

# An Overview of the Philosophical, Historical, Political and Socio-economic Factors that Have Impacted on the Development of Universities in Nigeria.

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## **Introduction**

All over the world education is regarded as the bedrock to economic, political, and technological advancement of a nation and this is why it is often emphasised that no nation can rise above its educational system. Higher education, particularly, university education is been demanded all over the world owing to the fact that economic and social are increasingly driven by the advancement and application of knowledge being provided by them. A university is an organised institution for the purpose of imparting instruction, examining students, and promoting higher education through conferment of degrees in specialised or all areas of learning. The Nigerian territory education, particularly at the university level, reflects global trends in university education development. It has however, been shaped by plethora of historical factor. These factors are: traditional African/Nigerian education system, Islamic education and Judeo-Christian higher education from Western Europe and America which have modified the development university education to promote unique university model for Nigeria.

The emergence of universities according to Adesina (2005) was as a result of the need for junior and older scholars to search for knowledge and to identify a forum for testing out their theories and ideas. Nigeria has one of the oldest, biggest and most comprehensive university education systems in Africa (Codestria, 2005). University education in Nigeria has been on the exclusive list of the government since 1948 when the university College, Ibadan was established. This made their establishment, funding and management to be in the hand of the federal government that had the exclusive right. The 1979 Constitution, which put higher education on the concurrent legislative list, allowed state governments to establish universities. Within four years of the new constitution, that is the period of the civilian administration of Shehu Shagari, 1979-1983, state universities were established in Anambra, Bendel, Cross Rivers, Imo, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, and Rivers States all in the southern part of Nigeria. During the same period, there were also the new federal universities of Science, Agricultural and Technology and the National Open University. In addition to all these, there were applications for 24 proposed private universities and a proposed military academy.

Essentially, the established universities during the period were political outfits whose creation had little or no regard for human and material resources required for sustaining such institutions.

They owed their existence to mere legislative fiats which took virtually no consideration, for physical planning, funding implication, quality control mechanisms and manpower needs. Some of the universities, as a matter of urgency took off in the premises of primary and secondary schools (Adesina, 2005). The federal government itself introduced the policy of establishing at least one federal university in each of the existing 19 states of the federation. In Ogun state for example, the federal university was hurriedly started in the premises of the reputable Abeokuta Grammar school which had to move elsewhere for this purpose. Such was the race for universities that the military administration in 1985 had to promulgate the National Minimum Standards Deere providing for accreditation and quality control.

The Universities of Agriculture were established at Abeokuta and Makurdi and a third one later added at Umudike. In the same year, the federal universities of Technology at Bauchi and Yola, which were merged with other universities were "demerged" and autonomously re-established as Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi, and Federal University of Technology, Yola. By the end of 1990, Nigeria had 31 universities most of which were glorified secondary schools yet with many more in the pipeline. In general, since the Ashby Commission, it is evident that higher educational institutions have grown far more rapidly in numbers than the Commission could possibly have projected. The reasons for such growth and expansion have been many and varied but it is clear that political considerations have been the predominant single factor. Since 1948 to date, 27 federal, 36 states and 41 private universities, totaling 104 have been established in Nigeria (National Universities Commission, 2010).

Many factors impacted on the establishment of these universities. There are philosophical, historical, political and socio-economic factors that have combined to influence their establishment. All these factors are discussed in this paper.

## **Philosophical Factors in the Development of Nigerian University Education**

The philosophy of university education in Nigeria stems from the nation's philosophy of education which was derived from the nation's philosophies. These philosophies are as found in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2004). These fundamental principles about the importance of education to national and individual growth engendered the three basic items under the Nigeria's philosophy of education. These three basic philosophical items are:

- (a) the development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen;
- (b) The full integration of the individual into the community; and
- (c) The provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the system (FRN, 2004, p. 6).

University education in Nigeria is expected to contribute to national development through the intensified and diversified programmes for the development of high level man power within the context of the nation's needs, contextually relevant professional course context and providing students with general education for all-round improvement in university education (FRN, 2004). Philosophically, university education is meant to provide general education that prepares the individual for entry in to the government professions, business, and the industry, or provide the individual with opportunity for advanced or postgraduate study. The general education given within the university provides opportunity for individuals to continue to pursue knowledge within and outside the university. It provides for lifelong learning through critical intelligence to make us effective in whatever life requires of us. The public university exists because Nigeria as a nation is committed to the idea that a democratic society must educate its citizens.

The general education provides learners with the knowledge about the world and those live in it to achieve the following goals: understanding the symbolic action, interpretation, and communication; interpreting and understanding the natural world, the social world and the human world; understanding theories and methods of producing knowledge; understanding and interpreting and understanding human nature, cultural diversity and gender difference; and finding meaningful life, being responsible and protecting its environment (Waugh 2010). These philosophical goal of university education as highlighted by Waugh are further enunciated follows:

- Understanding symbolic action, interpretation, and communication allows for the understanding of people and their world. The linguistic, artistic, and mathematical symbols enable human beings to formulate, preserve, and pass knowledge from one generation the next, thereby providing opportunities to understand human experience. These are enhanced through university education.
- Interpreting and understanding the natural world, the social world, and the human ring the understanding that human beings are natural, social and human and that languages and expressions are ways to understand human beings, Object, events and actions are classified to construct explanations of why things happen and why people behave as they do.
- Understanding theories and methods of producing knowledge. This calls for scientific method in explaining and predicting events, and intervening in the world. It leads to understanding the nature of critical reasoning itself, how some statements about the world count as evidence for the truth of other statements, and how deductive and inductive methods of reasoning lead to knowledge. It is also important to know whether logic, mathematics, and scientific method are sufficient to explain all human experiences.
- Interpreting and understanding ourselves: human nature, cultural diversity and gender difference. These can be understood by studying the symbol systems, languages, cultures, and societies that occur at specific times and places in human history. It deals with questioning whether many societies give the same right and responsibilities to male and female members and also examine how natural and cultural difference affect the way an individual, or a group of individuals, or a society experience and interpret the world. This furnishes human beings with the ways in which experiences of individuals or a group reflects human experience for global citizenship.
- Finding and making a meaningful life; being responsible stewards of the earth and protecting its environment so that human beings can survive and live in a world of joy, pleasure, and happiness. University education provides the avenue for imagining alternative futures and making deliberate choices that would preserve the earth for die sustenance and well being of earth's inhabitants.
- Based on the deductions from the aforementioned premises, university education provides avenues for the development of global citizens who are shaped and who also shape their environment. Waugh (nd.), concluded that:
- University education is part of the long process in which we form beliefs about the world and ourselves based on evidence, even as we engage in debates about what count as evidence what counts as evidence and what counts as knowledge. Thus, university education being the lifelong project of fashioning a way of being in the world that is one's own. Human beings are given the means to ask how they are subjected *to* the forces that govern other physical objects in the natural world.
- The knowledge acquired at the university helps human beings to understand how physical, biological, cultural, economic, or technological happening at one place on earth can profoundly change what happens elsewhere. Changes in the environment would

affect the survival of species, thus university education requires both a perspective that is interdisciplinary and the perspective of the specialists. It provides avenue for knowledge in sciences, mathematics, social sciences, humanities, etc, to be integrated.

- University education enlarges human understanding and curiosity about individual as citizens of the universe, inhabitants of the earth, and as members of global and local societies both.
- The university teaches that learning requires critical, analytical and openness to people, ideas, stories, theories, and artifacts because this diversity makes the university what it is. Openness does not require agreement or acceptance but rather that one challenge *the* truth of what is told, disagree when it lacks sufficient reason, and dissent whenever one is not persuaded by reason, evidence, and logic.

Besides the preceding general philosophical needs, university education can be economy define particularly for a developing nation like Nigeria. These are further enunciated as follows

University education leads to greater career opportunities because employers prefer university graduates. Higher educational qualification generally demonstrates the skills and quality valued by employers. Thus, it provides whole range of academic subject courses and career-specific courses allowing individuals to chart their career paths confer increased earning capacity, broaden the range of opportunities, and ensure a more rewarding career (**Benefits of University Education, nd.**). University education also provides opportunities for changing career direction through the provision of necessary skills and knowledge to kick-start a new and rewarding career. Emerging in open and distance education has further given impetus to universities to provide the options of flexible study to help fit higher education with existing physical condition of learner. University education promotes opportunities for career Advancement as higher qualification improves job skills and also boosts employability in times of job crisis. Empirical evidences have shown that higher qualification reflects on career progressive in terms of climbing the professional ladder faster and also improved remuneration (**Benefits of University Education, nd.**).

University education also provides opportunities for personal growth as students meet and interact with people from different social, cultural, political and financial backgrounds, thereby promoting social education and effective interpersonal relationship. It provides avenue for exposure to diverse cultural and social milieu. University education teaches the need to work with dedication teaches the need to work with dedication and commitment in addition to the traditional skills of essay writing, research activities, group discussions etc (Benefits of University Education, nd.).

### **Historical factors that impacted on the development of Universities in Nigeria**

There are many historical factors that impacted on the development of university education in Nigeria. These factors include the under-listed which are also discussed below:

1. British colonial administrative policy and efforts;
2. Agitation by the Nigerian nationalists and elites;
3. Preparation for Nigeria's independence and manpower needs after independence;
4. Effort of the states; and :
5. Demands university education which led to the establishment of private universities

### **British Colombian Administrative Policy and Efforts**

The British government since her occupation of Lagos (Nigeria) in 1861 had been lukewarm in her attitude to educate Nigerians. *In* fact, Lagos was administered together with all other conquered colonies of Gold Coast (Ghana), Gambia and Sierra-leone and these were referred to

as the British West African Colonies. The development education at the university level followed the same historical patterns like other levels except for the fact that the Christian Missions did not establish universities in the colonies. The unwillingness of the colonial government to educate the conquered citizens also affected the establishment of full universities in the colonies. The *Achimota* College, in the Gold Coast, the Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone and the Yaba College, in Lagos were colleges running classes in the sciences and arts but were never empowered to award degrees.

Historians of Nigerian education disagreed on whether or not the education provided in Yaba Higher College, established in 1932 could be regarded as "re education" as the college did not claim the status of a university or anything closed to it. Adesina (2005) asserted that the Yaba Higher College was more of an ad-hoc training school than an institution of higher learning. The colonial administration, in-order to supplement higher education of the Yaba Higher College, started a scheme of training a number of Nigerian students in Britain at government expenses and between 1937 and 1943, according to Adesina (2005), 69 students had been so sponsored. However, there were two major problems which confronted the scheme. The first was that most of the trained Nigerians refused to return arguing that they : would be underutilised and they would never be offered any meaningful position. So, out of the 69 students trained under the scheme, only seven returned to Nigeria

It was also argued that most of the scholarships were awarded in the less attractive areas that would not threaten the position of the colonial personnel for example, Adesina (2005) reported that no scholarship was awarded in medicine: only two were in law and three in engineering. Many people argued that the scholarship programme was inadequate and that it was a ploy by the colonial government to prevent Nigerians from taking positions in the colonial administration.

### **Agitation by the Nigerian Educated Elites and Nationalists**

Agitation arose by the Nationalists and the Nigerian public at large for the establishment of universities in Nigeria. For example, this was the comment of a nationalist in the report of a commission on Higher education in West Africa in 1945. Why should African youth depend upon Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, Yale, Sorbonne, Berlin and Heidelberg for intellectual growth? These Universities are mirrors which reflect particular societal idiosyncrasies. Give the nascent African a university, you who are capable of financing the same. With twelve million pounds, there is no reason why the best libraries and professors cannot be produced right here and this Continent can become, overnight a Continent of Light (p. 13).

Agitations by nationalists and elites led to the setting up of commissions by the colonial office to look into the issue of higher education generally and the establishment of universities in British colonies. The history of university education in Nigeria started with the setting up of two commissions by the House of Commons in 1943. The first was the Elliot's Commission set up in June and the second one was the Asquith commission set up in August. The Elliot's commission was set up to investigate and report on the organisation and facilities on the existing centers of higher education in the British African Colonies and to make recommendations regarding future university development in that area. The Asquith Commission was the second one set up to examine the principles which should guide the promotion of higher education, learning and research and the development of university in the colonies, and to explore means whereby universities and other appropriate bodies in the United Kingdom may be able to cooperate with institutions of higher education in the colonies (report of the Commission on Higher Education in the Colonies, 1945; p.3).

The recommendation of the two Commissions led to the establishment of Nigeria's first

university college - the University College, Ibadan in 1948, which was an affiliate of the University of London (Ike, 1976). The remains of the Yaba Higher college staff and student were transferred to start the new University College, Ibadan. However many problems that militated against the college at inception. Some of this problem learns included rigid constitutional provisions, poor staffing, low enrolment and higher Dropout rate (Ibukun, 1997) and lack of a governing body (Adesina,2005) on the eve of Nigeria's independence according to Adesina (2005), the total output graduates was three hundred. This low output was partly as a result of distance of the University College, Ibadan to the other parts of Nigeria.

## **Preparation For Nigeria's Independence and Man Power Needs After Independence**

As part of Nigeria preparations towards political independence in October, 1960 according to the programme assented to by Britain, the government of Nigeria appointed a commission in April, 1959 to advise her on the need for post-school certificate and higher education in the country in the next twenty years. The report of the Ashby commission showed that the estimated needs for both intermediate and higher-level man power in the next decade outstripped not only the actual supply rate but also the estimate capacity of the existing institutions. For instance, enrolment at the sixth forum level, teacher training, technical and university institutions had to be greatly increased and at a considerably greater rate in the Northern than in the Eastern

One of the outcomes of the Ashby Commission's report was the establishment of universities and enrolment of students which increased by leaps and bounds. Thereafter from one university having an enrolment of 1,395 in 1960 to 13 Universities with 41, 499 students in 1976 (Taiwo, 1980). The University of Ibadan and the university of Lagos become the first two federal universities in Nigeria and the other three remain regional.. The newly created mid-western region established the University of Benin in 1970. Thus, there were six universities established in Nigeria between 1960 and 1970 (two federal and four regional). These six universities referred to as first generation universities. During this period, according to Babalola Jaiyeoba ; & Okediran (2007), universities in Nigeria were under the close supervision , of the government. The government was politically responsible for appointing members of the governing councils and vice-chancellors.

The Third National Development Plan of 1975-1980 had propose, establish four universities but instead, seven universities were established by the government which also took over four regional universities in 1975. These established universities are referred to as second generation universities. Many states also contributed a lot to the establishment of universities in Nigeria. Those universal established between 1980 and early 1990 are known as the third genera universities. Many of the fourth generation universities established between 1991 and the present day belong to the states. As at 2007, there were more states than federal universities in Nigeria. For example, the National Universities Commission (2010) reported that there are 27 federal, 36 states and 41 private universities opera-in Nigeria as at 2010.

## **Demand for University Education Higher Than Supply**

In spite of establishment of many federal and state universities in Nigeria, the demand for university education in the last 20 years is far greater than the supply. There has been unsatisfied supply of university education in Nigeria since the 1971/72 academic year when over 70% of candidates demanding for university education failed to secure. admissions. More than 83% of candidates seeking university admissions during -1992/93 academic session did not

get it. Olaniyan (2001) reported that there : gross inadequate provision of university education in Nigeria due to absence improved facilities to cope with the increasing demand for university education Similarly, Okebukola (2003 & 2004) noted that the absorptive capacity of Nigerian. Universities would soon get worse; he stressed further that by 2010, when the first set of Universal Basic Education (UBE) students graduated from secondary schools and at least 10% of them sought university admissions, the existing universities capacity, will absorb less than 3% of the applicants. To take care of about 97% others, the establishment of private universities would go a long way. The table below confirms the unsatisfied supply of university education which calls for the establishment of private universities.

**Table 1: Total Number of Universities, Applications and Admission Between 1999-2009**

Year	No. of Universities	No of Applicant	No. Admitted	Left Over
1999/2000	45	417,773	78,550	339,223
2000/2001	46	467,490	50,277	417,213
2001/2002	52	550,399	60,718	544,321
2002/2003	53	994,380	51,157	942,535
2003/2004	54	1,046,950	105,157	941,793
2004/2005	56	841,878	122,492	719,386
2005/2006	75	916,371	N/A	N/A
2006/2007	76	803,472	123,626	679,846
2007/2008	94	1,054,053	194,521	859,532
2008/2009	95	1,182,381	N/A	N/A

Source : [http:// ww.ume.com.ng](http://ww.ume.com.ng)

Note: that the Figure of 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 are reports given by the NUC and JAMB in the punch, Wednesday, may 21,2008, p,7 and the punch Wed, April 15, 2009,p6

There were pressure from the public and this led to establishment of private universities as approved by the Federal Government in 1993. An act was enacted to repeal the law banning the establishment of private universities (Abolition and prohibition act of 1984). However, early attempt at establishing private universities in Nigeria was in the late 1970s. The attempt failed and subsequently led to the abolition of all existing private universities in 1984 by the Buhari regime. The first set of private universities was licensed to operate in Nigeria on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May, 1999 and they include Igbenedion University, Okada; Babcock University, Ilesan Remo Madonna University, Okija (NUC, 2004).

Other reasons, apart from the inadequate number of universities, which led to the establishment of private universities, was the effect of globalisation which made private

schools, especially at the university level, to be responsive to the growing demand for qualified candidates. The need to be internally efficient is another reason. The public universities were becoming internally inefficient because of the incessant strike action due to the deplorable situations of public universities and other areas of disagreement between the governments and the university staff. Also, the need to assist the government in funding education is another reason. Funding has been a major problem facing university education in Nigeria and this can be attributed to the increase in demand. Olaniyan (2001) opined that demand for university education has been growing faster than the available resources.

## **Political Factors that Impacted on the Establishment of Universities in Nigeria**

Political interventions in the higher education system under a series of *military* governments imposed distortions and constraints on the development of education. By 1980, Nigeria had established a well-regarded higher education system offering instruction of an international standard in different disciplines. The universities of Ibadan and Ahmadu Bello, for example, were globally reputable for their research in tropical health and agriculture respectively. Between 1980 and 1990, the reputation was lost to political instability resulting from military interventions. Owing to the political pressures and social demand for access, the university education system expanded rapidly. Enrolments grew at an annual rate of 12 to 15 percent. Between 1980 and 1992, eleven more universities were established, some of them seemingly on an *ad hoc* basis. Government interference in university affairs (e.g., the direct appointment of vice-chancellors and, in some cases, of military "sole administrator" steadily increased. As university autonomy was usurped by central government incentives and rewards for research productivity, teaching excellence and associated innovations gradually disappeared. In consequence, research output dropped, educational quality declined, and management structures became rigid.

The hierarchical command structure of the military governments pervaded all aspects of the public service. In order to ensure effective co-ordination of universities in Nigeria, the National Universities Commission (NUC), was established in 1962 and reconstituted as a statutory body in 1974. The Commission was originally intended to function as a modest university grants commission, advising government on policy issues, defining norms for quality assurance, channeling block grants from government to the universities, and ensuring the balanced and coordinated development of the -system. By the end of the military era in 1998, the NUC had become a large and unwieldy organisation that was involved in all spheres of university Endeavour. It managed university finances through a series of predetermined expenditure guidelines and constant expenditure monitoring. It was involved in the selection of institutional leaders and members of governing councils. Its approval was required for all new university course offerings and for the physical development plans of the universities. It also participated in the negotiation of staff salaries with the various academic unions. Along the way, the NUC's governing board was dissolved in 1992, leaving it accountable solely to the Minister of Education and the Head of State.

University autonomy was steadily compromised by military governments and as a result, there were several criticisms by the academic staff and student organisations. The military governments viewed them as potential opposition to military rule, and this explains why universities suffered progressive erosion in the purchasing power of their budgets during the military regimes. Between 1990 and 1997, for example, while the enrolment in the university grew



by 79%, the real value of government allocations for higher education declined by 27%. The result was a precipitous fall in the quality of university education and research, as implied by the 62% drop in the real value of recurrent expenditure per student during this period (Harnnet, 2000). Downward pressure on staff salaries, together with deteriorating working conditions and political repression on campus, generated a series of staff and student strikes during the 1990s, culminating in year-long closures of the university system in 1992 and 1996 (Oni, 2000).

In 1999, the first time in 15 years, a democratically elected government was put in place in Nigeria. With the new government came the political will to tackle the nation's long festering higher education difficulties. The new government instituted many policy and institutional reforms in higher education. Among its more notable actions are institutional audits of all universities and associated organisations, revocation of the vice chancellors' former privilege of personally selecting 10% of each year student intake, reconstitution of all university governing councils with broader representation, the licensing of seven private universities, exemption of university staff from public service salary scales and regulations, and 180% increase in funding of the university system that raised per student allocations from the equivalent of USD 360 to USD 970 per year (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2001).

Another notable effort was a new *government policy on university autonomy which came into existence on July 21, 2000*. This policy framework gave university councils full responsibility for institutional governance including the appointment of senior officers; restored block grant funding to universities; circumscribed the powers of the National University Commission; vested university senates with the authority to decide on curricula; returned to universities the right to set admissions criteria and select students; and laid the groundwork for new minimum academic standards.

A law was passed in the legislative house and approved by the Federal Executive Council in May 2002 to reform existing higher education laws and establish a permanent legal basis for these changes. This was designed to give the university freedom from the public service responsibility of setting institutional policies, hiring top management, forwarding institutional budget; give institutions control over their own student admission; limit the role of the NUC to quality assurance and system coordination; place a curb on the right of employees to strike; and legally de-link the universities from the public service, thereby ending their adherence to government regulations regarding employment, remuneration and benefits (Okojie, 2007).

Nigeria possesses the largest university system in Sub-Saharan Africa. Although South Africa's tertiary enrolments are higher, Nigeria can boast of more institutions. With 61 state and federal universities enrolling over 600,000 students, its university system supports numerous graduate programmes and serves as a magnet for students from neighboring countries. The World Bank (1988) commented that "more than any other country in Sub-Saharan Africa, the structures exist in Nigeria that could provide for a rational and effective development of university education" (World Bank, 1988; p3). This was because the university system embraces much of the country's research capacity and produces most of its skilled professionals. It is the responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Education to oversee the system and it is supervised by the National Universities Commission (NUC). The Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) administers a national university entrance examination and informs universities of applicants' scores. A National Education Bank (formerly the Nigerian Student Loan Board) is charged with providing merit scholarship and student loans. Enrolments in the federal universities grew at a rapid rate of 12% annually during the 1990s and totalled

325,299 students by 2000 (NUC 2002). Enrolment growth rates were the highest in the South-South Region, followed by this North-East Region.

### **Socio-Economic Factors that Impacted on the Development of Universities in Nigeria**

One of the socio-economic reasons that impacted on the establishment of universities in Nigeria is the effect of globalisation. All over the world, private schools especially at the university levels have been responsive to the growing demand of education by qualified candidates. International Institute for Educational Planning (2003) posited that private university is a reality and its impact is fast growing around the world in relation to the demand of globalisation. It was observed that the number of private universities in Nigeria has geometrically increased from three to thirty-four between 1999 and 2009. The owners of private educational institutions in Nigerian have realised that education business is an investment that is profitable. Most of them have invested in either primary or secondary levels of education and with their experience at those levels; they also signify their intention to establish private universities. Ali (2004) opined that private school system is one of the most profits sectors of the sluggish Nigerian economy, readily attracting huge investment from banks, foreign investors, and well-meaning Nigerians. Those investors who have tasted the profitability of educational institution at the lower levels desire to establish private universities.

Another reason justifying the establishment of private universities in Nigeria is the need to be internally efficient. The public universities are becoming internally inefficient because of the incessant strike actions. This aggravated the demand for private sector participation in the establishment of universities. Nigeria has a peculiar attitude of providing individual solution to social problems. Those that see education as investment become more aware of the economic benefits of university education and discovered that public universities were unable to deliver their services as expected due to inadequate facilities.

Resources needed for the provision of qualitative university education has been on the decline since the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in the late 1980's and this led to the production of half-baked graduates. Despite this, the demand for university education keeps increasing. With the establishment of private university in Nigeria, some of those who were not admitted by public universities were offered admissions and most of them graduated at record time because strikes and other vices that are common in the public universities are alien to private universities. Increase in demand for university education is another reason for the upsurge of private university in Nigeria. Olaniyan (2001) reported that there is a gross inadequate provision of admission spaces in the public universities and this could be due to inadequate facilities cope with the increasing demand for university education. As at 2009, 132,381 candidates sat for University Matriculation Examination (UME) out of which all the existing universities could not admit more than 200,000 due to various problems facing university system ranging from facilities to personnel.

Another reason for the establishment of private universities is to assist the government in bringing education to the doorstep of Nigerians. Funding has been a major problem facing university education in Nigeria; this is because of the increase in the demand as well as corruption and mismanagement of available resources. Having realised this problem, the federal and state governments seized the opportunity of people agitation to shed the heavy responsibility of funding university education all alone. This resulted in granting of operating licenses to private individuals, religious organization and cooperate organisations to establish universities. The cost of running the federal university system totalled \$210 million in 1999. The financial burden of tertiary education rests largely on the federal government. As a result of

enrolment growth and currency devaluation, recurrent allocations per university student in the student in the federal system fell from \$610 to \$360 between 1990 and 1999 - with obvious implication for educational quality. However, agreements covering university salaries and teaching inputs negotiated with government by the Academic Staff Union of university (ASUU) in 2001 have raised this amount close to a much healthier \$1,000 per student annually (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2001). The cost must have risen beyond 200% as at now, 2010.

Federal university revenues are received mainly from three sources: the federal Government (84%); income generation activities (7%); and various student fees (9%) even though no undergraduate tuition fees are charged. In 1992, student fees had represented just 2% of revenues. Another attention-grabbing issue is the fact that, in real time capital budgets for federal universities surged by 40% during the 1990s. this is the combine result of special campus refurbishment and rehabilitation grants of substantial size, awards for university capital projects from the now-defunct Petroleum trust Fund, and similar grants from the recently operational Education Tax Fond. This trend of increasing financial support for the system appears likely to remain during the coming years. In August 2002, the NUC announced that federal universities would receive an additional 7.2 billion naira (USD 60 million) from government in 2003 and 2004 for the completion of capital projects (Okebukola, 2002).

The patterns and structure of university expenditures have improved steadily during the last decade. Whereas in 1991 academic expenses accounted for 49% administration absorbed 46% of total expenditures, by 1999 these shares were 62% and 35% respectively. In the process, the portions devoted to teaching support library development showed positive gains across the system. Direct tes. expenditure per student, however, differed considerably among institutions. In 1997/ 98 funds spent on direct teaching ranged from a low of 137 naira (\$2) per student at Usman Danfodio University in Sokoto to a high of 1,683 naira (\$21) at the University of Maiduguri. The system-wide weighted average was 331 naira (\$4) per student, (Hartnet, 2000). Overall, the NUC expenditure guidelines appear to have had a salutary effect, although adherence to them seems to have varied considerably among institutions.

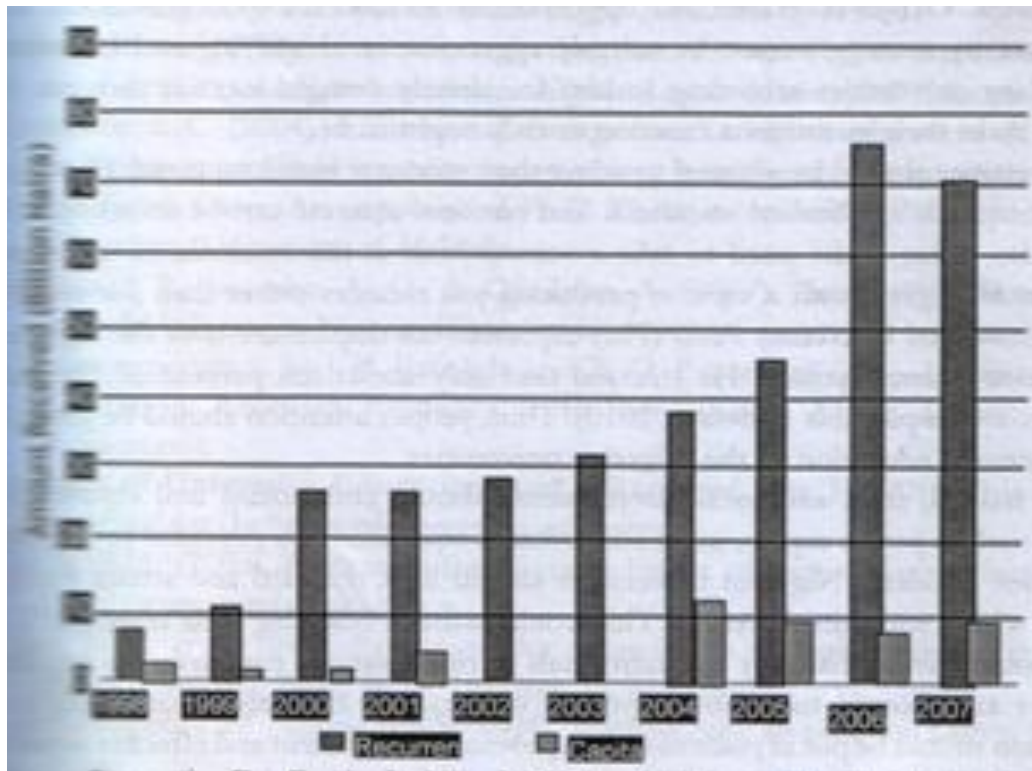
Nevertheless, when the financing of higher education is placed within the context of overall education sector financing, the picture becomes less heartening. Although tertiary education presently receives a larger share of the education budget, the latter's portion of the federal budget has diminished. Over die past four decades, various Nigerian governments have increased university subventions at the expense of investments in primary and secondary education, as they struggled to maintain financial support in the face of burgeoning higher education enrolments. Using data from 1962 Callaway and Musone (1965) concluded that Nigeria's education expenditure represented 3.5% of GDP and 15.2% of total government expenditure. of this amount, 19% was allocated to tertiary education. Hinchliffe (2002) estimated that education expenditure is equal to only 2.4% of GDP and 14.3% of government expenditure. The share of these funds going to tertiary education has nearly doubled (35%).

Nigeria's recent allocation shares for education are sharply different from regional and international norms. For example, UNESCO's *World Education Report (20<* indicated that for 19 other countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, education expenditure averaged 5.1% of GDP and 19.6% of the total government expenditures. On average these countries allocated 21% of their education budgets to tertiary education, comparison with other African nations, Nigeria's funding on education is less than ten per cent. This has created some problems and a disabling environment that hamper, goal-realisation for the Nigerian universities. Among such problems according to Adesina (2005), are lack of focus; failure to relate enrolments to available human and material resources, excessive trade unionism, decaying and obsolete learning and

teaching facilities unbecoming of centres of excellence, inadequate research an scholarship, demoralised and frustrated staff and students and poor remunerate packages for teaching and non-teaching staff, which is currently being corrected by die federal government of Nigeria.

Okojie (2009) asserted that there is rapid increase in demand for university education as a vehicle for socio-economic transformation and that the objective of government is to provide adequate access to university education for those who desire it. He noted an increase in student enrolment from 104 in 1948; 1,395 in 1960; 40,000 in 1976; 172,000 in 1988; 448,000 in year 2000; to over 850,000 in 2009. He emphersised that the challenge has been to find the necessary resources to support such population explosion in university education. Inability to realise funding expectation has raised concerns about quality of university education. Okojie explain some current challenges could be attributed to unstable external revenue due to economic depression and refusal of some Nigerians to allow the governments to change tuition fees. He gave a graph of how the universities are funded from 1998 to 2007(see below).

**Fig.1 Funding Federal Universities – Trends**



Source: innovation Funding in the Nigerian University System (Okojie, J.A. (2009)

### The Way Forward

In order to meet the challenges of providing efficient and effective university education to Nigeria and take the country from the stage of a developing to developed nation, the following commendations are considered appropriate:

Okejie, the NUC Executive Secretary observed that many Nigerian universities such as the university of Lagos, University of Maiduguri, University of Ilorin, University of Benin, Bayero University Kano and Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU)

have developed creative fund generation strategies which are assisting the running of the

universities. He cited the example of the NAU which introduced a levy following consultations with PTA and approval by the Board so as to be able to move all its operations to its main campus; generated 40% of its recurrent needs in 2006/2007. He explained some varieties of creative strategies which universities may utilize such as: Alumni tracking, database of alumni, periodic contact with alumnus to maintain sense of belonging, Alumni Consultancy services; Linkages/Partnerships with philanthropist/donor agencies, collaborative research and development; Small and Medium Scale enterprises like built-up shops for rent; operation of cybercafés, fee for-service parking lots, laundrettes, transportation services, renting of hall in idle time and other ventures that create avenues for student-work programmes.

The University administrators should therefore be innovative and devise different strategies of funding universities rather relying solely on the Federal and state governments. Okojie reiterated that opportunities abound for fund generation and that university managers must be suitably aggressive in identifying and exploiting them. Many universities according to him are already doing a lot, but they can do more to make their institutions function as they ought to be.

Universities should be allowed to admit their students based on merit. However, compliance with established standards and national interest can be monitor by NUC. Also, there is the need to take a second look at the curricula of university education in Nigeria with a view to producing job creators rather than job seekers. The Chairman of University Press (Plc.) expressed his displeasure over the higher rate of graduate unemployment. He stressed that only about ten percent of Nu graduates are employable (Adetayo, 2010). Thus, proper attention should be great entrepreneurial education in the Nigerian universities.

The federal, state and local governments should collaborate and ensure that facilities such as power supply, water and research equipment are provided to Nigerian universities. Similarly, Nigerian universities should look outward and attract foreign for students within and outside Africa. This would assist in boosting their revenues. The NUC should ensure that only the individuals or organisations that have the required resources are allowed to establish private universities. Effective monitoring and supervision should be put in place to ensure provision of efficient and effective service by the state universities. The NUC, the Police and the Judiciary should be more responsive to the cases of illegal universities. Offenders should be promptly brought to justice to serve as deterrent to others (Ajadi, 2010).

Iheduro (2010) noted that the current practice of politicising the approve universities, admission processes and accreditation of programmes in Nigeria prov. little or no incentive for healthy competition among the universities. According to him, too much centralisation breeds inefficiency and corruption and the government should allow autonomy in the administration of Nigerian universities.

Finally, Nigerian universities should collaborate among themselves and with university outside the country in order to achieve scientific and technological breakthrough available facilities should be judiciously utilised through collaboration and cooperation.

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### **Country Profile**

Nigeria, as it is known today was the creation of the British colonial system. In 1914,