

ATTAINMENT OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND SUSTAINABILITY DEVELOPMENT GOALS: THE ACHIEVEMENT SO FAR IN NIGERIA EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT: *This study focuses on examining the extent of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) achievement in Nigeria so far. It is a well-known fact that (MDGs) came as a result of relief to most developing countries and has been seen as a way of rampaging the issue of poverty. A lot of people in high positions have benefitted in this as they siphon/embezzle the funds meant to alleviate poverty slated for the less privileged by MDGs. Nigerian government is not able to dedicate funds reasonable enough to cater for the Education of its citizenry and effort to inculcate male and female gender in education has not been given a fair attention due to endemic corruption that has eaten deep into the fabric of the Nigerian development. The study aims at outlining the challenges facing Nigerian government in realization of MDGs in its education, gender equality and women empowerment and the way forward towards achieving this very desirable venture after the elapse of the duration of 2015 ultimatum for quality education in Nigeria.*

KEYWORDS: education, Nigeria, millennium development goals (MDGS).

INTRODUCTION

In any country's advancement and development context, education, economic well-being and sustainability are very crucial phenomena. Education is an instrument used to develop a total human in all sphere of skills that catapult an individual into sustainable life and development through employment whether self or conventional. National Planning Commission (2004) on National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) specifically addresses the International Development Targets (IDTs), which were set in 1996 to improve economic well-being, social and human development and ensure environmental sustainability and regeneration. In September 2000, 149 World Leaders adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration which listed series of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These embrace most of the IDTs and add poverty concerns related to hunger, water, disease, AIDS, orphans and urban poverty. The Declaration commits UN members states which Nigeria is one of its member, to achieving the following Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

The goals that are to be achieved are listed below:

- Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal 2. Achieve universal primary education
- Goal 3. Promote gender equality and empower women
- Goal 4. Reduce child mortality
- Goal 5. Improve maternal health
- Goal 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Goal 7. Ensure environmental sustainability
- Goal 8. Develop a global partnership for development

Among the eight goals listed, two (2) of it emerges to education which is: achieve universal basic education and promoting gender equality and empower women.

Consequently, there is a NEEDS Thrust still from National Planning Commission (2004) that states how the goals on Universal Primary Education (UPE) will be achieved as:

- Reducing number of qualified primary school teachers by 80 percent.
- Mobilize community and private sector involvement in education.
- Competition of universal basic education programme, and to achieve the goal of promoting gender equality and empower women as: eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015 etc.

The NEEDS Thrust was in scripted under the regime of President Olusegun Obasanjo who made an outstanding effort to see how the socio-economic and political spheres will be a yardstick to facilitate this goals to be realized and achieved. Many good steps were taken such as: the release of the central government funds, more parastatals created and people were appointed to pilot them for the realization of the MDGs targets. The President had a good vision but failed to put the right peg in the right hole which seemed to be the failure of the whole Programme/initiative.

Nigerian government stressed on achieving universal primary education and promoting gender equality and empower women. How can this mission be accomplished when the Federal Government have not dedicated substantial funds necessary to build the human capital and resources to bring this vision to reality. It is worth noting that since 2010 till date, education has been less funded than other ministries, forgetting that education holds the anchor of all other ministries/sectors.

Despite all efforts made to curb this menace of inequality, it encroaches with full force. The more government shouts and/or relinquishes power for the partnership of private sector to establish schools, the more inequalities in access, quality and cost submerges. Enem (2015) argued that privatization of public enterprises will as well result to certain fears and sacrifice which must be encountered in the course of the exercise which include inequality and inequitable wealth distribution.

Education therefore is the pivot and engine room that generate powerful and essential tool for empowering an individual with diverse skills suitable for sustainability and self-reliance and development of an individual to access productivity employment. Mhone & Edigheji (2003: 182) see education as a phenomenon that enhances and sustains national development. They

perceive education as central to the process of 'nation building' as well as to the economic, social and political development of the country; this is because it empowers people to participate effectively in all processes of democratic society, economic activity, cultural expression and community life. It is important to note that it is only through education that the eight MDGs will be achieved hence education leads to the actualization of every other goals listed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nigeria Millennium Development Goals Report (2006) states that MDGs draw together in a single agenda issue that require priority to address world development question. MDGs have received tremendous endorsement and backing by world's governments. MDGs have the advantage being more or less measurable, few in number, concentrated on human development and focused almost on a single date-2015. MDGs add urgency and transparency to international development. Explicit resource commitments have been made to achieve the MDGs. (MDGs Report, 2006).

The Guardian (2009) states that the implementation of MDGs has been characterized by deeply entrenched endemic corruption, gross inefficiency and wastefulness. Past governments in Nigeria, instead of focusing on delivering essential public services, assumed control of major sources of national income. In the process, corruption thrived in public services and gained a strong foothold in society (NPC, 2004). Corruption has become an innate habit and eventually all citizens especially those who are in the position of highest authorities are susceptible to it. Olatunji (2008) studied Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes of selected manufacturing Companies in two areas in the South West of Nigeria, and his findings showed that more CSR programmes for manufacturing Companies are needed to achieve the goals. He called for increased community involvement and empowerment in developmental projects rather than the present approach that emphasises "money giving" and haphazard execution of CSR projects. NPC (2004) stated that NEEDS shall set far-reaching public reforms that will make clear that corruption and graft will be punished. The National Orientation Agency and its State-level counterparts will be strengthened to lead a campaign to re-instil the virtues of honesty, hard work, selfless service, moral rectitude and patriotism.

Due to the cankerworm of corruption, Ajiye (2014) concluded that Nigeria would not attain the MOGs target by the end of 2015, even if smaller nations in Africa did so, such as Ghana, Kenya, Cameroun and Botswana. Okeshola (2018), noted that Nigeria is daunted with poverty and economic underdevelopment which coupled with poor administration, lack of political will, etc which made its yearning towards achieving the MDGs in 2015 very unrealistic. She went ahead emphasizing that despite the present challenges to the realization of the goals, the country has sufficient resources needed to meet the MDGs target by 2015. The impact of the social vices could be seen in the slow pace of development and the inability of the nation like Nigeria to meet up the Millennium goals.(Agboola & Ukoette 2018). UNDP Report concluded that MDGs are the world's time-bound and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions – income poverty, hunger, diseases, inadequate housing – while promoting gender equality, education and environmental sustainability. For the MDGs goals and objectives to be realized, there is need for establishment of an appropriate political and institutional framework to guide states intervention, market reform and poverty alleviation (Oloyode, 2006). He also argue that with appropriate policy measure, Africa in general and

Nigeria in particular can attract more capital flow and benefit immensely from full integration into the world economy, which will culminate into speedy realisation of the MDGs objectives.

Action Aid International in its report titled “Changing Course: Alternative Approaches to Achieve Millennium Development Goals and Fight HIV/AIDs” shows that there is a gap between MGD needs and spending realities in poor countries and that macroeconomic policies enforced by the IMF block poor countries from being able to spend more on education, health and economic development. The report argued that for the MDGs to be achieved, the world must start to change course now and adopt at local, national and international levels of alternative economic policies that allow for much higher long-term public investments in health, education and development.(Abani, Igbuzor & Moru, (2005). But the report of MDGs (2005), Otive, (2006) noted that the 2003 MDGs report did not point out and or indicate the policies and practices that need to change to attain the goals. The target for education was that by 2015, all Nigerian children (boys and girls) can complete a full course of primary schooling; enrolment in primary education; completion of primary education and the literacy of 15-24 years old females and males (Lawal, Obasaju & Rorimi 2012). Despite the vision, the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal education (NCMLAE) has disclosed that ‘35 percent of Nigeria’s 160 Million population is considered to be illiterate’, which by estimate is about 56 Million illiterates.

Statement of the Problem

The cankerworm that has eaten the debris of growth and development especially the third world countries in which Nigeria is not an exemption has been the issue of wretched and miserable poverty (abject poverty) which has warranted most of the citizens to wander about some kilometres everyday in search of what will help in filling the stomach to avoid the eating up of the intestine by the worm. Many can no longer define their livelihood just because they lack the vision and are incapacitated on how to go about making ends meet. The inhumanity to man has deprived many out of the rich and natural resources of which Nigeria was endowed divinely without paying a dime, but the rich has shut many away from this bounty through inappropriate policies, politicization, corruption, inequality and disparity, to mention but few.

Education is essential and a tool for development of the total human being for sustainable development. Education is an instrument to instruct, inform and liberate. To target the achievement of as such MDGs; education is to set the pace. The listed goals to be attained by NEEDS such as Universal Primary Education, promoting gender equality and women empowerment; reducing child mortality, maternal health,; combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; fostering environmental sustainability and developing global partnership for development are all geared toward implementing and inculcating sound education. Therefore for MDGs to be achieved and realized full acquisition of necessary knowledge and skills needed in sustainable development is to be keyed into strong dissemination of accurate information through education, since education holds the anchor of all other fields of endeavour.

MDGs has failed in Nigerian education sector due to lack of adequate funds to foster training of the human resources and human capital that will combat illiteracy, poverty, inequality, diseases, mortality rate, maternal health and so on, thereby resulting in non-achievement of the goals listed in MDGs. The problems that encroach on the success of the nation’s education sector include but not limited to: access, quality, cost, corruption, politics and poor wages and

salaries for teachers. Many have attributed the menace of economic melt-down that has engulfed Nigeria for the past years to be the cause of haphazard allocation to education sector. The question still remains: who is responsible to combat these problems? The researcher deemed it fit to find out the answer.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate how far MDGs has been able to achieve its goals in education, gender equality and Women empowerment in Nigeria since the pronouncement of 2015 deadline till date. The study specifically finds out:

1. If adequate fund had been dedicated for the good management of UPE in Nigeria since 2015 to 2018 for the realization of MDGs.
2. If gender equality among school enrolment has been adequately streamlined in primary education since 2015 to 2018 school years.

Research Question

Two research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. How has funding affected the achievement of the millennium development goals in Universal Primary Education since 2015 to 2018?
2. What is the gender ratio of school enrolment of male and female in Universal Primary Education since 2015 to 2018?

METHODS

The study focuses on descriptive design to describe the MDGs achievement so far in Nigeria Education using Universal Primary Education (UPE) funding rate and gender equality and women empowerment from the year 2015 to 2018 academic sessions. The population comprised all the pupils enrolled in 2015 to 2018 in the National Statistics of Primary School enrolment. Source: (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018). The research instrument used in the study was a document from the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics, 2018. The documents contained data on enrolment of pupils (boys/girls) gender for 2015 to 2018 academic sessions. Simple percentages (ratios) were used to answer the research questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

Research Question 1:

1. How has funding affected the achievement of the millennium development goals in Universal Primary Education since 2015 to 2018?

Table 1: Fund Allocation on Education 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018

S/N	YEAR	TOTAL BUDGET FOR THE YEAR	TOTAL ALLOCATION FOR EDUCATION	PERCENTAGE %
1.	2015	4.358 trillion Naira	492.2 billion Naira	7.74
2.	2016	6.1 trillion Naira	448.01 billion Naira	6.01
3.	2017	7.30 trillion Naira	367.73 billion Naira	7.41
4.	2018	9.12 Trillion Naira	102.907 billion Naira	7.04

Source: Nuruddeen, (2016).

Table 1 shows the percentages allocation due for four years National Budget Allocation for Education. 2015 had 7.74%, 2016 had 6.01%, 2018 had 7.41% and 2018 had 7.04%. This explains why Nigerian Schools will continue to rank low among her counterparts in terms of academic excellence, openness and research. In a nutshell, United Nations had confirmed that for any nation to strive in its education, there must be a substantial fund of at least 26% annual budget allocated to education sector. With this notion, it implies that Nigeria is far beyond the reach of achieving the enviable feat of MDGs realization. The Compulsory, Free Universal Basic Education Act, 2004 mandates the Federal Government to allocate 2% of its Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) to the universal basic education programme. As long as Government revenue continues to increase, the UBE fund will be increasing. However, with the condition for access requiring each State of the Federation to provide a 50% matching fund, several States are not accessing the grant. Based on the last report in August 2016, no State has access the fund – which is N627m each! The effect of this means the increase in the number of Out-of-School in Nigeria. Therefore, the law need to be amended to current reality and ultimately make funds available for children who are the pivot beneficiaries.

This is to say that even though the budget both at the national and state level falls below the recommended benchmark, it fails to take into consideration the issues affecting education at those levels. The budget may not meet with realization of the MDGs, neither did it try to match government laudable promises with actions. Notwithstanding, the poor budgetary allocation indicate that the current challenges facing education such as inadequate qualified teachers, inadequate infrastructure and learning materials and poor learning outcomes among pupils etc in the education sector will not be tackled. This means Nigerian Government are not redressing at all over the achievement of the MDGs.

Research question 2:

2. What is the gender ratio of school enrolment of male and female in Universal Primary Education since 2015 to 2018?

Table 2: Gender Enrolment: Primary – Male / Female (% gross)

Year	Male		Female	
	Total Enrolment	% (Gross)	Total Enrolment	% (Gross)
2015	102, 358	91%	102, 483	90%
2016	103, 546	90%	104, 383	90%
2017	103, 392	91%	103, 934	90%
2018	103, 769	91%	104, 135	89%

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2018)

From Table 2, it is indicated that in 2015, 2017 there was 1% increase of male enrolment over females. In 2018, there was 3% increase in male enrolment over females. This indicates that the enrolment percentage of males is 4% higher than that of the females for 3 years (2015, 2017 & 2018). Therefore there is still gender disparity in the enrolment of the two sexes. This indicate that the budget line did not take cognisance in addressing the issues presently affecting the education sector such as education in emergency, high dropout/ out of school children, girls education and women empowerment etc. This also implies that girl education/women empowerment as part of MDGs of 2004 is not prerequisite for sustainable development goal since girls education has been subjected to discrimination.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings in Table 1 revealed that fund allocated to education sector was too meagre compared with what was recommended by UNESCO. This means that with this insufficient fund, Nigeria cannot meet the target of realizing the MDGs. This finding agrees with the finding of Uyanga, Udo-Onkon, & Thomas, (2017) who concluded that Nigeria is not among the academic ranking of world's Universities for the period 2013-2016.

The finding of the study correlates with Abani, et al., (2005). Who opined that for the MDGs to be achieved, the world must start to change course now and adopt at Local, National and International levels of alternative economic policies that allow for much higher long-term public investments in health, education and development.

The finding also agrees with Omokorede & Ikegwuru, (2011) who concluded that lack of proper funding in secondary schools had resulted in poor provision of learning environment, infrastructures, facilities which is proponent by endemic corruption of the bodies in charge of disbursing/implementing public projects and programmes.

The finding in Table 2 contradict with the finding of Abosede, (2012) who opined that there is a significant difference between the enrolment of girls in primary school and the gross national product as well as positive rate of life expectancy. The finding agrees with Akulo, (2009) who noted that preference is given to education of male against their female counterpart in Nigeria by their families which has resulted in greater number in percentage of male children enrolled in school than female. The findings is in support of Ezegbe & Akubue,(2012) who noted that neglecting women in any country's development, means abortive of meaningful development since in African society, women are seen as resourceful and potential in achieving sustainable development.

This also agrees with Kikwete & Okonjo-Iweala in Budget and the Paltry Allocation for Education, (2018) in highlighting the poor state of education in most commonwealth countries in an op-ed, concluded that "The situation is particularly worrisome in Nigeria, where nearly nine million primary-school-age children are not enrolled, and millions more – especially girls – are denied access to secondary education. Educational opportunities are also highly unevenly distributed between the richest and poorest Commonwealth countries, while gender discrimination plagues many states.

The findings contradict that of Lawal et al, (2012) who noted that as Nigeria was part of the conference, the target for education was that by 2015, all Nigerian children (boys and girls) can complete a full course of primary schooling; enrolment in primary education; completion of primary education and the literacy of 15-24 years old females and males.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that fund allocation should be sufficient as budget is allotted to education sector in Nigeria especially in UPE in order to avoid pupils attending school without active learning taking place. Girls' education and women empowerment should be given fair consideration without discrimination in Nigerian education.

These will contribute to the achievement of Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable livelihood and development

Suggestions for the way forward

For the MDGs/SDG to be realized and achieve in Nigeria, there will be the need to tackle the following:

- Government should diverse a means to allocating sufficient fund as regard to UNESCO benchmark recommendation of budgetary allocation to education sector.
- Putting the right peg into the right square hole. Though corruption is in – built in humanity, but there exist some set of humans that is still with their right conscience to deal with public fund.
- All children, irrespective of socio – economic status, race, ethnic etc should have access to education with discrimination and disparity.
- Monitor the Budget and follow up resources with an exceptional concentration in order to achieve the MDGs in particular note of eradicating poverty in Nigeria.
- Follow – up Universal Primary Education (UPE) Act and making sure all forms of charges from beneficiaries (pupils) are eradicated and eliminated
- Training of teaching staff that are human resource with necessary pedagogical skills to inculcate values/morals with the help of teaching materials/aids in developing the learners.
- To achieve the MDGs/SDG in Nigeria, even after 2015 ultimatum, it calls for accountability and transparency from the governing bodies, policy makers in legal norms and all the schools.

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