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## **ASSESSING THE COST OF FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION POLICY IN NIGERIA AND THE QUESTION OF SUSTAINABILITY**

### **Abstract:**

The cost of implementing free and compulsory primary education policy in Nigeria and the question of sustainability were respectively assessed in the paper. The observed poor quality of primary school leavers and scarcity of all production inputs in the school system motivated the study that raised three (3) research questions to guide investigation. The entire primary school system including the 707,124 teachers across the 622,841 available primary schools constituted the study population. A convenient number of 35,356 (i.e 5 percent) teachers randomly selected from the schools using the multi-stage sampling technique made up the study sample. Documentary evidences of allocated funds from relevant government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and a questionnaire title: Free and Compulsory Primary School Attendance Policy Sustenance Questionnaire (FRECOPRISUQUE) was validated, pilot-tested (N=50, r= 0.77) and administered by the researchers assisted by 37 chair persons of Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT), each from every state of the federation including the FCT. Data collected to answer the research questions were descriptively analysed with means, percentages and standard deviation. Based on data analysis, the following findings emerged. First, the money required to adequately fund the free and compulsory primary education policy per pupil is N255,000.00. Second, it is only about 3 percent of the required money that government allocates to fund primary education. Thirdly, the perception of stakeholders particularly teachers is that government lacks the ability to implement the policy in Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that government should admit its inability to adequately fund the policy and through legislation invite parents and corporate organizations to contribute money to sustain the policy.

### **Keywords:**

Free, Compulsory, Primary Education, Policy, Cost, Sustainability

**JEL Classification:** I22, I28