

Funding of Vocational Education for National Development in the 21st Century

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Abstract

Vocational education is one of the prime movers for achieving the desired technological and economic development of Nigeria. It is a tool for addressing the economic, political and social crisis that is threatening the political and economic stability of Nigeria. It therefore remains the major instruments for national development. Because of rising unemployment, lack of skilled workers, high crime rate, high dropout rate and rate of movement to the urban cities in search of job, the reason for vocational education has been placed high on the educational reform agenda. For this programme to be successful, funding cannot be left out. Funding is a major factor that could mar or make this programme. Fund in vocational education is the fulcrum with which other activities/programmes revolve. The paper therefore examined funding of vocational education for national development in the 21st century, budgetary allocation to educational sector and the need for proper funding of vocational education. The paper also recommended that the government should endeavour to meet up or even exceed the 26% benchmark of UNESCO and finally that cooperate bodies and non-governmental organizations should support vocational education by providing the needed fund.

Keyword: Funding, Education, Vocational Education, National Development

Introduction

Education is the bedrock of every nation and vocational education is the vital part of 21st century education. Education is the process of acquiring general knowledge, developing the power of reasoning, judgement and preparing oneself intellectually for mature life. It brings about permanent change in a persons thinking and capacity to do things. Education is an indispensable instrument not only to an individual but also for the development of a nation. The National Policy on Education document in Nigeria attaches great importance to Vocational Education. This is because; it is one of the prime movers for achieving the desired technological and economic development of Nigeria. It is also a tool for addressing the economic, political, and social crises that are threatening the political and economic stability of the nation (FRN 2014). Rising unemployment, lack of skilled workers, high school dropout rates and the changing demographic nature of the workforce has placed the need for vocational education high on the educational reformed agenda (Okolocha & Baba, 2016). Vocational education is that part of the total experience whereby the individual learns knowledge and skills successfully to carry on a gainful occupation. Vocational education is also seen as a highly useful education, because its occupational content offers one the

opportunity to acquire skills, attitudes, interests and knowledge to perform socially and economically work that is beneficial to the individual and the society (Ugboaja, 2016). Okon and Uke (2015), posited that the progress of a nation is the function of the level of the resourcefulness of the people which to a greater extent, relate to the level of quality of vocational training and purposeful development of functional education in that nation.

Vocational education adequately equip students to be more effective in this age of science and technology and to raise a generation of people who can think for themselves and respect the dignity of labour and propel its citizenry into a bosom economic. What is needed today and tomorrow are workers with good technical skill background, rugged enough to transform Nigeria into positive technological breakthrough with the ability to meet its immediate demand. As the world around us is changing fast, there must be an increased emphasis on vocational education in meeting the aims and objectives in which it was established (Dimkpa & James, 2020).

Agwi, (2019) opined that the enterprise of human-power development is practicalized on the transfer of knowledge and skills to the trainee through education and training. Efficient and corruption free educational systems are essentially component of this, for cultural, self-economic and environmentally sustainable development of individual communities and nations. Thus any country which desires to enhance and accelerates its manpower and national development must take its vocational educational system seriously and execute it comprehensively. Vocational education is important to the development of human resources, impartation of appropriate skills, knowledge and attitude. It is the basis for transformation, industrialization and a high way to global knowledge economy. It leads to national transformation and ensuring of peace and security. Thus, the goals of wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction and value re-orientation can only be attained, and sustained through an efficient vocational education system which impacts the relevant skills, knowledge, capacities, attitudes and values.

The contributions of vocational education cannot be undermined. The scope of its contributions cut across mechanical/automobile technology, wood work technology, electrical/electronic technology and building technology. Vocational education is an agent of change both technologically, societal development, revenue generation, employment generation, manpower development and skill acquisition for self reliance. Infact the exposure and practical nature of vocational education in content and approach makes it stand out. When vocational education records success, even a nonentity will observe, when it is failing also, it will be observed (Dimkpa & James, 2020).

Not minding the level of transformation of both lives, properties, awareness, employment generation, manpower development, revenue generation, technological advancement recorded by so many countries of the world, how has Nigerians, opinion leaders, political leaders, co-operate organisation, government and non-governmental bodies viewed or invested in vocational education? How much interest has been shown in vocational education? Does it really communicated to Nigerians that this is one of the factors responsible for the high level of poverty in our society and lack of employment, high crime rate and insecurity in the country? It is universally said that an idle mind is a devils workshop, the best cure of sickness is to prevent its course and you will forever be free from

that sickness. For these reason, this paper therefore seek to x-ray funding of vocational education in Nigeria.

Funding of Vocational Education in Nigeria

Fund is required in every human endeavourer to make it succeed. Like wise, adequate fund is required in education generally and in vocational education in particular to make it successful. When funding is mentioned, the first thing that comes to mind is the availability of money for meeting the need for a given project or programme. Funding refers to a form of financial support that is given for the achievement of a project. Funding according to Peter (2018) is the provision of financial resources in order to meet a need, project or program. Funding in general term is a way of providing both fleeting capital, fixed assets (plants and machines) for the day to day running of a business. It includes the provision of adequate labour supply, employee development and staff appraisal to meet organizational goals. The process of making the fund available to the units that require them either in the short or long run is referred to as funding.

Funding according to Williams and Woke (2020) is the act of providing financial resources, usually in the form of money or other values as effort or time, to finance a need program, and project, usually by an organization or company. Generally, funding is used when a firm uses its internal reserves to satisfy, its necessity for cash. Funding could come through personal savings, credit, subsidies and taxes. In the governmental education sector, the government is the sole provider of fund for the smooth running of the education sector. This is because it is directly owned, runned or managed by the government through individuals. Decisions are directly made by the government that governs the day to day, running of government owned schools.

Funding has the capacity and potentials of bringing an organisation out of obscurity. Funding is the life wire of every business organisation. Daso (2012) stated that the allocation of fund to the education sector as a share of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is quite minimal. Daso further opined that government funding of vocational education have not been impressive. Adequate funding and proper management of fund in business tells in the progress and impact of such an organisation goal attainment.

In the education sector in Nigeria, under funding is still the bane of vocational and technical education in Nigeria (Offiong, Akpan and Usoro, 2013), Nigeria lacks the interest and ability of funding technical and vocational education. This could be seen in the lack of machine in technical education and where it is seen, it is either offsolate or lying as a monument due to lack of operational knowledge. Fafuwa clearly stated that Nigeria has money but lacks the ability to use it judiciously. Furthermore Fafuwa stated that Nigeria has money but it can only sponsor primary and secondary education. The road to success and developmental growth of Nigeria lies in the hands of vocational education and yet it is the worst applied instrument for national development (Dike, 2009).

Literacy and numeracy alone cannot get Nigeria out of poverty. We will continue to be enslaved by world leading countries because we have nothing to offer technologically. Nigeria is a very wealthy nation that has what it takes to compete out there in the world but due to lack of adequate funding and provision of practical learning experience, Nigeria is limited to theoretical technical education. Lets take university of Uyo which is a Federal University as an example, there is no single functioning machine or equipment that portrays the department to be a vocational education. Yet Nigerians has 'a lot of money to travel overseas, go for medical treatment overseas, spend a lot of money for security and yet

neglecting the cause of insecurity as a result of graduates who are roaming the street because of unemployment, some have resorted to drugs and some are now militants whose lives are wasted because they feel if they drop their guns they have nowhere to fall back to. If a man is trained he will fend for himself and his family, if a woman is trained she will feed a nation.

Funding of Vocational Education Past and Present

In the year of colonial heritage, vocational education is self-acquired, self-developed and self-financed. However, the coming of the white men and the establishment of organization institutions, schools were financed by foreign missionaries that owned the school. According to Tatumwa (1984) in Omoku (2019) missionaries used book learning to introduce various training programmes as part of their activities in Onitsha, Lokoja and Calabar, Agriculture, carpentry, bricklaying, woodwork weaving among others, were encouraged by the Christian Missionary School (CMS). The missions controlled and financed these institutions. At the end of the Second World War in 1945, two trade centres were established and financed by government at Ikeja and Enugu, to train ex-service men in basic skills and crafts. Yaba Technical College was established in 1945 and was controlled, administered and financed by government. The trend continued until the late 1950s, when some industrial and commercial firms opened a few technical and trade schools to produce skilled human resources for their own need. These firms include the Railway Corporation, Ports Authority, Post and Telegraphs, Electrical Corporation of Nigeria. These firms manage and finance those technical and trade schools.

Today Vocational Education is owned, managed and financed by the Federal Government. It is an established fact that vocational education is capital intensive in terms of procurement of equipment, tools, laboratory materials/apparatus, as well as manpower training. But the funding arrangement put in place for it is shown to be inadequate leading to ill-equipped workshops and laboratories for training. The National Policy on Education (2014) acknowledges that vocational education programmes require adequate funding for successful implementation. It is also noted that Nigeria as a nation is yet to meet "United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization" UNESCO recommendation of minimum of twenty – six percent (26%) of budgetary allocation to education in its member nations. Quality education in Nigeria is fast losing relevance, as education is not fulfilling the national objectives set for it. This is due to poor funds. From 2010 to 2019 education funding in Nigeria is gradually declining.

Budgetary Allocation to Education

Budget is seen as a plan quantified in monetary terms, prepared and approved due to a specified period of time and usually showing planned income to be generated. In Nigeria, the budget is normally presented by the executive arm of government to the legislative arm before it becomes appropriation bill (Ogungbenle & Edogiawerie, 2016). Vocational education as the integral part of national development required a proper funding. The percentage of allocation to education in Nigeria since 2010 till date is too poor. This has led to a decline in the quality of vocational Education in Nigeria. Nigeria profile of expenditure in education sector is relatively low and poor in real terms. Ameh and Aluko (2019) stated that the 2019 budget of ₦620.5bn which gave 7.05% to Education has proven to all that the ruling class in Nigeria does not prioritize education. Also, Ndujihe (2018) affirmed that poor funding through budgeting allocation has been identified as the major reason for the rot and challenges in the education sector, especially, in tertiary institutions of higher learning, which

has led to frequent strikes by teaching and non-teaching staff since the early 1990s till date. Indeed the Federal Government allocation to education in the last 10 years has been miserly.

Table 1: Budgeting trend for education sector (2010-2019)

Year	Total Budget (N Trillion)	Allocation to Education (N Trillion)	Allocation %	Recurrent (N Billion)	Capital (Billion)
2010	4,608.68	339.6	7.37	198.1	97.2
2011	4,226.19	393.6	9.32	304.3	35.1
2012	4,749.10	463.3	9.75	345.1	55.1
2013	4,924.60	509.0	10.21	360.8	71.9
2014	4,698.19	565.8	12.05	444.08	51.3
2015	4,493.36	551.6	12.28	459.7	23.5
2016	6,060.68	557.4	9.17	444.8	35.4
2017	7,441.18	540.9	7.41	398.9	56.9
2018	9,120.33	651.2	7.14	439.3	102.9
2019	8.33	620.5	7.05	N.A	47.29

Source: Federal Budget Office and Budget Research (2019)

From Table 1, the allocation to education keeps on increasing and decreasing at different intervals in 2016, there was a significant increment of 34.9% from 2015, while 2017 and 2018 increments in budget size were 22.8% and 22.6% respectively, then declined in 2019. However, increments in budget size are not felt in the education sector because the allocation is fluctuating below 10%, which added no value to skills learning in vocational education. The maximum and minimum allocation to education was 2015 and 2019 with 12.28% and 7.14% respectively against UNESCO recommendation. A look at other African countries average budgetary allocation to education shows for Botswana, 19.0%; Tunisia, 17.0%; Kenya, 23.0%; Morocco 17.7%; Swaziland, 24.6%; South Africa, 25.8%; Cote d'Ivoire, 30.0%; and Ghana 31.0% (Udenka, 2018). This explain why Nigerians are now sending their wards to study in these countries especially Ghana and South Africa despite Nigeria been a richer and larger country than them. For a proper development to take place in Nigeria there must be a proper allocation to education to enhance creativity and productivity through science and technology.

Capital Budget Spending Performance in Education

In this section, the focus is on the Capital budget and its implementation since it has to do with building of infrastructure, equipping vocational laboratories and workshop. Due to the importance of capital budget to Vocational Education, the federal government needs to improved capital spending on building of vocational laboratories and equipping them, and also building of conducive classrooms. Budget Research (2019) stated that a healthy and educational citizen will definitely help improve the economy while a country whose commitment is not directed to health and education will have an unemployable citizen, and health is a by-product of science and technology. This means that every health sector is an outgrowth of education, and a citizen needs to be healthy and educated in other to become a functional citizen to the society and nation at large.

Table 2: Capital budget implementation trend (2010- 2019)

Year	Total Capital (N Billion)	Amount Released (N Billion)	Amount Utilized (N Billion)
2010	48.7	23.5	25.1
2011	51.8	29.8	28.5
2012	55.1	47.6	47.6
2013	71.9	36.2	36.2
2014	51.2	21.8	20.7
2015	23.5	13.8	13.1
2016	35.4	22.6	20.8
2017	56.9	33.4	31.6
2018	102.9	N.A	N.A
2019	47.29	N.A	N.A

Source: Budget office, Budget Research (2019).

Table 2, shows that the actual spending on capital project is always lower than the amount budgeted, and this poorly influences the areas to benefit on the project. N47.6bn was the highest amount utilized for capital project in 2012 and the least was N13.1bn in 2015.

In general, these capital budget released and utilized have little or no positive impact in Nigeria vocational schools because the laboratories in public schools are degenerating instead of developing. These are indicative politics been played on education because there is no proper report on how this money was utilized or how many schools benefited from the capital budget.

On the average, Nigerian budget allocation to education is 7.44% which is very below UNESCO benchmark of 26% from the above discussion it can be clearly seen that the amount allocated to education is very small. Vocational education is a part of education, it therefore follow that the amount that will be allocated to vocational education is nothing to write home about.

Proper Funding of Vocational Education

Funding refers to the budgetary allocation that are really available or that are going to be made available at a stated time by the government for the purpose to paying salaries, building and provision of educational infrastructure to aid teaching and learning process. If there is adequate fund both in cash and equipment, for expository and practical learning, unemployment will be reduced to the barest minimum in Nigeria. The rate at which Nigerian scholars and graduates migrate to the western country will reduce. This is because 90% of this migration are for greener pasture. If nothing serious is done about funding Education in Nigeria particularly in Vocational Education, it will get to a time tat the ratio of Youth in working age will drop to none working age. This means that there will be more elderly to young adults because they will leave the country to where they will have a better working experience, furthermore, Nigeria will cease to be a dumping ground of China and other Asian Countries of sub-standard products. The dignity, integrity and glory of our great nation Nigeria as the giant of Africa will increase beyond the bounds of the country. Nigerians will be respected and not be seen as opportunists who are coming to develop other countries. Finally, Nigeria will step up to a world leading country in production. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Nigeria will increase. Even if Nigeria would borrow, it will be very little.

The rate to which people migrate from rural to urban will reduce and industrialization will extend to the rural areas.

Conclusion

Everywhere in the world, education has been proven to be a sinequa-non in the development on of any nation. Pathetically, despite this undisputable fact, that poor state of vocational education in Nigeria continues to decline on a day to day basis due to inadequate funding. There is therefore need to fund vocational education the more with a view to sustaining the current position and at the same time positioning the sector for more robust performance to lift the productive capacity of the economy. The current 7.44% of the sectorial allocation cannot achieve the needed or aspired economic growth and development. Apart from government funding vocational education, individuals, non-governmental organizations and cooperate bodies should as a matter of fact support in the system.

Suggestions

- (1) Government should endeavour to meet up or even strive to exceed the 26% benchmark allocation to education as recommended by UNESCO. If this made possible vocational education in Nigeria will wear a new face as it concern funding.
- (2) Funding of vocational education should be supported by individuals, non-governmental organizations and corporate bodies.
- (3) Fund allocated to vocational education should be properly utilized by the people concerned. Non should be used for other purpose.

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