

Redistributive Policy: A Panacea for Tertiary Education Reform in Nigeria

**Semshak Danladi Kassem¹, Rwang Patrick Stephen² &
Ponmak Kenneth Zingdul¹**

¹Department of Political Science
Federal University Lokoja
Corresponding author: Semshak.danladi@fulokoja.edu.ng

²Department of Political Science,
Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State

Abstract

The Tertiary Education in Nigeria has faced a lot of challenges over the years, ranging from poor funding, weak infrastructure and the perennial cum incessant ASUU strike. Since 1960 till date, there has been low allocation to the sector as government is allowed to fund education as enshrined in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The authors look at possible ways to seek alternative funding to tertiary education, to enable the ivory towers lived up to their expectations. It was argued that based on current global reality of paucity of funds, government alone can't fund tertiary education without intervention of wealthy citizens. This postulation is birth out of the necessity to expunged strikes out of the system and brings willing partners in to reduce the burden on government. The paper relied on Secondary source of data collection which focused on sourcing information from library, internet, books, and journals. The article made use of systems theory as theoretical framework to explain how education if properly funded by government and stakeholders would lead to progress and advancement in tertiary sector. It was recommended that, unity of purpose, oneness and collective intervention through redistribution will bring lasting lights in the sector completely.

Keywords: Education, Tertiary, Redistributive, Policy & Reform.

Introduction

Policy making and policy implementation can easily be understood better in the view of Dye (1972) when he refer to it as "whatever government does or chooses not to do" that means, considering redistributive policy as means of funding tertiary education is solely unto the government to act, accept or not act and effect on this suggestive position of the researchers. There are six (6) cardinal and prelate types of policies in a state that breeds development and lead to progress in all realms in the state, they are; Substantive, Distributive, Redistributive, Regulatory, Constituent and Symbolic policy.

Nigeria education system is run through two policies of distributive and regulatory over the years but lagged completely on redistributive policy. Tertiary education is the most important part of education globally, this is because, it is charged with the sole responsibility of producing technocrats, professionals and artisans that will run the wheels of government efficiently and effectively. Nations develop due to its capacity of well skilled and excellently endowed manpower development. Countries like United States, Germany, France, Russia, Japan, China, Britain, Brazil, South Africa, Kenya etc. are where they are today because of the quality of their tertiary education.

Funding is another key aspect of tertiary education because without funds, the research and development sectors will not function appropriately. The fundamental part of tertiary education funding in advanced states is the redistributive policy adopted to make the system run at the instance of government and well spirited individuals who choose to give back to the society after excelling in their endeavors. Education especially at the apex level demand massive attention and government alone can't handle the bills void of help and assistance from other source. Nigeria has been in a deep tertiary mess in the past sixty two (62) years of its independence because inadequate partnership with good spirited people.

Elizabeth (et al, 2019) postulate that, education is the cultivation of the entire individual including intellectual, character, and psychomotor development for better output, effectiveness and efficiency in all realms for transformational development of the state. It's the main investment and investiture in human capital development and lead overall productivity and growth both in macro and micro levels separately. Education reflect everything that will make a people to have core dreams, value for life, hope for tomorrow, mind to project, vision for better life and to detest trouble of any kind because of exposure, knowledge, wit, grit and civilization. It is clear that tertiary education generally is lagging behind in the Nigeria's educational conservation since Nigeria independence of 1960 due to government focus on self-funding and closed policy that has limited the sector completely.

The utmost importance attached to education is underscored in the National Policy of Education which emphasized education as the locus standi for affecting national development. The development in this context in view is stability and serenity in tertiary sector of education void of incessant, protracted, perennial and prolonged strikes that has been creeping the nation for years. The most recent strike is the 2022 eight (8) months strike that took the good intervention of the Speaker Femi Gbajabiamila to be suspended by Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). It was gathered that, closure of tertiary institutions for long led to increase in insecurity, youth restiveness, juvenile delinquency and crime in general. Redistributive policy of policy making if adopted has the required tendencies of stabilizing the system and promote absolute goodness in the tertiary education hub.

Methodology

Library method was used to source for relevant data and materials for the article. The method entails sourcing information from researches and literature and archival records or documents. Explanation in this work is built mostly on the work done by other renewed intellectuals, sound minds, seasoned academic contributors and literati alike and intellects of sound mind. The work is descriptive in nature. To this end therefore, extensive materials were consulted from Secondary sources which involves the use of textbooks, journals, periodicals, magazines, newspapers and online materials.

Theoretical Framework

Every research work must have a suiting theory that helps the researchers to explain their points better. The theory adopted for this work is the David Easton's System Theory also known as Social Systems theory in Social Science (Gibson, 2022). This theory sees the entire state or society as one, interdependent and relates symbiotically with one another, anything that affects

one system, part or organ will have an effect on the other parts. The system works like a machine and human body, all parts must be function together to yield good output.

The system is a set of interrelated variables that works together in other to breed progress so it is expected that, government and well spirited individuals must unite to give good funding to tertiary education. The theory came to the fore in 1953 in the book authored by David Easton titled 'The Political System'. In spite of everything, the idea of a system is from biological theory related to biodiversity and adaptation by some social scientists to the study of their subject matter, historically, system theory has its origin deeply rooted in biological sciences. In the view of David Apter, there are three types of systems which are; government, political groups and systems of stratification, while David Easton categorized the parts into two; inputs demand and support and outputs authoritative decisions. Every system has its boundaries and role which are describable and specifiable. *System theory* is relevant to discussing this topic redistributive reform because it calls on all agencies and partners to work together for the good of tertiary education. The theory sees the government as a partner with the stakeholders for the purpose of developing the sector through collective unity and goodwill. The system (government and its partners) working together for common good is what explains redistributive policy in earnest which will in turn serve as panacea for tertiary education turnaround in Nigeria for good of all.

Educational Funding

There is a massive difference between spending on education and investing in education. Since the inception of Nigeria as an independent entity, it has constantly spent on education without really investing in education comprehensively. Lots of funds are been allocated to the sector since 1999 but there seems to be any visible investment in the sector. What then is the cause? Gate (2023) said during his visit to the country and in trying to point out the relevance of education and tertiary education funding to Nigeria when the country was merely focusing on infrastructural development with almost zero regards to skilled manpower development via education.

He said "*people without roads, ports and factories can't flourish. And roads, ports and factories without skilled workers to build and manage them can't sustain an economy*". He posited that, the country's focus should be on human capital development. How can Nigeria keep to such a golden advice when it constantly failed to fund education properly and treat educators with much disdain? This is possible at all. Poor allocation to education is hampering the strength of the nation's ability to provide needed manpower to man the affairs of the country. Funding education is quite different from allocation of fund to education. Most times, government budget to education is use to service the bureaucracy in the sector like the minister of education, his appointees, ministries and department staff without the field lieutenants in the classroom getting what work with or buy instructional materials (Gate, 2023). There are seven (7) core ways of managing education which are; political, technical, teachers' salaries, and teacher development, teaching and learning material, infrastructure and school level management.

This is the critical challenge facing funding of education in Nigeria, hence a new path needs to be introduced in other to make people doing the work get impact and good benefits from their Labour. This funding has always been the responsibility of the government which lack apt and accurate supervision. The call for public support towards funding education at the tertiary level has become very imperative and absolutely necessary.

New Tertiary Reform Thinking: Redistributive Policy

The main view of the researchers in trying to find lasting and permanent solutions on tertiary education is a call for proper reform of the nation's tertiary education policy that will expand the responsibility of funding constitutionally to other stakeholders who will be willing to support educational advancement for the betterment of humanity and for the good of mankind in general. Tertiary funding in key states isn't government load or responsibility alone, private and well spirited individuals are in the social contract of funding for the good of all and sundry (Terwase, Bello, Onwuanibe & Sambo, 2021).

The call for *redistributive policy* is the option involving transfer of benefits from one segment of society and gives them to another to achieve equilibrium. It involves taking from the extremely rich and wealthy giving to the poor in form of progressive taxation. The more one earns the higher one tax that are used to provide social services to the poor. This policy is more in socialist states than in capitalist setting. The crux and hub of the policy is to make average citizens better off by giving them sense of belonging in the affairs of the state. Revenue generation via VAT, PTF, ETF, FIRS and Revenue allocation act are ought to be basically used for this purpose in totality to avert strike in the tertiary sector completely (Blum, 1967).

This *new perspective of redistributive policy* is not for the poor but to tertiary education funding to enable it thrives and grows, glow without limitations, hindrances and setbacks. Should the government review it policy trust on this, tertiary sector will have the needed strength and vibes to excel without been stranded. Consequently, if the government uses the money garner from any windfall, international favour, and international generosity to invest in education, tertiary education would have transformed properly over the years. This policy will build confidence of students, parents and staffers to know that, there is hope for anyone who trust in God.

Conclusion

Any country that must advance it tertiary education sector must have a clean policy on how to fund it. Nigeria tertiary sector is in total need of redistributive policy that will pressure and patronize well-meaning patriots and compatriots of goodwill to work hand in hand with government to transform educational hub in the country. Tertiary education funding should be allowed to run like a system through public and private partnership. A good relationship between the town [stakeholders plus spirited individuals] and the gown [tertiary education] will bring or lead to nothing but development and serenity in the sector void of rancor like strike and chaos like protests. Rwanda as a country is having better tertiary education system that is run by government and cherished more the than private schools because of deliberate decision of government to invest massively in education.

Government of Nigeria at the Federal, State and Local can't fund or run educational sector in reality due to the huge funding demands. Providing all academic friendly materials to students like; lavatories, laboratories, internet accessibility, state of the arts facilities, world class building has been limited or absent due to paucity of funds. Futuristic thinking on tertiary education is *redistributive policy* because it focus is simply taking from the have and give to the have not. Strike will keep resurfacing if nothing is done by the super Federal Government to call for help and allow private citizens to become partners in funding education. Good partnership will make

tertiary education very easy to fund while government remain in charge and in control completely. No man can live alone

Recommendations

- i. Federal Government should adopt redistributive policy swiftly and implement it forthwith
- ii. Citizens who are well to do must be given the chance and opportunity to work with government to revamp tertiary education in Nigeria.
- iii. Strike must be brought to an end and federal government should have an open funding policy on education to enable private sectors to invest in tertiary education
- iv. Federal Government of Nigeria should allocate more funds to education to make the system very excellent and conducive for teaching, research and learning. By extension it more budgetary allocation to educational investment will limit brain drain
- v. There is need for complete overhauling of the education sector aside that of redistributive policy. Stringent and implementable policies must be introduced in educational sector to make redistributive policy more efficient and effective.
- vi. Tertiary education should be legislated to become necessary and compulsory to all citizens. This will increase the literacy rate of Nigerians at the tertiary level.
- vii. Constant training of lecturers by government and other people of good will must be encouraged. When lecturers are trained properly and motivated to work, their performance will be optimal because, a happy lecturer will always give out his best for the job.
- viii. Monies meant for TETFUND must be genuinely allocated to it for proper disbursement to beneficiaries. Using the money meant for this purpose on other things will only lead to setback.
- ix. Government should identify five (5) key partners and work with them to invest graciously in the long run for tertiary transmogrification.
- x. Education must remain affordable for all citizens, but others must be allowed to contribute as promising partners.

References

- Blum, W. J. (1967). Motive, Intent, and Purpose in Federal Income Taxation. *The University of Chicago Law Review*, 34(3), 485-544.
- Deji, O. F. (2021). *Funding education: A case of no money or no interest?* Retrieved November 15, 2022. www.premiumtimesng.com
- Elizabeth, A.B, John, T.T & Nanji, U (2019); An Appraisal of the Role of Education in Human Capital As a Framework for Development in Nigeria. *UJJPS Vol.5, No.5, October, 2019.* Pg 79-90

- Gates, J. (2023). The Effect of Evidence-Based Funding on Student Performance.
- Gibson, B. (2022). *Systems Theory Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved
Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. Special Edition
- Pai O. (2016) Twenty Four Original Ideas of Education. Academic Presentation at Faculty
of Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan Nigeria.
- Pai O. (2018). Educating for the New World Creativity and Innovation. Paper Presented at
the Biennial Conference of Lead City University Ibadan, Faculty of Arts and Education.
- Sharkansky I. (1978) Public Administration and Policy Making in Government
- Terwase, I. T., Bello, I., Onwuanibe, J. O., & Sambo, M. A. (2021). Peace and Security
Sustainability through Hostel Provision in Nigerian Universities: Lessons from
Malaysia. *IRA–International Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 17(03), 89-97
- Thomas T. S. (2005). Introduction to Public Policy Making and Analysis. Mono Expressions
LTD, Zaria Road Jos Plateau.