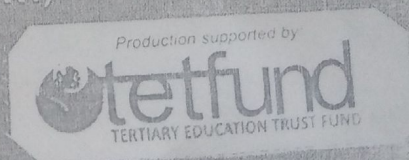


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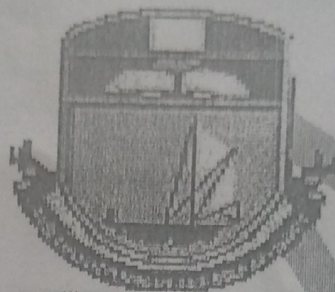
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A REVIEW OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FINANCING OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

Stakeholders in education sector have developed interest in financing aspect of education in recent time. This is because any educational policy, no matter how good it is, it's bound to fail without adequate funding. It is on this note that this paper reviews the trends of Federal Government Financing of Education in Nigeria for about ten years periods. The data for this work were collected through the project submission from states. The finding of this paper reveals that the total allocation to education by Federal Government is too meager as compared with the aggregate expenditure. Only 3-10% of the aggregate expenditure was devoted to education. It also discovered a yearly reduction in the proportion of Federal Government financing between 1976-1991. The paper called for an increase in Government's finance to education to salvage it from a total collapse.

Introduction

The financing of education has been an intractable problem for government in most developing countries of the world. This happened as a result of uncontrollable increase in school age population. The yearly increase in pupils at all levels of education has alone led to expansion of education which in turn pushed the cost of education constantly upward.

However, the public sector mode of financing education is presently at deplorable in Nigeria. Government financial out lay for education at all levels has been rising constantly. The observed increase have been to meet the recurrent cost of the education system. Even when this is considered alone, government expenditure on education is hardly adequate to meet recurrent cost (Ogbodo 1991).

Other factors that have contributed to the problem of financing education in Nigeria according to Coombs and Hillock (1992) include

- i. The widening perception of education as the key to upward economic and social mobility.
- ii. The widespread adoption of public policies aimed at democratizing educational opportunities (UPE, UBE, etc).
- iii. The rapid expansion, upgrading and diversification of manpower requirement due to technological advances in the economy and a new emphasis on economic development.

The public owned institutions are expected to be properly financed by government at all levels. Sufficient budgetary allocation is however needed to meet challenges facing educational system. The problem is therefore, to what extent has government been given adequate provision to education sector? What in the proportion of aggregate expenditure of government especially at federal level is devoted to education? The answers to these questions called for concerted effort of all researchers in education and on which the paper tends to examine.

Basicall, this paper examines the federal government financing of education in Nigeria for a period of ten years, 1976-84. Ultimately, the paper surveyed and analyzed federal government grants to universities through PTF and ETF between 1994-2002. Data were sourced from both primary and secondary sources, thus; grants to federal universities were obtained from NUC in 2003 and government expenditures adapted from a secondary source. Tables provide further information on the federal government allocations to education as compared to the aggregate federal government expenditures; the results were obtained in percentage on which the discussions are based.

Trends in Government Financing of Education in Nigeria

Tijani (2003) was of the view that, until about a decade ago, financing the development of university education in Nigeria seemed to be one of the most secured activities with little or no serious financing problems confronting either policy maker at the federal and state government levels or the authorities in each university. During the last ten years, however, university education has been continually confronted with financial crisis. This is clearly borne out by the frequency with which some universities have been making public statements about their financial plight and appealing to the federal and state government for help

Adeshina (1981) have shown very clearly that grants allocated to the universities are becoming smaller and smaller in relation to their actual needs. Finance therefore, determines the quality of education a people may receive and the extent to which this education can go. This is why Nwako (1982) regarded inappropriate funding as one of the seven barriers to good quality education in Nigeria. Unfortunately as Adam (1967) further observed "our educational system is witnessing an epileptic growth and inertia at all times due to under – finding and thus failing to fulfill its role"

Government accepts education as expensive social services which require adequate financial provision from all its tiers, for a successful implementation of the educational programmes NPE (1987). The spirit in the policy seems to compel government to commit substantial amount of money to education initially. The story appears to be different now because government's pattern of financing education has been on the decline since the last two decades. Adam (1967).

As a result of constitutional change in 1954, the value of education became decentralized as the Federal government and three regions shared the responsibility of finding education. Public aggregate expenditure in education rose from £9.7 million in 1952 to £41.7 million in 1962 (Adeshina 1982:149).

The regional provisions of the 1954 constitution enabled the western region to introduce the Universal Primary Education In 1955. In 1955, the West budgeted £5.4 million for education, with nearly 90% of this spent on primary education alone (Fafunwa (1974:168): In 1956, the East tried out the UPE but had to abandon it in its second year due to financial difficulties.

In 1972, the responsibility for higher education which was in the concurrent legislative list in 1963 constitution was reversed by decree to the Federal government. The Federal governments then acquire all the existing state Universities and set about establishing new ones, this further increase the level of government financing of education.

As at 1976, federal government of Nigeria committed as much as 10.8% of its aggregate expenditure to education. This has sadly fallen down to 3.0% in 1991.

Table 1: Trends in Federal Government Expenditure on Education 1979-1987 and 1991 (in Millions)

Year	Aggregate Expenditure (a)	TOTAL on education (b)	B as % of a
1991	38,766.0	1170.4	3.0
1984	10,000.0	376.2	3.8
1983	11,628	967.4	8.3
1982	10,930	1116.6	10.2
1981	11,323	1001.4	8.8
1980	23,695.7	1238.5	5.2
1979	12,0914.4	667.1	5.3
1978	11,233.7	826.6	6.7
1977	11,695.3	499.1	4.3
1976	9,701.5	1051.2	10.8

Source: Adapted From Ilorin Journal of Science Education (1997)

The above table shows the rate at which government has failed in meeting its obligation for funding education generally.

However, the decade that followed it witnessed a remarkable change in trends of government allocation of funds to education sector. Between 1990-92 the federal government expenditure on education witnessed an improvement; this is shown in the table below.

Table 2: Expenditure on education 1990-1992(all states and federal government ₦ Million)

Focus	Expenditure (1990-92)
Primary	417,649
Secondary	1,297,965
Tertiary	1,489,505
Educational services	297,890
Adult education	53,152
Special education	53,438
Student financing	227,167
Total	3,836,76

Source: Project submission from states.

Also capital expenditure by all tiers of government in the country has gone up remarkably as shown in the table below

Table 3: Education Sector, Capital Expenditure

States	2,876,261
Abuja	158,500
Federal	802,200
L.G.A.	357,275
Total	4,194,236

Source: Project submission from states.

By 1995, the UNESCO's report on selected educational and socio economic indicators for 132 developing countries and territories report an increase in budgeting allocation to all sectors of education. Though, the figure for Nigeria during this period was not available, but government activities during this period suggests that there is an increase public spending on education. This was the period government established the National Primary Education Commission and an increased government financial expenditure to education through the Petroleum Special Trust Fund and Education Tax Fund. This trend is reflected in the grants to Federal Universities by the bodies in the table below.

Table 4: Grant to Federal Universities through PTF and ETF

Year	Gross Total Allocation
2002	32,694,828,005.00
2001	34,621,267,696.09
2000	33,843,491,261.43
1999	20,902,812,580.77
1998	9,194,839,283.00
1997	5,507,555,312.00
1996	7,696,732,469.00
1995	6,238,950,798.00
1994	41,489,261,90.00

Source: NUC - Punch 19th January 2003

Conclusion

In spite of increased budgetary allocation to the education sector by all tiers of government in the last decade; the fact still remains that, this allocations are not enough to be able to cope with increases demand for education witnessed by high annual increments in enrolment at all levels of education. It is important to know that the PTF and ETF as interventionist programme to arrest the decay in school infrastructures in all levels of education across the country. This interventionist role has since been stopped with the scrapping of P.T.F. and this has returned school, to the usual song "Lack of Adequate fund". The fact still remain that it is the statutory role of government to provide the lion-share of the funds needed to run the education industry. It is the fulfillment of this obligation that government is failing badly. The conclusion is that total allocation to education by Federal government is too meagre when compared with its aggregate expenditure. Just between 3-10% of its total expenditure was devoted to education sector. Added to this was annual reduction in the proportion of Federal Government financing between 1976-1991. The Government is therefore implored to be more responsive to education upon which the growth and development of the entire economy is hung.

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