

## **FINANCING FAILURE: HOW NIGERIA'S EDUCATION SECTOR STRUGGLES TO DELIVER QUALITY**

**Amadi Chinenye Blessing**

Department of Educational Management, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** The paper examined inadequate educational funding and its implications for quality education delivery in Nigeria. Education all over the world has been described as the key factor that drives the socio-economic development of any country, and the future of any country lies in the quality of its education. It is on record that inadequate funding of education in Nigeria has been attributed to one of the major factors militating against the development and achievement of educational objectives. In Nigeria, the problem of inadequate funding for education has become a reoccurring decimals which oftentimes results in strikes and the closure of institutions. Apart from strike actions, school buildings, such as classrooms, libraries, workshops, hostels, etc., are dilapidated, and even teachers are demotivated as they have remained stagnant without undergoing promotions. The fact that these problems have remained unattended to by the government shows that our education system will not attain the required quality standard. However, it was therefore recommended that the federal government increase statutory allocations to education by at least 20%, bearing in mind the enormous challenges facing the education sector.

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**Keywords:** Educational Funding, Implications, Quality Education, Delivery

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### **Introduction**

Education has remained an essential tool for achieving national development. This is why many countries devote substantial amounts of their resources to education. One of the strongest instruments for reducing poverty, improving health, ensuring gender equality, and maintaining peace and stability is education. The World Development Report (2018) infers that education drives long-term economic growth, spurs innovation, strengthens instructions, and fosters social cohesion. One of the key factors that sustains the educational development of any country is educational funding.

According to Ogbonnaya (2012), educational funding is the financial support that is provided to students or institutions for educational development. These funds are provided by the government or private agencies and allocated for long- or short-term purposes. Over the years, Nigeria's budgetary allocation to education has been dwindling. This issue of poor funding of education remains unchanged even in recent times and clearly justifies one of the reasons why the United

Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) specified that, for the educational systems of developing nations to witness stability, at least 26% of their budgets must be channelled to the education sector (Ekaette, Owan, and Agbo, 2019:56). However, Oweh (2013) affirms that the education sector in Nigeria still

faces the problem of inadequate funding with regards to the benchmark advocated by UNESCO. Relying on the benchmark advocated by UNESCO, it is important to state that the Nigerian education sector is still underfunded. In their critical analysis, Adewale, Ajayi and Enikanoselu (2006) reinstated that education in Nigeria is experiencing financial crises; they contended that there are increasing complaints about the under-funding of the sector, while the government accuses the sector of inefficient utilisation of available resources. The inadequate funding of education in Nigeria can be traced to the poor economic and development bedevilling the nations. One of the core reasons why Nigeria is lagging behind amidst her Africa's contemporaries is due to poor financing and insufficient funding of education (Odigwe, Cewan, and Valentine, 2019:3).

Thus, they added that it is common to see in Nigeria that many schools lack buildings, facilities, a lack of teaching manpower to drive planned policies and programmes, and poor supervision and monitoring, among others.

Nwadiani (2012) identified under-funding, a shortfall of all other resources except learners, politics, and a lack of political well-being as antecedent elements to the rot in education delivery in Nigeria.

According to often, Aniab, Agunwa and Owan (2017), the quality of human resources in any country is dependent of the skills, creative abilities, trainings and education acquired. The acquisition of quality education largely depends on the availability of financial resources. This is because money is required to build infrastructures, such as libraries, laboratories, workshops develop, the capacity of teachers, provide instructional materials and so on. The absence of these facilities makes it difficult to provide quality education in schools in Nigeria.

This paper therefore, critically examines educational funding and its implication to quality education delivery in Nigeria.

### **Concept of Educational Funding**

Educational funding refers to the money provided by a government or raised by parents and teachers to finance the running of a school (Collins English Dictionary, 2017). Gutries and Schuermann (2021) defined educational funding as governmental and organisational processes by which revenue is generated (through taxation, tuition fees, and philanthropy) and distributed and expended for the operational and capital support of formal schools. Funding education is primarily the responsibility of the government at all levels. To a great extent, the level of funding determines the quality of education. Through funding, relevant instructional materials are purchased, and an adequate number of human resources are provided to realise the objectives of the school.

### **Critical Review of Educational Funding in Nigeria**

Educational funding in Nigeria dates back to the 1960s, after Nigeria became an independent nation. The Nigerian nationalists believed that the only way to empower and develop our people was through education. During this period, the government took over the control and administration of schools from the missionaries and started funding schools through budgetary allocation. The sources of funding for educational projects are derived mainly from taxation and international donor organizations. The education funds are distributed among primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions in the proportions of 30% and 40%, respectively (Ubogu and Veronica, 2018). It is important to note that the financing of education in Nigeria is carried out under a joint venture agreement between the federal government, states, local governments, and private organisations.

### **Review of Educational Funding Between 1960-80.**

After independence in 1960, the National Development Plans (NDP) were initiated, which include sections that deal with educational objectives and projected financial resources to be used for the implementation of educational programmes in the period under review, 1962–1980. The following percentages were allocated to the education sector in the development plan.

National Development	Duration	Percentage (%)
Plan period		
1962-1968	7 years	10.3%
1970-1974	5 years	13.5%
1975-1980	6 years	7.4%

**Source: Federal Ministry of Education, Lagos**

Odigwe and Owan (2019) concluded that the percentage that was being allocated to the education sector out of the total budget each year was less than 15% between 1960 and 1980. The periods under review transited from regional government to states, and the development plan spanned seven years, five years, and six years, respectively.

#### **Review of Educational Funding Between 1992 and 2009**

The pattern of government budgetary allocation to education has been inconsistent; instead of maintaining an increasing proportion, it has been fluctuating from year to year.

Below is the disbursement allocation to educational sector between 1992 -2009.

Year	Allocations to Education (₦ Billion)	Percent Budgetary to Education (%)
1992	12,728,676,390	8.2
1995	12,816,400,000	8.28
1996	15,335,700,000	6.45
1997	16,841,200,000	4.07
1998	26,721,320,906	10.28
1999	27,712,000,000	6.61
2000	56,688,169,766	8.36
2001	62,557,055,443	6.99
2002	73,435,499,300	6.89
2003	13,900,000,000	1.82
2004	77,975,091,275	7.10
2005	9,341,341,551	7.76
2006	30,486,000,000	8.2
2007	56,941,411,310	8.09
2008	79,564,341,911	13.00
2009	87,546,477,494	9.9

**Source: Federal Ministry of Education, Abuja.**

The government's budgetary allocation between 1992 and 2009 has not been stable. Even at the present level, the amounts are still far from the UNESCO recommendation of 26%. From the available statistics, Nigeria has not reached half of the 26% recommended by UNESCO for developing countries to allocate to their education sector.

#### **Review of educational funding between 2010 and 2022**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>EDUCATION ALLOCATIONS (₦ BILLION)</b>	<b>PERCENT BUDGETARY TO EDUCATION (%)</b>
2010	249,009,000,000	4.82
2011	306,003,000,000	6.2
2012	400,015,000,000	8.20
2013	426,003,000,000	8.54
2014	493,000,000,000	9.93
2015	392,002,000,000	7.74
2016	396,006,000,000	6.34
2017	550,000,000,000	7.39
2018	605,008,000,000	7.03
2019	620,005,000,000	7.03
2020	691,007,000,000	6.71

The table above clearly shows that the federal government's allocation to education has been highly unstable and dwindling. Omuna (2016) revealed that there are fluctuations in the percentage of the total budget allocated to education, from 4.82% in 2010 to 6.71% in 2020. All these percentages were relatively below the benchmark of 26% recommended by UNESCO. Having reviewed the level of funding of our education institutions from 1960 until date, It is important to state categorically that the Nigerian government has yet to allocate the appropriate funds needed for the speedy transformation of the education sector. With reference to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) percent of various countries, Nigeria has 5.94%, as against Lesotho (35.33%), Cuba (32.21%), and Saudi Arabia (30.00%). This shows that the funding mechanism in Nigeria, compared to other countries, needs to be developed to achieve its educational objectives.

#### **Implications of Inadequate Funding on Quality Education Delivery**

Quality education encompasses learning activities that strengthen the capacities of students to acquire relevant knowledge and skills to become useful citizens of a country. The acquisition of appropriate skills and knowledge rests on the availability of funds to provide adequate teaching and learning materials. The introduction of Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Nigeria and the expansion of universities have witnessed a significant rate of enrolment of learners across all levels of our education. The current financial position may not sustain future educational plans. When all this pressure does not meet with increasing revenue, the results are obvious: a decrease in efficiency, productivity, and diminished quality and output (Adewolu et al., 2006). Moja (2000) infers that due to poor funding, the quality of education offered is affected, as the building of new classrooms has not kept up with the increased enrollment at all levels of education. He further stated that the primary and secondary

schools are the worst hit, where lessons are delivered in open spaces, learners sit on the bare floor due to a lack of desks, and classrooms are overcrowded. In many public institutions, students are found standing outside the classrooms to receive lectures, as their population has outstript the classroom space that is available (Ubogu and Veronica 20018). It is pertinent to observe that most learning institutions are like a market place, with no appropriate planning or control measures to check enrolment or admission of students in accordance with the space available. However, most school buildings are dilapidated, so students study under such conditions. There is also a widespread shortage of teaching manpower, inadequate classrooms, furniture, textbooks, and instructional materials. It is no longer news that our institutions experience the loss of facilities, the deterioration of equipment, and uncompleted school projects as a result of poor funding. Due to poor financing, the quality of education offered is affected by poor attendance and inadequate preparation by teachers; the morale of teachers is low due to poor service conditions and low salaries. According to Action Aid Nigeria (AAN), the rising insecurity in Nigeria is traceable to poor funding and the sheer neglect of the nation's education sector. No nation can develop without investing heavily in education. The country director of AAN, Ene Obi, remarked that the time to charge the narrative in the nation's education sector is now, as implications for less commitment to it are currently affecting socio-economic life and national security. Since independence, there has been an increasing demand for educational services such as the establishment of more schools, the provision of more schools, and instructional material, all of which require money to accomplish. As a result of inadequate funding, numerous problems are easily discomfited in the sector, which include poor infrastructural facilities, Poor facilities, poor number and quality of teachers, and poor confidence in the general public (Nwogu, Ineye-Briggs & Nwankpa, 2021; Nwagwu 2002). The recent face-off between the federal government and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), resulting in the shutting down of universities for over eight months, is premised on the demand for adequate funding of the universities. Undie, Essien, and Edemenang (2010), state that the impact and consequences of poor funding in Nigeria's universities can lead to inadequate and deteriorating infrastructure and facilities. They contended that over 80% of the funds provided go into the payment of salaries and allowances, while an insignificant amount goes to capital projects, overheads, and research. Due to a lack of funding for research activities, the quality of teaching, graduate training, and technology is affected, which negatively impacts the quality of education. Unmotivated staff and students Poor conditions of study in terms of classrooms, library resources, halls of residence, and sporting facilities all combine to nurture frustration, aggression, and conflicts among staff and students of the universities (Undie et al., 2010). However, the fact remains that education in Nigeria has been experiencing loss of facilities, deterioration of equipment plants, and uncompleted projects as a result of the financial crises facing the system (Ubogu and Veronica, 2018). It could be recalled that most schools do not make use of any form of instructional material or teaching aid. All these gaps, coupled with teacher absenteeism and a lukewarm attitude to work, weaken the capacity of the institutions to deliver quality education. Poor funding remains one of the greatest problems confronting the education sector. The United Nations humanitarian coordinator in Nigeria, Matthias Schmall, warned that Nigeria might not achieve the global agenda for inclusive and equitable basic education for all schoolchildren by 2030 due to poor funding of the education sector. She stated that the seven percent increase in the 2022 budgetary allocation for education was not enough

to achieve quality educational standards in the country. Ogbonnaya (2012) identified the following consequences of inadequate funding in education:

- a. The old age of facilities makes them insecure and unhealthy for staff and students without enough funds for maintenance.
- b. With the growth in student population over time, school structures like classrooms, halls, libraries, workshops, and recreation centres have become difficult to adapt to changes in population, size, and new school programmes.
- c. Inadequate funding also results in massive dilapidation of school facilities, such as wornout paintings, leaking roofs, classrooms, halls, and offices; the unavailability of science and technical equipment; broken-down school vehicles; no electricity; and a lack of modern teaching and learning aids.
- d. Other effects of inadequate funding are teacher strikes arising from non-payment of staff salaries, allowances, promotions, salary increments, etc.

#### **Reasons for inadequate funding of education**

One major reason for inadequate funding for education is a lack of political will. The political class does not summon sufficient political will to invest in education. This has led to the politicisation of some educational programmes. Other reasons include that defaults in school fees paid by parents or guardians contribute to ineffective funding of education by the government. In addition, other sectors of the economy, like health, security, transport, agriculture, etc., compete with education for the limited natural resources. Chukwunenye (2005) identified budgeting as one of the reasons for inadequate funding. He said that the expression of education programmes in financial terms, their unavailability, timely preparation, and comprehensiveness result in inadequate funding. Another reason is the lack of accurate statistical data on student personnel and facilities with detailed operational levels, which hinders adequate funding for education. In addition, the population explosion in Nigerian schools leads to high demand for education, which leads to inadequate funding.

#### **Possible Ways to Improve Educational Funding**

In Nigeria, education is the most capital-intensive venture that requires every stakeholder to contribute to its funding. The government alone cannot bear the financial burden. Fadipe (2000) emphasises that the wholesome scenario calls for reforms in the funding system to complement government efforts in this direction. Fadipe enumerated the reform initiatives to include: school fees and levies, philanthropic gestures, donations, government grants and subventions, internally generated revenue, contributions from the Parents Teachers Association (PTA), etc.

- a. School fees and levies: The government can approve school fees or levies depending on the economic viability of the government. Such payments should be closely monitored to ensure accountability and proper utilisation.

However, the purpose of such levies should be clearly stated, and government agencies should ensure that school heads do not abuse the process.

- b. Philanthropist gestures: Prominent stakeholders in the community could be invited during sports meets or end-of-year activities to raise funds for the school. Due to the government's takeover of schools, government grants and subventions are no longer popular, and statutory allocations to the education sector are taking their place.



c. Internally generated revenue: these are income-generating revenues such as embarking on agricultural ventures, e.g., poultry farms, fish farming, piggery, and so on. The proceeds from the sale of farm products can be used as a source of revenue for the school.

d. Parents Teachers Association (PTA): The PTA can seek government approval for levies on specific projects and ensure that the funds collected are judiciously utilised by the school leadership.

Ayo-Sobowale (2011) advocates that institutions of higher learning should undertake research contracts and consultant services for big organisations like oil firms, and the money realised can be used by the institution to fund education. Ayo-Sobowale also stated that private contributors, parastatals, and big firms in the country should be aware of the need to help fund higher education. So, as to have both quantity and quality education. Also, endowment funds and donations should be established by inviting rich citizens to assist in the development of the school. The donor's name should be immortalised in the institution before naming the building after him. The Alumni associations can offer assistance to their alma mater by carrying out some projects that have direct bearing on the academic development of the school.

### **Conclusion**

The successful development and sustenance of any education system cannot be guaranteed without adequate funding. To ensure that educational performance meets the goals and aspirations of national objectives, it is only possible to evaluate the quality of an educational system by looking at how adequate and accessible the facilities and materials required to enhance effective teaching and learning are. The strategies for funding education in Nigeria are not yielding good results, as there is a dearth of infrastructure, poor condition of classrooms and lecture halls, a lack of instructional materials, and so on. This affects the productivity of staff and, subsequently, the quantity and quality of outcomes at the institution. The inadequate funding of education leads to the deterioration of facilities, the unavailability of science and technical equipment, and teacher strikes as a result of non-payment of salaries and allowances. To ameliorate the situation, heads of educational institutions should think outside the box by carrying out programmes or projects that will generate revenue for the school.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the discussion in this paper, it is recommended that:

1. The federal government should increase statutory allocation to the education sector to 20 percent, bearing in mind that every aspect of development is anchored on education.
2. The federal ministry of education should set up an independent body to monitor the utilisation of funds made available to schools.
3. The political class should exercise strong political will to address the issue of educational funding.

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