

States of education, funding, and democracy in Nigeria

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Abstract

The restoration of democracy in Nigeria, particularly after decades of military dictatorship that began in 1966, has impacted the country's general growth, including the education system. However, it has grown more difficult to achieve democratic success because various societal qualities are required, particularly in educational development and funding. Citizens can only acquire these qualities through literacy if the country's education sector is democratized and adequately funded. One of the most significant obstacles to achieving this goal is a lack of financing, a persistent problem in Nigeria, particularly under this democratic government. As a result, there is an increasing number of private educational institutions, and government authorities in charge of education cannot effectively monitor and manage their establishment. However, due to the country's democratic structure, care must be taken to guarantee that quality is not compromised. Overall, because of its impact on individual and national development, making quality education accessible to all Nigerians should be one of the government's top priorities. This study aims to examine the current situation of education, funding, and democracy in Nigeria. This is done to better grasp the Nigerian educational system and its finance during the country's democratic era.

Keywords

Education, funding, democracy, Nigeria

Introduction

The achievement of any country is heavily reliant on the adequacy and effectiveness of its educational system. Education has long been regarded as an important tool for achieving national development and growth in pursuing a more stable economy. Education refers to acquiring knowledge, skills, values, morals, beliefs, habits, and personal development facilitated by learning. Teaching, training, storytelling, conversation, and focused study are all examples of educational practices. Mwangi (2021) states that among the essential factors responsible for developing the American economy has been comparatively increasing educational expenditures. In 2017–18, expenditures per student enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools in the fall were 4% more than in 2009–10 (\$13 118 vs. \$12 623). Over this time, expenditures per student decreased from \$12 623 in 2009–10 to \$11 975 in 2012–13 before rising to \$13 118 in 2017–18. Countries, states, societies, communities, politicians, parents, and others compete to ensure that every citizen obtains an education (Ogunbayo & Aigbavboa 2019). This study intends to examine the states of education, funding, and democracy in Nigeria.

Overview

Adidi and Irabor (2019) postulated that the education system impacts people's perceptions, competence, and knowledge, developing humans to discover and rediscover themselves. The government's pursuit of education (as well as several other activities) is supervised and organized to improve society and its citizens (Odiri 2019). This is because education benefits students by fostering inclusive knowledge around intercultural education and educating in a culturally responsive manner (Ogunbayo & Aigbavboa 2019). Not only does increasing intercultural awareness and inclusion aid students with diverse backgrounds and needs in succeeding, but it also promotes acceptance and helps students prepare to flourish in an increasingly diverse environment (Odiri 2019).

The word "democratization" originated as a political concept and is now one of the most frequently used words in the political science vocabulary. It simply means incorporating democracy into the very fabric of society (Ogbe & Ojie 2021). Its procedures necessitate eradicating roadblocks, including lack of accountability, unfairness, corruption, and indiscipline, among others. In relation to education, democratization is the equal and equitable provision of education to all citizens of a given society, irrespective of social status, religious practice, ethnic background, and tribal groups (Mwangi 2021). According to Ogbe and Ojie (2021), the democratization of education refers to making education available to all, irrespective of background, religion, ethnicity, political association, or other inequitable factors.

However, the democratization of education entails more than just increased access to education. People frequently make the mistake of comparing attendance or access to schooling with receiving education. Education is more than just constructing new schools and providing spaces in the classroom for the teacher to use blackboards, chat, practise, and teach. Efforts should be made to create an atmosphere conducive to acquiring knowledge. Education is pertinent to society.

Educational situation and democratization in Nigeria

The goals of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) and Education for All (EFA) were elements that contributed to the democratization of education in Nigeria. The international community met in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000 for the World Conference on Education, which noted that many countries were still far from achieving the goals established at the World Conference on Education for All in 1990. They reinforced their commitment to improving EFA by 2015 and identified the main measurable education goals to meet the learning needs of all children, youth, and adults by 2015 in order to meet the stipulated goals of education in Nigeria.

The Nigerian Government and the National Assembly enacted laws (including Section 18 of the 1999 Constitution) providing free and compulsory education for children up to certain levels. Furthermore, elementary education would be mandatory and higher education would be accessible to all on a merit basis. In Nigeria, access to education is regarded as a right alongside the rights to life, freedom of expression, and freedom of association. As a result, the government was obligated to make education available to all, particularly at the basic stages. The increased demand for education has resulted in the rapid development of educational institutions. According to Ogbe and Ojie (2021), the need for education in the southwestern part of Nigeria, for instance, was like a great river in flood that a weak man was attempting to confine to its normal channel. They further stated that the city's education-hungry citizens would patronize anything that included the word "school" because all children, no matter where they live or their circumstances, have the right to education in Nigeria. It is widely acknowledged that education is the best legacy a country can give its citizens, particularly the youth, who will be the future change agents in a country's administration for overall improvement. Therefore, education deserves special attention.

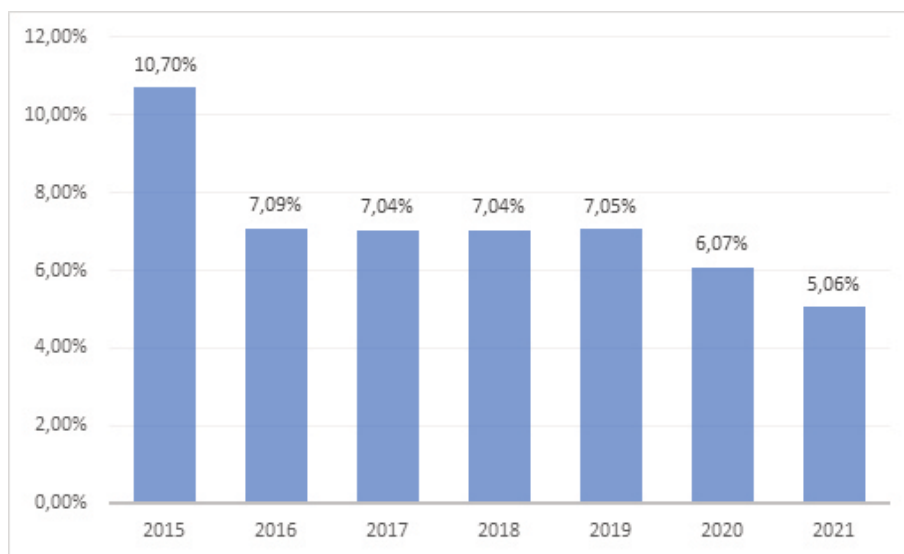
Funding and democratizing in Nigeria

The goal of democratizing Nigeria's education system is beset with poor funding factors. The Universal Primary Education (UPE) programmes of 1976 are a perfect example; their planning was so poor that no provisions were made for long-term funding. The outcome of the poorly received UPE programmes affirms the adage that 'failure to plan is planning

to fail. Everything was available except for adequate financing. The students were prepared and the classrooms were full, but there was insufficient funding to keep everything running (Okolie, Nwajiuba, Binuomote, Osuji, Onajite, & Igwe 2020). Nigeria's educational system is still beset by a lack of funding, which results in inadequate infrastructure, classrooms, and teaching aids. It is impossible to overstate the importance of funds in the implementation of any educational programmes.

According to Section 13 of the National Policy on Education (2004), subsection 120, education is a costly social service requiring sufficient financial provision to implement educational programmes effectively (Oke & Bukar 2018). However, poor funding has been a recurring issue (Ogunbayo & Aigbavboa 2019). Nigeria fails to meet the UNESCO recommendation that developing countries allocate 26% of their annual budget to their education sector (Uhunmwangho & Diakpomrere 2019). The table below shows the Federal Government of Nigeria's yearly budgetary allocation to education from 2015 to 2021.

Federal government's yearly budgetary allocation to education since 2015



Source: Adapted from Uhunmwangho & Diakpomrere (2019)

Uhunmwangho and Diakpomrere (2019) discovered that massive growth in education that is not supported by financial resources is taking place at the expense of quality. However, the democratization of education has opened the floodgates for anyone who wants to be a school proprietor to apply to the National Universities Commission (NUC) and other government educational bodies (Biamba, Chidimma, Chinwe, Kelechi, &

Chinyere 2021). Oke and Bukar (2018) found that poor educational policy under the democratization of education has allowed poorly funded private school owners to be in the business of running schools. These schools lack the necessary experiences, skills, and academic qualifications, bribing their way through the approved process of establishing their schools.

Government bodies in charge of education cannot properly control and regulate the establishment of educational institutions. For instance, in Ogun State, located in the southwestern part of the country, it is difficult to walk down a street without encountering at least one private primary or secondary school. Many of these schools are not accredited and operate at the expense of quality education, employing inexperienced and untrained teachers. The truth is that one cannot give what one does not have. These schools are more likely to be profit-driven than quality-driven (Okolie et al. 2020).

Conclusion

Education's contribution to the development of individuals and society is no longer questionable. Education has been and continues to be a vehicle for raising individuals' standard of living as well as the quality of life in society. As a result, there is a need to make it equally available to all without unequal treatment. However, in making education available to all, care must be taken to ensure that quality is not compromised. Making quality education available to all Nigerians should be one of the government's primary concerns. Apparently, this has been hampered by challenges ranging from poor funding to the uncontrolled propagation of private schools. It is up to the government to address these challenges using researchers' recommendations.

Recommendations

The study recommends that the government begin proper planning through its education management agencies, including forecasting and estimating any educational programme's financial, material, and human implications before carrying it out. In addition, the Nigerian government should improve its education funding.

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