

ADEQUATE FUNDING: A TOOL FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN NIGERIAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

Yusuf Suleiman

Department of Educational Management and Counselling,
Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria

Mustapha Adam Ishola

Department of Educational Management,
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

Lawal Abdulmumin Abubakar³

Department of Educational Management,
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

Lawal Ade Aliyu

Department of Educational Management and Counselling,
Al-Hikmah University, Kwara State, Nigeria

Abstract

The frequent strike action in Nigerian tertiary institutions is hinged on the growing interests and calls by academic unions on the financing aspects of tertiary education. Other stakeholders in education have also attributed lack of fund as the major factor that is contributing to the decline in the quality of university education in Nigeria. In view of the foregoing, this study examined adequate funding as a tool for achieving quality assurance in universities. To achieve this, concept of university education, objectives of university education, as well as the facilities needed for achieving its objectives as contained in the National Policy on Education were examined. A comparative analysis on funding of education between Nigeria and other African countries were also examined. The study concludes that the budget allocated to education is far below the UNESCO's recommendation of 26%, which has had adverse effect on quality of university education in Nigeria. The study recommends that to achieve the huge goals of university education, part of which is expected to make optimum contribution to national development through the intensification and diversification of its programmes for the development of high level human resources base within the context of the needs of the nation, adequate fund should be consistently devoted to universities (by government and other concerned stakeholders) to improve the quality of infrastructure, research, staff training and development and remuneration so that quality assurance can be assured.

Keywords: Funding, Quality Assurance, Tertiary Institutions, Nigeria

Introduction

Funding is globally acknowledged as the life wire that thrust the educational sector towards achieving its objectives. Education in Nigeria is often viewed as an exclusive service and sole responsibility of the three tiers of government. Tertiary education is the foremost source of providing the requisite knowledge which will assist to generate and hasten knowledge flow for contemporary based economy. The overhaul advancement of any nation relies on the function of quality of its manpower produced basically through the education system. Thus, individuals, firms, corporate organizations and government are faced with asset resolution on regular basis. The

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

Yusuf Suleiman, Department of Educational Management and Counselling, Faculty of Education, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria E-mail: yusufsuleiman@alhikmah.edu.ng

concern for quality in tertiary education through adequate funding therefore becomes imperative. Tertiary education in Nigeria has not been enjoying the expected position of eminence it deserved with regard to funding as the institution on many occasions receive the shorter end of the stick concerning statutory allocation of funds to the government agencies as evident in the Colleges of Education, Polytechnics, Monotechnics and Universities (Lawanson& Umar, 2020; Shirley, 2020). According to Nwaidiani (2007), there is no amount of money that is adequate to fund education. Those who believe that funding of education will be too cumbersome for government alone, agitated that there must be a paradigm shift to imbibe new core values that would align with other global realities of the rapid technological change. Therefore, funding is central to the provision of efficient and effective education, while inadequate funding has been the bane of educational growth and development at all level.

The funding of tertiary education in Nigeria has become problematic despite the fact that this level of education holds the key to human capital and national development. World Bank (2017) remarks that tertiary education in developing countries like Nigeria face the formidable policy challenge of balancing the need to enhance educational quality with growing societal demand for admission. Nigeria government has not been able to meet up with the United Nation Education Scientific and Cultural Organization standard of 26% budgetary provision for the funding of education. Education is capital intensive in nature and if the government keeps on developing lip services to its adequate funding to this germane segment especially at the tertiary level, standard will continue to deteriorate. The task of funding tertiary education in Nigeria is increasingly becoming complex over the years due to population explosion and the need for the government to diverse a financing approach for better service delivery which cannot be over emphasizes (Iyabo, 2017). In an attempt to compliment the funding, the federal government agencies like: Tertiary Education Trust Fund and Central Bank of Nigeria intervene in infrastructural development in these institutions, yet the reality remains that funding has not been adequate for the institutions in questions. Nidinechi (2014) emphasized that the deplorable circumstances regarding the progressive decay of the sector is characterized by paucity of fund, facilities, students' unrest and prolong shutting down of the institutions.

Tertiary education funding has dominantly been public concerns worsened by the rising cost of education. Diamboba (2014) emphasizes that the average cost of training a university student in African Countries is about ten times their per capital income. Funds are not even suffice to meet up with running cost, laboratories are ill equipped, decaying or not even in existence couple with the deteriorating value of the nation's currency in the international market, capital projects are abandoned, inadequate and dilapidated facilities are prevalent and capacity building for staff are not given priority in most of the tertiary institutions. The consequence of this in underdeveloped countries is the decline quality in the institution of higher learning. This is unquestionably beyond the public capability or government financial resource to accommodate. It becomes imperative for educational planners and administrators of institutions of higher learning to source for fund through non-governmental sources and financing approach where stakeholders in the education sectors perform the roles of the supplier of infrastructure of assets and services that have conventionally been provided by the government to argument the institutions programmes especially in this era of rising educational demand and depleting revenue from governmental support (Asiyai&Okoro, 2019; Eneasator, Azubuiké&Orji, 2019; John, 2016).

Concept of Educational Finance

Finance is a component of broad economics which focuses on the prudent management of monetary and non-monetary assets. James(2015) remarks that educational finance is the governmental and organizational process by which revenues are generated, distributed and expended for the operational and capital support of formal schooling. Hoyte (2002) opines that educational finance is the process of understanding how resources, social progress, technological advancement and wealth are created through a sound and continuously improving educational system. Corbat (2005) defines education finance as the collection and disbursement of funds by government and other bodies to serve the purpose of government. In a nutshell, educational finance is the provision and prudent utilization of public fund in the educational sector or the processes of sourcing, allocating and managing public school revenues in the production of educational service for the attainment of educational objectives. Muritala and Durosaro (2017) remarks that education finance is the commercial activities of providing funds and capital for both government and private investments. Education enterprise is a service sector and capital intensive in nature. Thus, the need for financing is sacrosanct to its goal attainment. Afolabi (2005) emphasizes that educational finance is the generation, distribution and utilization of funds with the educational organization.

History of Educational Finance in Nigeria

The history of educational finance in Nigeria could be traced from the inception of western education in the mid 19th century. Earlier financiers of education in Nigeria were Christian Missionaries (Church Missionary Society, the Wesleyan Methodist and Roman Catholic). The funding of education as at this time was the responsibility of the various missions who had to rely on their own home missions for financial support. Later on, these missions tackled the problem of financing education by supplementing the aid from the other home mission with meager fees paid by pupils. At this time the colonial administration did not make provision for education in its budgetary estimate. It was in 1872 that the colonial government provided the sum of \$300 to assist each of the three missionary societies that were involved in educational activities (Obayan, 2006).

In 1882, the first educational ordinance made provision for the establishment of the schools and took the responsibility of financing of schools established by the government and grant in aids were given to schools established by missions and private individuals. The mission continued to fund education alone until 1887 when the dual partnership in education provision was established in the territory. By this the colonial government established and founded some schools directly. In 1889, the government expenditure on education increased. Due to constitutional change in 1954, the funding of education became decentralized as the federal government and the three regions shared the responsibility of funding education. The regional provision of Richard constitution of 1954 enabled the Western Region to embark on the first attempt at Universal Primary Education in 1955 (Obayan, 2006).

The Eastern Region tried out the UPE in 1956 but had to abandon it in its second year due to financial difficulty. The North did not contemplate the scheme because of the financial implications owing to the large number of children of school age that would not be covered by the scheme. After the Nigeria Civil war in 1970, a new dimension in public funding for education was added. The government took over the

control of primary and secondary schools from the voluntary agencies. After the Civil war till the present 36 states structure, financing of education in Nigeria has been collective responsibility of the three tiers of government, communities, corporate organizations and well placed individuals in the society. Until adequate fund is invested in education, the problem of dilapidated structures, inadequate facilities and equipment for teaching and learning as well as poor welfare of staff in terms of remuneration and working environment would continue to impede educational advancement in the country (Akumah, 2012; Obayan, 2006).

Sources of Funding Tertiary Education in Nigeria

- 1. Government Grant:** All tiers of government annually make budgetary allocation to education in form of grant, which constitute a major source of school finance in Nigeria. The government imposed tax on citizens and the revenue realized from the taxes are shared out to various sectors of the economy including the educational sector. The Federal Government spends below 10 percent on education of its overall spending since 1997 (World, 2014).
- 2. Tuition Fees:** This represents considerable source of financing education and all money paid by the students for schools' instructional cost. This is known as instructional fees (Obayan, 2006). Though tuition is free in all Federal Colleges and institutions, monies are paid in sometimes known as instructional fees which represents considerable source of financing education in Nigeria. Other fees include: medical fees, examination fees, sport fees and card fees.
- 3. Endowment/Donation:** Endowment and donations are provided to schools by some public spirited individuals, corporate bodies or philanthropists either in cash or in kind for the upkeep of the schools. Durosaro (2017) views donations as voluntary gifts in forms of money, structure and stationery provide to educational institutions to help in the provision of the desired funds and facilities for educational institutions and programmes.
- 4. Internal Efficiency:** Improvement in the efficient profile of the school system would help to reduce wastage and make more funds available to schools. Schools generate fund through commercial venture, rentage of school halls, buses and so on.
- 5. External aids:** External aids are assistance given to educational institutions from outside the state. It may be inform of equipment and manpower through bilateral and multilateral relation. External aids could come from organizations such as the World Bank, UNESCO, USAID, Ford foundation, PTF and the like.

Approaches to the Funding of Tertiary Education

There are various techniques on how educational burden should be shared, which have been proposed over the years. The various alternatives range from a complex of government support on the one hand and the full support on the other hand. Morrision (2017) identifies the following approaches to the funding of tertiary education. These are:

- 1. The Full Support Approach:** This advocates full support and absolute responsibility for funding tertiary education by the government as part of her constitutional responsibility. In this wise, neighborhood region and municipal schools must cease to

exist since all schools are owned and provided for by the government. This arrangement is vigorous for tertiary education development as it tends to equalize educational opportunities even among districts and communities with inequalities in local prosperity support and educational tax capacity. The arrangement also assures rational allocation of resources to tertiary education since the districts, communities and individuals contribute through tax and rates in accordance with their needs from educational services.

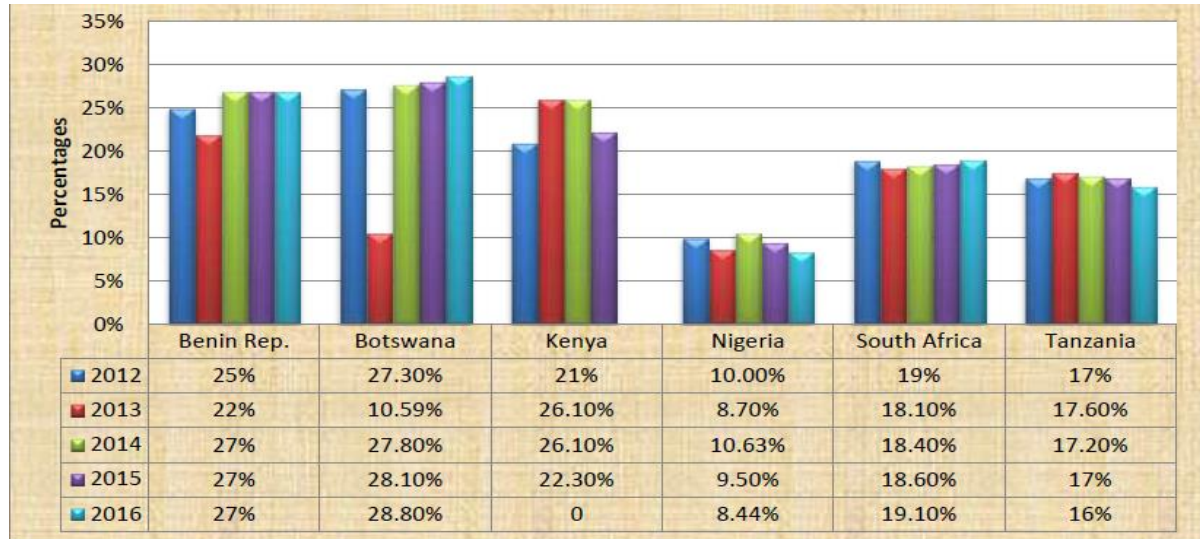
2. Partial Support Approach: This is an alternative to the full support approach which is concerned with the allocation of burden of educational provision between the government and decision makers in the management and administration of tertiary education. Agbabi (2014) remarks that if the government gives financial support to institutions of higher learning a desirable standard of instruction will be actualized. This will assist to ensure fairness and equalizing educational opportunities. The rationale behind this is to make sure that standard of education being provided for the students at this level is dependent upon the affluence of local tax effort made by a distinct in proportion to the wealth.

3. Privatization Approach: This approach supports leaving education completely to private sectors. The rationale behind this arrangement is that the market forces are supposed to adjust the demand and supply of educational services through price mechanism. Private sector participation in the funding of tertiary education is welcomed to provide additional resources to improve quality of service being provided. Samuel (2013) affirms that the improved quality of service provided by private market in the education sub sector in Subsaharan countries is a major reason for the preference. This approach explains the escalating cost of private cost of education as government is wandering away from bearing the educational cost.

Comparative Assessment on Funding of Education between Nigeria and Selected African Countries (2012-2016)

The issue of financing education in Nigeria has continued to be a subject of intense debate coupled with the endemic nature of funding at different levels of government. The education sector is still the worst hit while comparing with other selected countries in Africa. The justification for this premised on budgetary allocation to education in Nigeria is between 2012 -2016 compared to other Africa countries. For instance, the budgetary allocation to education in 2012 in Benin Republic was 25%, Botswana allocated 27.30%, 21% was allocated in Kenya, 10% in Nigeria, South Africa allocated 19%, while Tanzania allocated 17%. Further statistics shows that, in 2013, 22%, 10.59%, 26.10%, 8.7%, 18.10% and 17% were allocated to educational industry by Benin Republic, Botswana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Tanzania respectively. In 2014, Benin Republic allocated 27% to the educational sector, Botswana budgeted 27.80%, Kenya allocated 26.10%, Nigeria allotted 10.63%, South Africa allotted 18.40% and Tanzania apportioned 17.20%. In 2015 27%, 28.10%, 22.30%, 9.50%, 18.60% and 17% were allocated to the education sector by Benin Republic, Botswana, Kenya, South Africa and Tanzania respectively. Finally, in 2016, 27%, was allocated by Benin Republic, 28% by Botswana, 22.30% by Kenya, Nigeria allocated 9.50%, while 18.60% and 17% were allocated by South Africa and Tanzania respectively. Thus, it could be inferred from the statistic above that educational system is grossly underfunded in

Nigeria compared to others selected Africa countries. The budgetary allocation to the educational sector in Nigeria and some selected Africa Countries are here by graphically represented below.



Source:Ololube (2016)

An Assessment of Budget Allocation to Education in Nigeria (2010-2020)

Table 1: Budget Allocation to Education in Nigeria (2010-2020)

Fiscal Years	Percentage of Budget Allocation
2010	6%
2011	8%
2012	10%
2013	8%
2014	10%
2015	9%
2016	8%
2017	6%
2018	7%
2019	7%
2020	6%

Source: Ololube (2016) and Premium Times (2020)

From the budgetary allocation shown in Table 1, 6%, 8%, 10%, 8 %, 10%, 9%, 8%, 6%, 7%, 7% and 6% were allocated to the educational sector in Nigeria in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 respectively. Therefore, it could be inferred from Table 1 above that Nigeria government allocation to education is far below the United Nation Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommendation of 26% benchmark for budgetary allocation to education industry. This affirms that the government allocation to education is not sufficient to provide the type of education that would take the nation to its next level of development considering the explosion in the demand for the germane sector, and in higher education particular. Thus, underfunding has remained the bane of the Nigerian educational system.

Quality Assurance in Nigerian Tertiary Education

The importance of quality education in nation building cannot be overemphasized. There have been several calls on the educational managers on how to make educational system more vibrant in the quality of its products after several quantity of mass failure and half-baked products of various educational institutions. The concern regarding the manner in which the system is losing its confidence as regards to the effective and efficient nature of the system. Quality assurance in educational sector is an all-encompassing concept which include all processes, policies and actions through which the standard of education is developed, improved and sustained. UNESCO(2006) affirmed that quality assurance as the systematic review of educational programmes to ensure that acceptable standards of education, scholarship and infrastructure are being maintained. Reymond (2015) defines quality assurance as a means of putting in place appropriate structures, legislations, supervision of personnel and materials in order to ensure that minimum standards are developed, maintained and sustained. Ifediti (2014) views it as the process of ensuring that the educational output (graduating students) are processed with required personnel and quality programme, facilities and materials to meet global acceptance. Green(2003) defines it as those planned and systematic activities to provide adequate confidence that a product or service is satisfying given requirements of quality.

According to the National Policy on Education (2013), tertiary education is the type of education given after the secondary schools in institutions like: Universities, and inter universities centers, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics, Monotechnics and other specific establishments such as Agriculture, School of Health and Technology and National Teachers' Institute. World Bank (2012) remarks that tertiary institutions are establishments which are central to the creation of intellectual capacity on which knowledge production and utilization depend on and the promotion of lifelong learning practices necessary for updating people's knowledge and skills. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) through the Nigeria Policy on Education identified the goals of tertiary education as: to contribute to the development of the nation via high level human resource training, relevant and responsible to societal needs, provide highly experienced and competent staff whose products are well-informed, advance and encourage research, free enterprise, public service and strengthen national integration. These can be actualized through quality students' intake, teaching, research and development and public services among others. Tertiary institutions required infrastructure, equipment, resources and personnel.

The rationalization for sound and qualitative tertiary education cannot be overemphasized in that this level of education is the most advantageous for economic, political, social and technological development of any nation. Olaniyan (2011) remarks that human capital and national advancement of any country depend heavily on the quality of higher education. The business of providing qualitative tertiary education in Nigeria is a shared responsibility of all stakeholders in the educational sector. The truth that various levels of government cannot effectively fund higher education in the nations means that the institutions must look for other sources of providing fund to their operational effectiveness. The Federal Ministry of Education (2014) notes that higher education in Nigeria is in dissolute condition due to paucity of financial resources to maintain standard. This portends danger to the nation's economy as evident in the low quality of graduates being hitherto produced and ill equipped for the world of work. Aina, Babalola and Samuel (2013) affirm that federal universities in

Nigeria were lacking the financial resources to sustain educational standard in the face of enrolment explosion. The insufficient funding of tertiary institutions has had devastating consequences on teaching, research and result to academics brain drain.

In an attempt to find lasting solutions to the everlasting financial causes in the nation's tertiary institutions, the Federal Government directed through the National Universities Commission (NUC) that all federal universities should generate 10 percent of their entire annual fund internally through various revenue diversifications means (Odebiyi&Ainam, 2015). Inadequate funding of tertiary institutions in Nigeria is a fundamental cause of other problems that have undermined quality in institutions of higher learning. The issue of poor funding has its demonstration in the dearth of library books and journals, academic staff shortage, decline in reading culture among students, dilapidated buildings, obsolete equipment and the desire to obtain degrees by unconventional means. Tamuno (2016) affirms that dwindling funding undermine quality of programmes and lecturers productivity in tertiary education. The problem of underfunding and over reliance on government funds remain a clog in the wheel of tertiary education governance in Nigeria.

Need for Quality Assurance in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

The need for quality assurance in Nigerian schools cannot be overemphasized in order to ensure quality teaching and learning. However, the following are the major needs of quality assurance in our educational system:

1. To serve as indispensable component of control strategy in education
2. To ensure and maintain high standard of education at all level
3. To assist in monitoring and supervision of education
4. To determine the quality of the teacher input
5. To determine the number of classrooms needed based on the average class size to ensure quality control
6. To determine the level of adequacy of facilities available for quality control
7. To ensure how financial resources available could be prudently and judiciously utilized.

Challenges of Funding Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

Financing higher education in Nigeria has become a very crucial issue due to political, economic and social factors hitherto facing the country which have severe impact on the global economy. Education as an expensive social service requires adequate financial provision from the three tiers of government for effective implementation of education programmes. The funding policy of Nigeria education system has government decisive goals of making education free as at when practicable at all levels without shared financial responsibility by the federal, state and local governments. While no tuition fees are paid in all federal owned tertiary institutions, their students pay other fees like acceptance fees, registration fees, library caution fees, departmental registration and the like, the proportion of which differs from institution. However, the state and private universities are not restricted from the collected tuition and other fees charges (Akinyemi, Adebisi&Ofem, 2016).

It is evident in Nigeria that government alone cannot fund tertiary education because of the increasing cost of delivery in institution of higher learning brought about by a combination of enrolment pressures, resistance or failure of the institutions to adapt more efficient and productive financial management techniques and the inability

of government to keep pace with cost pressures in the face of other competing social demands have resulted in various cost sharing measures being introduced to usher charges that were not previously existed. Over the years, the government budgetary allocation to education in Nigeria have left many to be desired. Public financing of tertiary education to face challenges like the placement of limit on admission by government, very low education budget, reducing financial support from foreign donors, weak economic growth, poverty, unemployment and uneven distribution of wealth (Akinsanya, Adebisi, Akinyemi&Ofemi, 2018). Sporadic student's enrolment over the years has obvious critical challenge of funding the necessary resources to aid such massification of tertiary education. Inability to realize funding expectation has raised deep concerns about quality of tertiary education. The government by law is not allowed to charge tuition fees and the schools complain of paucity of adequate funding. Provision of qualitative higher education to citizens become unrealistic without adequate funding (Akinyemi, Ofem, Oketola&Folutile, 2014).

Rather than ensuring adequate funding of tertiary institutions by the government, vast amount of financial resources are being diverted into building luxurious government houses amidst other bogus projects. The developmental state of affairs of most of the institution of higher learning in Nigeria are unspeakable. Most of the institutions are grossly understaffed, lecture rooms were overcrowded and overstretched, equipment and consumable were in a state of paucity, capacity buildings are being conducted under deplorable conditions, science based faculties are running dry laboratories for lack of regents and tools to conduct real experiment, rapid deterioration of hostel facilities and overstressed laundry facilities (Deji, Folutilt&Oketola, 2017).

Financing education is both capital and labour intensive as well as highly expensive in nature. Tertiary education in Nigeria is currently underfunded which has put the institution administration under pressure and anxieties which has subsequently incapacitated them in providing essential services required for the actualization of set goal. The country financial procedures are difficult and absurd that impede the efforts of tertiary institutions from actualizing their mandates of teaching, research and publication and public services due to deviation from UNESCO benchmark of 26 percent recommendation from the annual budget to fund education (Kpoluew&Obilori, 2015). The financial challenges has resulted to incessant crisis in the system from both academic and nonacademic staff, shortage of equipment and facilities, indiscipline among staff and students upsurge in the cultists activities among others. Despite the fact that Nigeria is a signatory to the United Nation Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) programme, the Nigeria government is still unable to meet the statutory requirement of global body which requires that 26% of the annual budget should be allocated to education (Udoh, 2018).

Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) as source of financial wellbeing of tertiary education in Nigeria are yet to be fully explored as over 80 percent of public and private tertiary institutions depend on the IGR to argument proprietors funding. The typical area of focus is the fees from Sub -degree and postgraduate programmes. Tertiary institutions that are in commercial ventures hardly flourish due to weak structure of the management and high level of corrupt practices that characterized the operators. Only few of these institutions creatively explore endowments as well as local and international consultancies involving in the sector. Most of the institutions of higher learning established by the government were politically driven. Thus, many of them are

dearth of strong drive for decisive objectives and goal achievement. This is unlike the private tertiary institutions of higher learning that have strong objectives underlying their establishment from the inception. Politicians play politics with the institutions which account for the reason why the federal government has not been able to announce payment of tuition fees by all students of federal institutions of higher learning. Thus, the government usually pays lip service to education and adequate resources to ensure that excellence are not dedicated with no clear vision mapped out (Adebisi, Akinyemi&Ofem, 2016).

How Adequate Funding Can Increase the Quality Assurance Indicators in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

Scholars in the field of education have observed that certain indicators are associated with high quality education based on adequate funding (Asiyai&Okoro, 2019; Shirley, 2020). These indicators are summarized as follow:

1. Quality Learners: These are learners who are healthy, well nourished, have access to school, motivated to learn and supported by their family and communities.
2. Quality Personnel: Consideration for entry qualification, course duration, pedagogical skills, curriculum offering, promotion, remuneration, internship and professional specialization.
3. Quality Contexts: Relevant curricula, adequate and appropriate materials for literacy, numeracy and essential skills knowledge and skills for life
4. Quality Teaching: Child-centered and skill based approach and application to reduce disparities and promote learning
5. Quality Learning Environment: Child friendly school, policies and practices which prohibit harassment, humiliation, violence, corporal punishment and ensure adequate classroom and hygienic learning environment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, funding is one of the fundamental challenges that is persistently undermining and threatening the continued existence of quality in tertiary institutions in Nigeria and other developing countries especially in the face of increasing demand, thus rising cost of tertiary education. The issue of poor funding has its impact in decline of reading culture among students, dilapidated buildings, dearth of library books and journals, collapsed infrastructures and desire to obtain certificates through eccentric means. Institutions of higher learning lack the fiscal resources to enhance educational standard in the current allocation shares for education deviate stridently from regional and global practices. Dwindling funding brings dissatisfaction in workplaces and thus lower the qualities of input delivered. It is an established fact that government alone cannot sufficiently finance tertiary education based on the contemporary economic circumstances, thus the government was obliged to issue directives to institutions of higher learning asking them to generate supplementary resources within the sector to enhance effective service delivery. With the level of underfunding in Nigeria tertiary institutions, there is need for developing certain strategies that will make it feasible for the institutions to accomplish qualitative education.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. There is need to harmonize the internal and external criteria of quality assurance by raising standard of excellence in tertiary educational system;
2. There is need to introduce the macroeconomic strategies where the government needs to diversify to other sectors of the economy;
3. The principle of fiscal justice and fairness where all educational stakeholders are to involve in sharing the burden of funding tertiary education should be strictly adhere to;
4. There should be partial deregulation of tertiary education through public private partnership to ensure provision of additional resources for the institutions.
5. Government should endeavor to properly fund educational institutions in the country to meet the expectation of the society.

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