria’s best university, University of Ibadan, was rated 45th position, far behind South Africa and Ghanaian Universities (Odiaka, 2013).

Recommendation

Based on the issues and problems raised, the following recommendations were made:

1. In the light of the foregoing, governments at Federal, State and Local councils should begin to give greater premium to education by religiously releasing the UNESCO requirement of 26 percent of a developing country's annual total budget to education in each fiscal year.
2. The extant laws should be made and seen to enforce prompt release, implementation and monitoring of the education budget at various levels of government.
3. Deliberate policies should be put in place to ensure that politicians do not earn higher than teachers that made them. This will forestall exodus of teachers and make politics less volatile.
4. It is known over the world that education determines not only earning capacity, but also the very quality of human life. In a society that appreciates the educated class, those with good education naturally earn higher incomes; they also are in an enhanced position to live better and healthier lives. Higher education gives one a greater sense of how to reduce risks in life and change one's behaviour. Greater confidence, self-reliance and adaptability are all hallmarks of advanced education (Davies, 2001).
5. Given that the progress of any nation is a function of the quality of the educational attainment of its citizens, there is need for Nigeria to build and maintain good schools and accord education its rightful place as the only elixir that has the full capacity of curing all the ills of the society.

Conclusion

We cannot continue to pay lip service to education if qualitative and functional education for national development is in the agenda of this government.

With the entrenchment of adequate funding in education, agriculture and industrial sectors of the economy shall blossom, providing employment opportunities for our graduates. To inculcate this culture among Nigerians, there is an urgent and crucial need for a total and sincere ethical re-engineering and re-orientation aimed at substituting in our psyche the near in-born corrupt behavioural potential for honest, selfless, God-fearing and service-propelled national services. In this way our national priorities can be appropriately re-ordered and adequate attention accorded to commensurate allocation of resources to education sector; strict accountability enshrined, and Nigeria will favourably compare with other countries of the world on any development indices (Ezugwu, 2010). Given that no nation can develop beyond the quality of its education, as a nation's overall advancement is a direct function of the quality of the educational attainment of its citizens, the Federal Government of Nigeria had better be wise by giving greater premium to education budget than other sectors of the economy.

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