

## **100 YEARS OF EDUCATION POLICY IN NIGERIA: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES, CHALLENGES, AND A WAY FORWARD**

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### **Abstract**

Over the years Nigeria as a nation usually adjusted her educational planning programmes and systems of management to enable her meet up the challenges of globalization. The adjustment has been viewed in terms of policy introduction and reversal. This means that the functions of policy in the achievement of education standard cannot be over emphasized. This paper looks at the Nigerian educational view of assessing, appraising the success recorded, the challenges and a way forward. This paper made recommendations for the government and the stakeholders for proper and effective educational standard in Nigeria.

Keyword: Education Policy, Challenges and a Way Forward

### **Introduction**

Education existed before organized schools or school teachers were thought of. Education is not something different from life and society. It is the process of learning to live as a useful and acceptable members of the community (Farrant, in Lawal, 2003). In the part, the community accepted and supported traditional forms of education as provided by parents at home and priests in religious ceremonies or initiation rites, since these were in harmony with the people.

Every society, Fafunwa in Asuquo, Owan, Naja and Okon (2001) observed, that whether simple or complex has its own system of education for training youths. "Education for the good life" has been one of persistent concerns of men throughout life. The word "education is derived from Latin word" "Educare and Educere". Edu (means to train or to form while educere means to lead out or bring out what. To educate here refers to bringing out what is best in an individual. It is the manifestation of the perfection already found in man. Every individual is born with some innate abilities which lie dominant for a while. These latent abilities sprout like tree from a seed during the course of time and experience education, therefore, is the process in which an individual acquire the ways, beliefs habits and standards of the society into which he is born. It is through this process that individuals acquire their culture and transmits same to future generation (Asuquo, Owan, Inaja and Okon, 2001) they further stated that Nigerian education is viewed as a way of including sound education which involves the understanding of one's physical and social milieu. Education gets its inspiration from the society and in turn, contributes to the growth, renewal and development of the society. In whatever environment that education is practiced, whether in a primitive society or in advanced society, the ideas of education are almost the same. These include" exposing the young to different values beliefs, aspirations, and norms of the society. The oldest form of education known to men, which still continues today, alongside the school education is traditional indigenous or informal education. Different people have different objectives for educating their young ones. Boyd & King in Offem (2021) observed that the Greeks valued "an education man who" is intellectually and physically sound, while the Roman emphasized oratory and military process.

In the Nigeria society, the purpose of education is that of functionalism. Education is regarded as a means to an end and not an end itself. According to Fefinwa in Ogunu (2004), education is meant as an induction to the society and a preparation for adulthood. Education in Nigeria emphasizes social responsibility job orientation, political participation and the development of spiritual and moral values. Traditional Nigerian education is pragmatic. Furthermore, Fatimu in Offem (2021) noted that education combined physical training with character building and manual activity with intellectual training.

Moreover, the Nigerian development or underdevelopment has been a mechanism function of policy changes and financing. The Nigeria education sector has suffered serious setback in resource allocation mostly in financing. According to CBN (2000) in Obadara and Alaka (2010), poor financing investment has been the bane of Nigerian education system to the extent to which the budgeting allocation has been very low compared to others. Adawo (2011) opined that Nigeria had invested to informal education for a less than 167 years (1842 – 2009). The statistics of primary school had grown to above 50,000, 8275 universities. Nigeria's higher institutions have been turning out not less than 120,000 graduates yearly. The federal government and some corporate bodies such as Education Trust Fund (ETF), Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF) have been financing education. according to Adawo in comparing education finding of some countries in sub-Africa region, it is observed that Nigeria have never in any year met the minimum standard prescribed by the UNESCO, which is 26% of the total expenditure on annual budget of an economy.

In the modern system of education which is vibrant to provide for all Nigerian the great opportunity and facility to attain the maximum potential and provides the nation with adequate and competent manpower which is if great value to every Nigerian be it child, youth or adult. The quality of education in present time has brought back into the literature a new focus, especially, on relevant of functional/qualitative education that was sadly in adequate before the self-government of Nigeria (independence) in 1960. Notably, the basic quality of formal education has been on dim return in the current decades in Nigeria. Ballag (2002) in Dike (2002) noted the recent World Bank study that employers complain that the quality of universities graduates (and secondary school graduates) especially their communication skills, has fallen continually for two decades. Indeed, entrepreneurship education, technical and vocational education or skill oriented education is nothing to write home about. He emphasized that Nigeria cannot offer adequate, quality and sound education to her citizenry (students) at the elementary and secondary level of education, the higher institutions would continue to be populated by those who are least prepared to face the challenges of higher education.

### **Concept of Policy**

The concept of policy has been well articulated by researchers and social scientists or the subject. Both agree that an organization cannot function effectively without a policy or policies. Policy therefore, sort of directs the actions or activities of an organization. according to Egonmwan (1991) policy could be viewed as a government programme of action. To him, it stands for various degrees of goal articulation and normative regulation of government activities, that is what government intends to do or achieve (goal) and how it intends. Dror in Udidia (2015) defines policy as “a major guideline for action”, as general directives for action. In this word, he states that policy in most cases, lays done general directives, rather than detailed instructions, on the main lines of actions to be followed. It is thus not identical with the game-theory definitions of “strategy” as a detailed set of decision covering all possible situations. Similarly policy is a set of inter-related decision by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specific situation where those decisions would in principle be within the power of those actors to achieve (Jarkins in Udidia, 2015)

### **Role of Educational Policy**

It serves as guide t educational administrators when deciding lines along which the educational system should be conducted.

Decisions are usually taken to cope with uncertainties.

It specifies governmental programmes actions contained either in the nation's laws or in a public statement by a competent functioning of government.

### Critical Examine/Review of Nigeria Educational System in Operation

As education system continues to change, Nigeria over 170 years has witnessed many education systems in operation as shown in table 1 below:

**Table 1: Nigerian Education System in Operation**

| Year        | Education system in operation | Meaning                                                                                               | Reason for changes in system operation                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Before 1954 | 8-6-2-3 system                | 8 year primary,<br>6 year secondary,<br>2 year higher school certificate,<br>3 year university        | Agitations for self-ruled the British colonial rulers to change the education system in operation.                                                                                                                                |
| 1954        | 6-5-2-3                       | 6 year primary,<br>5 year secondary,<br>2 year higher school certificate<br>3 year university         | The colonial education was criticized as looking in vitality and relevance during September 1969 National Curriculum Conference.                                                                                                  |
| 1969        | 6-3-3-4 system                | 6 year primary,<br>3 year junior secondary,<br>3 year senior secondary<br>4 year university education | The system was hoped to empower the country towards the path of scientific technological development but the over arching objective was not met. Rather there has been a deep dissatisfaction with quality of education outcomes. |
| 2004        | 9-3-4 system                  | 9 year basic education<br>3 year senior secondary<br>4 year university                                | Since legislation was pressed in 2004, the intension was to provide active education at primary school and junior secondary levels.<br>This may have fizzled out just like other earlier policies because of findings.            |

Compiled by the researchers source; GUSAU (2008) and NPE 2004.

### Nigeria Education System in Operation and its policies since colonial era till post-Independence in 1960

The Nigeria education reform systems since before 1954 and 1954 proper were considered first. These were the Era of 8-6-2-3 Nigeria system of education. in 1960, Nigeria had two universities (University of Ibadan and Nigeria Nsuka) with students environment of about 1400 (Adawo, 2010). The National Curriculum Conference held in September 1969 in Lagos also recognized that the colonial education system was lacking in vitality and importance, however called for change to the system that will empower the nation towards the path of scientific and technological development. The educational system inherited from the British government remains greatly unconstructed and the industrialization process, thus structurally suffered by the lack of a sizeable supply of technically skilled and practically oriented work force (manpower).

### Education System in Operation from 1969 to date (2014)

Form the above table, it is indicated that educational transformation or reform began in 1969 in Nigeria with the system of education policy known as 6-3-3-4. During these periods, it was characterized by the process of something the educational system into four categories namely;

- Primary
- Junior
- Senior secondary
- Higher education

The change accidentally led to reduction of number of years at the primary and secondary school level. But Nigeria hoped that the system would empower the nation towards the path of scientific and technological development. The period/era witnessed the launching programme of free universal primary education in 1976 with focus on every Nigerian child shall have a right to equal educational opportunities irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities each according to his or her ability. The increased need for higher education during the oil boom of the 1970s in Nigeria, coupled with political pressure, led to the establishment of many universities in the society (Dike, 2002). He express further that ‘an explosive expansion in enrolments’ during this period marked the beginning of the decline in quality of education in the society. Unfortunately, the UPE programme failed due to adequate financing necessitated by corruption, among other factors. The era also witnessed the introduction of National Policy on Education in 1977. It was a functional scheme with focus on the acquisition of skills for self-employment. It is a total departure from the inherited colonial system of education which prepares young school leavers for white-collar jobs (government employment).

This period also experienced another information of educational programme, this era branding of Universal Basic Education (UBE). Since legislation was passed in 2004 establishing nine-year compulsory Universal Basic Education. The main sartorial emphasis of Federal and State Government has been an expansion of basic education to meet up the Millennium Development Goals. There has been a significant increase in investment in the basic education sector though federal and state government sources such as the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC).

Hinchliffe (2002) in Obadara and Alaka (2010) opined that poor funding of secondary education is based on our refusal to evolve education policy and educational goals as it suits Nigeria as a country because if we have to develop the secondary education that suits Nigeria we would soon or later discovered that it is even where we should lay emphasis on because all over the world, no nation jokes with its middle level manpower because, not everybody is required to go through university education but everybody is required to have achieved certain level of education that will make them go to anywhere in life. The period also witness increase in the number of schools and enrollments at all level of education.

#### **Other educational reforms programme embarked in recent government.**

Public private partnership (2006 – 2007) of the Obasanjo Regime: This was characterized by the privatizing campus of federal university and other tertiary institutions for the mere fact of greater efficiency of resources. As the bid for privatization of federal institutions continued, the federal government targeted 102 unity schools in the country for sale as public private participation (PPP) arrangement running of federal government owned unity schools was jettisoned (Gusau, 2008).

NEEDS: It is Nigeria’s medium term (2004 – 2007) reform plan that ericapsulates macro economic, structural and social policies and programme for citizen’s empowerment and national development. NEEDS has education components in form of institutional reform for efficient and effective service delivery. This document strictly examined fizzled out like other.

Seven-point (7 point) Agenda of President Umaru Yar’ Adua of 2008. This has education component in the form of human capital development. Emphasis is on reform of the education sector to important learning skills in science and technology by students who will be seen as the future innovators and industrialists of Nigeria and enhance standards which would ensure the minimum acceptable international standards of education for all.

Millennium Development Goals (MGS); the main aim of the MDGS adopted by 189 countries at the United Nations Millennium summit in New York in September 2000, is to create fairer and more stable

world. MDGs has education component in the form of Achieve universal primary education; ensuring that by 2015, child everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. Nigeria is committed to achieve a wide range of ambitious objectives involving poverty reduction, education, gender equality, health, environment and international development cooperation. Specifically, Nigeria had advanced efforts to provide universal primary education, protect the environment and develop a global development partnership (Wikipedia, 2011).

Vision 20:2020: At the dawn of November 2009, the Nigeria vision 20: 2020 blue print was released to the public. The vision is a step in the right direction. It focuses on the path of sustained and rapid growth, justifying its ranking amongst the Next 11 nations. The visions is anchored on the NEEDS and the seven-point Agenda of President Umaru Yar' Dau. It is hoped that by 2020 Nigeria will be one of the largest economies in the world able to consolidate its leadership role in Africa and establish itself as a significant player in the global economic and political area (The presidency Nigeria 20:2020 Document). For Nigeria to achieve the feat and its aim of being part of the 20 largest economies by 2020, she maintains an annual average growth rate of 12.45 over the next 15 years focus on developing the following areas: increase commitment to education, more economic reforms, structural reforms and governance reforms among other things (Soludo, 2007). Recently, the poor show in finding education and poor outcomes in education cannot continue if vision 20:2020 is to be accomplished. He buttressed that vision 20:2020 is to be accomplished. He buttressed that vision 20:2020 is a mirage, because, vision 20:2020 will end up a huge joke because the economy is currently depending on the life support of a fragile and temporary boom without the prerequisite economic investment to support the vision.

In view of the above mentioned programme it is well clear that past education policies in Nigeria are characterized by certain weak element such as implementations, lack of finances, slowness/lack of government commitment, poor conception, inadequate planning, poor learning environment, inappropriate legislative and regulatory framework, poor macroeconomic environment.

### **Financing of Education**

Financing of education simply refers to appropriate budgeting allocation to education sector which influences all level of schools according to their need (Unegbu, Uzo-okonkwo & Oduh, 2012) studies reveal that inability to realize financing expectations has raised concerns about standards of education in Nigeria. Hichliffe (2002) estimated that education expenditure is equal to only 2.45 of GDP and 14.3% of government expenditure. It is generally recognized that the share of these finds going primary education has relatively increased owing to the main sectoral focus of Federal Government and state governments in expansion of basic education to meet the MDGs Goals. The Table 2 below shows that recent allocation share of education in Nigeria deviates significantly from regional and the international norms.

### **To reveal the budgeting trend for education section**

**Table 2: Federal Government financial allocation of education from 1995 – 2014**

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Total Budget (#)</b> | <b>Allocation to Education</b> | <b>% Allocation Education</b> |
|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1958        | 38,267,480.00           | 2,260,760.00                   | 5.91                          |
| 1959        | 37,647,160.00           | 2,515,140.00                   | 6.68                          |
| 1960        | 46,629,930.00           | 2,808,040.00                   | 6.02                          |
| 1961        | 52,987,260.00           | 3,257,570.00                   | 6.15                          |
| 1962        | 52,054,700.00           | 2,705,250.00                   | 5.19                          |
| 1963        | 58,109,680.00           | 1992,590.00                    | 3.43                          |
| 1964        | 62,275,980.00           | 2,270,360.00                   | 3.65                          |
| 1965        | 78,396,980.00           | 2,800,950.00                   | 3.57                          |
| 1966        | 76,720,145.00           | 3,244,020.00                   | 4.23                          |
| 1967        | 68,484,070.00           | 3,339,400.00                   | 4.88                          |
| 1968        | 64,570,800.00           | 1,833,400.00                   | 2.84                          |

|      |                      |                    |       |
|------|----------------------|--------------------|-------|
| 1969 | 81,053,740.00        | 1,782,410.00       | 2.20  |
| 1970 | 267,920,814.00       | 1,850,540.00       | 0.69  |
| 1971 | 465,832,661.00       | 2,468,520.00       | 0.53  |
| 1972 | 638,947,649.00       | 3,976,650.00       | 0.62  |
| 1973 | 1,411,420,065.00     | 12,378,7890.00     | 0.88  |
| 1974 | 3,128,405,827.00     | 92,678,460.00      | 2.96  |
| 1975 | 5,252,297,737.00     | 240,196,680.00     | 4.5   |
| 1976 | 5,088,159,047.00     | 443,056,618.00     | 8.71  |
| 1977 | 7,652,554,360.00     | 238,617,290.00     | 3.12  |
| 1978 | 6815,198,810.00      | 779,399,610.00     | 11.44 |
| 1979 | 8,805,262,310.00     | 326,076,020.00     | 3.70  |
| 1980 | 9,041,279,000.00     | 447,902,000.00     | 4.95  |
| 1981 | 8,430,896,670.00     | 543,664,300.00     | 6.45  |
| 1982 | 6,758,123,360.00     | 546,698,980.00     | 8.09  |
| 1983 | 5,560,973,850.00     | 224,407,210.00     | 4.04  |
| 1984 | 6,072,461,420.00     | 272,497,470.00     | 4.49  |
| 1985 | 6,772,342,659.00     | 256,856,650.00     | 3.79  |
| 1986 | 78,780,732,900.00    | 208,990,210.00     | 2.69  |
| 1987 | 17,517,080,030.00    | 337,463,940.00     | 1.93  |
| 1988 | 24,365,232,326.00    | 584,130,070.00     | 2.40  |
| 1989 | 30,107,057,130.00    | 1,067,179,030.00   | 3.55  |
| 1990 | 39,763,988,960.00    | 1,126,664,140.00   | 2.83  |
| 1991 | 38,665,978,779.00    | 419,906,180.00     | 1.09  |
| 1992 | 52,036,021,610.00    | 2,008,340,430.00   | 3.86  |
| 1993 | 114,600,529,300.00   | 6,436,080,750.00   | 5.62  |
| 1994 | 100,500,000,000.00   | 7,878,084,9210.00  | 7.13  |
| 1995 | 155,500,000,000.00   | 12,728,676,390.00  | 8.19  |
| 1996 | 188,221,068,038.00   | 12,135,915,790.00  | 6.45  |
| 1997 | 404,000,000,000.00   | 16,440,162,815.00  | 4.07  |
| 1998 | 260,000,000,000.00   | 26,721,320,906.00  | 10.28 |
| 1999 | 419,500,000,000.00   | 27,712,000,000.00  | 6.61  |
| 2000 | 677,511,714,733.00   | 56,668,169,766.00  | 8.36  |
| 2001 | 894,214,805,186.00   | 62,567,055,443.00  | 7.00  |
| 2002 | 1,064,801,253,520.00 | 73,435,499,300.00  | 6.90  |
| 2003 | 765,100,000,000.00   | 13,900,000,000.00  | 1.82  |
| 2004 | 1,849,400,000,000.00 | 93,770,000,000.00  | 5.07  |
| 2005 | 1,846,000,000,000.00 | 92,000,000,000.00  | 4.98  |
| 2006 | 1,900,000,000,000.00 | 92,000,000,000.00  | 4.84  |
| 2007 | 2,300,000,000,000.00 | 186,000,000,000.00 | 8.09  |
| 2008 | 274,000,000,000.00   | 250,144,818,579    | 8.79  |
| 2009 | 3,049,000,000,000.00 | 252,204,813,495    | 7.37  |
| 2010 | 4,749,000,000,000    | 339,634,791,000    | 9.32  |
| 2011 | 4,236,000,000,000    | 393,810,171,775    | 9.86  |
| 2012 | 4,749,000,000,000    | 463,385,490,528    | 10.21 |
| 2013 | 4,987,220,425,601    | 509,039,713,761    | 8.28  |
| 2014 | 4,695,000,000,000    | 493,050,000,000.00 | 10.50 |

Source: Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletin and Information available on [www.nigeria.gov.ng](http://www.nigeria.gov.ng) [allafrica.com](http://allafrica.com), budgetary allocation to education sector (statisense) & [www.budgetingoffice.gov.ng](http://www.budgetingoffice.gov.ng).

### **Brief transcript of budgetary allocation to education sector**

1. Budgetary allocation to the education sector
2. Agencies and capital projects components of our education systems
3. It is my personal belief that the quality of life of any nation cannot be expected to be more than the quality of the education of their citizenry and the international investment in the education system. A quick look at the world today shows that all the developed countries have massive and strong educational institutions while the under-developed are bedeviled with perennial lack of the appreciation for the needs to take education serious. Education has beyond managing developed countries have pushed education to the level of governance; developed countries have pushed education to the level of government; developing frameworks, and monitoring its effectiveness, in vesting massively in the system, as well as partnering with private institution sin areas of lesser influence. Nigeria education system and budgetary allocation is the focus of this study, with the intention to extract some sense from available data as relating government budgeting.
4. The purpose of this education budget analysis is four-fold: (1) to revealed the budgeting trend (2) to determine the budge priorities, growth rate and annual growth rate (3) to perform a gap analysis and project on possible budget value (4) to propose possible synergy among all arms of government (Satisense, November, 2013).

Considering the federal government budget from 1958 to 2014 depict fluctuations in the percentage of the total budget to education from a ratio of 5.9% in 1958, 4.88% and increased to 8.71% in 1976 and decreased to 3.79% in 1985. Subsequently increased to 7.13% in 1994 and decreased to 1.82% in 2003, 5.6% in 2004 and 8.09% in 2007, from more details see table 2. Considering this dismayed picture, it is therefore, critical to keep in mind that resources are very vital in the growth and development of educational standards. Also, the success of any educational system depends greatly on the finance and material (human resources and material resources) available to it, because no organisation can operate effectively without adequate financing.

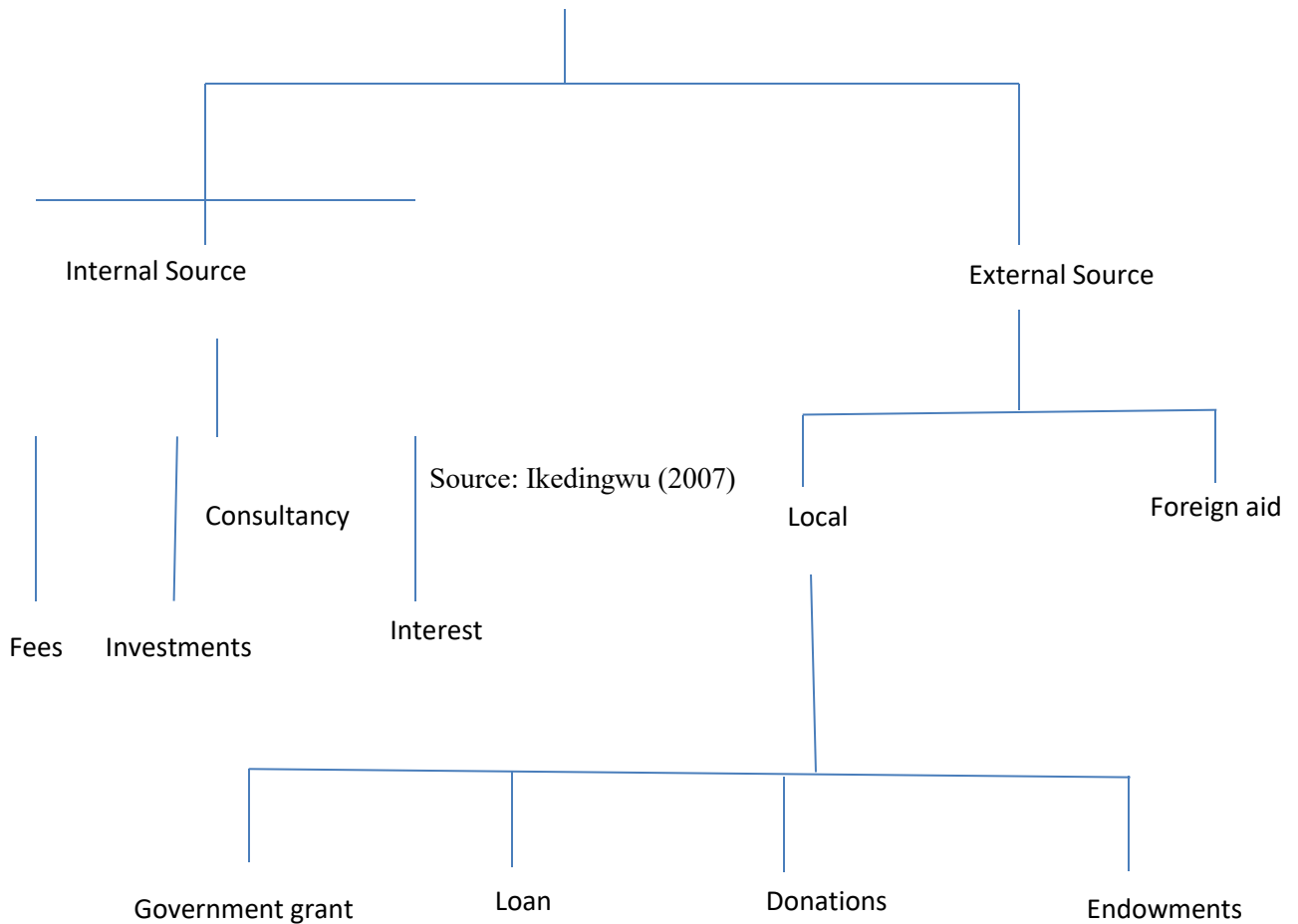
A way forward: measures for improving standards of education through adequate financing, policy implementation and initiatives.

The traditional financing sources of education such as appropriation to education sector by the federal government, subvention by the state government from appropriate on education, deduction from local governments' allocation accruing from federation account and Internal Generated Revenue (IGR) which have been insufficient in the provision of education services and facilities. The way out for adequate financing are as follows:

- a. Creation financing generation medium such as
  - i. Financing from Parent's Teachers Association (PTA)
  - ii. Alumni
  - iii. Consultancy services
  - iv. Internet centre
  - v. Profit from short-term bank deposits
  - vi. Individual and community contribution
  - vii. Donation from NGO
- b. Education tax is another choice that cause companies, financial institution to supplement government financing of education by means of education tax. This is important since the business enterprise/organisations are also beneficiaries of education dividend.
- c. Integrative financing which shows that the financing of education is joint effort f the three tiers of government (Federal, State and Local governments)

- d. Public-private participation (PPP) is also financing medium. This is vital become a serious burden of government and therefore needed participation of other stakeholders. By so doing, there is necessity for partnership participation among stakeholders in education sector. This partnership include the World Bank, UNDEP, UNICEF, UNESCO and other organized private bodies/sector, non-governmental agencies.

#### SOURCE INSTITUTIONAL FINANCE



## **Conclusion**

From the above measures, the successful education policy implementation in Nigeria at all levels of education seriously require a joint efforts of government, individual and private bodies in the provision of adequate financing for provision standard educational programmes (provision of infrastructure, equipment, training and re-training of staff including other necessary activities which will help Nigeria education sector to meet up global competition/challenges.

## **Recommendations/way forward**

- Government should continue to play a proactive role in financing and providing adequate education service mostly in universal basic education which is a preparation ground for other levels of education.
- Monitoring team should be form to monitor the proper use of the finance allocated to education sector.
- Government should create an enabling environment for education to take its place in the society.

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