

Higher Education in Nigeria: ts Gain, its Burden

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Abstract

One of the most enduring legacies parents and the country can pass on to its youth is education. Indeed education is the fabric of any culture, with it, culture is transmitted thought are conceptualized and information transmitted. It is hardly inconceivable to imagine a learning process without education, in this case higher education. For instance, how and where would a professor transmit his knowledge to students? How can the innermost recesses of a teacher be tapped by students? Any serious response to these questions may probably x-ray the importance of higher education and its contributions to educational system in Nigeria. The challenges, politicking and benefits of higher education. This paper recognizes the benefits of higher education and the challenges faced in attempting to provide higher education. It notes that government alone cannot provide the resources needed to provide qualitative higher education, and advocates for other sources of dealing with these challenges.

18

19 *Index terms—*

20 1 Introduction

21 education is an experience, the sum total of a person's experience (Nduka, 1964). Some scholars see it as culture 22 -a way of life and the process of transmitting, advancing and consolidating culture as the process of education 23 (Jaja, 1996). The national education system transmits art, music, custom, tradition, the language and the skills 24 of the society to the younger generation with a view of perpetuating and advancing the culture of the people. 25 This paper therefore set to underscore the importance of higher education. The quality of knowledge impacted, 26 the dysfunctional system and the challenges faced in an attempt to carryout this all important function and the 27 politicking in the system.

28 2 II.

29 3 Education

30 Education is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills and other capabilities. Education could be formal with 31 clearly intended consequences and informal with unintended consequences. It is a universal aspect of any culture. 32 Although it is a universal feature of society, educational systems vary according to organizational structures, 33 pedagogical practices, and philosophical and cultural organizations ??Kunle and Rotimi, 2006).

34 This may be readily observed when one examines educational systems in a variety of crosscultural settings, 35 (and even among the myriad of public, private, parochial, and alternative educational networks). What is to 36 be learned, how the learning is designed to a great extent, is a function of culture. For instance, in precolonial 37 Africa, the pattern of learning was chiefly informal with the family playing the major role. It was not only the 38 responsibility of the immediate nuclear family, but also that of the extended family and community at large to 39 educate the younger generation (Jaja, 1996).

40 There were particularly no systems of organized educational training. The acquisition of skills and language 41 was achieved through the simple process of observation and imitation with little or no overt instructions. However, 42 there were also elements of deliberate learning in specialized occupations such as goldsmithing, weaving, carving

43 and specialized religious acts and functions. This was the result of prolonged training based primarily on decent
44 i.e. the younger understanding the older ??Chuku, 2008).

45 4 III. Higher Education: A Concept

46 Higher Education Refer to the western type of education which is organized after college education. There
47 are rules and regulations formulated and administered by the Ministries of Education. Policies are drawn up
48 to guide and direct such institutions by Government. In the Higher Education laws are to be found rules and
49 regulations guiding the type of buildings, facilities, equipments required in the institution, the entry qualifications
50 of students, their ages, the curricula, the rules guiding the students movement, the qualifications of the teachers,
51 their workloads, their conditions of service and the students certification and graduation. There is usually quality
52 control mechanism, in the case of Nigeria it is the universities and the National Universities Commission (NUC)
53 that is saddled with that responsibility. It became obvious that for Nigeria to effectively grow and develop it
54 needed the universities, and in the observation of Curle (1970) for a country to develop, the citizens must be
55 educated, he declared: ? in order to develop; a country must have a very considerable proportion of trained
56 citizens, not only to act as doctors, engineers, teachers and agriculturists but also to establish its own values of
57 justice, selection on merit, flexibility, empiricism and efficiency.

58 universities, colleges of education, polytechnics and monotechnics. Tertiary education is aimed at: The first
59 institution of higher education was the Yaba Higher College, established in 1934. This became the nucleus
60 of the first university college, established in 1948 at Ibadan. At independence in 1960 there was need for
61 expansion, the university of Nigeria, Nsukka was established in 1960, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, University
62 of Lagos, and the University of Ife (all in 1962) and much later, the University of Benin ??1970). These are
63 known as the first generation universities. In 1975, with the twelve states structure, and the agitation for more
64 universities by Nigerians, the Federal Government established seven additional universities at Jos, Maiduguri,
65 Kano, Sokoto, Ilorin, Calabar and Port Harcourt. These universities became known as the second-generation
66 universities (Olaniyan and Adedeji, 2007). Virtually, all states have either a higher institution or a Federal one
67 located there.

68 The establishment of Higher Institutions was to train various crop of people. Nigeria now has a crop of well
69 educated graduates despite the now popularly taunted falling standard. And are readily making contributions
70 in all spheres of the country's development.

71 Nigeria has witnessed a phenomenal growth in the number of Universities from 2 at independence in 1960,
72 to 55 as at November 2004, to 73 in 2012, and about 181 other tertiary institutions with student enrolment up
73 to 24 million (Universities inclusive). In 2004/2005 session only 14.5% applicants were admitted into Nigerian
74 Universities, while 2008/2009 18.9% applicants were admitted. (See Fig. ??). In 2005 the male/female admission
75 profile stood at 780,001 and 1,014,337 in 2008/2009. Those of mono/polytechnics and colleges of education are
76 also indicated in (Fig. ??). The factors leading to this explosion range from need to meet the goals of the national
77 policy on education of the 1970's, which provided for equal educational opportunities for all citizens at all levels
78 (primary, secondary and tertiary) Gboyega and Atoyebi, 2002), through establishment of specialized universities
79 (of agriculture, education and technology) to the quest for private and state ownership of universities, to the need
80 to meet the educational needs of qualified candidates who could not be admitted in the Federal Universities.

81 5 IV.

82 6 Dysfunctions in University

83 Education in Nigeria

84 The main reason for the heavy investment in university education is the belief that education can solve all our
85 socio-economic and political problems. This is not however true, our experience so far show indiscipline in high
86 places, examinations malpractice, corruption, laziness and immoral practices.

87 Unfortunately university education has not liberated Nigerians from the bondage of parochialism, ethnicity,
88 tribalism, oppression and injustice. Disappointingly those who fan the embers of tribalism and ethnicity, and
89 are dangerously corrupt are the educated class. Many have argued that education has not transformed Nigerians
90 Development (Aghenta, 1983). The quality of university education in Nigerian appears elusive because the six
91 inputs into learning are poor.

92 1) Proprietary responsibility 2) Marketability of products of the university 3) Subjects taught 4) The teacher
93 capable of teaching the subjects 5) Strikes in Nigerian universities 6) Morality of the student And here lies the
94 burden of Nigerian universities. These we will attempt to address.

95 V.

96 7 Proprietal Responsibility

97 Unfortunately, this rapid expansion in number of universities is not matched with available qualified lecturers
98 and increased funding, either by federal or state governments, since most of the expansion took place at periods
99 of economic decline in real terms. The level of funding of education thus declined over the years with attendant
100 decay of infrastructure and low staff morale. It is governments statutory responsibility to bear the cost of higher

101 education in the country but the instability of the oil market and the monolithic nature of the Nigerian economy
102 have conspired to make funding of universities and other higher education decline sharply. Some have argued
103 that the failure syndrome is symptomatic of the general failure in all aspect in the Nation ??Adedeji, 1998).

104 The bulk of finance allocated to education largely comes from the performance of oil. Consequently, the
105 management of public finance is the management of oil resources (Olaniyan and Adedeji, 2007). Higher
106 institution in Nigeria are funded in a number of ways. The proportion of funding and modalities vary across
107 institutions. Government believes, it has the responsibility of providing Nigerians with free and quality education.
108 consequently, government through the National Universities Commission (NUC) makes it mandatory for all
109 Federal Universities to generate 10% of their annual funds internally. The Education Tax Decree No. 7 of 1993
110 make it mandatory for limited liability companies registered in Nigeria to pay 2% tax on profits. This is disbursed
111 according to the ratio: 50:40:10 to higher, primary and secondary levels of education respectively. The share of
112 higher education is further re-distributed to universities, polytechnics and colleges of education according to the
113 2:1:1 ratio respectively.

114 So far the budgetary allocation to education is not in anyway encouraging. It falls far short of expectation
115 in a country like Nigeria. The solution to these problems, which range from human to infrastructural, requires
116 economic, social and psychological approaches (Jaji, 2004). This informed the decision of Government to set
117 up the Education Tax Fund in 1993 under Act No. 7. This fund alone is incapable of solving the problem.
118 Lack of adequate financing led to the establishment of the Education Tax Fund (ETF). It was established by
119 Decree in 1993 (Amended by Act 40 of 1998) with the sole objective of using funds combined with project
120 management to improve the quality of education in Nigeria. The act provides for all companies and organization
121 registered in Nigeria and operating in Nigeria to contribute 2% of their annual assessable profits to the fund.
122 This contribution compliment Federal and State budgets allocation to education. Between the period 1999 and
123 2005 the ETF released funds to different levels of Higher education as shown in table 2 below. The Federal
124 Government has also realized the enormity of the problem and is now taking measures to improve the condition
125 of the Universities. This issue of quality of higher education in Nigeria must be given priority, otherwise it will
126 be difficult for the Nigerian educational system to play the crucial role of supporting knowledge driven economic
127 transformation and the construction of a democratically and socially cohesive societies.

128 **8 VI.**

129 **9 Marketability of Products of the Universities**

130 Student are important in the transformation of the Nation. In Nigeria, many of the students are brilliant but lack
131 the zeal to learn. They have side attractions and are negatively charged -they take to intimidation, blackmail,
132 and examination malpractices. Many of them avoid classes and when there, do not pay attention to learning.
133 The students are the catalyst of change and development and once they are not ready to study there can never
134 be genuine transformation. Student's capacity and zeal to learn are determined by their state of health, nutrition
135 and parental advice/background.

136 The result is the product of our universities are not marketable and cannot compare favourably with
137 counterparts in other parts of the world. This is translated into the many unemployable graduates roaming
138 the streets of Nigeria. Moreover, its time our universities begin to train products on skills they can use rather
139 than waiting for government employment.

140 **10 VII.**

141 **11 The Subjects Taught**

142 The culture of the people -the ways of living, their values, skills, language, guide the drawing up of courses
143 and define the subjects taught and how they are taught including the frequency and duration of instruction.
144 From the course, syllabus each subject area are closely linked to performance standard and measures of learning
145 outcome. In Nigeria, this had been adequately done for all programme. The only problem here is the effective
146 implementation so that the student can meet the standard of contemporaries outside the country. The course
147 outline are never adequately covered nor are they thoroughly taught because of many constraints including
148 teachers' lack of dedication, lack of adequate knowledge and training, lack of equipment long periods of strikes,
149 lack of tools and so on. Moreover courses taught does not prepare the student for life outside the campus. They
150 are not taught how to be self employed. For sometime now, not more than 40 percent of the normal period for
151 teaching during the academic year has been used for actual teaching.

152 **12 VIII. Teachers Capable of Teaching the Subjects**

153 Quality teachers have never been in good supply in our universities. The 2006 audit showed that there are even
154 more senior non-academic staff than very senior academic staff. Fig. ?? is quite instructive and could explain
155 why adjunct staff of various categories are used in tertiary institutions. As at 2006 50,000 academic staff was
156 required as against the current figure of 30,450 then, showing a short fall of 39.1%. The poly/monotechnics
157 require 30,016 academics as against the 2006 figure of 12,938 showing a short fell of 56.9% (Fig. ??). In the

158 colleges of education the 2006 faculty staff was 11,256, the number of staff required was 26,114 showing a shortfall
159 of 56.9%. In the National Teachers Institute, staff required was 7000 the 2006 figure was 6,526 showing a short
160 fall of 0.6.8% (See fig. ??). Nigerians graduate from one level to the other up to the doctorate programmes in
161 the universities, they have graduated without proper and indept foundation or grounding, but have continued to
162 contribute to the development and transformation of nation.

163 Outside the university system, Nigerians contribute in agriculture and quarrying, mining, building and
164 construction, manufacturing, commerce and trade, public utilities, transport and communication, health, civil
165 service, defence, police, prisons, judiciary and the political system. University give literacy enlightenment and
166 skills to many Nigerians, but still many university graduates lack professional training. The new generation
167 of university teachers know their subjects but cannot impact knowledge because teaching is not their calling.
168 They are just passing through and are not patient to learn lessons about teaching. The only authority they
169 rely on, to teach the students is that they stand in front of the class. Consequently their teaching is ineffective
170 and dangerous. In the present dispensation, there are two categories of this generation of teachers: a) Contact
171 staff These are those who after their degree programme and usually after trial and error decide on a career
172 outside the ivory tower. But with a good masters degree in related field, though unwilling to go through the
173 ranks from graduate assistant, assistant lecturer etc in the ivory tower. On retirement from their chosen career,
174 look for jobs in the universities. They may be good materials if they had started a career in academics. There
175 are, however, problems with this group of teachers. They are a spent force, old, weak, not capable of research,
176 since there is no motivation for upward mobility, encumbered by family and social responsibilities, age and more
177 important having no experience in the classrooms, they just float through. A growing and expanding profession
178 like university teaching cannot rely on such a group for the teaching of all the subjects. Besides, experience has
179 shown that most of those in this category do so, not out of love for teaching or students welfare but to shore
180 up their dwindling finances on retirement or out of want of what to do. A good profession cannot rely on such
181 teachers.

182 **13 b) Conversion by Administrative Personnel**

183 Today more than ever before is a growing group of administrative personnel in the senior staff cadre desiring to
184 become teaching staff. This is a great cause for concern as most of them had little knowledge of what teaching
185 is all about. First of all they are not professionally sound the bright ones amongst them didn't see teaching as
186 a first calling or profession but rather as an option to fall back on only after they reach the barr/peak of the
187 administrative career where there are no more avenue for promotion or upward mobility. Conversion becomes their
188 next option. Because they were not properly trained, many things were left undone and these non professional
189 teachers cannot provide the much needed quality education, to the detriment of the system and the nation.

190 **14 IX.**

191 **15 Strikes in Nigerian Universities**

192 Students of Nigerian tertiary institutions, especially the university have been more out of school than in school
193 since 1986. This is a result of incessant strikes by either the teaching or administrative staff or both". It is time for
194 us as teachers of these students to address squarely the problem of strikes (warning, impending, solidarity). The
195 beauty of the ivory tower is in the supremacy of superior argument unlike democracy where majority viewpoint
196 hold sway, it is the nation that has everything to loose on the long run.

197 Government is being called upon to fund universities adequately. In 2009 226,676,000,000 being 7% of the
198 total budget was allocated to education out of 3,445,410,000.00 trillion naira. In 2010, out of N4,206,465,684.00
199 trillion N271,196,102,115.00 billion representing 6.45% was allocated to education. (See Fig. ??). The so called
200 autonomy should be seriously adhered to and governing councils should be composed of technocrats who know and
201 understands how a university system operates. Better still retired Professors/Vice Chancellors should be made
202 chairman of councils and not politicians. University councils are not a place for political job seekers and should
203 not be used for political patronage. Some councils have become a thorn in the flesh of some Vice Chancellors
204 and the Academic Staff Union (ASSU), causing unnecessary friction in university campuses. It is time to ensure
205 that all arms and unions on campus work in synergy to achieve desired goals.

206 Moreover, the unions must learn the value of dialogue and that strike should only be used as a last resort. Vice
207 Chancellors are members of the academic union and should deal with the union and other unions as colleagues and
208 not play God. It is only when these parameters are clearly understood and respected that meaningful academic
209 pursuit can exist in our campuses.

210 Finally, universities must increase their sources of revenue generation as well as be more prudent in the use
211 of available resources; and the lecturers on their part must be ready to live up to their responsibilities and the
212 expectations of parents and students by being disciplined and more committed to their duties. The damage done
213 to the psyche of lecturers in the recent past led to massive brain drain in our universities. It is not all about
214 increasing salaries. There is the need for patience, understanding and continuing dialogue, not politicking, if we
215 must transform our society (Jaja, 2005b).

216 **16 X.**

217 **17 Morality of the Students**

218 Students who eventually graduate are products of the university and carry with pride the certificate, the aura
219 and personality of the university. It is therefore the burden of the university to produce graduates who will reflect
220 positively on the image of the university. Not one that will attract second or third rating in the market place.
221 How do lecturers inculcate that on the students? How do lecturers inculcate the habit and love to digest and
222 bury ones (students) head in reading when emphasis is no longer in buying books to read? How can value of
223 hard work be instilled on students when "everybody must pass" whether they study or attend classes or not?
224 How would malpractice be taken as misconduct when sanctions are not meted out on those caught, for fear
225 of cult reprisal attack? How can lecturers call students to order when students have direct access to the Vice
226 Chancellor, making nonsense of the channels of administration? Or when some students are on the payroll of
227 Vice Chancellors. When these happens, we find that products of universities have disdain and disrespect for
228 channel of administration and authority, therefore diminishing the place of the lecturer as a role model.

229 **18 XI.**

230 **19 Benefit of University Education**

231 Students, parents, guardians, individuals, voluntary agencies, and Governments have invested and have continued
232 to invest in university education because for society and government it is a tool for development. National
233 resources committed to education is about 16 percent of annual budget. Private contribution to education is
234 as high as the social contributions. The human resources committed to education in form of teachers and non-
235 teaching in universities are tremendous. Facilities and equipment committed to education both publicly and
236 privately as well as to formal and non-formal education are countless. This is because education performs many
237 functions. XII.

238 **20 Conclusion**

239 The central theme in this paper is Higher Education as a tool in the transformation of graduands, with emphasis
240 on the role of universities in the production of ambassadors and catalyst of change. The paper attempts at
241 espousing the challenges confronting universities in their desire to meet the onerous responsibilities expected of
242 them by government, parents and society.

243 It is worthy to note that, higher education should be better planned and controlled by quality, in terms of
244 students in take and lecturers; emphasis should be more in science/technology and the professions. These are
245 areas of great need for a country like Nigeria. Emphasis should also be in the acquisition of knowledge and
246 skills in agriculture, mining, building, construction, manufacturing, industrialization, health, education among
247 others. Less attention should be placed on politicking on campus as politicking is more, dangerous than politics
248 itself. In politicking, set down laws and guidelines, rules are neglected, as naked power is exhibited. There is
249 no doubt that if the university authorities could overcome the burden that seem to have held her captive, and
250 faithfully purge itself, then the road to genuine transformation and development is indeed much brighter. Then
251 the universities role of training of qualified professionals, inculcating, right attitude, norms and values as well as
252 developing human and social capacity, which are the bedrock of societal and economic development will greatly be
253 affected. Unless the issue of quality of Nigerian educational system in general and higher education in particular
254 is addressed, the socioeconomic transformation of Nigeria is yet to be out of the woods.

255 Conclusively therefore, the continuous relevance of the university system is hinged on its ability to carry out its
256 responsibility to society; only then can the continuous existence and relevance of the universities be appreciated
257 by society. ¹



Figure 1:

1

show

Figure 2: Table 1

1

(1998 -2008) (%) Ratio of GDP (%) 8.27 9.12 8.36 7.00 6.82 7.20 6.68 6.80 7.28 7.68 7.82 Source: Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (Various Years). Years Ratio of Total Govt Exp. (%) 1998 5.1 1999 8.6 2000 7.1 2001 7.6 2002 6.4 2003 6.6 2004 6.4 2005 6.3 2006 6.6 2007 6.4 2008 6.8 This level of funding by the Nigerian government falls far below the 26% of government expenditure as recommended by UNESCO, and illustrates her poor priority index and poor commitment to education. ? Inadequate and outdated library books and journals; ? Inadequate scientific materials; ? Non-existent fund for conferences and exchange programme; ? Inadequate resources for recurrent expenditures; ? Inadequate capital resources, which have led to suspension and or non-completion of capital projects, leading to overcrowded and rundown facilities, lecture hall and hostels; ? Inadequate staffing and training, poor motivation and low staff morale; ? Instability in academic calendar caused by incessant strike actions by students and teachers; ? Deficiencies in the curriculum and its delivery; ? Cultism in student life; ? Examination malpractices; ? Mercenary attitude to teaching and research.

Figure 3: Table 1 :

2

Years/Institut Universiti Polytechnics Monotechnics
Universities Colleges of Education
problem and ways of assisting the Universities. One

Figure 4: Table 2 :

- 1) Politically, education brings about enlightenment among members in the country. Through political education, national unity can be achieved especially in a plural society like Nigeria. Although for Nigeria, our politically educated seem to be our problem. However, it makes one better informed to play better roles in society.
- 2) It confers permanent literacy, numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively. It provides sound citizenship as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life in the society. Education develops in the recipients, the ability to adapt to changing circumstances. It provides tools for further advancement and equips the recipients to live effectively in a modern society of science and technology, while at the same time develops and projects culture, art and languages.
- 3) Economically, the university provide skills and techniques competencies.

nectessing human

Figure 5:

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