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THE ROLE OF WORLD BANK IN FUNDING HIGHER EDUCATION: IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF QUALITY HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Funding education is the thrust upon which success is established in the realization of the goals of higher education in Nigeria. A properly funded education engenders positive learning outcomes with higher quality achieved. Under-funding is the critical challenge facing the Nigerian higher education system. There is a remarkable increase in the demand for Higher Education and its financing has remained an issue that has occupied an unending debate in the Nigerian public domain. This paper attempts to assess the role of World Bank in funding Higher Education in Nigeria. The paper also attempts to x-ray other imperatives of Higher Education in Nigeria such as the supervisory role of the National Universities Commission as well as the obstacles in funding Higher Education in Nigeria. The paper draws a conclusion that adequate attention should be given to funding higher education due to its strategic importance in the life and polity of the Nigerian nation; that much has been achieved by basic education and secondary level education through World Bank intervention.

KEYWORDS

World Bank, International Organization, Nigeria Higher Education System, Education Finance.



INTRODUCTION

International organizations are organizations with a stable set of norms and rules put in place to govern the behavior of states and other actors in the international system. International organizations are of two types namely governmental and non-governmental international organizations. The key international organizations operating in Nigeria in terms of activity and impact are the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), European Union (EU), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and many other Non-Governmental Organizations operating within and outside Nigeria.

World Bank was established in 1944 after Second World War and was primarily intended to help rebuild structures, facilities and equipment destroyed as a result of the war. It was also intended to help improve the status and faces of infrastructures and capital projects in developing economies through the provision of medium to long term loans at zero and/or low interest rate.

The World Bank later transformed into an organization that grants loans to needy countries for the purpose of economic growth and development. In most cases, the loans so granted are meant to be adequately provided to developing nations.

Record from the World Bank shows that about 183 countries of the world are involved in partnership with World Bank organization. However, the major goals of World Bank are; "to end poverty and boost prosperity for the poorest people, helping to create sustainable economic growth, the surest path out of poverty, investing in people, through access to health care, education, water and sanitation and energy, building resilience to shocks and threats that can roll back decades of progress"(World Bank, 2018.) The World Bank impacts on education having acknowledged education as one of the avenues for investing in human capital. This role has, over the years, impacted on all levels of education. For example, the World Bank has worked to increase enrollment at primary, secondary and post-secondary levels. Evidently, data from World Development Indicators is a proof to the positive trend in enrollments.

The World Bank Organization is the highest global educational support (GES) established since 2012 purposely to help enhance and fast track the goal of Education for All (EFA). GPE was targeted at Millennium Development Goal (primarily meant to achieve Universal Basic Education for all; promote and support gender equality, empower women and rendering special care and help to children) as well as the EFAE Goals. These MDG's goals were agreed in Dakar in 2000.

As stated by Jones (1992), in the year 1990, 70% of World Bank's education programmes requested an increase in participation in primary education, 67% reduced funding to secondary and higher education, 56% included the condition that private education should be expanded. Without abandoning these priorities, the World Bank has been promoting from the 1990s onward reforms agenda whose main elements are now common wherever neo-liberal policies in education are well established: decentralization of schools management, free choice of school, more involvement of the private sector, performance related payments for the teachers, monitoring and evaluation of educational results (Alexander, 2001)

Also, during the 1990s, the amount lent by the World Bank for education programmes represented 27% of the global external funding on education and 40% of the total aid provided for education by international organizations (Jallade, 2001). For Africa, the loans and funds provided by the World Bank represented during the same decade 16% of the total amounts made available for education by African governments (Alexander,2001). Still however, despite these amounts and in spite of the large

number of countries relying on its loans, it is not the World Bank's share in the global spending on education which makes its role financially important.

CHALLENGES OF FUNDING HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Right from the beginning of the 21st century, funding requirements of Nigeria higher education institutions have been on the increase.

However, the funds have not been sufficiently provided.

For example,

A total sum of #320,345,040,835 was approved by the president of Nigeria for disbursement to various Higher institutions in Nigeria in on 5th April, 2023 (TETFUND, 2023) this was part of the intervention programme of Federal government to higher educational development. Also according to the same source, a total sum of #1.702 trillion has been disbursed to Nigeria's public tertiary institutions between 2015 to 2023 compared to #1.249 trillion that was disbursed from inception of TETFUND in 1993 up to 2014.

However, three months after the intervention fund was released by TETFUND, Nigeria, The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) publicly raised an alarm and questioning TETFUND over a shortfall of #132 billion being 41% of the #320.3 billion released by Federal government. This shows that there is a serious problem of appropriation in the funding of Nigeria's Higher education leading to the lack the actual funds needed to effectively fund the tertiary educational system.

In the year 2004, the Federal Ministry of Education (2009) affirmed that the sum of N216, 708,206.00 was requested from Federal Government (FG) to fund some federal universities but the FG released the sum of N53,466,287.01 representing about 24.7% of the budget request of these Universities. According to Nigeria constitution, the law as regards funding of higher education (HE) shows that it is the responsibility of the FG to fund about 93% of university (Saint, et al 2013).

Moja (2000) report that most of the relevant need of the universities such as infrastructural facilities, granting student financial loans, grants and scholarship has been in effective to assist less privileged students and limited resources to take full advantage of HE. It was also noted that since total income from students fees amounts to only 5% of university income as a result of less fees paid by the students, federal universities have over the years encountered difficulties with funding the Universities.

The insignificant effect of this insufficient funding Nigeria's Higher Education are reflected in school laboratory, class rooms for practical studies, low participation in academic conferences, less field trips involvement, inadequate provision of school facilities such as furniture, bulk of class rooms and equipment, research grants, just to mention but few (ASUU,2023).

In attempting to address the challenges of insufficient funding in Nigeria higher education, Okuwa (2004) associated the problem to cost sharing. Cost sharing is related to Higher Education funding strategy that allows educational cost to be shared among students, parents, philanthropists and government. The cost share supports that all this four parties should borne all the cost for funding Higher Education rather than the government. However, several efforts by the government has been attempted to introduce tuition fees to federal institutions which has resulted to crises from student union, parents and society.

It is common knowledge that there is an enormous role and devotion of international organization to other level of education like the Universal Basic Education at primary and lower secondary levels but to date, the impact of international organization in Nigeria higher education has not been properly comprehended hence this paper.

Nigeria is a participatory member of the World Bank group, European Union (EU), International Monetary Fund (IMF), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) with myriad of Non-Governmental Organizations operating from within and outside the shores of the country.

OVERVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Higher education essentially refers to that education other than that of basic and secondary education and which includes education acquired in universities, polytechnics and colleges of education (Adesina&Awoniyi, 2004). The Nigeria government has always encouraged pursuit of higher education and this is reflected in the continual establishments of higher institutions of learning, both by governments and private individuals, as a consequence of both government laws and liberalization policy.

In order to ensure quality, and orderliness in the establishment and running of higher institutions of learning, various regulatory authorities have been set up. In 1962, National Universities Commission was established to see all issues in the country's universities. Also, National Board for Technical Education and National Commission for Colleges of Education were subsequently established to oversee all affairs of polytechnics and colleges of education respectively.

Demand for higher education can be explained in terms of derived demand, both in microeconomic and macroeconomic context. At individual level, each individual demands education, especially at tertiary level, in order to earn benefits such as being informed and getting a higher certificate with potentially accompanying chances of securing highly paid jobs. At national level, the demand for education is increasingly higher than as perceived at individual level and it derives essentially from the need to invest in developing human capital with the strategy of growing and consequently developing the nation's economy (Ajadi, 2012).

A global perspective of education includes the advocacy by international organizations such as the United Nations enshrined in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is on this note that Akinnaso, (2012) stated that the aim of education support by international organizations is aimed at raising global literacy and output. In this regard, several studies have posited that education and output are positively related.

The ownership and management structure of higher institutions of learning vary from government levels to private individuals, following the liberalization of education sector which simultaneously allows and accounts for increase in private control in other to give room for more provision of Higher Educational institutions in the country. In Nigeria, it is assumed that the private ownership and participation in Higher Education will significantly help to meet the high demand of Higher Education.

At present, there are about 110 universities in the country, comprising 45 Federal Universities, 50 State Universities and 25 Private Universities (National Universities Commission, 2022)

REGULATORY AUTHORITIES FOR NIGERIA HIGHER EDUCATION

National Universities Commission (NUC)

In 1962, the NUC was established as an administrative unit and it became a statutory union in 1974 with a board to see to the implementation of its mandates which have since been expanded to include the following:

- Monitoring of universities
- Approval of courses and programmes
- Determination and maintenance of minimum academic standards
- Accreditation of academic programmes
- Provision of guidelines and processing of applications for establishing private University of private.

Financing Higher Education in Nigeria

The goal and purpose of higher education in Nigeria is to produce high quality skillful and well prepared world class graduate that will be well qualified for National and world labor market, national sustainability, globalization and competing with world standard (National Universities Commission, 2014). In respect of the above, the Nigeria government under Federal Ministry of education and National Universities Commission, have been dedicated to making sure that this goal is achieved. However, in the light of this commitment and the increased awareness created by globalization, Higher Education has significantly led to increase in demand for education. Every young individual in Nigeria so desire to participate and benefit from Higher Education. This is why Adeyemo (2000) stated that Nigeria Education is seen as an investment in human and a basic tool for economic and national development.

National policy of Education (2004) stated that education Is the affair of the government. This mean that it is the duty of the government to provide education for the citizens of Nigeria.

For several years in Nigeria, federal government is the main source of financing education from elementary level to tertiary level since 70s. However, Adesulu, (2013) stated that Higher Education still remains stagnated and the most challenging agenda enunciated by most late and present administrations on assumption of office is to revamp the educational sector. In spite of the strategies and reforms employed by the government to offer a world class Higher Education, there is nothing significant to boost the Nigerian economy, offer stable institutions as well as create an effective leadership for the country.

Also, about 85% of Nigeria federal higher institutions are deteriorating and most teaching staff/lecturers are leaving the country to other countries for greener pastures. Most students' are desperately interested in seeking for better opportunities to further their studies abroad because of the present challenges in the education system (Akinyemi, 2013).

Besides the challenge of insufficient funding and poor education facilities, there is the problem of inadequate support for student, teacher and non-academic staff. Students from disadvantaged background who gain lesser privileges of attending higher education are on the increase. It is obvious that the frequent challenges in Nigerian Higher Education is the problem of inadequate funding which is the reason why different governments have been confronted with demonstrations by Nigerian labor unions under the education sector demanding for a permanent solution to this long lasting problem of

inadequate funding. In most cases, the union embarks on yearly strike action to demonstrate their feelings and desire for quick response and intervention by the government to grant their demands.

On several occasion the disagreement between the FGN and Academic Staff Universities Union (ASUU) led to closing down all the federal universities for more than two to three academic sections/semesters.

Imhabekhai and To new (2001) affirm that underfunded/inadequate funding in Higher Education has ended up destroying the goals of universities, resulting in poor management, academic crises and strike, dearth of facilities and equipment, indiscipline among students and staff, secret cults, poor student performance among others. In the quest for rapid development, developing countries have acknowledged that higher education should be adequately funded to engender economic growth for developing countries.

Funding higher education is the hinged on funding teaching, learning, research and the production of qualified Personnel as product of the institutions which are needed for national development”(UNESCO, 2002). Oghenekohwo (2004) divided Nigeria higher education funding into two regime; Deregulation and Pre-deregulation regime. At the point where it is the government that born most of the cost or funding is called the pre-deregulation regime. While the point of Post Structural Adjustment Programme is called the deregulation regime. At present, higher education funding is assumed to fall largely under the care of individual as it is being called “private good” in which case, the beneficiaries are expected to pay.

Ok ebukola (2003) in his studies on issues in funding university education in Nigeria affirmed that more burden will be shifted to higher institution graduate because most grant that was supposed to enhance student funding will be converted to loans.

However, 20 years after this comment was made, in 2023, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu came up with the idea of student loan scheme for Undergraduates of Nigerian Universities. Higher educational benefits not only its fundamental stakeholders (student, parents, teachers, ministries, administrators) but also international organizations. The government should not only be involved in funding Higher Education but all stakeholders and international organization is to enforce in supporting the system for optimal development. The issue of population should not however be neglected. The increase in higher education enrolment should significantly call for a relative increase in supplying adequate funding in catering for the growing demands for Higher Education but unfortunately, the reverse is the case.

IMPACT OF INADEQUATE FUNDING IN NIGERIA HIGHER EDUCATION

The alarming situation in Higher Education administration is that there is complete lack of Quality delivery of higher education to meet up with global educational skills (Ajadi, 2012). Higher Education administration in Nigeria cannot boost of meeting up with world educational standard. For example, No university in Nigeria is counted among world top best 100 university. It is certain that they are some specific reason of policy in stability in Higher Education delivery as well as the curriculum offered in . As a result, most of assigned higher educational institutions. Most importantly, staff salaries are irregular together with deteriorating working conditions which lead to long strike. No doubt, all this challenges have until recently result to “brain-drain” among student and staff, low academic quality, reduction in academics support and grants, inadequately equipped laboratory, student riots, poor student attendance, etc.

THE FACTORS AFFECTING FUNDING OF NIGERIA HIGHER EDUCATION

Some of the basic factors affecting Nigeria higher education are; Lack of adequate data on student and teacher population, political exigencies, poor management policy, low staff (manpower) capacity, Economics crises. Akintayo 2004 associate this problem under low budget allocated to education, inadequate finance and donors from international organization, poor economy policy and vision to enhance adequate funding and economy crises. Fagbulu (2003) linked the problem to 'high level of poverty in Africa, high rate of unemployment, high level of tuition fees by private higher institution for example, Igbenedion University collects about (N1.5 million), Babcock (N1.3 million), Bowen (N900,000.00) etc. And Limited supply of higher institution by stakeholders.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF WORLD BANK TO HIGHER EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

The World Bank appears to be the largest external financier contributor to HE in most developing countries. Generally, since the year 2000, the World Bank invested more than \$45 billion USD in education (World Bank, 2018). However, evidences abound that bulk of this spending is domiciled in basic/primary and secondary education levels. More importantly, nations that mainly benefited from most of this financial resources committed by World Bank Group includes Senegal, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mongolia, Haiti, Niger, Mauritania, Tajikistan, The Gambia, Cambodia, Ethiopia and Sudan. (World Bank, 2018).

In 2017, the World Bank planned to invest \$70m on Nigerian varsities. This was intended to affect ten universities in Nigeria which are Redeemers University, Ahmad u Bello University, University of Jos, University of Benin, Africa University of Science and Technology, University of Port Harcourt, Obafemi Awolowo University, Bayero University, Benue State University and Federal University of Technology (World Bank 2018).

CONCLUSION

The high financial challenges for several years in Nigeria have resulted in the poor quality of higher education being suffered in all parts of the country. The Government of Nigeria alone cannot finance higher education. Therefore, to improve upon the quality delivery of Higher Education, it is necessary that collaboration of all internal stakeholders, parents/guardian, the society and private sector should be facilitated. Intervention of international organization and non-governmental agencies should as well be strengthened. The education sector can only perform effectively when international organizations and stakeholders strives to carryout their responsibilities and obligations on financing in a manner that will account for the delivery of quality education. The World Bank concentrates and pays more attention to basic and secondary education and largely give less focus on Higher Education. This may be the reason why World Bank targeted in raising literacy level and enrollment rates up to the college level. With about 60 projects undertaken in Nigeria between 1958 and 2018, only 16 affected education sector. Out of these 16 projected, only 2 affected higher education.

The World Bank documents only projects and associated costs it commits itself into each country. Surprisingly, the World Bank seems to be the only international organization executing developmental projects on Higher Education system. This paper also exposes the fact that World Bank and other international organizations have played less of a significant role in higher education delivery in Nigeria. With the low quality education arising from poor learning facilities, poor

remuneration of lecturers, poor face of school/ learning environment etc. it is recommended that World Bank should help countries like Nigeria facing critical higher education challenges to raise facilities and general learning conditions.

Rather than just the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), the Federal Government of Nigeria should establish an organization that will major only on funding Higher Education; in boosting infrastructural facilities, research training grant for the Academics Staff and Scholarship awards for outstanding students. More attention has to be given to Higher Education since other levels of education such as the basic education and secondary level have so far benefitted more from World Bank. These calls for consolidating existing projects with more aids that will help improve existing status and face of Nigeria higher education system.

However, it is recommended that all other international organizations such as IMF, UNICEF, UNESCO, EU, AFDB,NGOs and others should focus on impacting on Nigeria's higher education if truly high quality education is desired for Nigerians.

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