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INADEQUATE FUNDING IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES AS A MENACE TO EDUCATIONAL GROWTH

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ABSTRACT

The funding of higher education in Nigeria has a long history that began with the establishment of academic institutions. Since then and up to the present, there has been insufficient funding for higher education, which frequently causes disagreements among stakeholders and has an impact on the growth of the standard of higher education in Nigeria. The incessant strike in Nigeria universities has also been caused by inadequate funding of these institutions. There have been several sources of funding for these universities including; Money received from outside sources in the form of Grants or Direct donations or government funds and funding obtained through additional sources of revenue, such as contract research, consulting services, working with private institutions and partnership among others. Many universities that have struggled with underdevelopment have had access to significant resources in the past, which their leaders have abused, misappropriated or stolen. Thus stricter measures must be implemented to deter corruption at our universities. The government and individuals should work together to provide the universities with substantial financial backing because of the essential role it plays in the development of the Nation. Aggressive private sector engagement that would offer additional resources for universities has been suggested and the administration of the universities should actively investigate all possible avenues for collecting Grants or Money for its operations that have up to now gone underdeveloped.



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Problem

There has been frequent strike at university institutions throughout the history of higher education in this Nation, Nigeria. Even in year 2022, students have been home for more than 7 months, these ongoing strikes have led to the current conflict between the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the Nigeria Government. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2015) has recommended that member countries dedicate at least 15–20% of their yearly budgets to education. The ASUU supports Nigeria accepting and implementing this suggestion.

One might envisage the consequences of such strikes on the students and the society lasting for more than six months which has been borne from the inadequate funding to run these institutions. The purpose of this article is to examine the options and methods of funding these institutions by the private citizens, Internally Generated Revenue (IGR), government and the university. This will eliminate the presumption that they must only be financed by the government and restore peace to these institutions for the benefit of our educational development. This essay aims to explore one of the key issues impacting higher education in Nigeria which is inadequate funding to carry out its different operations.

Background

Education has long been recognized as a vital instrument for both personal and societal growth. It is a flexible tool for transformation. It serves as both an important engine for growth and development and a fundamental social responsibility on the part of the government. It has been viewed as a significant component influencing both societal and individual wellbeing (Alumanah, 2001). Higher education is described as the Post-Secondary Section of the National Education System in the National Policy on Education (NPE) (2004). This section includes Colleges of Technology, Polytechnics, Universities, as well as courses offered by Advanced Teachers Training Colleges, Correspondence Colleges, Colleges of Education, and other institutions that may be related to them. Adeyemi (2001) asserts that the term "higher education" refers to a system that encompasses a large portion of the Nation's research capacity and generates the vast majority of the qualified professionals needed in the labor market.

With millions of students, Nigeria's higher education system is the biggest in all of Africa. Universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, and other institutions make up Nigeria's higher education system. The National Universities Commission, a parastatal under the Federal Ministry of Education, was founded by the Federal Government of Nigeria as the external monitoring agency to supervise the numerous higher education institutions in the Nation.

The funding of higher education in Nigeria has a long history that began with the establishment of academic institutions. Since then and up to the present, there has been insufficient funding for higher education, which frequently causes disagreements among stakeholders and has an impact on the standard of higher education in Nigeria. According to a World Bank (2010) report, Africa has a more acute higher education funding issue than the rest of the world. This is especially true for university education. For instance, in Nigeria, in addition to the global economic downturn that is destroying the economy, other factors like a high rate of corruption in all sectors of the economy, declining government revenue from the oil sector they depend upon, poor management of economic resources, influence of the political class, declining non-oil sector revenue due to neglect, enormous foreign and domestic debts, etc. have made it difficult for the government to meet up this demand to the educational sector.

Therefore, it is necessary for these institutions to take part in income-generating activities in order to augment government subsidies. This will help to mitigate against the ASUU's frequent strikes (Academic Staff Union of Nigerian Universities). Our Nation's higher education system has been rendered inoperable by this strike. Interesting research on the Nation's strikes from 1999 to 2022:

1999 - 5 months, 2001- 3 months, 2002 – 2 weeks, 2003 6 months, 2005- 3 days, 2006 – 1 week, 2007 – 3 months, 2008 – 1 week, 2009 - 4 months, 2010 - 5 months 1 week, 2011- 3 months, and 2013 - 5 months. 2016 -1 week, 2017 - 1 month, 2018 - 3 month, 2020 - 9 month, 2022 - 7 month (Source, Author Computation Experiences), The central theme for all these prevailing strikes was inadequate funding.

Sources of Funding

Due in large part to the Nation of Nigeria currently experiencing an economic recession, the situation of inadequate funding for universities has gotten so bad that some universities are unable to pay their employees' salaries and others are owing employees' salaries that total more than two to six months' worth of wages. Universities have had to scale back their research efforts as a result of this issue. According to Babalola (2014), there are several non-government organizations that may help colleges raise money, including but not limited to the following:

Money received from outside sources in the form of direct donations; buildings, grants, real estate, scholarships, and student loans technical assistance, indirect donations; vouchers, stock exchange trade percentages of sales revenue, and credit cards, tied donations which is access to resources with stringent conditions, such as a loan from the world bank, concessions item offered for sale under the University name, and endowment a money or piece of land invested for the benefit or assistance of nonprofit organizations.

Funds from investments in businesses with the intention of making a profit, interest, rent, dividend, or other type of payment. These endeavors included, but weren't limited to, housing for workers and students, conference space, property rent, company operations, product manufacture, etc.

Funding obtained through additional sources of revenue, such as contract research, consulting services, working with private institutions, partnerships, etc.

Funds from endowments and charitable gifts, alumni donations, private businesses or organizations, and private individuals.

Funding from student-related private sources in the form of tuition and other fees assessed to various types of students, including those enrolled in undergraduate, graduate, distance learning, part-time, and international programs. These expenses cover a wide range of non-tuition fees, including those for libraries, sports, exams, acceptance, health services, identity cards, and other things.

Solution

In order to avert a total collapse of the sector this paper makes the following suggestions to improve on the funding of university education in Nigeria. The education sector should be given at least 25% of the National budget. Because it is at the university level of education that a person acquires the abilities required to operate effectively in society, university education should be extensively funded for its members and provided in a high-quality manner. In addition, it is the degree of education that makes it difficult for people and nonprofit groups to quickly offer suitable solutions. It should be

noted that the 25% proposed here is greater than the 15-20% UNESCO recommends as the minimum for education.

It is important to promote family planning among Nigerians. Nigeria's population is expanding far more quickly than its economy. The need for education has increased despite no matching increase in available resources. The crisis in the education sector is mostly caused by this predicament. Therefore, if population growth continues uncontrolled, the education sector will experience further difficulties in the future. Multinational organizations stand to gain the most from higher education. As a result, it is recommended that at least 5% of their yearly income go only toward financing higher education. To make this effective, the National Assembly needs enact the required enabling legislation.

Private universities should be supported since Nigerian society is made up of people with various financial capacities. While the majority of people grumble about their inability to pay even the most basic necessities, there are others who can afford everything, even sending their loved ones to the most prestigious colleges in the world, regardless of the expense. In order to serve these people, more private institutions have to be supported in Nigeria. As the children of the wealthy will be more inclined to attend private institutions, the strain on the public universities will be lessened.

The emphasis on domestically produced funds that is currently fashionable at our institutions has led to a variety of consultancy activities at the expense of academic performance. Nigerian institutions should place more emphasis on imparting information to the populace and teaching them how to live in society than just generating money.

The possession of sufficient funding for a university does not ensure progress if the vice chancellor is dishonest and incompetent. Corrupt vice chancellors should be tried and imprisoned. Many universities that have struggled with underdevelopment have had access to significant resources in the past, which their leaders have abused. Thus, stricter measures must be implemented to deter corruption at our colleges. Without a doubt, corrupt vice chancellors must be brought before the federal government's anti-corruption statute and given enough punishment to serve as a deterrence to others.

There should be less political and government interference in the governing and management constitutions of these public educational entity. Within the space of 5 years one can have the vice chancellor of the university changed severally, which might not be healthy for the education climate and continuation of growth and development policies.

Conclusion

The government and individuals should work together to provide the University with a substantial financial backing because of the essential role it plays in the development of the Nation. Every education stakeholder must step up to the task and save higher education from utter collapse since the cost of education is rising owing to inflation and the government may not be able to do much about proper financing of university education given the present economic downturn. Universities can also take the initiative by looking inside and examining all of their options for raising money to support their operations. This suggests that money should not just come from the government but also from within the Institutions.

In order to raise additional money, it is also necessary to implement a macroeconomic policy that calls for the government to diversify into other economic areas. In order to guarantee the supply of more resources for universities, the education system should also be somewhat deregulated. Lastly, aggressive private sector engagement that would offer additional resources for universities should also be encouraged. The administration of the university should actively investigate all possible avenues for collecting money for its operations that have up to now gone undeveloped.

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