

Exploring Alternative Sources of Funding Universal Basic Education for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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Abstract. It is a statement of fact that people all over the world are day by day becoming aware of and sensitive to the benefits of formal education. The educational needs for primary and secondary education in Nigeria have increased due to the introduction of Free Basic Education in 1999 and the increased transition rate. This will require that the government commits more resources towards basic education. This study was conducted to identify the alternative sources of financing basic education in Plateau North and their influence on management of those schools. It also sought to identify challenges facing schools in financing Basic education and the impact of alternative sources of income on the school budget. The study employed a descriptive survey design. The study sample consisted of thirty school principals and their bursars; five from each of the six local governments in Plateau North, six ES's, and six DQAs. A semi-structured questionnaire was administered to the school principals, while interview schedules were used for bursars, ES's, and director of quality assurance. This research was guided by the Capital Theory of School Effectiveness and Improvement developed by Hargreaves (2001). Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data collected. Findings of the study revealed that the dominant sources of financing Basic education include households and the

government with the mean scores of 3.34 and 3.66 respectively. Other sources of funding are private sector, religious organizations, communities, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Further findings revealed that earnings from this sources enhanced management in secondary schools through salary remuneration for BOG/ PTA teachers, support staff and student motivation, to purchase more teaching and learning materials and improvement of physical facilities. The Ministry of Education should therefore formulate policies on how schools can implement alternative sources of financing secondary education to reduce overdependence on government.

Key Words: Alternative Sources, Financial Challenges, Junior Secondary Education, Universal Basic Education (UBE) and sustainable development.

1. Introduction

Education, in every human community, is an indispensable instrument for human progress, empowerment and for effecting national development. Hence, the Nigerian federal government has adopted education as an instrument per excellence for effecting national development (FRN, 2009). This suggests that a nation that lacks a sound educational culture and

philosophy stands the risk of decay whereas a nation that sees to the development of its education is bound to achieve great success.

It is a statement of fact that people all over the world are day by day becoming aware of and sensitive to the benefits of formal education. Even though the process of formal education is usually long, it is not without immediate and long-term profits (Akangbou, 1987; Akpa 2002; Blaug, 2008; and Eze, 2013). This awareness can be seen as one of the reasons for the annual increase in students' enrolment at all levels of education in many countries of the world. Consequently, most nations of the world strive to devote a sizeable proportion of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to develop the education sector. However, it should be noted that Nigerian education sector has consistently received less allocation than advocated for by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, (UNESCO 2002), every nation of the world should allocate at least 26% of its annual budget to education sector but Nigeria has not met this recommendation. Between 2010- 2015 only 8.2% and 8.7% of our annual budget was allocated to education (FGN, Annual Budget, (2010-2015).

World Bank, (2003) stated that the federal government expenditure on education seem to be below 10% of its overall expenditure. This issue of under-funding of basic education is so endemic that, it has encompassed series of other problems of shortages of human and material resources, (Iwuanyanwu and Anene, 2001). This current pattern of investment within the education sector is such that the tertiary level gets the lion share while the primary level gets the least, (Alabi, 2010).

The Federal Republic of Nigeria in the National Policy on Education (2013: 14) describes primary education as the education given in an educational institution for children aged between 6-11 years plus. The policy states that since the rest of the educational system is built upon it,

primary education is the key or failure of the whole educational system. Despite the preeminence accorded this level of education in Nigeria, the sector is poorly funded.

Funding is the amount of money needed to fund an on-going project or programme for future development. According to Ogbonnaya, (2012), funding refers to a sum of money saved or made available for a particular purpose. Investment in basic education has become internationally recognized as instrument per excellence for national development. Gidado, (2000) asserts that primary education has suffered tremendously in Nigeria from poor finances, inappropriate allocation of funds and a host of other problems.

Nigerian's education is financed from various sources, depending on the types of the educational Institutions. The Government-maintained institutions are financed by the Government out of funds voted by Parliament each year. Basic schools prepare their annual budgets or estimates, which are forwarded to the Ministry of Education headquarters through their respective Directors of Education. The estimates, indicating also the amount of fees to be collected from the parents, are then considered by the grants section of the Ministry which then gives out grants, less the amount of fees. The fees are retained by the schools as appropriations-in aid.

The inadequate funding of basic education has led to deterioration in infrastructural facilities at this level of education. Most of the infrastructures currently existing at this level of education in many parts of the country are in a dilapidated state. The school administrators have consistently claimed that their inability to put these infrastructures in proper shape is due to the limited financial resources available to them.

In tandem with international conventions and protocols that encourage governments to provide universal education to its citizens, the Government of Nigeria under the then Head of State, (Rtd) General Olusegun Obasanjo launched Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme in September 1976. The objective of these policy initiatives was to increase access

and to cushion poor households by abolishing school fees, (Oni, 2005). This program reflects the government's commitment to the attainment of education for all (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's).

The programme started with an enrolment of 8.2 million primary school pupils for the whole country. The number of primary school teachers trained for the scheme was 48, 780. This was 11, 220 teachers less than the projected figure of 66,000. (Nwagwu,1989). As a result, the government employed retired but healthy teachers on contract, withdraws teachers in their third year of five year programme for one year before returning to their training institutions and employed auxiliary teachers, (Ogbonnaya, 2010).

The scheme did not last the test of time as a number of factors were responsible for the failure of the scheme and one of such factors was the issue of inadequate funds. As a matter of fact, education is an expensive project and the government alone cannot successfully handle it in the country. This is evidenced in the previous Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme which collapsed because of poor funding (Nwagwu, 1989).

In an attempt to achieve the ill-fated Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme, the federal government under former president Olusegun Obasanjo launched the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme in 1999 to provide free compulsory basic education, free adult literacy programme amongst others to its citizens as a means of eradicating illiteracy in the country education, Maduasi, (2005) but with the look of things, the scheme is having some financial challenges in terms of funding because since its launching in 1999,

Funding is one of the major factors of the management of education in any country. No educational institution or programme can be managed effectively without adequate funding. Researches on the funding of UBE revealed that the scheme was not effective because of lack of funds as enough funds were not available to pay teachers' salaries and allowances, procurement of textbooks, provision of instructional

materials, construction of classroom blocks, provision of school equipment, insufficient funds for effective supervision among others , (Adesina 2005; Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2005). As a result of this, teachers that are employed in the schools could not cope with the increasing number of pupils and this affects the standard of basic education in Plateau State. Therefore, this paper sets out to achieve these four objectives: i) To examine the current challenges in funding Universal Basic education in the country, ii) to examine the current sources of funding Universal Basic education in the country, iii) to examine the influence of alternative sources of funding Universal Primary and Junior secondary levels of education in the country, and iv) to explore the alternative funding strategies for public primary and junior secondary education in plateau state.

To achieve these objectives, the following questions were raised, 1) what are the current challenges in funding Universal Basic education in plateau north? 2) What are the sources of funding UBE Programme in plateau north? 3) What are the influences of alternative sources of funding on UBE sustainable development? 4) What are the alternative sources for improving in funding UBE in plateau north? It is based on this that, the researcher is poised to carrying out the study on alternative sources of funding universal basic education for sustainable development in Plateau State.

2. Literature Review

Based on the lessons learnt during the implementation of UPE, it would be expected that implementation of free basic education was to be faced with a myriad problems. Research on UPE indicated that there were many challenges facing its implementation (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2005; UNESCO, 2005). For example, UNESCO (2005) carried out an assessment of the Universal Primary Education programme in Nigeria in 2005. The assessment found out that some of the major challenges facing Universal primary education initiative were increased student numbers; shortage of teachers; lack of clear guidelines on admission; lack of consultation with teachers and parents; delay in

disbursement of funds by the government; and expanded roles for head teachers. The recent assessment of basic education in Nigeria by UNESCO (2012) and Oke (2014) similarly documented that despite milestones achieved towards attaining UBE by 2020, Nigeria still faces a number of finance related challenges that are negatively impacting on quality and equity of educational provision in the country. The foregoing notwithstanding, the strategies to generously finance education system in Nigeria is hinged on the philosophy, vision/mission and target goals pursued through clearly stated objectives (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Furthermore, the Ministry of Education in Nigeria is guided by the National Philosophy, which places education at the centre-stage of the country's human and economic development strategies (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Thus, the education system focuses on the acquisition of knowledge and skills as well as provision of lifelong learning (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013; United Nations, 2013). In line with the current United Nations (2013) and other educationally relevant international conventions and protocols which Nigeria is a signatory to, the education in the country emphasizes provision of a holistic, quality education and training that promotes the cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains of learners, instilling values such as patriotism, equality of all human beings, peace, security, honesty, humility, mutual respect, tolerance, co-operation and democracy, through education (Omoriegbe, 2006; Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013; United Nations, 2013). Ultimately the overall vision of education service provision in the country is to have a globally competitive quality education, training and research for Nigerian's sustainable development. To achieve this, the Ministry of education has endorsed Vision 2020 and shall focus education and training towards achieving the goals of the Vision (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013).

3. Research Methodology

This study employed a case study using descriptive research method. Descriptive research design was appropriate for this study,

as it allowed the researcher to use secondary schools to explain the effect of alternative sources of income in public secondary schools in plateau north senatorial zone. The target population consisted of one hundred and fifty secondary schools while study population comprised of 30 head teachers of public primary and Junior secondary schools in plateau north.

Purposive sampling was used to select the public secondary schools within the zone; five from each local government. The schools selected were all receiving the free basic education funding from the government; they were also to have been in existence for at least nine years: this would guarantee enough data on student enrolment, retention and dropout since the schools would have enrolled students in basic one and taken them through the basic nine year.

The major instruments for data collection for this study was the questionnaire, titled: Alternative Sources of Funding Universal Basic Education Questionnaire (ASFUBEQ) It comprised 15 items built in four clusters- A, B, C and D on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (S A) 4 points, Agree (A) 3 points, Disagree (D) 2 points and Strongly Disagree (S D) 1 point.

The reliability of the instrument was determined by a trial-testing exercise carried out in five primary schools using Primary School Head-teachers. A coefficient reliability of 0.89 was obtained. The face to face method was applied in the administration of the questionnaire on the respondents. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics on various alternative financial funding models in public primary and junior secondary schools in Plateau North.

Any item with a criterion of 2.50 and above score was accepted, while any mean of 2.49 and below were rejected.

4. Results and Discussion

The Sources of Funding UBE Programme in Plateau North: The first objective was to find out the sources of funds for basic education in

plateau north. Finding indicated that the main sources of funding basic education in plateau north include households and the government with the mean scores of 3.34 and 3.66 respectively. Other sources of funding are private sector, religious organizations, communities, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and development partners largely the donor community. This was revealed with the mean scores range between 2.74- 3.99. The cost of basic education borne by the government and households consists of salaries for teaching and non-teaching staff, bursary allocations, capital investments, school fees, tuition and transport, amongst others (Oke, 2014). Assie-Lumumba (2005) identifies five sources of financing education: the state, local communities, families, businesses and external sources. In general, for children from rural communities to access education at lower costs, there is a tendency for the most broad-based contribution of rural communities to the costs of education to be situated in the framework of investment costs. The construction of school buildings is a significant area in which community participation is most visible and widespread.

The current challenges in funding Universal Basic education in plateau north

Finding indicates that the inadequate funding of the education sector is the main challenge, others are; Misappropriation of funds meant for SUBEB, Politicization of the membership of SUBEB, Undue influence by SUBEB officials, inadequate and Poor statistical data for basic education planning, Sole dependence on government in funding education, Unstable education policy / programmes in Nigeria, Poor methods of disbursing funds. All the above mentioned challenges have the mean scores ranging from 3.10- 3.84. This portraits the general level of agreement to the current challenges in funding UBE as indicated by the respondents.

Influence of Income from Alternative Sources on Sustenance of School Projects and Programs

The results indicated that additional income from alternative sources made school management easier. Income from alternative

sources enabled schools to pay workers on time and even hire extra labor whenever it was required. This extra income was also used to hire more teachers, take students for excursion and motivate the students and staff. Other schools utilized this extra income in infrastructure improvement e.g. putting up extra toilets and painting. This income was also used in paying school creditors since fee payment was not prompt. Having rental houses in schools meant that staffs were available full time hence making school management easier especially in boarding schools. The mean and standard deviation were 3.96 and 0.60 respectively, implying about 40% of the schools sampled were challenged in securing funding for basic education in the country. The distribution is uniform.

When school principals were asked how much income from alternative sources was raised and how it impacted on school projects and programs, the results reflected mean income per school at N59, 545. The income generated from alternative sources in schools is skewed.

The extent to which the challenges of funding affect UBE

The findings revealed that challenges of inadequate funding of UBE has degenerated to the following problems; Poor provision of infrastructure, facilities and equipment with the mean score of 3.64, Inadequate facilities and instructional materials 4.11, while inadequate provision of pupils supportive services has the mean score of 3.80, others are Lack of initiative and creativity, Delay in the payment of salaries and allowances, Poor achievement in education. The mean scores ranges between 3.07 and 4.16. This shows the level of agreement of the respondent on the effects of the challenges of funding on school effectiveness.

The Alternative Sources for Improving Funding For UBE in Plateau North

The finding suggests the following alternative sources of funding; Increasing the budgetary allocation to education, Collaborative effort by all the three tiers of government in the funding for sustainable education development, Active participation of the private sector in funding basic education, Generating funds through rates,

Establishing endowment funds, Making judicious use of funds meant for basic education, Planning for basic education with accurate statistical data.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The research aimed at studying the alternative sources of financing basic education in plateau north. Based on the findings the following conclusions were made: Apart from government funding, the following alternative sources were identified: Income generating projects that were classified into three classes: Agricultural based, Commercial based and Service based. The Agricultural based included livestock farming and crop farming. The commercial based activities are school canteen and bakery. The service based income activities were; Bus hire, Hire of furniture and school fields, school halls and equipment. Other alternative sources of financing secondary education in plateau north other than income generating projects include funding from the following: Individual sponsors and donors, Government bursaries, Fundraising, Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs), Religious organizations e.g. Churches, Constituency Development Fund (CDF), Banks e.g. Equity, Cooperative, Micro-finance.

The following were recommendations of the study:

- The government through the Ministry of education should formulate policies that will require schools to come up with alternative sources of financing basic education in order to break the overdependence on solely government funding that does not seem to be sustainable from the findings of the study.
- Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) and other private groups should join hands in providing funds for the running of basic education in the country.
- The Ministry of education should develop structures within the schools and the in-service training courses to train the school managers on successful

management of the projects by imparting them with skills. This would ensure that fees charged is subsidized and therefore affordable to most households and hence increasing access, improving retention by preventing drop-out and that facilitating achievement of the Millennium development goal (MDG) and Education for all (EFA)

- In pursuit of increased returns from basic schools, the ministry should put in place mechanisms to ensure that each school is given a condition of raising a minimum threshold of income for financing basic education.
- Government should ensure adequate provision of not only funds but other facilities and equipment to enhance better quality education at the primary level in the country.

From the background and findings of this study, the following areas are suggested for further study:

- That a study be conducted to establish the influence of level of skills in management of income generating activities in secondary schools in Nigeria.
- That a study be conducted to find out the influence of alternative sources of income on the quality of various level of education offered.
- That a study be conducted to establish the effect of the level of training of the management team of basic education on resource mobilization of the schools.

6. Implications on Funding Policy and Quality Education

The findings have major implications on the basic level of education. Basic education is the basic area for the laying of crucial foundation for the educational development and progress of individuals in the society. As a result, it requires adequate funding and provision of infrastructural facilities and equipment as well as adequate staff to ensure the realization of quality and sound basic education for the citizenry. It becomes

imperative that Plateau State Government, the State Ministry of Education, the Head-teachers, the LGEAs as well as SUBEB including parents should join hands to look inwards, with a view to creating conducive and sound foundation for proper funding and running of basic education.

Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) as well as religious groups can equally help in the provision of funds for primary schools through supply of instructional materials, books for the libraries, desks and other needed facilities and equipment that will enhance efficiency and effectiveness of basic education in the country.

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