

POLITICS OF FUNDING OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the politicisation of funding of education in Nigeria. It is an explorative and qualitative study, which involved the use of descriptive statistics for analysis. The study revealed that the challenges befalling the education system is primarily due to politicisation of funding of education. The education sector is yet to witness the appropriate injection of funds that meets UNESCO's recommended threshold of 26 per cent of the annual budget of the nation. This lack of funding has led to inadequate infrastructure, lack of facilities and the shortage of qualified teachers to support the execution of the educational policies, thereby affecting the quality of education provided to citizens. There is a positive relationship between the improvement of the education system and the social and economic development of Nigeria. The government must see the educational sector as a viable social service that directly affects the economic growth rate of the nation. Given the preceding, government leaders must continually develop and review educational policies, which must be supported by frameworks that ensure the provision of facilities and human resources to execute the tasks embedded within the policy positively. This must also be backed by adequate funding to ensure continuous achievement of the goals and objectives of the educational system.

INTRODUCTION

The significance of education to humans cannot be undervalued. As such, investments in education are strategic initiatives that carry equal weight with the plans to build a nation. There is no universally accepted definition of the term education, and this is due to the different views and perceptions of scholars on this phenomenon. Mark (2020) defines education as the process of requesting truth and possibility, whilst supporting and creating time for discovery. Thomas (2013) describes education to be a social process, which focuses on the present process of living and not a process of preparing for future living. These definitions hinge on the notion that education is deliberate, informed and a cooperative process that makes people live their lives in the best way possible. This view suggests that education extends beyond acquiring knowledge in schools – as Oralu and Oladele (2015) explain, educating at all levels enable individuals to achieve the primary purpose of education in society as a whole. Education is often described as the deliberate efforts made by a society to achieve desirable objectives that are aligned with the needs of individuals and that of the community where the educational activities are being implemented (Afolayan, 2014). Education is viewed as a human right that should be afforded to all individuals without discrimination (Das, 2018). This view suggests that education is not a privilege and, as such, countries including Nigeria must protect, value, and satisfy the rights to education. The fact that education is a fundamental human right is unequivocally supported and declared by the African Charter of Human and People's Rights in 1981 (OAU, 1981).

Various studies link the economic advancement of countries with the quality of education provided to its citizens, thereby reinforcing the utmost importance of education to a nation. For instance, Kalusi (2001) believes that a nation may not experience rapid economic growth and societal development if they cannot provide quality education to its citizens. This view aligns with Kayode and Irele (2019) who posit that the provision of quality education extends beyond the acquisition of skills, knowledge and character. Still, it is a requirement for the successful development of a nation. There is a positive relationship between the development of a country and education, and is acutely established that such education is viewed as a significant index of development. Afolayan (2014) suggests that educating people improves productivity, enhances health awareness and improves individual empowerment. According to a report published by The World Bank on partnership for educational projects in Nigeria, it suggested that education enables all citizens to participate in developmental activities, which in itself is a primary benefit for the people (The World Bank, 2020a). This reflects the importance of education such that if citizens are deprived quality education, they would be exempted from the process of development, thereby placing them at a disadvantaged position within the society.

There has been the major emphasis placed on the quality of education provided to people in recent times. As Adediran (2015) explains, the quality of education available to citizens is largely dependent on the funding available to support such initiatives. The role of knowledge within the wider society is so significant that adequate funding must be provided to support developmental activities, and reap the full benefits of education. Odigwe and Owan (2019) argue that education fulfils the human need for knowledge acquisition and create a means to maintain and ensure continuous development. This view aligns with Rowell and Money

(2018) who suggest that education ensures the development of people, whilst providing a means to meet other human basic needs. They further suggest that education often determines how employment and income should be distributed to individuals within a society. Another role of education is its influence on social welfare through its possible impacts on the health and life expectancy of people in a nation (Callaway & Musone, 1968; Adeyemi, 2011).

Funding for education is an exigent issue that continues to draw global attention. It is an aspect of education that continues to elicit more attention from present generation and may continue to be of interest to future researchers. The role of education in economic development cannot be disputed. Fabunmi (1997c; 1999a; 2005a; 2006a and 2012c) established the fact that education is a major determinant of economic development. Education provides skills and improves the productive capacity of the individual. Fabunmi (2013) asserted that the availability of a skilled workforce is a prerequisite for economic development. The United Nations Education, Social and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) expects budget for education to constitute a substantial proportion (or percentage) of total national budgets (Onigbinde, Agunloye, Atiku, Faleye, Olaleye, Jolayemi, Fauziyyah & Johnson, 2018). However, most developing nations continue to under-fund education.

The funding of education in Nigeria is inadequate (Olawepo, 2001; Osuntokun, 2003 and Fabunmi, 2019). Osuntokun argued that the high debt burden of Nigeria was the main cause of the underfunding of education in Nigeria. However, Fabunmi (2019) identified lack of political will as the main cause. According to Fabunmi (2019), educational institutions in Nigeria continuously fail the integrity test and consistently fail to meet global standards because they persistently fail to meet global funding standards. Fabunmi further compared the budgetary allocations for most of the leading universities in the world and that of the education sector in Nigeria, using the 2018 Budget figures. The budgetary allocations for each of the universities, except the University of Oxford, Princeton University and Imperial College, exceeded the total budget for the education sector in Nigeria. Nigeria makes a lot of money from exportation of crude oil. It is one of the largest producers of crude oil in the world. Nigeria continues to dwindle to nothingness, because of political leaders' inability to manage the economy and education sector in particular. This paper seeks to focus explicitly on the politics of funding education in Nigeria. In a bid to achieve this, the different levels of education would be examined. A critical look into the nature of funding and the sources of educational funding would be investigated. The development and execution of educational policy concerning its current and future stability in Nigeria would be examined.

Various Levels of Education in Nigeria

Education in Nigeria is a tool used to influence national development. In a bid to support the development of the nation, education in Nigeria has witnessed active participation by individuals, communities, non-governmental agencies and the intervention from the state and the federal government. In the quest to achieve the primary objectives of education, the Federal Government of Nigeria through the National Policy on Education expressed in clear terms the philosophy and the objectives that underpin the investments in

education (FGN, 2004). Currently, there are five different levels of education in Nigeria – and these include (FGN, 2004):

- Early childhood education
- Primary education
- Secondary education
- Mass literacy, adult and non-formal education
- Tertiary education

Early childhood education is also referred to as pre-primary education. Educational institutions provide this type of education to children before they commence primary education. The early childhood education includes a nursery for children or kindergarten (Oralu & Oladele, 2015). Primary education is provided to children between the age group of six and eleven (FGN, 2004). The primary education is regarded as the foundation level in which all subsequent forms of education are built on. According to Rowell and Money (2018), the primary education level is critical to the success or failure of the entire educational system. The significance of the primary level education led to the introduction of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) to improve the achievement of success in education – especially the formative years of children (Oralu & Oladele, 2015).

The secondary school education is provided to children after successful completion of the primary education. The primary objectives of secondary education are to prepare children for positive living within the society and enhancing the capabilities of individuals for higher education (FGN, 2004).

The mass literacy, adult and non-formal education is one that encourages all varieties of functional education provided to young adults outside the typical educational system (FGN, 2004). Such functional education includes vocational education and functional literacy (Oralu & Oladele, 2015). The primary objectives of this level of education include (FGN, 2004; Ozurumba, 2013):

- The provision of functional literacy
- Providing education for young adults who have not been fortunate to undergo formal education
- Providing remedial education for those who did not complete primary or secondary education. These include marginalised groups such as the disabled and the disadvantaged gender.

Tertiary education is a form of education provided by universities to individuals after successful completion of their secondary education. Universities provide tertiary education through correspondence courses (Afolayan, 2014; Oralu & Oladele, 2015). Adediran (2015) suggests that the primary goals of tertiary education are to develop individuals through training such that they can contribute effectively to the development of a nation. This view aligns with Ozurumba (2013), who believes that tertiary education focuses on high-level training that instils proper values in individuals to survive and functions effectively within society.

Funding of Education in Nigeria

Providing the right quality of education is an expensive social service that demands sufficient funding from all stakeholders, including the federal government. Education is a costly activity that requires the necessity

to attract, hire and onboard teachers for them to provide quality education, provide and maintain the infrastructure that would support the delivery of education – for instance, providing classrooms, computer equipment, laboratories and workshops (Afolayan, 2014; Oralu & Oladele, 2015; Ibezimako, 2020). This view aligns with Adeyemi (2011) who believes that the continuous replacement of consumable equipment by students, teachers and educational institutions increases the cost of education. According to Amoo (2019), the Nigerian government, over time, has made people believe that only the government can ensure the provision of free education for all citizens at all levels. This situation has made it difficult for the government to create suitable policies that would encourage the financing of education through the Nigerian people. However, the government has realised this precarious situation and now instituting ways to encourage stakeholders to assist in the funding of education. Such stakeholders include private individuals, local communities, non-governmental agencies and corporate organisations.

As Rowell and Money (2018) explain, there is a need to commence programs that seek to re-orientate the minds of people to appreciate the value in financing education within Nigeria. In a bid to tackle educational funding crisis in Nigeria effectively, the government has set-up relevant bodies such as the Education Trust Fund (ETF) and Industrial Training Fund (ITF) (Oralu & Oladele, 2015). Education in Nigeria is funded by various sources, which include government grants and external aids (UNESCO, 2002). Amoo (2019) supports the view that government grants are a primary source of educational funding since the government owns public schools. As such, they are responsible for providing a significant portion of the funds needed to educate individuals at all levels. Corporate organisations provide external aids in the form of monetary resources, human resources, computer equipment and facilities, non-profit organisations and wealthy nations to help fund education in Nigeria (Ozurumba, 2013; Kayode & Irele, 2019). School fees also act as a means of generating funds from pupils or students who are recipients of the education provided by institutions (Adediran, 2015). In line with this view, one can infer that adequate fees should be charged for the provision of quality education in alignment with varied educational programs. Amoo (2019) believes that schools are beginning to get ingenious regarding the generation of funds to support education by embarking on projects like consultancy services, rental services and the establishment of bookshops. Oralu and Oladele (2015) argue that there are various sources of educational funding which includes donations, loans, work-study programs and taxes.

According to a report published by National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC), the funding of education are distributed in the proportion of thirty, thirty and forty per cent amongst the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education (NMEC, 2008). This public funding includes both direct and indirect government expenditure. For instance, the salaries of teachers are direct government expenditure whilst the provisions of scholarships, loans or grants are an indirect expenditure that supports the funding of education in Nigeria (Oralu & Oladele, 2015). Hinchifle (2002) argues that the primary source of fund in which the Nigerian government uses to support education is the federal taxes and profits made from the sale of petroleum exports. Over time, the Nigerian government has been able to contribute financially to the education sector primarily due to the proceeds of oil sales – whose discovery in itself led to a significant change in the Nigerian economy. The proceeds from the sale of oil have created huge wealth for the country.

As such, the government has been able to apportion these proceeds into expenditure in different sectors, including education. The Nigerian policy on education provoked the establishment of several educational institutions, which then led to an increase in student enrolment (Oralu & Oladele, 2015). For instance, student enrolment within tertiary institutions increased considerably by over 1000 per cent between 1976 and 1990 (Adewole, 2006). By default, education being a social service should attract significant investment from the Nigerian government due to its direct influence on the development of the economy. As Adediran (2015) explains, education should be viewed as a long-term financial investment that yields positive economic advantage for a country in the future. This view is in line with the view of The World Bank – as they posit that an advanced educational sector would lead to positive achievements in a nation’s social and economic development (The World Bank, 2020a). Although the known positive influences education possesses over a nation’s economy, Nigeria has somewhat failed to fund the education sector adequately. As UNESCO suggests, a nation should allocate approximately 26 per cent of its annual budget to education (UNESCO, 2002). Nigeria currently expends below 11 per cent of its budgetary allocations to the education sector. The table below shows a trend in Nigeria’s national budget from the years 2005 to 2018.

Table 1: National & Education Budget Allocation from 2005 to 2018. Source Federal Ministry of Education (FME), 2018

Year	National (N)	Education (N)	% Allocation
2005	1,799,938,243,137.97	120,035,527,799.21	7%
2006	1,899,987,922,466.93	167,278,378,749.45	9%
2007	2,309,223,949,982.80	189,199,774,928.78	8%
2008	2,647,492,865,643.00	218,032,707,518.89	8%
2009	2,649,543,000,000.00	224,676,889,661.00	8%
2010	4,427,184,596,534.00	271,023,009,062.42	6%
2011	4,971,881,652,689.00	356,495,828,145.24	7%
2012	4,877,209,156,933.00	409,531,390,348.17	8%
2013	4,987,220,425,601.00	431,789,137,839.19	9%
2014	4,695,190,000,000.00	495,283,130,268.30	11%
2015	4,490,000,000,000.00	483,183,784,654.00	11%
2016	6,077,680,000,000.00	480,278,214,688.64	8%
2017	7,441,000,000,000.00	455,770,201,889.21	6%
2018	9,120,334,988,225.00	651,226,697,523.00	7%

Table 1 above indicates the percentages of annual education budgets to national budgets. Percentage budgetary allocations to education reached a peak in the year 2014 and 2015 at 11 per cent. All the percentages of budgetary allocations to education are far below the recommended 26 per cent suggested by UNESCO. Because of the high returns to investments in education and positive contributions of education to the economy, it is, however, desirable to devote a substantiate proportion of the annual national budget to education.

The development of any country depends on its investments in education. Inflation may not enable the increase in budgetary allocations to be meaningful, hence the need to devise some other methods of determining the actual value of budgetary allocations. A stable foreign currency can be used to determine the actual value of the allocations. The United States (US) Dollar is the most stable currency, and as such, it is often used to determine the actual value of allocations (Fabunmi, 2019). The US dollar values of education budgets and national budgets are often used to illustrate the funding of education among regions or countries. It is good to note that budgetary allocation to education reached a peak in the year 2018 with an allocation of the sum of N651, 226, 697, 523. 00 to the sector. However, we should note that the actual value of these allocations is lower than that of the N495, 283, 130, 268. Thirty that was allocated to the sector in the year 2014, using the US dollar values of \$2,720,439,032 for the year 2014 and \$1,789,084,333 for the year 2018 as depicted in the table below.

Table 2: National & Education Budget Allocation from 2005 to 2018 in US (\$). Source Computed from Federal Ministry of Education (FME), 2018 Data

Year	Exchange Rate (N to \$)	National (\$)	Education (\$)
2005	131.27	13,711,725,779	914,417,062
2006	128.65	14,768,658,550	1,300,259,453
2007	125.81	18,354,852,157	1,503,853,230
2008	118.55	22,332,289,039	1,839,162,442
2009	148.9	17,794,110,141	1,508,911,280
2010	152.83	28,968,033,740	1,773,362,619
2011	162.34	30,626,349,961	2,195,982,679
2012	157.19	31,027,477,300	2,605,327,249
2013	159.14	31,338,572,487	2,713,265,915
2014	182.06	25,789,245,303	2,720,439,032
2015	198.82	22,583,241,122	2,430,257,442
2016	314.88	19,301,575,203	1,525,273,801
2017	259.76	28,645,672,928	1,754,581,929
2018	364	25,055,865,352	1,789,084,333

Educational Policy in Nigeria and its Future Stability

The educational policy implemented in Nigeria is a proclaimed statement that guides the actions required to achieve goals and objectives that bring about the nation's development through the educational sector (FGN, 2004). The education policy creates a foundation upon which the national education system can be regulated and controlled effectively. The primary objective of creating the education policy is to satisfy the desires and ambitions of individuals, community and the country as a whole (Adewole, 2006). The educational policy created by the federal government in Nigeria was based on the need to create a democratic society and a society based on equality (FGN, 2004). This view aligns with that of The World Bank. They suggest that the educational policy in Nigeria was developed based on a national philosophy to create a united and strong

nation and a dynamic economy (The World Bank, 2020a). These views are also in alignment with the view of UNESCO (2002) as they suggest that a formal educational policy is required to create diverse and great opportunities for all citizens of Nigeria. As Hinchifle (2002) suggests, all government leaders are saddled with the responsibility of creating policies that must be implemented as a basis for directing the administrative activities of a nation. In the creation of educational policy, the challenge presented before government leaders is the need to tackle decisions about the means to support the educational initiatives and the value of such initiatives. These have become important since the creation of all policies should be viewed as essential components that act as a core upon which the educational initiatives are developed for the success and benefits of the entire system and the wider society.

Oralu and Oladele (2015) argue that educational policy planners should be aware that when creating policies, there should be stability and conduciveness of the political environment to enable the education sector to add value through the delivery of efficient and effective services to the entire society. This is all anchored on the notion that educational policies deal with detailed specific practices that reflects tasks to be done and how varied operational elements of the educational system would be implemented. In a bid to ensure stability and support the rapid transformation of the educational system, leaders must be aware of the notion that the creation of an educational policy must be successfully implemented or actioned appropriately. Such policy must be guided by a framework that ensures that the provision of facilities and human resources needed to effectively achieve the goals and objectives of the educational policy are observed (Ozurumba, 2013; Adediran, 2015).

Rowell and Money (2018) argue that the development of educational policies used to drive the operations of the university system is driven primarily by political factors. In addition, the commencement of capital projects in alignment with the execution of educational policies have been abandoned due to lack of adequate funding. The government must allocate sufficient funds in a bid to address the rising costs of education at all levels. Government leaders must incorporate educational expenditure during the development of educational policies. As Oralu and Oladele (2015) explain, the execution of educational policies is largely dependent on the resources available to expend on such initiatives. Educational expenditure refers to actual expenses incurred on education in a country or region within a specific period (Fabunmi, 2019). It includes wages/salaries and capital investments in buildings and equipment. The actual expenditure on education often differs from the education budget. A budget is merely a statutory document containing estimates of anticipated expenditure for a financial year. Table 3 below depicts the actual educational expenditure about the budget of Nigeria between the years 2011 to 2016.

Table 3 Actual Education Expenditure about National Budget. Source Computed from NBS (2018) data

Year	National Budget for Education (N ^l Billion)	Actual Educational Expenditure (N ^l Billion)	% Educational Expenditure
2011	306.0	335.8	109.7
2012	397.4	348.4	87.7
2013	427.5	390.4	91.3
2014	493.0	343.8	69.7
2015	392.4	325.9	83.1
2016	367.7	341.9	93

The table 3 above shows that the actual annual expenditure on education is persistently lower than the budgetary allocations to education in these years, except in the year 2011 when educational expenditure was 109.7 per cent of the budgetary allocation for the year. In the year 2014, educational expenditure was 69.7 per cent of the budgetary allocation, and it was the lowest achieved within the 2011 and 2016 period. The success of the educational policy implemented in Nigeria is mostly dependent on the funds available to support the execution of such policies. The link established between the success of educational systems and the improvement of national development in developed countries is similar to the present situation of Nigeria. The low economic growth of Nigeria is partly due to the poor state of the educational system (Odigwe & Owan, 2019). An evaluation carried out by UNESCO on the Human Development report in Africa shows Nigeria in 24th place out of 54 countries in Africa. The same report also shows Nigeria in 157th place in comparison to other countries of the world in the development of education.

Table 4: Comparison of African Countries by Human Development Index. Source (Human Development Report, 2018)

Africa Rank	Global Rank	Country	HDI Value
1	62	Seychelles	0.797
2	65	Mauritius	0.79
3	85	Algeria	0.754
4	95	Tunisia	0.735
5	101	Botswana	0.717
24	157	Nigeria	0.532

Odigwe and Owan (2019) argue that the primary reasons Nigeria falls behind other African countries are due to inadequate funding of the education sector. And as such, it is common to several schools in Nigeria that lack computer equipment, facilities, buildings and the shortage of human resources needed to execute the educational policies. This view aligns with Ozurumba (2013), Afolayan (2014) and Adediran (2015). They all suggest that inadequate funding of the educational sector has led to classrooms in public schools not being properly equipped, and schools not having a conducive environment that supports student learning. As

Albright (2019) explains, it is common to see children undergo learning activities under trees as supposed classrooms due to inadequate educational funding. Ibezimako (2020) suggests that inadequate funding, coupled with the lack of political will from the Nigerian government are primary root causes to the present dire state of the educational system. Most educational institutions at all levels lack simple infrastructure and qualified teachers or instructors, whilst suffering from insufficient budget allocations and neglected projects such as libraries, workshops or laboratories (Odigwe & Owan, 2019).

The responsibility of leaders in the Nigerian government during the implementation of educational policies is immense. As Adediran (2015) explains, educational policies developed in Nigeria often reflect the beliefs, values and ideologies of the government holding power – and as such, decisions that are made, often create massive shifts in the development and progress of the educational system. This view reflects the importance of ensuring a stable political environment, as this directly influences the effectiveness and success of the development and implementation of educational policies in Nigeria. To ensure rapid transformation and continuous improvement in the Nigerian educational system, policies that guide the adoption of educational programs must be reviewed and aligned with economic, social, and political variables.

Implications for Financing Education in Nigeria

Even though financial analysts and economists project that the Nigerian economy would grow by 3 per cent in the year 2021 (The World Bank, The World Bank in Nigeria - Overview, 2019b), there is no evidence to show that sufficient funds have been or would be allocated to the education sector in Nigeria. The current rate of expansion in the educational sector – especially concerning student enrolment requires adequate correspondent funding that would support the development, management, sustainability and progress of the educational sector. As Oralu and Oladele (2015) suggest, the high levels of school enrolment has led to major short and long-term forecasting errors that have also affected the level of funding allocated to the sector. This view is in alignment with Adediran (2015), who believes that the rapid explosion of student enrolment has created a demand for afternoon classes in a bid to cater to the learning needs of students. Because the education sector needs to be financed adequately. There are major concerns that should be addressed. As Odigwe and Owan (2019) explain, one of the challenges include identifying those responsible for funding the education sector.

They further suggest that the sources of funding must be identified and exploited to achieve the desired goals within the sector. Albright (2019) supports this view by explaining that stakeholders must determine if the educational sector should be funded from private or public sources, or through external grants from wealthy nations, non-profit organisations or corporate organisations. External grants are financed by institutions such as the World Bank. However, Oralu and Oladele (2015) opine that this constitutes approximately 5 per cent of the government's expenditure on the educational sector. The heavy reliance of the government on grants, loans and other external sources to fund the education sector suggests that the government cannot sustainably finance the sector alone.

Over time, various researchers have identified reasons as to why the educational sector has been underfunded. For instance, Orakpo (2018) suggests that the rot in the education sector began during the military era where the funding of the sector was just 1 per cent of the real gross domestic product (GDP) of Nigeria. To date, the Nigerian government has underfunded the education sector with an average of 7 to 8 per cent of the annual budget allocation to the sector over the last decade. This is grossly below the UNESCO recommended value of 26 per cent of the national budget for allocation to the education sector. Because of the high costs associated with financing education in Nigeria, Dike and Olayinka (2020) suggest that the debt burden of the country, coupled with the rapid increase of student enrolment has created a challenge for financing education within the nation. This view aligns with Oralu and Oladele (2015). They argue that the increasing costs of managing the thirty-six states of the nation have created a challenge for education financing in Nigeria.

As identified in this paper, one of the many ways in which education is funded is through the school fees students pay since they are a direct beneficiary of such education programs. The need to charge appropriate fees has sparked debates as to the determination on what fee is right concerning the disposable income of citizens. Universities increase their fees continuously in a bid to compete effectively with other universities in western countries. Ozurumba (2013) explains that the adequate funding of education is pertinent for the growth of the economy – and as such, the Nigerian government must educate people to understand that government alone cannot fund the education sector. Even though the government has not done its part by allocating the required funds as suggested by UNSECO, Ibezimako (2020) argues that the government should create a structure to enable local communities to assist the government as it strives to finance the education sector. The fact that education is a fundamental right call for the adequate funding of this sector in a bid to provide qualitative, efficient and effective education to citizens.

In a bid to meet the needs of the educational sector, apart from the conventional support from the federal government, alternative sources of financing should be explored. These sources include tuition fees, private contributions from corporate organisations, research activities, consulting initiatives and levies from community participation – such as alumni groups (Callaway & Musone, 1968; Adewole, 2006; Adeyemi, 2011). The education sector can also be financed through endowments and grants from bodies such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Kayode & Irele, 2019; The World Bank, 2020a). Rowell and Money (2018) advocate the need for the implementation of cost-saving measures to support further the sustainability and progress of the educational sector in Nigeria. Examples of such cost-saving measures include:

- Instituting effective financial control and creating a structure that supports accountability to prevent mismanagement of funds in schools.
- Implementing tight management and control over inventory by monitoring the use and replenishment of consumables to prevent waste and support effective teaching and learning
- Implementing mergers between smaller universities to save costs
- Investing in the development of multi-purpose student accommodations

- Creating a culture of maintenance for facilities and pieces of equipment used in schools for teaching and learning

Several nations possess admirable programs that support free education, most especially at the primary and secondary school levels. However, emerging economies, such as Nigeria cannot entirely sustain the provision of free education (UNICEF, 2020). This demonstrates the need to charge fees to students who are direct beneficiaries of education in Nigeria. The dilemma arising with the concept of the 'right to education' in a developing nation such as Nigeria is hinged on the financial ability of the government, individuals and the society as a whole. Concisely, the provision of free education in Nigeria must be supported by the development of programs that seek to openly or implicitly raise funds within the economy to underpin such initiative.

CONCLUSION

The challenges befalling the education system is primarily due to the lack of inadequate funding provided by the government in Nigeria. As identified in this paper, the education sector is yet to witness the appropriate injection of funds that meets UNESCO's recommended threshold of 26 per cent of the annual budget of the nation. This lack of funding has led to inadequate infrastructure, lack of facilities and the shortage of qualified teachers to support the execution of the educational policies, thereby affecting the quality of education provided to citizens. This paper has demonstrated the positive relationship that exists between the improvement of the education system and the social and economic development of Nigeria. The government must see the educational sector as a viable social service that directly influences the economic growth rate of the nation. Given the preceding, government leaders must continually develop and review educational policies, which must be supported by frameworks that ensure the provision of facilities and human resources to execute the tasks embedded within the policy positively. In addition, the education sector should be supported by injecting adequate funds to ensure continuous achievement of the goals and objectives of the educational system.

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