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# Evolving Education Development Plan Strategy for Ondo State

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## Abstract

The problem of high cost of education to both governments and parents, poor quality of school outcome, and declining public funding for education among many others, have continued to impose serious challenges to most state governments over the years. These challenges have the capacity to restrict the provision of quality education delivery, and subsequently limit the human capital stock necessary for overall national development. This underscores the need for government to evolve an enduring education development planning strategy that will address the aforementioned problems. This paper therefore discussed the actionable areas of concern in Ondo state education sector, which include: access to all levels of education, quality of school output, cost and financing, and effective management of the sector. The paper highlights the actions to be taken in order to improve the quantity and quality of education service delivery in Ondo state, Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Evolving, Education, Development, Strategy, Planning

## Introduction

The level of educational development in any society is pivotal to the overall social and economic progress of the society. A poorly educated society are most likely to face several challenges ranging from widespread poverty, high illiteracy, poor hygiene, high infant mortality rate, shorter life span( i.e. low life expectancy) among many other problems. On the other hand, a market relevant education has the capacity to increase the economic freedom of the individual recipient, and the society at large. For instance, an individual with the relevant and adequate education have a lower probability of being unemployed, has higher health benefit – freedom from financial stress and insecurity, civic involvement, personal development i.e. a strong sense of responsibility, better communication, greater productivity and hence, greater personal and national income among others (Isuku,2014; & 2007; Umo, 2003, and Vaizy, n.d)

The stock of human capital available to a state or a nation acquired through education represents its assets as a means of achieving an end. Hence, education on its own is described as an “instrument per-excellence” for confronting and overcoming the multifarious social and economic challenges facing most societies. Thus, the interest of this paper is to evolve actionable education development planning strategy for Ondo State, with the aim of achieving specific and measureable educational goals in the medium and long term within the limits of available resources. Ultimately, the essence is to ensure that Ondo State takes its rightful place in terms of quantity and quality of education service delivery at all levels.

## Brief Overview of Ondo State Social and Economic Status

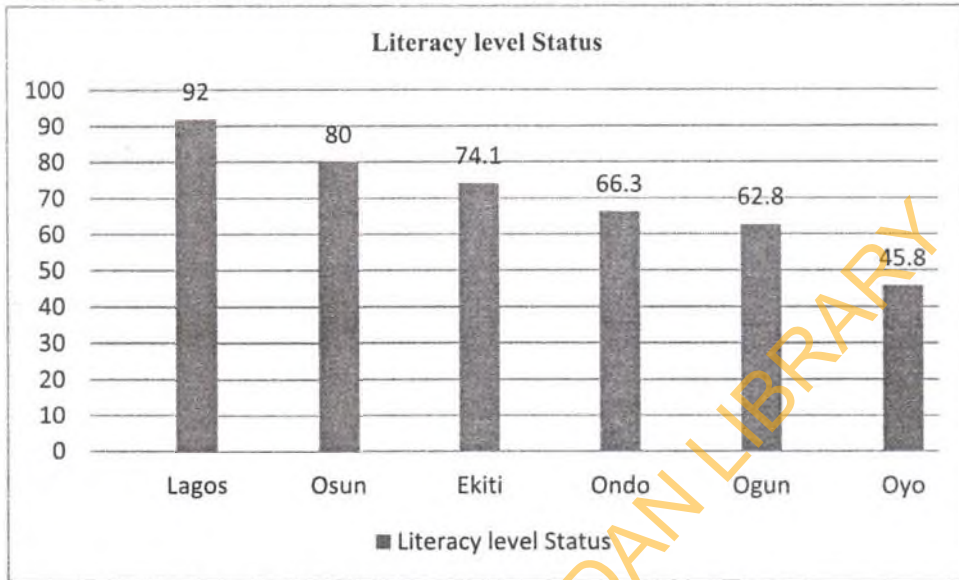
Ondo State was created in 1976 out of which the present Ekiti State was carved out. The State has 18 Local government areas, with a population of 3.4 million people National Bureau of Statistics NBS (2019). The State presently has 12 higher institutions of learning – comprising of one federal university, 3 State universities, 3 private universities, 2 Colleges of education ( one state, and one federal), two polytechnics (one state and the other federal) and a federal university study centre (NOUN). The total number of primary schools in the state amount to 1233, averaging 68.5 schools per local government area, with enrolment totaled 830,434 in the state at that level. The total number of public secondary schools stood at 581, averaging 32 secondary schools per Local government Area. The summary of higher institutions in the state is shown in table one.

**Table 1: Summary of HEIs in Ondo State – 2020 data**

Institutions	Ownership			Total
	Federal	State	Private	
University	*2	3	3	8
College of Education	2	-	-	2
Polytechnic	1	1	-	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>

Source: <https://en.m.wikipedia.org>, 25/8/2020

\*Federal Universities in the state include NOUN Study Centre.

**Fig1: Literacy, Status of Ondo State and Southwest, Nigeria**

Source: Author's Analysis from available data obtained from the National Bureau of Statistics, 2019

Literary rate is an indication of the proportion of the population who can read and write with understanding at a particular point in time. Table 2 shows that the National average is 50.6

Although the State ranked 4<sup>th</sup> among the six Southwest States in the region, and the national average, the need to improve literacy level in the state cannot be overemphasized.

**Table 2: Poverty and Inequality in Ondo state, Southwest, Nigeria**

States	Head Count Rate	Poverty	Poverty Gap	Squared Poverty Index (Severity)
Lagos	4.50		0.67	0.18
Ogun	9.32		1.63	0.44
Ondo	12.52		2.28	0.58
Osun	8.52		1.43	0.44
Oyo	9.83		1.85	0.52
Ekiti	28.04		6.16	2.00

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, 2019

The poverty head count ratio (PHCR) which represent the proportion of the population living below the poverty line (\$1.90 per day World Bank 2015 estimate) is highest in the region, second only to Ekiti State. Similarly, the state has the poverty gap (or the intensity of poverty) of 2.28 which is the second highest in the region. The implication of extreme poverty is that most households in the state will find it difficult to provide schooling opportunity to their children or wards as they may

not have the financial wherewithal to enable the financial expenditure associated with schooling.

#### Education Development Planning Strategy for Ondo State

Educational planning is a process of preparing a set of decisions for future action in such a way that the goals and objectives of the education enterprise will be achieved using the available resources judiciously (Isuku, 2014b; Fabunmi,

2014). It is a rational systematic analysis of the process of Educational Development, with the aim of making education more effective and efficient in responding to the needs of the student and the society (Coombs 1972). Thus, the focus of educational planning is to meet the student needs (personal) and the society needs (in this case Ondo State).

Strategic Planning on its own is a holistic collective process for developing creative initiatives that direct resources to achieve the goals and objectives of the organization (in this case, the Ondo State education project), by taking maximum advantage of developments in the internal and external environment (Babalola, 2009). Strategic planning for the state thus involves the process of setting measurable medium and long term goals for the state education system. The process involves designing strategies based on the internal Strengths, Weakness, Opportunity and Threats (SWOT Analysis) in the prevailing environment in order to achieve the goals. The actions taken are expected to guide the education development planning the State to respond to the following questions:

1. What is the current educational situation in the state now?
2. What is the expectation of the state about its education, i.e., where do the state wants to be, and
3. What should be done to achieve the expected goals and objectives?

Ultimately, the intension of education development Planning strategy is to systematically take advantage of available information to fulfill the goals and objectives of the educational enterprise.

#### The Objective of Modern Educational Plan

Generally, the focus of government towards education according to Isuku 2014b, includes among other considerations:

- Improving access to learning and skill acquisition for students.
- Ensuring students adequately fit into the mainstream of the global market.
- ensuring an effective and efficient cost and financial management of public education
- ensuring that students acquire the needed values, behaviours and attitude to become useful to themselves and the society
- improving staff welfare and development so as to improve their productivity level

- ensuring the production of employable graduates through quality service delivery
- ensuring the supply of the needed resources for the production of quality output

#### Conceptual Model for Effective Educational Development Plan for Ondo State

The conceptual model specifies areas of achievable objectives for the State (Ondo State) educational development plan. The medium and long term plans to be achieved to cover the areas of improving access, quality, cost and finance, and management. The focus and efforts of the State should be directed to achieving these objectives for the overall wellbeing of the State education system.



**Figure 2: Actionable areas for achieving success in the Ondo state education sector**

This model (fig.2) displays the expected areas of focus by government in order to achieve a successful and functional educational system in Ondo state, Nigeria. The activities of a typical educational system everywhere revolves round these important operational areas. Deliberate efforts by government to improve each of these aspects in the education system, will go a long way in enhancing the overall wellbeing of the education sector, and ultimately the state at large. The analyses of how these goals and objectives can be achieved are as discussed below.

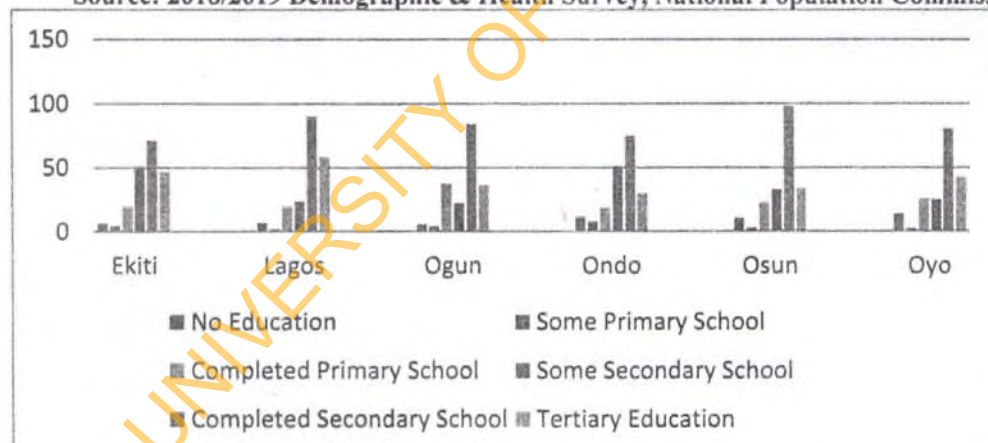
**Improving Access at all levels:** The rate of access is regarded universally as the strongest index for measuring the level of educational development in any society (Isuku 2011). This underscores why many countries intensify efforts to provide the needed schooling opportunity to their citizens despite the financial implications involved.

Unfortunately however, a major feature of many developing countries' education is the low level of enrollments; particularly at the secondary and tertiary levels (Psacharopoulos 1999). Table 2 shows the educational attainment status of Ondo state among other similar states in the southwest region of the country.

**Table 3: Educational Attainment by gender (15 -49 years) in Southwest, Nigeria.**

State	No Education		Some Primary		Completed Primary		Some Secondary		Completed Secondary		Tertiary Education	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Ekiti	1.5	5.1	1.6	2.8	8.0	11.8	24.2	26.8	33.1	38.0	26.6	20.3
Lagos	1.5	5.4	0.0	1.8	10.3	8.9	8.0	15.5	43.1	47.2	33.1	25.2
Ogun	5.4	0.3	1.4	2.7	18.3	19.2	10.6	11.5	37.0	47.2	17.0	19.3
Ondo	3.6	7.9	3.5	4.2	11.2	14.1	24.2	27.0	32.9	41.8	15.7	13.8
Osun	4.1	6.4	0.1	2.7	8.1	14.3	13.3	19.7	42.5	55.4	19.1	14.4
Oyo	9.9	3.8	1.1	1.2	13.0	12.8	10.7	14.4	39.3	41.2	24.1	18.4

Source: 2018/2019 Demographic & Health Survey, National Population Commission



As evidently shown in the table above, the schooling deficit in Ondo State among its pairs in the Southwest is high. The picture indicates that an average of 5.7% had no any form of schooling with the girl-child standing at 7.9% which is higher than any other state within the region. At the tertiary level, Ondo State has the lowest access rate for both male and female at 15.7 and 13.8 percent respectively among the six states in the region. Evidently the level of educational attainment at each level in the state is not satisfactory. The

reluctance of government to enforce the free education policy at the primary and secondary levels as well as other socio-economic challenges such as poverty facing most parents could limit access to schooling. Many parents seem to be financially handicapped, and as such allow their children and wards to hawk or do other menial jobs despite the free education policy (see poverty profile data in table 2). Access to education can therefore be enhanced in the following way:

- providing support to parents through the provision of school learning materials such as books and uniforms at the lower level
- encouraging and enhancing the school feeding programme to boost school attendance
- abolishing all forms of illegal payments in school so as to encourage children from poor homes.
- provision of necessary support to private providers of education in form of tax reduction or tax holidays. This could help to reduce the usually high fees charged by private providers of education and thus improve access.
- establish a taskforce supported with relevant policies to ensure that school-age children attend school
- exploring the probability of economics of size in public higher institutions. This approach involves the efficient use of available facilities as a way of raising enrolment and consequently reduces the unit cost of training student in the university. According to research, a reduction in the per-student cost results to reasonable savings which could be ploughed back to the institutions to expand the institutions (Isuku, 2011; Byne and Dollery, 2002).
- Diversification of programmes. One of the main reasons for the low level of access to higher education is the low level of institutional differentiation. Many higher institutions have limited programmes which have made it difficult for most

prospecting students to gain access as they have to compete for the few available programmes (Isuku, 2007).

- Raising and mobilizing adequate fund. This is one of the most important factors that could influence access to higher education in the state. The availability and appropriate mobilization of the available funds could go a long way in increasing opportunity for participation. With the availability of sufficient funds, adequate facilities would be provided to accommodate the growing number of applicants who are seeking admission.
- Ensuring effective partnership. E.g. involving missions by returning some of the schools to missionary owners. This will help to tap into additional resources financial which could be plough back to expand the system.

#### Improving Quality of school outcome

Improving the quality of school output is a major concern of every government, as the quality of the products from the educational system, to a large extent determines the quality of the labour force in the economy. Quality in education among others refers to a situation where school "products" (i.e graduates) conforms to the standard, specifications, requirements and expectations. A more readily available measure of school quality is examinations scores. Thus improving school quality becomes a major responsibility of government. Table 4 shows Ondo state performance in the WASCE from 2016-2018.

**Table 4: WAEC Result: Five Credit Pass including English and Mathematics in SW Region 2019**

States	2016	2017	2018	Total Average
Lagos	63.0	65.50	60.72	63.07
Ondo	64.80	44.27	52.21	53.76
Ekiti	54.3	71.83	56.81	60.98
Osun	45.5	43.50	40.85	46.28
Ogun	52.8	54.14	51.64	52.86
Oyo	36.0	53.58	37.87	42.48

Source: WAEC Result; National Bureau of Statistics 2019

Although the state came third behind Lagos and Ekiti states, there is the need to improve the quality

of school outcome in the state. This could be achieved through:



- effective staff training and development for quality teaching delivery
- adequate provision of relevant teaching and learning facilities such as books and other didactic materials
- improving class size for effective teaching and learning
- provision of conducive teaching and learning environment
- provision of adequate equipment for sciences and laboratories
- provision of adequate infrastructure

### Cost and Financing of the system

Cost and financing in education are interwoven and not mutually exclusive. The cost of education refers to what is given up to produce or educate people in schools. Educational cost refers to "all the monetary and non-monetary value of educational activities or products that are incurred in the course of educating or training an individual or group of individual" Educational cost are usually incurred by the government, the educational institutions and the individual (parents and students). While the formal are educational producers, the latter are educational consumers. An increased financial burden on parents could make it difficult for children from poor homes to attend school. For instance, in the state owned universities, school fees ranges from about N120,000 to N350,00 yearly. This is besides other personal costs that are incurred by students and their families. Considering the poverty level of most parents, sending children to higher institutions may be difficult especially in cases where some parents had more than one or two children. In most cases, the budgetary allocation to education is highly unsustainable. The figure below reveals the trend in budgetary allocation to education in Ondo state from 2015 to 2019.

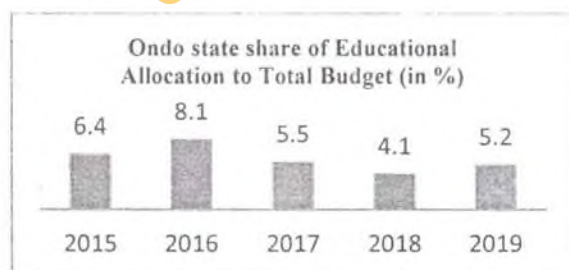


Figure 3: Budgetary allocation to education in Ondo state (2015 – 2019)

As shown in the table, the highest amount of allocation during the period under review stood at 8.1%, while it further declined to all time low of 4.1% in 2018. In improving control over cost, and raising the financial base of education in Ondo state, the following steps could be adopted

- Increase education budget from its current low level to a more sustainable level
- Increase the grants to schools/institutions and introduce tuition free for students in the state.
- Providing bursary support for higher institution students of the state.
- Embarking on cost-sharing device. Government could partly pay some of the costs borne by the students and parents particularly in higher institutions. This method is now a very important universally accepted cost-reduction strategy in many countries. For instance, costs of books and other important resources could be borne together by students and governments. This will go a long way in reducing the total expenditure of students and their parents on schooling and thus boost access to the relevant education levels.
- Involving private support. The policy of public-private partnership will go a long way in reducing over dependence on government funds while at the same time increasing the finances and physical facilities to the various institutions.
- Involving alumni support is an important source of institution funding. The support provided by alumni and alumnae of the various institutions could make funds available to meet most of the needs of the schools thereby reducing the cost burden on both the government and parents.
- The support of philanthropists would similarly help too
- Institutions (particularly higher institutions) would need to increase their internally generated revenue. This will equally go a long way to reduce overdependence on students' fees.

### School Management

In order to ensure the realization of the education goals and objectives, effective

management of both human and non-human resources is needed. Without effective management, enormous scarce resources on education could be wasted. Management here refers to the efficient and resourceful manipulation and usage of men, money, machines (equipment), and material resources available to achieve the goals and objective of education. The functions of management are: planning, organising, staffing, directing, coordinating and controlling. It involves the deployment and manipulation of the required human, financial, material, technological and other resources to achieve the goals and objectives of the sector in the state. Among some of the expected specific school management activities are:

- monitoring standards and performance of teaching and learning in the state schools
- ensuring attendance and punctuality of staff and students in order to make the schools functions effectively
- taking stock of the physical, human, material and other facilities of public schools and ensuring their supply.
- setting new targets for high performance of the school system in the state.
- preparing financial statements and reporting such to the appropriate authority
- ensuring judicious use of available resources to meet stakeholders' expectations of the school system in the state.

#### **Other areas needing attention in Ondo state education sector**

Other areas of high importance in the course of providing sustainable and satisfactory education to the state include:

- ❖ Provision and use of ICT facilities in government schools (secondary and tertiary) to enhance teaching and learning. Examples are interactive boards, projectors and computers. In today technology-driven world, the place of ICT in the provision of quality education cannot be over emphasised. Thus, investing in ICT to improve education service delivery should be strongly pursued by the government.
- ❖ Making Technical institutions and polytechnics in the State more practically oriented through real skill acquisition. This could be achieved by linking graduates of these institutions to firms and individuals

where they can acquire the relevant skills that will make them practice on their own and be self-reliant

- ❖ providing financial support to encourage graduates with technical/vocational skills to start their own business
- ❖ setting up a functional Educational Management Information System (EMIS) for the State. This is a technologically based computer managed data system that aids efficient information management for quality decision about the education enterprise
- ❖ regulating the operation of private schools in the state. This will ensure private schools operate in line within the Benchmark Minimum Academic Standard that guarantee quality educational service delivery
- ❖ introduction of Adult Literacy Programme to promote life-long learning among the growing population

#### **Conclusion**

Education is certainly one of the most important aspects of human capital development. Investment in education at all levels has the capacity to improve individual well-being and increase the income of the State. A well-educated people will guarantee quality workforce and creative minds that will help to increase the output of that society and hence bring about an overall development. Ondo state cannot afford to passive among its peers in the education performance scale. There is need for adequate and concerted effort towards a formidable educational plan that will launch the state into becoming a strong force in overall educational development in this period of global competitiveness.

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