

TERTIARY EDUCATION AND THE FUTURE OF NIGERIA: BEING THE CONVOCATION LECTURE DELIVERED BY YUSUF ALI SAN FCIArb AT THE 36TH CONVOCATION CEREMONIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN HELD ON 22ND OCTOBER, 2021 AT THE UNIVERSITY MAIN AUDITORIUM

“But we are building this Center because we believe it can speak to some of the central struggles of our time. We are living through a moment of rapid disruption in technology and the global economy, in our social arrangements and our environment. Too often, it feels as if our major institutions have failed to respond effectively to these disruptions. And in the breach, we’ve seen a growing culture of cynicism and mistrust, more division and more bitter conflict.

The good news is we can reverse these trends, reimagine our institutions and rebuild our Societies in a way that gives more and more people a better life.”¹

1.00 INTRODUCTION

1.01 I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Council, Senate, Vice Chancellor, Staff and Students of this great University for the invitation extended to me as the 36th Convocation lecturer, to mark part of the 36th Convocation ceremonies of the University.

1.02 The first inclination about my invitation was via a telephone call from the very able and capable Registrar of this University Dr. Fola

¹ President Barack Obama at the ground breaking ceremony of his presidential library on 28th September, 2021. At Chicago USA.

M. Olowoleni, sometimes in the middle of September. She sought to know if I would be available to deliver this lecture. I had no hesitation to accept the invitation for many reasons, which I will recount at some point in this lecture. I asked her the topic I was to speak on and she retorted that I have a freehand to pick a topic of my choice. True enough, a formal letter inviting me to deliver this lecture did not suggest any topic but provided some direction on what the lecture should deal with. In the 3rd paragraph of the letter under reference the Registrar stated thus:

“Through the Annual Convocation Lecture, the University stimulates and harvests ideas from a notable lecturer that can provide constructive and impactful knowledge, and act as a springboard on how our nation can achieve its desirous goals of becoming a prosperous, successful and productive nation.”

1.03 In essence, I am expected to ***“provide constructive and impactful knowledge”*** which will ***“act as a springboard on how our nation can achieve its desirous goals of becoming a prosperous, successful and productive nation.”***

1.04 The above marching order gave birth to the topic we are about to deal with which is ***“TERTIARY EDUCATION AND THE FUTURE OF NIGERIA”***

1.05 Before proceeding further, I pay homage to my 35 predecessors who mounted this podium before me to deliver the Convocation Lecture of this University. I pray that I will measure up to the very high standards they have set in the delivery of this type of lecture, in the last 35 years, or so. **Mojuba!!!**

1.06 My understanding of a lecture of this nature is that it should be thought-provoking, so as to enable further discussion and debates about the topic, be relevant now and in the future. In other words, it is to whet the appetite of the listeners and provide a reputable source of agitating various issues that may be thrown up in the discourse. It is, therefore, my desire to do just that in this presentation, of course, without forgetting that I am to proffer solutions to any problems that I may identify in the course of the lecture. I also hope to do this.

1.07 The letter of the Registrar under reference indicated that my choice as the Convocation lecturer is informed, putting it in the Registrar's words

“.....not only by your eminent global standing and reputation as an iconic legal practitioner in Nigeria, but also by your achievements as a great Nigerian who is versed in leadership and global affairs. It is our strong believe that the convocation lecture will give you a rare engaging platform to share ideas you have garnered over the years in your sojourn and pursuits as a reputable lawyer and Senior Advocate of Nigeria. Such ideas, we believe, will not only help us in improving the operation of our university system, it would also provide insights on how our nation could be propelled to a glorious destination. Besides, your presence on our campus will also give us the opportunity to discuss and cement a long-lasting and mutually benefitting relationship with the University.”

1.08 Let me make it clear from the onset that, in this lecture, I take liberty to use ‘tertiary education’ interchangeably with ‘university, so ***cetris paribus***, where either occur, I beg your pardon, take it to mean the same thing.

2.00 MY ODYSSEY WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN AND OTHER UNIVERSITIES

2.01 I dare say that my invitation is actually multi-dimensional, as will be demonstrated, shortly based on my other experiences. My first very close relationship with this University was in 1995, when I was co-opted, by the University Council, to be part of the Council's investigation of the Bursary. That exercise exposed me to a lot of things, not only about University of Ilorin alone, but other Universities. Secondly, I have had very productive professional and personal relationships with the last four Vice Chancellors of this University and the current occupant of the office, from Professor Oba Abdulraheem, to Prof Shamshudeen Amali, Professor Ishaq Oloyede, Professor Abdulganiyu Hambali and now Professor Age Abdulkareem.

2.02 What I said, about the former Vice-Chancellors and the current Vice-Chancellor, applies on all fours to all the former Registrars and the current one. I therefore have enough insider experience of the University to be able to deliver the lecture.

2.03 In the year 2000, I was appointed as a member of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the problems of cultism in Nigerian universities, with special attention to Obafemi Awolowo

University, where cultists had killed four students. The Commission visited all the universities in the country in the course of the assignment. The experience from that exercise is immeasurable.

2.04 Then in 2016, I succumbed to the invitation of the then Osun State Governor and accepted the Pro-Chancellorship of Osun State University, for a 4-year tenure, which ended in August, 2020. It is common knowledge, that the current Governor reappointed me for another term of 4 years, which is currently running. Therefore, being a Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council of a University for more than 5 years should place me in a position to talk with some level of authority on University education in our country.

2.05 Another thing which I think places me in good stead for this assignment is the fact that, from January, 2021, I assumed the Chairmanship of the Committee of Pro-Chancellors and Chairman of the Councils of the 48 state-owned Universities in Nigeria. That ongoing experience is a new education on its own. I must not fail to mention that I have been an associate lecturer of the Faculty of law of this University for more than 2 decades.

2.06 Lastly in the litany, I have been visiting Fellow at the King's College, London, which has afforded me the rare opportunity of working in a world class university that is currently ranked among the best 50 Universities in the world, by all the ranking bodies of Universities in the world.

2.07 The aforementioned points, to my mind, coupled with my professional experience, provide me with the credentials to do the prognosis and treatment on the topic of discourse which, as stated before is ***“TERTIARY EDUCATION AND THE FUTURE OF NIGERIA”***

3.00 BRIEF HISTORICAL DISCOURSE ON THE EVOLVEMENT OF UNIVERSITIES

3.01 The modern Western university evolved from the medieval schools known as ***studia generalia***; they were generally recognized places of study, opened to students from all parts of Europe. The earliest studia arose out of efforts to educate clerks and monks beyond the level of the cathedral and monastic schools.²

²University' available at <https://www.britannica.com/topic/university/First-universities-in-the-Western-Hemisphere>

3.02 The first European medieval university was the University of ***Magnaura in Constantinople*** (now Istanbul, Turkey) [now in ruins], founded in 849 by the regent Bardas of emperor Michael III, followed by the *University of Salerno (9th century)*, [growing out of a Benedictine monastery]. The first true university,³ an institution called such, was founded in Bologna, Italy, in 1088 and the University of Paris (c. 1100) in Paris, France, later associated with the Sorbonne. At these early dates, universities were more of an association or a guild for learning particular crafts. In the case of Bologna, the focus was law. The emphasis was on training students for more developed skills within a particular profession to serve and develop those skills at more professional levels. Oxford, the second oldest university and oldest English speaking university, was established sometime late in the 11th century. Traditions such as having a chancellor and halls of residence had become established by the 13th century. Oxford had established its oldest colleges, Balliol and Merton Colleges, by the mid 13th century⁴

³There is some debate among scholars about which particular place can be called the first university. The medical school at Salerno, in southern Italy, is often cited as the first university, or at least one of the first universities. Salerno was well known as a health resort from the ninth century. It was also a meeting place of Greek, Latin, Arabic, and Jewish learning, being a port situated on important trade routes. It became a universitas sometime in the twelfth century, and obtained formal recognition in 1231, but remained solely a medical school and did not influence the style and organization of later universities.

⁴Ridder-Symoens, Hilde de, ed. 1992. *Universities in the Middle Ages. A History of the University in Europe*, v. 1. Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

3.03 Many of the medieval universities in Western Europe were born under the aegis of the Catholic Church, usually as cathedral schools or by papal bull as Studia Generali. In the early medieval period, most new universities were founded from pre-existing schools, usually when these schools were deemed to have become primarily sites of higher education. Many historians state that universities and cathedral schools were a continuation of the interest in learning promoted by monasteries.⁵

3.04 Universities began to spread across Europe. Often disputes within a university led to migrations of teachers and students and the formation of new universities. Migrations from Bologna led to the founding of Padua (1222). Further moves from Padua led to the creation of a university at Vercelli (1228). Also, Cambridge University in England was established by scholars who dissented and left Oxford. Some historians claim that up to half the universities of medieval Europe originated from such disputes. Universities also sprung up seemingly on their own, although usually following the organizational principles of either Bologna or Paris. By 1500, there were 62 recognized universities in Europe.

⁵ 'The Origin of Universities' available at <http://www.la.utexas.edu/users/bump/OriginUniversities.html>

Universities continue to evolve today, and yet still retain some of their earliest characteristics, as formed in the medieval period.⁶

4.00 HISTORY OF UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA

4.01 The history of university education in Nigeria is traceable to the ***Elliot Commission of 1943***, which culminated in the establishment of University College Ibadan (UCI) in 1948. UCI was an affiliate of the University of London.⁷ In April 1959, the Federal Government commissioned an inquiry, the Ashby Commission, to advise it on the higher education needs of the country for its first two decades. Before the submission of the report, the Eastern Region government established its own university at Nsukka, University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1960. The implementation of the Ashby Report led to the establishment of the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife) in 1962 by the Western Region, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 1962 by the Northern Region and University of Lagos 1962 by the Federal Government.

⁶ 'The Rise of Medieval Universities' available at <https://www.encyclopedia.com/science/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/rise-medieval-universities>

⁷Ike, V. C., (1976), University Development in Africa: The Nigerian Experience. University Press, Ibadan.

4.02 The University College, Ibadan became a full-fledged university in 1962.⁸ This meant that UCI, Ibadan and University of Lagos became the first two federal universities in Nigeria – the other three remained regional. In 1970, the newly created Midwestern region opted for a university known as University of Benin. The six universities established during this period 1960-1970 are still referred to, till today, as first generation universities. During this period, universities in Nigeria were under the close surveillance of the government. Appointments of lay members of the council, and that of the Vice-Chancellor, were politically motivated.⁹

4.03 In the Third National Development Plan (1975 - 1980), the government established seven universities instead of the four proposed in the plan, and also took over the four regional universities in 1975. They were Universities of Calabar, Ilorin, Jos, Sokoto, Maiduguri, Port Harcourt and Ado Bayero University, Kano - all known as second generation universities. The third generation universities were established between 1980 and early 1990. They are: the Federal Universities of Technology in Owerri,

⁸Babalola, J. B.; Jaiyeoba, A. O.; and Okediran, A., (2007) "University Autonomy and Financial Reforms in Nigeria: Historical Background, Issues and Recommendations from Experience". In J. B. Babalola and B. O. Emunemu (eds.). *Issues in Higher Education: Research Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa*. Lagos: Bolabay Publications.

⁹Jake Otonko 'University Education in Nigeria: History, Successes, Failures and the Way Forward' International Journal of Technology and Inclusive Education (IJTIE) , Volume 1, Issue 2, December 2012 p. 45.

Makurdi, Yola, Akure and Bauchi. While state universities were founded in Imo, Ondo, Lagos, Akwa- Ibom, Oyo and Cross-River states.¹⁰ The fourth generation universities are those established between 1991 and the present date. They include more state universities, Nigerian Open University and many private universities. Thus, presently in Nigeria, there are 170 universities, a total of 43 owned by the federal government, 48 state-owned and 79 owned by private individuals and organisations; providing university education to Nigerians.¹¹

5.00 **UNIVERSITY RANKING IN THE WORLD**

5.01 According to a ranking just released by *Times Higher Education* (THE), a London magazine that tracks the higher education market, University of Oxford sits on top of the universities with the best reputations in the world, Stanford University comes in second and Harvard is in the third place.¹²

5.02 *Times Higher Education* has been putting together the World University Ranking for well over a decade, where it employs 13

¹⁰Nwangwu, I.O., (2003) *Educational Policies in Nigeria: Trends and Implementation*. Jobus International, Nsukka.

¹¹ Simona Varrella 'Number of universities in Nigeria 2021, by ownership' <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1130701/number-of-universities-in-nigeria/>

¹², World University Rankings 2021' https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2021/world-ranking#!page/0/length/25/sort_by/rank/sort_order/asc/cols/stats

carefully calibrated performance indicators to provide the most comprehensive and balanced comparisons available, which are trusted by students, academics, university leaders, industry and governments. The performance indicators range from the number of academic citations schools receive, to the percentage of their faculty members with Ph.D.s. To arrive at their conclusion, the magazine also polls senior, published professors at universities in more than 100 countries around the world. It asks them to nominate 15 or fewer institutions in their field which they considered to have the best departments in their area of study. Then *Times Higher Education* takes the data and divides it into six disciplines: social sciences, engineering, technology, physical sciences, medicine and life sciences, arts and humanities, and does its tally from there.

5.03 Though this is purely subjective data that is completely based on opinion but it is opinion from the people whose views really count. Reputation is almost like the currency of higher education. It is the way scholars decide whom to do business with, whom to collaborate with and where they will go for their next career move. The same goes for students, reputation often comes out as a major decisive factor that students employ in deciding where

they want to go to school. Of course there is something circular about college rankings. If a school comes out on top of the *U.S. News* ranking, *The Times Education* ranking, or *the Forbes* ranking for that matter, it enhances the public perception of that school, which then ups the number of applicants and the quality of students the school can accept.¹³

Nearly 100,000 Nigerian students were enrolled abroad in 2020. It was also reported that along with popular regional hubs like South Africa and Ghana the top destinations were:

- The US, with 15,980 students in early 2019
- Malaysia, with roughly 13,000 in 2019
- Canada, with 11,985 in 2019
- The UK, with 10,540 in 2017/18¹⁴

5.04 The top 10 universities in the world, according to the report, are the University of Oxford (UK), with 95.6 aggregate score. It was followed by Stanford University (USA), 94.9; Harvard University (USA), 94.8; California Institute of Technology (USA), 94.5. Others are the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (USA), 94.4;

¹³ Susan Adams 'The World's Most Admired Universities' <https://www.forbes.com/sites/susanadams/2015/03/11/the-worlds-most-admired-universities/?sh=46bc59ee6002>

¹⁴ New report describes shifting Nigerian demand for study abroad' <https://monitor.icef.com/2021/02/new-report-describes-shifting-nigerian-demand-for-study-abroad/>

University of Cambridge (UK), 94.0; University of California, Berkeley (USA), 92.2; Yale University (USA), 91.6; Princeton University (USA), 91.5; and The University of Chicago (USA), 90.3.¹⁵

5.05 In Africa, of the first 500 ranked Universities in the world, only three South African institutions made the list. They are the University of Cape Town, ranking 155th and scoring 57.3; University of Witwatersrand, between 201th and 250th; and the Stellenbosch University, between 251st and 300th.

5.06 The UK varsities top the list in Europe, with Oxford University as the leader, followed by the University of Cambridge.

5.07 In Asia, Japan leads the way, with 116 universities in the ranking, while China comes second, with 91 ranked institutions. India is the third most-represented country, with 63 universities.¹⁶ In North America, the USA had the top 20 universities except for the University of Toronto (Canada) came 18th, at 86.0.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ibid note 11

¹⁶ Best universities in Asia' <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/best-universities/best-universities-asia>

¹⁷ Study in North America' <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/where-to-study/study-in-north-america>

5.08 In Latin America, despite Brazil being the most-represented country in the ranking, the top university for the second consecutive year is the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, although Brazil's University of São Paulo comes in second place. The rest of the top five comprises the University of Campinas (ranked third), the Monterrey Institute of Technology, in fourth place, and the Federal University of Minas Gerais, in fifth position.¹⁸

5.09 Australia has the first 8 universities in the Oceania. They are the University of Melbourne (33rd), Australian National University (54th), University of Queensland (54th), University of Sydney (72nd), Monash University (57th), University of Sydney (58th), UNSW Sydney (70th), University of Adelaide (111th) and The University of Western Australia (132nd).¹⁹

5.10 It is really disheartening to note that the latest World University Rankings for 2021, by all ranking bodies like Times Higher Education, USN news, OS World University Rankings, Shanghai

¹⁸ Best universities in Latin America' <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/best-universities/best-universities-latin-america>

¹⁹ <http://www.forbes.com/sites/susanadams/2014/03/05/the-worlds-most-reputable-universities-in-2014/>.

Rankings and CWUE, has no Nigerian University in the top 500 positions. This can only be interpreted to mean that, according to the latest World University Rankings, Nigeria is 'incompetent' to provide globally accepted degrees that can be presented and used anywhere in the world.

6.00 UNIVERSITY RANKING IN AFRICA

6.01 To come closer home, let us take a look at university rankings in Africa. The ranking of Africa's top higher education institutions has been provided by the 4 International Colleges & Universities (4icu). 4icu is an international higher education search engine and directory, reviewing accredited Universities and Colleges in the world. 4icu.org includes 11,160 Colleges and Universities, ranked by web popularity, in 200 countries. A quick look shows that twenty-five (25) Universities from the Giant of Africa made the list, while South African universities dominated the top despite the fact that South Africa ranks very low on the quality of education in the world.

6.02 The first Nigeria University on the list came in at no 42 which is University of Lagos.²⁰ This was followed by University of Nigeria, Nsukka at no 43, University of Ibadan at no 51, Obafemi Awolowo University at no 66, University of Port-hacourt at no 77, University of Ilorin at no 78, Covenant University at no 79, Ahmadu Bello University at no 95, Federal University of Technology, Akure at no. 106 and Rivers State University at no. 125.²¹

6.03 The above ranking, even within our own continent, is nothing to write home about for a country that boasts about intellectual wealth. What then is responsible for the low quality of University in Nigeria? This paper will proceed to examine the problems plaguing our higher education system, which in turn have robbed it of a pride of place on the international plane. However, before I venture into that, it will be profitable to itemize some of the areas of our national life that our universities should ordinarily impact upon.

7.00 EXPECTATIONS FROM OUT TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

²⁰ See more at: <http://www.naijaloaded.com.ng/2014/01/06/top-100-universities-in-africa-obafemi-awolowo-university-came-10th-in-africa-and-1st-in-nigeria-see-list/#sthash.hCK3ytmb.dpuf>

²¹ <http://theafricaneconomist.com/top-100-universities-in-africa-in-2013/>

7.01 Every country that provides University education expects the universities to meet three broad areas of its needs viz: teaching, research and civic obligation. The universities are expected to build the future generation through teaching. They are also expected to build different areas of the country through research and they are to educate and sensitize the public through civic obligation. Areas that can be developed through the Universities are:

- a. Technology: Technologies are usually the byproducts of innovative research. Technology development translates research outputs into practical application of discoveries for the nation's use. For our universities, nay our tertiary institutions, to become relevant, the output of their technology research must be cut-edge and project the realities of the 21st century. It is axiomatic that without technology development, there can be no industrial revolution and without industrial revolution there can be no progress. The nation expects our universities to be the orb for technological advancement, research and innovation. With the myriad of problems bedeviling our country, from lack of power to lack of viable steel industries, shortage of public infrastructure and other such challenges facings us, our universities must play

the roles universities played during the industrial revolution in the west.

- b. Information Technology (IT): The advent of IT, from the middle of the last century, has opened a new vista for the world. It gave birth to mobile telephoning, World Wide Web (www), internet and other ease of doing things that are now an everyday occurrence. Our universities, while not reinventing the wheel, must weigh in through research on Information Technology, to be able to be big players on the world stage. Our universities should look at areas of our social engineering in which new research can assist in the way things are done. Our country expects the universities, at this point, to be able to come up with solutions that are IT-based, to the problems of insecurity, banditry, kidnapping etc. The nation would not be expecting too much if our universities would develop local drones that can be deployed to fight the scourge of criminality that are threatening to overwhelm and subdue our nation.
- c. Social development: Our universities should be a center for social integration and development. It would aid social development if, for instance, every student that passes through the university is mandated to offer a course in any Nigerian language other than their mother tongue. The social fabric of a country determines the future prosperity of that country. Our universities should be in the forefront of research on how to turn the heterogeneous nature of our nation into a viable vehicle, which can transport us beyond

the 21st century. Though I am aware that there have been some efforts in many of our universities to study some of our indigenous cultures and norms of the people but I am unaware of any inter-university collaboration to collate and synthesize the findings of the various researches, with a view to translating them into building blocks for the cohesion and continuous existence of our country as one nation.

d. Economic prosperity: Our universities are expected to be pathfinders in the search for economic stability and prosperity in our country. They are expected to do incisive research to integrate our own home grown traditional economic models - how does the country exit the mono-economy conundrum that we have found ourselves, when oil was discovered in Oloibiri in 1956? How does ensure that our new attempt to harness our solid minerals and other natural resources would not lead to degradation of the environment? These are all issue that the universities are expected to deal with. If it was possible for the 'Asian Tigers' to emerge from the crumbles of the Second World War as viable economic behemoth, we should be able to have, if not the 'African Tiger', at least the 'Nigerian Tiger' that will drive economic prosperity for our citizens at large.

e. Agriculture: This sector contributes to the growth of a nation in the areas of food security, cash income generation, increasing gainful employment, reducing poverty and rural development.²² Therefore, it is important to ensure that improved agriculture is achieved by way of knowledge generated through scientific research and innovative development. Nigeria, with a land mass of 923,768km, out of which more than 90% are arable land should not be a country that cannot produce sufficient food for its 120million citizens. Unfortunately years of neglect of the agricultural sector due to the discovery of oil and commercial drilling that commenced in the early 70's, effectually diverted the nation's attention from agriculture. The nation expects that, with the many universities of agriculture that litter our landscape, viable research in the areas of introduction of high yielding agricultural products, drought-resisting plants, preservation of agricultural products and manufacturing in the sector should be the focal point of research for our universities. How do we address the problem of wastage of agricultural products seasonally and annually? How do we ensure all year farming in our rural areas, by the development of local irrigation implements that will be designed and manufacture by the universities at law

²² SENIORL ANZU

and affordable costs? How can we use our agricultural development to arrest the problem of rural to urban population drift? These are issues that our universities should be concerned with in their research.

f. Political development: Universities, by their structure organogram and make-up, are best suited to conduct research into political development and governance. The type of political set up that can sustain a multiethnic, multi-religious, multi-language country like Nigeria, should be of research concern to our universities. Universities are in a position to come up with sustainable, home-grown democratic practices that can blend our traditional political system with the adopted political system, in order to produce a workable political model. After all, the only thing common about democracy is the definition that it is a government of the people, by the people and for the people. In other words, it is the representative nature produced by periodic elections, with a viable legislature, that gives democracy its distinctive feature. However, this does not preclude each society from coming up with adaptable models which will be the result of research by the universities.

g. **HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH-** The country expects her universities to be the ware-house for researches into health and

medical related areas of our lives. The country waited anxiously to see what our universities have to offer, when the COVID-19 pandemic broke out. Lamentably, the country had to wait for the ingenuity of the researchers of other universities outside Nigeria to take benefit of the vaccines developed there, to combat the pandemic. The virtual collapse of primary and secondary health care system in our country does not help but one would expect that our universities will take this collapse as a clarion call to come up with alternatives that will be sustainable and stand the test of time. The country expects our universities to come up with research findings on the various diseases that are common and peculiar to us and help develop medical drugs and vaccines that could provide palliatives. A situation where, even for common ailments, Nigerians run out of the country to seek medical attention, does not only advertise the failure of our government to equip our health institutions properly, it is also a sign of failure or lack of research capabilities of the universities.

8.00 THE BANE OF NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

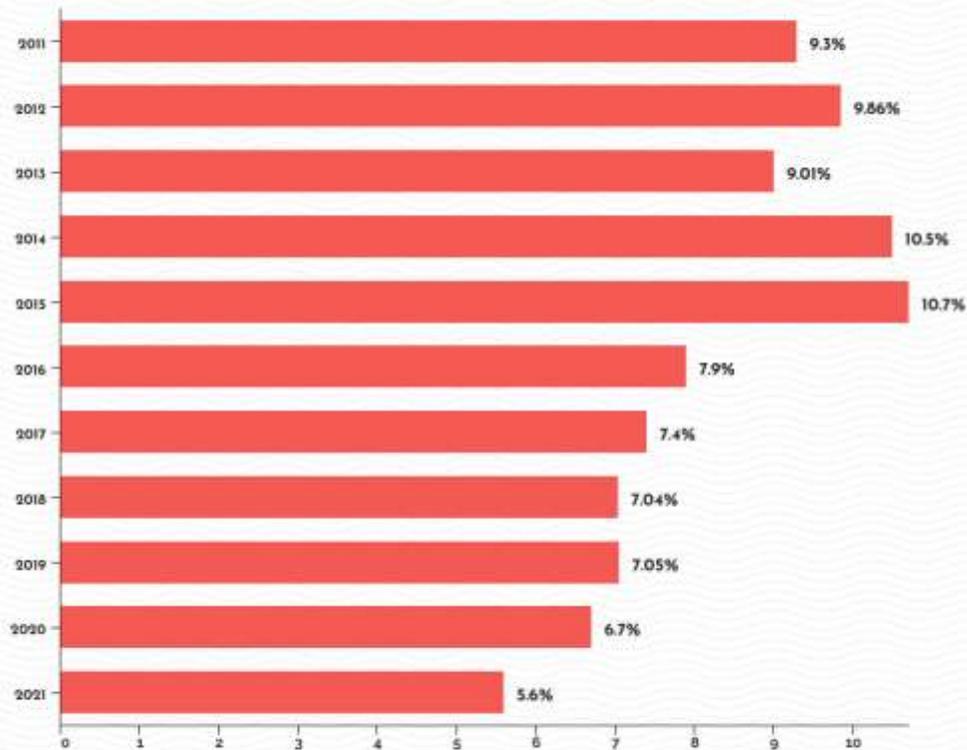
8.01 The universities have however been unable to meet up to expectation as a result of the following factors that have been identified as albatrosses on the neck of our university education system.

1. **INADEQUATE FUNDING:** One of the greatest challenges that faces the Nigerian universities is that of underfunding. Finance is so crucial to any organisation as it continues to dominate discussions on the state of university education in Nigeria. The establishment and the running of tertiary institutions is capital intensive.

It is, therefore, not for fun that the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) prescribed 26% of national budget for the Educational Sector. A cursory analysis of the 2021 budget shows that out of N13.08 trillion budgeted for the year, N742.5 billion was allocated to education, which is just 5.6 per cent. In the breakdown, N579.7 billion is for personnel cost, N35.4 billion for overhead cost, while N127.3 billion is dedicated to capital expenditure.

Mind you, the above figure is for the whole of the education sector from Primary to the Universities. I am aware that, as we speak, many Federal Universities cannot employ critical work force, even in areas of dire need, especially in the academic.

2021 Budgetary allocation to Education sector, Lowest in 10 Years



In the face of our low resource allocation to education, the allocation to the sub-sectors of Education is devoid of such prioritizations as would make for a knowledge-based nation. You will be right to situate this as “double jeopardy”. Mostly affected are infrastructure (buildings, roads, power, and water resources); learning facilities (library accessions, computing facilities, and teaching aids); research funding; recreational facilities; and

welfare packages for lecturers, administrative staff, and students. They are either inadequate or nonexistent.²³ Money is not only inadequate but is never released as and when due.

In the absence of adequate funding and clear direction, universities are left to engage mainly in routine activities. There are master plans alright and periodic development plans are constructed, but neither is implemented. A number of federal and state universities have remained on their temporary sites for decades because the government has failed to back up its initial promise with adequate funding.²⁴

The Nigerian university system has been imperiled by misconceived government policies and poor funding. For a society like ours, there is nothing more important than education. To help rejuvenate our higher institutions, government should increase funding of the education sector. The amount allocated for education in the budget is grossly inadequate for a sector that needs a lot of capital to improve. Nevertheless, universities on their own should begin to source for funds outside of the government.

2. PROFESSIONALIZATION OF UNIONISM: The true essence of unionism is primarily to foster harmony between the

²³ Akinnaso N. 'University education in Nigeria problems and solutions. Punch Newspaper; 2012.

²⁴ Ibid.

management and labour so that industrial peace, efficiency and productivity are achieved. There has, however, been a great deviation from the true aim of unionism by the University unions. People are now part of unions, not to foster any smooth running of the university, but for self aggrandizement.

The incessant strikes by both staff and students have become the order of the day. The point must be made, that trade unions are important, as they serve as effective liaisons between management and the groups they represent. They ensure that managers do not wield undue authoritarian influences on their employees and that the welfare of workers is appropriately protected. However, the point must also be made, that the frequent use of disruptive strike actions as a means of protest or conflict resolution in federal and state-government universities, which has become the stock-in-trade of the unions, has done untold harm to the Nigerian University System. Offices, libraries, classrooms, laboratories, conference centres and other physical structure of universities remain closed for long periods during strikes, thereby paralyzing all academic activities in the institutions. It does not matter if the issues in dispute are within the purview of the federal or state government as the unions

always manage to paralyze the entire system nationwide due to the central command structure that they operate.

The result of this has been frequent disruptions leading to poor quality of academic work, irregular and uncertain university calendars. Thus, a four year programme might take even a bright student over six years to complete. This is in sharp contrast with the experience of those that attended the university between 1960s and late 1980s. After a five year course of study like law for example, students graduate exactly on the date that was indicated in the University Calendar that was handed over to them at the point of entry. It is noteworthy to state here that the principle of 'no work no pay' is extant in our law. Section 42(1)(a) of the Trade Dispute Act vol. 15 Cap. T8 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 provides that:

“notwithstanding anything contained in the Act or any other law, where any worker takes part in a strike, he shall not be entitled to any wages or other remuneration for the period of the strike, and such period shall not count for the purpose of reckoning the period of employment and all rights dependent on continuity of employment shall be prejudicially affected accordingly.”

Some institutions are now applying these potent but dormant provisions of the law.

3. MANAGEMENT GAPS: Another area of close examination is the management style and the structure of our universities. There are allegations of politically motivated decision-making, mutual back scratching, patronage and partisanship that have permeated our universities.²⁵ The way and manner some of the universities are being managed by the university administrators is also one of the factors militating against quality assurance in Nigerian universities. The method by which the management of the universities manage crisis is indeed poor. The style being adopted in running the universities is “*we against them.*” Thus constructive criticism is seen as an affront against the university management by ‘enemies’ of the system.²⁶

Though a university is an academic enterprise, a lot of academic effectiveness rests on administrative support machinery.²⁷ Hence, the management competencies of university managers determine to a large extent, the severity of conflicts within the university,

²⁵ Rev. Emmanuel Ogu, OP (PH.D) ‘CHALLENGES FACING NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES’ <https://nigeriaworld.com/articles/2008/sep/300.html>

²⁶ Felix Maringe, Emmanuel Ojo ‘Sustainable Transformation in African Higher Education: Research, Governance, Gender, Funding, Teaching and Learning in the African University’ https://books.google.com.ng/books?id=M9eyDgAAQBAJ&dq=The+style+being+adopted+in+running+the+universities+is+we+against+them.+This+constructive+criticism+is+seen+as+an+affront+against+the+university+management+by+enemies+of+the+system.&source=gbs_navlinks_s

²⁷ Ndum, Victor Etim and Stella-Maris Okey ‘Conflict Management in the Nigerian University System’ Journal of Educational and Social Research MCSER Publishing, Rome-Italy ISSN 2239-978X Vol. 3 No. 8 October 2013

irrespective of the origin of the conflict (internal or external). Managers who have tendencies to authoritarianism and dogmatism are particularly conflict-prone.²⁸ Equally prone to conflicts, are those with low self-esteem and a disposition to distrust and suspicion.

4. GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE: The anti-intellectual stance of corrupt and clueless federal and state government officials since the days of military has also eroded ethical values and academic standards in the universities. The truncation of university autonomy was accompanied by government interference in university affairs, ranging from appointments to promotions, discipline, salaries and wages.²⁹ The government's erstwhile proprietary role became an executive one, with government officials dictating to University Governing Councils and Senates.³⁰ Vice-Chancellors soon learnt the political art of defending their budgets and lobbying for subventions the same way governors lobby for federal allocations and excess crude funds. The diseases of the political system diffused into the universities as professors

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Maringe, Felix & Ojo, Emmanuel. (2017). Sustainable Transformation in African Higher Education: Research, Governance, Gender, Funding, Teaching and Learning in the African University. 10.1007/978-94-6300-902-7.

³⁰ Bibiana Ngozi Nwabufo PhD and Joshua Sule Mamman 'CURRENT ISSUES AFFECTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF BUSINESS EDUCATION IN NIGERIAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS' Nigerian Journal of Business Education (NIGJBED) Volume 3 No.1, 2016

began to migrate between government and university positions.³¹

In no time, the culture of scholarship gave way to the corruptive and materialist culture of the political system.

This level of interference by the government in the running of the universities is alarming. Even things as simple as recruitment and admission will not be complete without the *president's list*, *minister's list* etc. These lead to recruitment of incompetent individuals and admission of unqualified students, to the detriment of the standard of the university. Top officials of federal universities especially the vice chancellors spend more time in Abuja chasing government officials to get one thing or the other done. A large chunk of their time is taken up by meetings with, either the National Universities Commission or the Federal Ministry of Education and its legion of parastatals.

5. CULTISM AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR: Secret cults in Nigerian higher institutions started as fraternities with the sole aim of maintaining law and order on the campuses. This is a role performed by secret societies in the adult communities. The cults were in existence with the aim of addressing acts of injustice, victimization and other issues capable of disturbing the peaceful

³¹ Okebukola, P. A. O. (2012). *The Growth and Development of Education in Nigeria: A book of Readings*, Ibadan: HEBN Publishers plc Pp. 133-137.

atmosphere of the institutions.³² One of the ways by which they achieved their aims was through their various publications where they exposed various vices on the campuses.³³

In 1952, the Pirates Confraternity (also known as Seadogs) was formed at the University of Ibadan as a protest student group. Students' protests were against the suits and attitude of sigma. The Pirate, being the first known social club in any Nigerian University, saw their mode of dressing as typical example of colonial mentality and therefore adopted a motto "sworn enemies of convention" a position which portrayed them as a radical students' group.³⁴ The group also acted as a corrective organ of students' union. In this regard, being disciplinary in nature, they fought against all forms of injustice perpetuated either by the University authority or by the students' union.³⁵ In the 60s and 70s, the Pyrate and "Eiye" Confraternities were not noted for violence. They socialize freely with their fellow students. The members were intelligent and easy going. They were brilliant youths who professed their faith with extreme eagerness, without trampling on the fundamental rights of their colleagues and

³² Ogunade, R. (2012). Secret societies and cultic activities in Nigeria tertiary institution. In leading issues in general studies. Ilorin: University of Ilorin Press.

³³ Oyemwinmina, Christopher & Aibieyi, Stanley. (2015). Cultism: A Destructive Concept in the Educational Development of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. African Research Review. 9. 221. 10.4314/afrrrev.v9i4.17

³⁴ Adigwu, C. "Students cultism- a creation of regime". The National Concord, Monday, September 20.

³⁵ Jekayinfa A.A. (2008). Cult Activities In The Nigerian Institutions Of Higher Learning. Sociology of Education 2008.

members of the public. They never displayed the level of crudity and barbarity that has become the vogue among the cultists of the present day Nigeria.³⁶ The history of the University of Ibadan, shows that the bulk of the first class and second class upper honours students were usually found among these groups of students. The first seven founders of Buccaneers are all Ph.D holders. Research shows that the Confraternity has about twenty four Ph.D holders, two hundred and fifty Masters degree holders and about seven hundred and ninety First Degree holders with about 78 Lawyers.³⁷

6. OUTMODED CURRICULAR: Unfortunately, today's students are learning in dilapidated buildings, environmentally depressing and learning disabling situations and yet some of these students are still excelling³⁸. For students, it is simply a means to acquire certificates, and not the development of their cognitive and social powers. A revisit to our present day recruitment and retention exercise need a crucial attention.

If the University focuses on its mandate of teaching, research and civic obligation, it is a great opportunity to grow the academic culture. The University should ensure that teaching and

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Adigwu C. (1999)., Students cultism- a creation of regime., The National Concord, 5

³⁸ Odetunde, (2004). The State of Higher Education in Nigeria. <http://www.Nigeriadeltacongress.com/sarticle/state-of-higher-education>

researches carried out in the institutions reflect the need of the society. Societies often make demands on higher education on the intelligentsia. When the United States (U. S.) was facing the oil crises of 1974-1975, the government fell back on their universities for advice and strategies that reversed the situation. Similarly, there was pressure for expansion of enrolment and increment of faculty staff on American Universities, after the Second World War. These challenges were ultimately dealt with successfully.³⁹

This can only be achieved in Nigeria by introducing academic curricular that reflect the solutions to the challenges of the modern day society. Virtually all the universities that have attained academic excellence like Harvard, Cambridge, Oxford and so on are funded by foundations, trusts, industries and bequests of wealthy patrons, due in large part because of the relevance of their curricular to the needs of the society.

7. WASTE AND MISMANAGEMENT: Despite the inadequate funding of universities, we still have various areas of waste by the leadership of the universities, which if well harnessed can be effectively directed towards the expansion of facilities to accommodate a larger number of students. The existence of

³⁹“The Oil Shocks and State Responses.” *Reasons of State: Oil Politics and the Capacities of American Government*, by G. John Ikenberry, Cornell University Press, Ithaca; London, 1988, pp. 1–20. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt207g7cv.4. Accessed 23 Mar. 2021.

several official vehicles, which some institutions brand as project vehicles, but used for private businesses do not augur well for the system. Even when these vehicles are most times used for private activities, they are fuelled and maintained by their respective institutions. This in itself negates the principle of consolidation.⁴⁰

The scarce resources available to the universities are not channelled towards research and training. Rather the university is involved in all things that are not part of its core mandate. The system might not get the desired impact until the culture of accountability and transparency is instituted in these institutions. Instances of abandoned projects at various institutions, which nobody got queried for, abound as testimonials to this fact. Most often, times than not, the fund-related problems being experienced by the Universities are caused, not necessarily because of lack of funds but as a result of the misplaced priorities by university authorities. So there is the need for the management of the universities to think fast and re-prioritise on the key areas that will help to deliver on the core mandates of this institution.

8. TOWN AND GOWN INTERACTION/RELATIONSHIP: There is obvious lack of communication between the university (the gown)

⁴⁰ Akarue and Eyovwunu 'Tertiary Education Reforms: the Case of Nigeria' CONTINENTAL J. EDUCATION RESEARCH (2017) 10 (2): 51 – 66

and the larger society (the town). Nigerian universities operate like islands. People in the town don't know what the University is all about and the university knows little about how to interact with the town.

The promotion of cordial town and gown relationship is mutually beneficial for both the university and the community. The institution has a lot to gain in terms of peace, stability and security, whereas the communities benefit in terms of economic gains, social and community services.⁴¹ It has been recommended that the University's programmes and policies should be planned to meet the needs of the communities, a forum for friends of the Institution should be established.⁴² There could be a formal structured Parents Association and Alumni. This would ensure unity between the university and the host community and consequently fend off the problem of interference, since there will be little or no strife to warrant any form of intervention by the government.

The gown and the town must communicate effectively to arrive at course content that meets society's immediate and long-term

⁴¹Robert-Okah .I. (Ph.D) and Nyenwe, Joy (Ph.D) 'Town And Gown Relationship: A Synergy For National Development In Nigeria' Developing Country Studies ISSN 2224-607X (Paper) ISSN 2225-0565 (Online) Vol.3, No.3, 2013 available at <https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/DCS/article/viewFile/4673/4752>

⁴² ELDER A. INYA IBIAM FCAI, MNIM, JP 'Polytechnic Community/Host Community Relationship' Being A Paper Deliver to Newly Employed Staff of Akanu Ibiyam Federal Polytechnic on the Occasion of their Induction On March 25 available at http://akanuibiampoly.edu.ng/?page_id=338

needs. Therefore, as a way of bridging this gown-town divide, universities need to begin, from time to time, to invite industry experts to interact with both students and lecturers to share on-the-field experiences. There is no reason, for instance, why a fellow who has spent a lifetime in a particular industry, say, automobile, cannot get a place as adjunct professor in the Mechanical Engineering department of a Nigerian university. For all you care, such a fellow sharing hands-on experience with students might have greater impact than a professor's whole semester's lecture notes.

9. LACK OF THE CULTURE OF SCHOLARSHIP: In the days of yore, people go into the career of lecturing by choice and with the requisite passion for it. However, the trend in Nigeria now is for people to troop into academics not because of any love for imparting knowledge but for lack of an alternative career to pursue after they have searched endlessly for employment in the banks and oil companies. As a result, the level of commitment to teaching, research and the students is virtually non-existent. A lecturer from the good old days would feel he has not discharged his duty to impart knowledge if more than 10 students fail in a class of about 200. However, the crop of lecturers we have in the system nowadays will go about boasting that only 2 students

passed out of a class of 200. The whole essence of the lecturing career and education is completely lost on many of these current set of lecturers. Instances abound when scholarship is thrown overboard by lecturers, who award undeserved grades to students on grounds other than academic. Woe betide a student that intellectually challenges a lecturer. In these days of social media and I.T. there lots of knowledge for free on the internet, so today's students have better access to knowledge based information than the students of old.

10. COMPOSITION OF COUNCILS: Appointments to the universities' councils are supposed to be based on competence and commitment to higher education and not political patronage. The consequence of basing appointments on political patronage is that these appointees get to the Councils and, instead of concentrating on their mandate, they go about to become involved in the day to day running of the Universities. Where the interest of many Council members is in the award of contracts and other basic things that do not concern the Council, it will lead to awarding contracts to cronies of the appointees who, most often, end up not performing the contracts awarded to them, thus further destroying and stunting the growth and development of the universities. In spite of the very clear provisions in the laws

setting up the universities on the limitations of the areas of influence of the Councils, the members tend to get involved in management issues.

11. CORRUPTION/GRAFT: As Nigerians struggle to tame the psychosocial beast known as corruption, they have particularly beamed the searchlight on the behaviour of public officials (civil servants, military and police personnel, elected officials etc.) and former public officials, contractors, business associates of public officials and families of public officials. However, one sector of our society that has escaped the penetrating searchlight is education. The educational sector seems to escape critical assessment on the conduct of educational bureaucrats, administrators of various educational institutions and the faculty.⁴³ Like most sectors in Nigeria, corruption is the bedrock of all the problems in the system. It pervades every area, from appointment of the Vice Chancellor to cleaners. Qualified and competent people are not brought into the system in order to make way for the friends and families of the powers that be, whether or not they are qualified. Graduates are thus turned loose on the society without the ability to defend the grades they obtained from the universities. Many of our graduates are not fit for purpose.

⁴³ Priye S. Torulagha 'The Corrosive Effect of Corruption on Nigerian Educational System' <http://www.gamji.com/article6000/NEWS7987.htm>

12. FAULTY APPOINTMENT PROCESS OF PRINCIPAL OFFICERS: The Principal Officers of the University are the Vice Chancellor, the Deputy Vice Chancellors, Bursar, Librarian and in some instances, the Director of works. In relation to the appointment of Principal officers, there must be respect for academic excellence, managerial/leadership capabilities, transparency and accountability, and the non-negative application of the principle of federal character to stem the tide of emerging sectional agitations and clamour for indigenes and other parochial interests. There is no template or guidelines to produce leadership. Apart from the advertised criteria, there are no practical qualities being looked out for. The Principal Officers form the leadership of the University, it is therefore important to ensure that they possess the requisite qualities and character required for leadership. Where the focus is merely on academic qualification and experience as is usually included in the advertised criteria, the Councils are in danger of appointing individuals with credentials but no character. Having such leaders portend danger for the autonomy of any institution as they will be prone to strife and rancor that is bound to result from poor

leadership. As much as possible, 'indigene-ship' should not be critical in the appointment of principal officers.⁴⁴

It is common sight today to see vice chancellors rivaling political office holders on the use of of convoy and other ephemeral bounties of office. I recall that in my days at IFE when late Prof Ojetunji Aboyade was vice chancellor, he was still teaching students economics, his core area of specialization.

13. EXTERNALIZATION OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS: This is now a growing tendency for members of the academic and administrators of our Universities of running to 'Godfathers' with actual or perceived influence to intervene in matters concerning members of the University. It is common for staff of the University to seek for intervention of individuals external to the University administration in matters like promotion, discipline e.t.c. Even procedures for employment of staff and admission of students are usually bogged down by lists from different quarters external to the University, leading to little or no exercise of power by the University itself.

⁴⁴ Committee of Vice Chancellors of Nigerian Universities COMMUNIQUE of the CONSULTATIVE POLICY DIALOGUE on THE FUTURE AND RELEVANCE OF NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES AND OTHER TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS CVC Conference Hall, Abuja 6-7 November 2012 <http://www.trustafrica.org/en/publications-trust/workshops-and-convenings?download=277:higher-education-convening-nigeria-communique-of-the-consultative-policy-dialogue-on-the-future-and-relevance-of-nigerian-universities-and-other-tertiary-institutions>

14. **ATTITUDE:** It's often said that one's attitude determines one's altitude. The attitude of stakeholders in our university system constitutes a veritable danger to attainment of true autonomy for the universities. Cronyism, corruption, lack of commitment, divided attention and loyalty are some of the self imposed problems eroding autonomy of our universities. The unfolding saga at the University of Lagos as a clear case point.
15. **MULTIPLICITY OF REGULATORS:** There are too many regulatory bodies and authorities that make autonomy almost impossible for our universities especially the federal universities. To underscore the point, ask any vice chancellor of a federal university how many times he or she goes to Abuja in a month to answer one agency or the other.
16. **LOCALIZATION OF LEADERSHIP:** A University is a universal place, in that it accommodates all shades of opinions and persons without taking into account ethnicity, tribal affiliation, religious and other mundane considerations. That is ideal.

So far I have tried to indentify what appeared to me to be the most fundamental problems plaguing our university system, however I don't lay any claim to the exhaustiveness of the problems. Others do exist but to my mind if we tackle the ones identified thus far in this paper, we may be getting to the promised land.

I don't want to be a prophet of doom, to all problems, there must be solution and I will go ahead to proffer some solutions to the myriad of problems indentified above by way of recommendations.

However, in our clime there are instances where positions of principal officers are zoned within state. There is a new negative culture that host community now, insist that the headship of the University must be a son or daughter of the soil. A country that plays politics with the appointment of the leadership of its tertiary institutions cannot complain of lack of international competitiveness. The syndrome of the idol of the cave that has besieged our tertiary institutions is a sure bet for failure. In all the world class Universities we have referred to earlier, the color of the skin or where one comes from plays no role in getting appointed to positions of responsibilities. Kings College London, one of the celebrated Universities in the world has a young Nigerian woman professor as its Vice Principal equivalent of Deputy Vice-Chancellor in the last five years or more. Prof Funmi Olonisakin competes well with her colleague from other places. What should stand people out for appointment into the position of Vice Chancellor especially are competence, ability to lead from the front, incompatibility, clear vision, intellectual endowment, commitment to higher goal, ability to lead others effectively, possession of leadership by example qualities and goal getting instincts among others.

GLOBALIZATION

The new word that is now very current in most discourses is globalization by which we mean that the world has become a global village. The artificial boundaries enacted by man has been laid to waste by Information Technology and the rise of the internet and social media.

Globalization is what has led us to know that our Universities are not pulling their weight in the comity of world Universities. The low ranking of our Universities alluded to earlier tell of dismissal story of the deficit in our intellectual capital.

Were it not for globalization it is possible we would have been thinking that we are making progress but it's obvious that our knowledge economy is in deficit.

Globalization has shown us that our universities are not competitive nor challenging for leadership space in that knowledge hall.

The current Covid 19 pandemic has shown us our place in the world of science. I'm not aware that even hand sanitizer our universities were able to come up with an alternative not to talk of vaccine.

RECOMMENDATION

1. COMMITMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS: There is an urgent need to restore the integrity of higher educational, institutions in terms of work ethics and morality, transparency, productivity,

democratization and total commitment to the ideals of the ivory tower. The Federal and State Governments should provide leadership in upholding the uniqueness of our higher institutions, while the university staff unions and the student unions should work in partnership with the university leadership to enthrone a new regime of stability, revitalization and growth in all our institutions. Parents cannot and should not shy away from funding the education of their children. There is no more free lunch anywhere in the world. Nigerian parents must stop their hypocrisy when it comes to paying for the education of their children. Parents that paid thousands of Naira for their wards in private secondary schools should be prepared to pay tuition in the universities. Government must then come in to provide student loans, bursaries, grants etc to the real indigent students. I subscribe to the slogan that if you believe that education is expensive, than you should try ignorance. As a matter of national and personal honour, all those involved in the educational sector should take the war against corruption serious. Students, lecturers, academic and non academic staff, management and councils of the universities must all unite to fight this dreaded disease that has crippled our nation from attaining its full potentials in all facets of human endeavor .

2. PROVISION OF INFRASTRUCTURE: If Nigeria wants its universities to be counted among world class universities, the infrastructure base of the system needs to be improved upon. The present situation calls for an urgent need for our governments to make available enough funds for the rehabilitation of existing facilities.⁴⁵

Governments should intensify efforts in providing more physical facilities in the universities. Besides, corporate bodies, philanthropists and alumni associations should also assist in the provision of these facilities to aid effective teaching-learning activities in order to achieve the academic goals of university education for national development. There is need for a serious expansion of physical facilities and equipment to meet the increasing student population. Also important is the need to take serious look at maintenance culture, which is lacking in an average Nigerian, as this will go a long way to reduce the rate of decay of the existing facilities.⁴⁶ Not only that, such appropriated sums must be released for the purpose they are meant for.

FUNDING: Governments should allocate more funds to the universities so that they can be more effective in their day-to-day operations. Efforts should be made by the governments to abide by the 26% annual budgetary allocation prescribed for the

⁴⁵ Ochuba (2001)

⁴⁶ http://herp-net.org/REVITALIZATION_OF_AFRICAN_HIGHER_EDUCATION

educational sector by UNESCO. This will go a long way to change the face of education in the country.

The universities should also seek alternative sources of revenue generation to augment what the government allocates to them. Apart from the release of fund, there is the dire need for an effective monitoring of the management of funds presently being allocated to the sector, as efforts should be intensified to improve on what is currently being allocated to the system. As a means of ensuring effective management of funds, it has been suggested⁴⁷ that reliable and credible accounting system should be established in each Nigerian university to guarantee accountability, honesty and transparency.

3. CREATING CONDUCTIVE ATMOSPHERE BOTH WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE IVORY TOWERS: The basic obligation of the university administration is the provision of a conducive working and learning environment for staff and students. This obligation involves, among others:
- i. formulation of concrete and achievable goals,
 - ii. provision of necessary human (lectures and support staff’); material (lecture halls, seats, library and instructional materials) and fiscal resources to work with,

⁴⁷ Mgbekem (2007)

- iii. setting up monitoring devices for detecting non-compliance with goal attainment activities, and,
- iv. provision and application of a fair and free policy framework for dealing with non-compliance to set standards.⁴⁸

4. INTERVENTION BY PUBLIC SPIRITED PERSONS: There is the need to educate donors and well meaning members of the society, as most Nigerians have no legacy of giving to institutions of higher learning. Then there is the reality that most of the first-time donors cannot afford to give much, and others who can give more, such as alumni, don't give what they can. Meanwhile, the costs of a college education and the growing need for more aid via private donors continue to soar. It is obvious that government alone cannot finance University education.

Education should not just be seen as the responsibility of only the government. Rather it must be appreciated that the very future of the nation depends on how seriously we address the issue of education, knowledge and innovation because higher education is crucial for national prosperity and progress. There is the urgent and dire need for industry to come to the aid of the universities, not only in the areas of direct endowment or establishment of

48

http://www.naere.org.ng/journal/CURBING_EXAMINATION_MALPRACTICE_UNIVERSITY_SYSTEM_MANAGEMENT_PERSPECTIVE

chairs but in active engagement of the universities in commissioned research efforts, that will bolster the income of the universities.

5. INTENSIFICATION OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH: To improve the quality of our graduates, there is the need to encourage the lecturers to intensify their academic research. This will advance the quality of knowledge being imparted on the students, which will in turn improve the quality of the graduates been sent into the labour market.

Funds voted for academic research should be made available to the institutions and this should be disbursed on merit basis to ensure that it does not go to waste on undeserving 'scholars'. The current effort at ensuring that those who teach in the universities have a minimum of doctoral degree does not in my view guarantee higher scholarship, this nation has produced great academicians who did not/do not possess doctoral degrees. The Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe and T. M. Alukos come to mind. We must also be cautious to ensure that there is quality assurance in the rush to acquire doctoral degrees. The purpose of a doctoral degree may not necessarily beam in action of sound intellectual sources.

6. REDUCTION OF POLITICAL INTERFERENCE: The autonomy in the universities should be enhanced to help reduce the extent of political interference in the affairs of these varsities, most especially in the appointment/selection of key principal officers. The Councils should be free to choose, without the influence of the visitor, who becomes the Vice Chancellor. Where this is not so, as often as it is not from experience, then the governance of the system will still depend on external influence. The place of school head in the administration of any school cannot be over-emphasised, therefore, there is need to follow the conditions for the appointment to the letter.⁴⁹ The issues of tribalism, political interference, etc should be disregarded in the appointment of heads. The idea of using visitation panels to witch-hunt Vice-chancellors and university authorities should be discarded. The Visitation Panels should be made to follow the due process and the core of their recommendation assiduously and objectively implemented.⁵⁰

7. INTERNALLY GENERATED REVENUE: While it is conceded that the universities are not primarily money-making institutions, I am of the opinion that there is plenty of room for cost savings on the one hand and improved revenue generation on the other, if the

⁴⁹ Jaiyeoba (2006)

⁵⁰ http://herp-net.org/REVITALIZATION_OF_AFRICAN_HIGHER_EDUCATION

management gets a little bit more creative. University managements should intentionally commit more funds in identified profitable investment areas. Without the commitment of adequate cash investments in the identified profitable projects or activities, there will not be enough support to the primary business of the university from the revenue generating units. Happily enough most of the first and second generation universities have exceedingly large land areas that could be used for commercial farming. I'm told that cassava and maize farming are the cash cow of farming today, why should our universities not go into this? Everyday one reads about shortage of poultry and fish, these are areas for the universities to invest not only to make money but conduct more researches for sustainable economic growth.

8. NEED TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION: Issues like labour and wages should be in the concurrent legislative list. Universities should be left to decide and negotiate with the workers on what it can afford to pay. Each university should be given powers to determine remuneration packages and review the terms and conditions of service of its staff by themselves. The blanket application of the payment structure has woefully failed and this is expectedly so because the states and regions have different

level of funding and therefore have varying capacities to meet up with the structure imposed on them. As earlier stated, the Universities should be allowed to generate funds internally for recurrent expenditure, the government can then intervene by way of the provision of infrastructure by way of grant.

9. AMENDMENT OF THE RELEVANT DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES: The so-called 'appointment with statutory flavour' is an anathema in today's world. What exists between the University and its workers is simply a contract of service, it should be so treated and the enabling laws should be amended to reflect it as such. Tell me any private establishment in the whole wide world where employees will go on strike for months and would be paid salaries and allowances during the period of strike? My little research tells me that Nigeria is about the only Country that the principle of no work no pay is not applied. I must point out that Section 43 of the Trade Dispute Act provides for no work no pay.
10. PROMOTION OF SCHOLARSHIP: The University is supposed to allow for interplay of ideas. There should be no suppression of divergent views, especially in the academia. Academic staff must be free to express their views on any current issue in the society as long as it is done in conformity with the professional ethics and their classrooms are not used for propaganda. There must be

freedom to think, to investigate and publish the result of their research work. In the same vein, we should not encourage the culture of the nurturing students that will be morons or zombies. Students must be encouraged to be independently minded and research focused.

9.00 CONCLUSION

9.01 In this short discourse attempt has been made to highlight the problems afflicting our universities in Nigeria and the problems standing in their way to attain worldwide recognition and delivery on their mandate.

9.02 In conclusion, despite the huge capital requirements and recurrent expenses, universities are established everywhere among others, because of their immense potentials to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of the people through research, innovation and skills which they foster. They serve as sources of new knowledge and innovative thinking; providers of skilled personnel with credible credentials; attractors of international talent and business investment; agents of social justice and mobility; contributors to social and cultural vitality; and determinants of health and well-being.

9.03 The nature and dimension of the problems confronting higher education in Nigeria require a new approach on all frontiers. After all has been said and done, just like in other sectors of the country that has been bedevilled with ills, we need a change of attitude by all stakeholders to issues concerning our Universities. This will create room for the higher institutions to concentrate on their core mandate of adding value to student education and academic advancement, cut edge research, public accountability and social responsibility, transparency, ethics and integrity.

FUNDING AGENCIES:

There is urgent need to focus on the funding intervention agencies like TETFUND, NEED ASSESSMENT and others to rejig them for better service delivery. There is the need to rework the modelities of this intervention to make them robust, equitable, transparent and goal getting.

Better scientific and empherical methods must be designed to bench mark the intervention.

Lobbying, favourtism, whom you know nepotism should have no place in the criteria used for intervention.

9.04 What we have done in this presentation is essentially to raise issues for further debates on the issue of standardization of

tertiary education in our country. The points raised are to whet our appetite for more robust discussions in future. No one possesses the solutions to all the problems discussed in this paper.

9.05 Let me draw the curtain by congratulating the graduands at this year's convocation ceremonies, I also congratulate the members of their families, friends, relations and other well wishers for their sacrifices and contribution towards making the events for the lucky graduands.

9.06 I now close by thanking the organisers for providing me with this platform to express my humble thoughts on the topic of discourse. It is my hope that I didn't disappoint much. To the members of the audience I thank you for your endurance.
Thank you all and God bless.