



## Resources Input as Condition for Sustainable Development in Nigerian Universities

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### Abstract

Education in its generic sense is fundamental and basic to human and overall societal development which in turn makes its recipient self-reliant and self-sustaining. The extent of development of societies has been associated to the extent of the literacy of its citizenry. In this regard, the establishment of universities globally with mission of promoting the life of the mind store and transmit specialized knowledge, sophisticated enterprise, higher forms of culture and ethical basis of conduct, cannot be toyed with if there has to be national development and sustainability. For the university system to achieve this huge mandate, basic resources – man (human resources); money (funds) and materials (facilities) are benchmarks for sustainable development in universities. This paper observed however, that despite the critical requirement of these resource inputs in the Nigerian universities to bring about sustainable development, they are all in very short supply thereby dwarfing the vision and mission of the university system. Suggestions to ameliorate this problem were made.

**Keywords:** Resources, Input, Condition, Sustainable Development, Nigerian Universities.

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## INTRODUCTION

Education has been defined in diverse ways to suit the situation or process under review. Education is the complete development of man such that he/she becomes functionally useful to himself/herself, society and humanity at large, it as the aggregate of the processes through which a person develops abilities, attitudes and forms of behaviour that are of positive value in the society in which he/she lives. Education in its generic sense is fundamental and basic to human and overall societal development. It in turn makes its recipient self-reliant and self-sustaining. The extent of development of societies has been associated to the extent of the literacy of its citizenry.

The National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004) noted that education is a tool per excellence that do r not only equip its recipient to be self-reliant but also serves as a wheel for propelling national development. With and through education, ignorance is eliminated, skills for productivity and leadership acquired, and the key to the future of productivity and comfort acquired (Shokunbi, 1999). In order words education brings growth and development.

It is generally observed that the economic state of underdeveloped countries and their slow rate of progress could be partly attributed to the deficiencies and dysfunctional educational system. Amplifying this position, Briggs (1969 p. 2) noted that no illiterate society has been known to progress far in the modern world; also, there is no educated society with initiative and leadership that has remained backward. Literacy and education can thus be said to affect the course of development.

Education no doubt is the master key that opens the door of ignorance for knowledge acquisition and utilization. Egbuchunam (2001) and Okoh (2002) are of the opinion that:

*Education is a companion which no misfortune can depress, no crime can destroy, no enemy can alienate, no despotism can enslave. At home, a friend, abroad an introduction, in solitude a solace and in society an*

*ornament. It hastens vice, it guides virtue, it gives at once grace and government to genius, without it what is man? A splendid slave, a reasoning savage.*

This paper attempts to posit therefore that for the universities in Nigeria to effectively and efficiently perform their input – output productive function of turning out the required human resources (both in terms of number and quality) to run the wheels of national development, some basic resources should be benchmark for this huge assignment. These resources as identified by this paper are man (human capital), money (funding) and materials (facilities/infrastructure). The problematic question then is how can these resource inputs bring about sustainable development in Nigerian universities? Other resources input not covered in this paper are non-academic staff and students. This paper attempts an exposition on these resources to show the interface between them and sustainable development in Nigerian universities.

### **The Functions of the University**

From the foregoing, it is quite obvious that the university system in general have huge assignment on its shoulder. Ehiometalor (1999) described the university as “the highest level of schooling and its natural characteristics set it apart uniquely from any other institution in the world”. Brunbacher (1982) acknowledged that universally, the fundamental mission of the universities is to promote the life of the mind through intellectual inquiry and to “generate, store and transmit specialized knowledge and expertise, higher forms of culture and ethical basis of conduct”. In practical terms, universities track their universal mission through teaching, research, publication and community service.

On the other hand, Brickel (1975) described universities as “places where professionals of diverse disciplines can follow lines of inquiry determined by themselves, individually and collegially, and not dictated by anyone else, on either ideological or practical grounds ...” He further observed that it is only in a university that inquiry and teaching constitute creative whole, so that knowledge and insight of scholars and the methods by which they gained them are shared with students. This eventually makes the students the scholar’s company, nourishing him/her, giving as well as taking in.

Privateer (1999) noted that universities are complex cultures that create order and manage information and are constituted as dense information networks held together by ideological and technological strands. The objectives of university education are instruction in skills, promotion of the general powers of the mind, advancement of learning and transmission of a common culture as well as meeting the needs of the economy. In line with this therefore, the universities ensure that the degree programmes are of minimum standards that will ensure that students acquire appropriate skills, level of competency and overall development that will enable them fit adequately into the world of works in the larger society (Osagie, 2001).

At the beginning of university education in Nigeria, the concept of the “ivory tower’ and “the gown and town” was the accepted norms. The university (ivory tower), the scholar (the gown) and the larger society/community (town) interacted meaningfully to achieve common goals and interests. Re-echoing this concept, Kerr (1963) submitted that universities are legitimate centres for the simultaneous pursuit of the goals of teaching, research, manpower development and services to a given community.

### **The Concept of Sustainable Development**

In order to understand the concept of *sustainable development* and apply it to the Nigerian university system, it is important first and foremost to understand the concept – “development”. The concept – “development” is not easy to define as authorities use the term to suit their needs. Development in its simplest term is synonymous with growth. Curle (1973) viewed development “as the creation of a form of society in which certain conditions – safety, sufficiency, satisfaction and stimulus (4s) prevail for human beings.” Development is a process which involves radical changes in attitudes and in most cases, customs and beliefs. For development to bring about improvement in the living standards of the people, it must involve the economic, political, educational, psychological transformation of its citizens.

Thus development as a widely participatory process of social change in a society, intended to bring about social and material advancement for the majority of the people through their gaining control over their environment, it as any change which has a continuous direction and which culminates in a phase that is qualitatively new and brings about a perceptible pattern of growth. The above picture of development was further echoed by the World Bank (1978) when it observed that development is a process of enabling people to accomplish things that they could not do before – that is, to learn and apply information, attitudes, values and skills previously unavailable to them. It went further to observe that learning is usually not enough by itself because most aspects of development require capital, investment and technical

processes but that capital and technology are inert without human knowledge and effort. In this sense, human learning is central to development.

The concept of *sustainable development* was popularized in 1987 with the publication of the “Brundland Report” – the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. This landmark report highlighted the need to conceptualize sustainable development that would meet the needs of the present without compromise in the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The main thrust of this *Report* was how to create a balance between man and his environment with the latter not being a victim (Greenhouse effect and Ozone Layer depletion). From this *Report*, it is generally believed that education is an essential tool for achieving sustainability. People around the world recognize that the current economic development trends are not sustainable and that public awareness, education and training are keys to moving society towards sustainability.

However, the concept, *sustainable development* as used in this paper means the continuous, practical, positive, proactive and deliberate improvement of resource inputs, of human, financial and facilities of Nigerian universities with the intention of positioning them to perform their assigned mandates. In other words, for the Nigerian universities to be effective, efficient and productive, there must be a collaborative interplay between human resources supply. Infrastructure/facilities provision and adequate funding for maximum productive output. Education is the super-structure on which economic development and societal growth are predicated since innovation and creativity usually come from the educational environment (Obielumani, 2006).

### **Interface Between Resources Input and Sustainable Development in the University System**

Education all over the world is believed to be the most powerful and dynamic instrument for social-economic, political, scientific and technological development of nations (Olutola, 1983; Fadipe, 2000; Aghenta, 2001, and Abadulkareem, 2001). This reasoning has informed the establishment of about one hundred (100) universities in Nigeria to produce the required critical manpower to run the wheels of national development. In order to achieve this, it is important to examine the relationship these resources have in achieving sustainable development in Nigeria Universities.

#### **Human Resource Input**

It is necessary for a country to be well endowed with natural resources if it is to develop a modern economy. However, this view is no longer tenable. The Asian tigers of China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore and other countries have demonstrated beyond any doubt, that a rich endowment of natural resources is not necessary in developing a modern economy. Nor is it necessary that country be large for it to modernize, hence the need for trained manpower to harness these natural resources. This can only be achieved through education which has become a major source of skills and trained talent. Indeed, education plays a critical economic role – the formation of human capital which shows “the capital value of man”. This position is further echoed by Harbison (1973, p. 39) when he observed that:

*Human resources ... constitute the ultimate basis of the wealth of nations, capital and natural resources, are passive factors of production; human beings are creative agents who accumulate, exploits natural resources, build social, economic and political organizations and carry forward national development*

He further posited that if a country is unable to develop the skill and knowledge of its people and utilize them effectively and efficiently in the national economy, then such nation is unable to develop anything else.

It is assumed that Nigerian universities can produce the needed human resources needed internally and externally for “export”. The question that arises here however is, what is the intellectual base of our universities in carrying out their assigned functions? Has brain – drain syndrome succeeded in riddling this intellectual base? It is important to note that Nigeria’s Human Development Report data for 2005 (HDI ranking) was 158<sup>th</sup> from 151<sup>th</sup> in 2000.

It is obvious that some Nigerian universities do not have the required number of human resources that can enhance quality education. The 1999 National University Commission accreditation indicated that many of the departments in Nigerian universities– Science, language, medicine, Agriculture, humanities, among others, lacked, qualified lecturers. Comically painting this sad reality, Longe Commission (1990) observed that the figures quoted in the report were higher than the “available manpower on ground” and that even if the figures were correct, “they are still quantitatively inadequate to run a progressive and flexible academic programme that will propel the nation to greatness”. Many academic programmes are floated without the equivalent number of professional academics to man them, thereby leading to the production of half-baked graduates. While some departments may be lucky to have the required hands

intellectually, others might not be that lucky, leading to twist in critical academic resource. This is a major set-back for sustainable development in Nigerian universities.

The Education Sector Status Report (ESSR, 2003) acknowledged that there is severe academic staff shortage in Nigerian universities due to the departure of some lecturers from the older universities to the newly established ones or to the banking and oil sector (poaching or internal brain-drain?). Okoh (2002) believes that highly educated citizens is a condition for national survival because an individual is less than fully effective if his/her education and training are less than the limit of his potential. It is reasoned that most of the uneducated are fast becoming unproductive economic liability. Can we in fairness boast of at least 80% of academic staff strength in Nigerian universities? What are the implications for sustainable development in the ivory tower?

It is a known fact that the brain-drain of Nigerian universities and economy is the brain-gain of European and American universities and economy. Table 1 below shows the trend of university staff exodus in 1988 and 1989.

Table 1: The Trend of University Staff Exodus in 1988 and 1989

S/N	University	Total No. Of leavers	No of leavers – Academic/Professional staff	Direction of movement
1	Fed. University of Tech. Owerri	27	24	Only 3 joined the public sector
2	Bayero university, Kano	117	108	Most of them joined the public sector
3	University of Calabar	37	30	Virtually all left for the private sector and over seas.
4	Usman Dan Fodio University, Sokoto	57	33	
5	University of Lagos	95	53	Some of these academics and medical officers joined the public service while most went overseas. Additional 50 staff on leave of absence may probably not return to the university
6	University of Benin	163	154	Only 15 joined the public service
7	Ahmadu Bellow University Zaria	321	296	Of these figures, 58 left for other universities within the country while 84 to public sector.
8	Obafemi-Awolowo university, Ile-Ife	102	53	
9	University of Nigeria Nsukka	228	178	5 deaths
	Total	1147	909	

Source: Compiled from the Report of the Committee on Non-salary conditions of service for Nigerian university staff, August. 1990.

The picture on the above table indicated that as many as one thousand, one hundred and forty-seven (1147) staff voluntarily left the universities services between 1988 and 1990. Imagine what the figure will look like between 2008-2009, the figure would have been five times more.

According to the World Bank (1980), manpower is the basic resource because it is an indispensable means of converting other resources to mankind's use and benefit. How well we develop and employ human skill is fundamental in deciding how much we will accomplish as a nation. This was the main focus of the 1959 Ashby Commission which was meant to address the problem of the shortage of high-level manpower.

With the expansion of universities in Nigeria, and the attendant admission explosion (A university originally built to admit 10,000 students now admits over 20,000 full-time and part-time programme students), even, with the introduction of quota system by the National Universities Commission (NUC), the demand for university placements is still very high thereby putting much pressure and stress on the limited number of lecturers. Ehiamezor (1999) in his comments on the crises at the university level observed that one interesting aspect is that the full-time lecturers also teach in the part-time programmes. The implication of this is that the full-time lecturers have to share themselves thinly between the two programmes, or either fully services one to the neglect of the other programme. Although more staff than usual were needed to meet the requirement of various faculties, such individuals were nowhere to be located and recruited and

when located, there is the problem of being able to cater for their bills. Potential candidates in the first class and second class upper divisions were no longer available to the university because of the abysmally poor take-home salary and inability to compete for the essential commodity in the market place (Ehiametalor, 2003). There is no exception for masters and doctorate degree holders who have now joined this category. Such candidates had to choose between working in the university, going abroad, or taking up job in the oil companies that compete with the universities for the academic achievers.

In the same vein, Ukeje and Ehiametalor (1998, p. 17) stated that Nigeria has produced world renowned scholars but has failed to retain most of them due to lack of adequate facilities and incentives. The available academic staff are so over-worked marking bundles upon bundles of scripts almost rendering them intellectually jaundiced.

Okebukola (2002) reported of a high load of administrative and technical staff that constituted about 76% of staff strength in most federal universities. At the same time, system wide, there were severe shortages of academic staff to the extent that some universities could not run their postgraduates programmes (see table 2).

Table 2: University Academic Staff Shortfall in 2000

S/N	Discipline	Academic staff available	Enrolment	NUC staff student ratio	Academic staff required by NUC Norms	Shortfall by NUC norms as % of Total requirements
1	Administration	697	43,933	1:20	2,197	1,500 (68%)
2	Agriculture	1,904	25,602	1:9	2,845	941 (33%)
3.	Arts	2,116	45,440	1:20	2,272	156 (7%)
4	Education	1,652	46,812	1:24	1,930	278 (14%)
5	Engineering Technology	1,798	52,843	1:9	5,871	4,073 (69%)
6	Environmental science	904	15,663	1:10	1,566	662 (42%)
7	Law	586	23,431	1:20	1,172	586 (50%)
8	Medicine	1,876	23,241	1:6	3,874	1,998 (56%)
9	Pharmacy	360	5,066	1:10	507	147 (29%)
10	Sciences	4,146	77,092	1:10	7,709	3,563 (49%)
11	Social Sciences	1,831	72,430	1:20	3,622	1,791 (49%)
12	Vet. Medicine	368	2,318	1:6	386	16(4%)
Total		18,328	433,871		33,951	15,718(46%)

Source: National University Commission (NUC), 2001

Table 2 gives an analysis of the shortfall in academic staff in the Nigerian universities in 2000. According to NUC statistics of 2000, there was a total number of 18,328 academic staff to cater for 433,871 students. Whereas by NUC staffing regulations, a total of 33,951 is required in the university system. Therefore, the academic shortfall was 15,718 (46%) in the Nigerian universities in 2000.

In addition, the vice-chancellor of the University of Ibadan, Professor Olufemi Bamiro who in a recent interview with the *Vanguard Newspaper* of Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2009 (p.8) complained about the dearth of lecturers in Nigerian universities which he concluded is a dangerous signal to the survival of the educational sector. He lamented that out of 95 (Ninety-five) universities across the country, only 28,000 lecturers are available, adding that not fewer than 8,000 additional academic staff are needed to meet the increasing educational demands of the teaming Nigerian youths. Even the National Universities Commission (NUC) is very conscious of this shortage especially through brain-drain and it is synergizing with Nigerian academics in Europe and America (Diaspora) to address the problem. Table 3 below shows the academic staff strength of some Nigerian Universities.

Table 3: Academic Staff in Nigerian Universities

<i>S/N</i>	<i>NAME OF UNIVERSITY</i>	<i>TOTAL ACADEMIC STAFF</i>
1.	Abia State University, Uturu	450
2.	Abti-American University, Yola	50
3.	Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi	340
4.	Adamawa State University, Mubi	241
5.	Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba	286
6.	Ahmadu Bellow University, Zaria	1,499
7.	Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo	43
8.	Akwa Ibom State University of Technology	34
9.	Al-Hikma University, Ilorin	42
10.	Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma	509
11.	Anambra State University, Uli	250
12.	Babcock University, Ilesha-remo, Ogun State	260
13.	Bayero University, Kano	581
14.	Bells University of Technology, Ota	45
15.	Benson Idahosa University, Benin City	147
16.	Benue State University, Makurdi	-
17.	Bingham University, New Karu	37
18.	Bowen University, Iwo	170
19.	Caritas University, Amorji-Nike, Enugu	132
20.	Covenant University, Ota	245
21.	Crawford University, Igbesa	28
22.	Crescent University, Abeokuta	37
23.	Cross River University of Technology, Calabar	527
24.	Delta State University, Abraka	615
25.	Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki	1,004
26.	Enugu State University of Technology, Enugu	202
27.	Federal University of Technology, Akure	442
28.	Federal University of Technology, Minna	569
29.	Federal University of Technology, Owerri	549
30.	Federal University of Technology, Yola	416
31.	Gombe State University, Gombe	115
32.	Ibrahim Babangida University, Lapai	70
33.	Igbinedion University, Okada	548
34.	Imo State University, Owerri	478
35.	Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji-Arakeji	26
36.	Kaduna State University, Kaduna	108
37.	Kano University of Science and Technology, Wudi, Kano	163
38.	Katsina University, Katsina	-
39.	Katsina University, Katsina	22
40.	Kogi State University, Anyigba	298

41.	Ladoke Akintola University of Tech., Ogbomosho	580
42.	Lagos State University, Ojo	639
43.	Lead City University, Ibadan	67
44.	Madonna University, Okija	381
45.	Michael Okpara University of Agric., UImudike	229
46.	Nassarawa State University, Keffi	318
47.	National Open University of Nigeria, Lagos	1,343
48.	Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island.	505
49.	Nigerian Defence Academic, Kaduna	143
50.	Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka	756
51.	Novena University, Ogume, Delta State	53
52.	Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife	1,084
53.	Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye	766
54.	Pan-African University, Lagos	23
55.	Plateau State University, Bokokos	-
56.	Redeemer's University, Ogun State	76
57.	Renaissance University, Agbani, Enugu	23
58.	River State University of Science and Tech., Port Harcourt.	449
59.	Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu-Ode	394
60.	University of Agriculture, Abeokuta	295
61.	University of Abuja, Abuja	360
62.	University of Ado-Ekiti, Ado-Ekiti	380
63.	University of Agriculture, Makurdi	350
64.	University of Benin, Benin	998
65.	University of Calabar, Calabar	846
66.	University of Ibadan, Ibadan	1,173
67.	University of Ilorin, Ilorin	658
68.	University of Jos, Jos	801
69.	University of Lagos, Lagos	1,052
70.	University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri	845
71.	University of Mkar, Mkar	-
72.	University of Nigeria, Nsukka	1,211
73.	University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt	1,030
74.	University of Uyo, Uyo	912
75.	Usmanu Danfidiyo University, Sokoto	449
76.	Wukari Jubilee University, Wukari	30
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>30,817</b>

Source: National University Commission (NUC), 2007

## Funding

Global debate as to whether the education sector is grossly under-funded, over-funded or whether it is having its fair share of financial resources from national, state, regional or local government levels is an issue of great concern. The argument that Nigeria, education system still enjoys a high priority in the nation's development plan also calls for concern. However, Ogunu (2000) observed that during the Third National Development Plan (1975-1980), education got N3.2 billion or 12% of the total sector effective programme of N25.5 billion. As he observed, this was based on the social



demand approach to educational planning with the introduction of U.P.E. in September, 1976 and university expansion from 6 to 13 during the period.

Famade (2000) also observed that the proportion of the gross national product and national budgets devoted to education has been on a steady rise from 1960 to 1984. The increased budgetary allocation was because the nation was in a hurry to develop the increasing manpower needed for the expanding administrative framework. The budgetary allocation between 1994-2000, shows that education was second position only to defence (Sofoluwe, 2002).

However, Obielumani (2003) observed that the funding input in our educational enterprise has since dwindled from 11.1% four years ago to 2.8% in 2003, without taking into consideration upsurge in school enrolment, dilapidated school plants and the vital need to uphold standards and quality assurance. IHEME (2002), indicate that actual spending by the federal Government on education as a ratio of the total budget has fallen to its lowest level in ten years. From a peak of 12.96% in 1995, the budget for education dropped to a mere 7% in 2001. He further observed that the Federal Government expenditure on education was as follows: 1994 – 7.83%; 1995-12.96%; 1996-12.32%; 1997 – 11.5%; 1998 – 10.27%; 1999- 11.12%; 2000-8.36% and 2001-7.00%.

Supporting the above financial anemia in this regards, the Education Sector Status Report (ESSR, 2003), observed that between 1997–2002, the federal government’s expenditure on education was below 12% of its overall expenditure, the trend being largely downward. Of this share, 70-80% was earmarked for recurrent items in 2000 when the capital expenditure rose to 45% of the total budget. Hindcliff (2002) opined that the budgeting process lacks incentives for rational allocation as some federal institutions have been relatively under-funded. The ESSR (2003) also noted that at the State level, the amount of money devoted to education is a cause for concern.

There is no doubt that the education sector anywhere in the world is an expensive venture. However, if there has to be sustainable development in Nigerian universities, they have to be “adequately” funded, prioritization notwithstanding. Inadequate funding of public universities has been identified as the prime cause of the problems of the universities. The current position of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) is that both federal and state universities should be appropriately funded by the various governments concerned. As to the question whether the universities were better funded in the 1970s than now, ASUU holds that the real value of current funding is low in terms of its purchasing power due to the progressive devaluation of the local currency and inflationary trends.

Re-echoing the poor funding trends of Nigerian universities in a convocation lecture at the University of Ado-Ekiti in 2004, professor Erinsho, the executive secretary of the Social Science Academy speaking on “Challenges in higher education in Nigeria”, observed “that there is no doubt that the funding of public universities has declined precipitously since the introduction of SAP. This has resulted in the universities inability to have resources to keep their facilities in full (even half) operational state after paying salaries. The limited fund that comes from the government is through prolonged strike.

Amplifying the financial anaemia in the university system, the Association of African Universities General Conference in Kenya (2000) speaking on the theme “African Higher Education management and leadership in the information Age” and quoting World Bank source (2000), noted that “half of today’s higher education students live in developing countries but that their higher education systems are under great strain because they are underfunded.” This has led to a situation where these universities are facing escalating demand while faculties are often under-qualified; lacks motivation and is poorly rewarded. Poor selection and the lack of remedial education compound the problems of the universities. Emphatically, they agreed that the “problem facing higher education in development countries have their roots in the lack of resources”. This is because far less per student is spent in developing countries in comparison to students in developed countries. In their calculated observation, budgets are approved by government officials who have little understanding of the goals and capabilities of a particular university while 80% of the funding is spent on personnel and students cost leaving little for building maintenance and research. Thus deteriorating buildings, inadequate libraries, scientific equipment that cannot be used because of lack of supplies are features of higher education in developing countries.

In a related issue, Edukugho (2008) took a cursory survey on the cost and financing of public education in Nigeria in eight years put at N832. 6 billion as given by the former Minister of Education, Dr. Igwe Aja-Nwachukwu who indicated that the country has invested so much in education. However, writing under the caption, “How N832.6 billion on education in 8 years declined in real terms” in the *Vanguard Newspaper*, Thursday, September 18, 2008 (P. 51) and citing the report put together by the World Bank country office in Nigeria, the British Department of International Development, the Federal Ministry of Education and the office of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) in the presidency, it was observed that while funding levels increased from N30.6 billion in 1999 to N205.2 billion in 2007, public expenditure on education declined in real terms, as less and less facilities, equipment, infrastructure and services were provided for the funds allocated (See Table 4 below).



Table 4: Breakdown on Expenditure for Public Education

S/N	Year	Allocation	Percentage of Total Budget
1.	1999	N30.6b	10.7 per cent
2	2000	N64.2b	6.1 per cent
3	2001	N74.9b	5.1 per cent
4	2002	N45.5b	2.9 per cent
5	2003	N63.5b	4.9 per cent
6	2004	N90.3b	3.9 per cent
7	2005	N106.7b	3.7 per cent
8	2006	N151.7b	7.4 per cent
9	2007	N205.2b	8.0 per cent
	Total	N832.6b	

Source: Federal Ministry of Education, Abuja.

From table 3, it is quite obvious that the highest percentage of total budget of 10.7% of 1999 for education is not up to half of the recommended 26% benchmark by UNESCO. The former Minister of Education, Aja-Nwachukwu (2008) in the report titled: “A Review of the costs and financing of Public Education in Nigeria”, submitted that 70.8 per cent of the total expenditure between 1999 and 2005 went into tertiary education; secondary and basic education sub-sector took 29.2 per cent during the same period.

It was further disclosed that out of an estimated N332,000 cost per undergraduate student yearly in the university, government bears the amount of N323,000, representing 97.3 per cent while the student bears N9,000, representing a mere 2.7per cent. (so why the poor living standards of students?)Ironically, the funds purportedly spent on education, were either diverted, misapplied, misappropriated, misused, wasted, siphoned away by top government officials and their cronies through inflated contracts and graft or out rightly stolen. This situation is not assuaged by the high inflation rate in the economy.

Cataloguing the myriad of problems facing higher education in Nigeria, Coombs in Nwadiani (1995) observed remorsefully that “... national educational systems have always seemed tied to a life of crisis.” For this reason, “each has periodically known a shortage of funds, teachers, classrooms, teaching materials, a shortage of everything except students”. The reasons given for this shortage are the increase in student population, on one hand and increase in the number of higher institutions which are politically established. Consequently, the management of these institutions have become very difficult since resources available are not proportional to students’ number. Also, due to shortage of fiscal resources, it has become increasingly difficult to recruit and retain high level academics in our institutions of higher education.

In order for the university system to adequately perform its task of nation building, a funding formula was carefully spelt out by the National Universities Commission (Ehiametalor, 1999). The student – teacher ratio was the basis of funds allocation to the University. In budget planning at the university, the following criteria were always used viz – Arts 20:1; education 20:1; Administration 20:1; Law 20:1, Social Sciences10:1; Environmental Sciences 10:1; Agriculture 9:1; Engineering 9:1, medicine 6:1; Veterinary Medicine 6:1; Dentistry 6:1; among other criteria. The question is whether these criteria have been sustained or being sustained and if not why? The university has always been under-funded because the allocation of funds is usually based on what the government of the day can ‘afford’ and not necessarily what the university requires meeting its needs (Ehiametalor, 2003).

Citing a case study of the University of Benin in a study carried out by Osagie (2001), Ehiametalor (2003), painted a vivid picture of the funding jaundice in the university. In the report, she pointed out that the university requested for its funding needs in relation to the formula provided by the National Universities Commission, earlier enumerated and this gave a total sum of N685,224,112 for the year 1996/97, but surprisingly, even after budget defence at Abuja and the cogency of the request was established, the government approved only N362,364,124 or about 53 percent. The report went further to show that 83.4 percent of the recurrent expenditure was spent on salaries and 16.6 percent went for other

resources. Based also on the NUC criteria, the report further observed that the required number of academic staff for 1996/97 academic year in all the faculties was, 1,608 but only 769 or 48% were available.

The picture of the University of Benin painted above appears to be the picture of other federal and state universities in Nigeria. Ukeje and Ehiamentor (1998) noted that universities are so poorly funded that lecturers are currently unproductive in their areas of specialization because of the lack of materials like current journals while renowned scholars leave this shores for greener pastures abroad because of the enabling working environment (brain-drain). So the brain-drain of African societies (like Nigeria) is the brain-gain of Europe and America. The resultant effects of this poor funding are unequipped human resources, dilapidated infrastructure and facilities, poor remuneration, “half-baked graduates” with unemployment and underemployment problems, capital flight, among others.

The over politicization of education by the government has led to the belief that education irrespective of its traumatization will, also “manage”. ESSR, (2003) Obielumani (2004) further confirmed that the average 7% (Federal budget allocation to education); 7.4% (state education expenditure annually and Delta State’s allocation of 21.63% (1999 budget) and 19.41% (2000 budget) is still very much below UNESCO’s recommendation that 26% of the national budgets should be devoted to education. . Observers in this sector however, are of the opinion that even if government(s) allocates so much to education (most times for recurrent expenditure to the detriment of capital expenditure) there is still the potential problem of “diversion” of funds meant for education to other sectors.

However, the Federal Ministry of Education in defence of the accusation of the universities (especially Federal Universities) not being properly funded, came up with the various amounts spent in the universities for two years (2005 and 2006) under its “Community Accountability and Transparency Initiatives for Universities” in 2007. Apart from the over heard expenditure (including recurrent expenditure) that runs into billions of naira, various sums of money were also allocated for capital expenditure ranging from teaching and research equipment, university libraries, access roads, street lighting, purchase of pool cars, expansion of livestock and fisheries farms, supply and installation of generators, water supply to maintenance and building of different structures to house the various programme. Table 5 below gives a clearer picture of the funding pattern for two years.

For instance while the university of Benin got N2,416,705,660 (2005) and N4,696,908,116 (2006) respectively as overheard expenditure, it also got N180,000,000 (2005) and N154,293,260 (2006) respectively for capital expenditure. Within the same two years, University of Lagos got N2,963,879,646 (2005), N4,102,514,712 (2006) respectively as recurrent expenditure while N143,455,840 (2005) and N325,316,160 (2006) respectively was disbursed as capital expenditure (see table 5 for more information on other universities).

While it is obvious that the government has not been able to meet the 26% benchmark set aside for education by UNESCO, it is also correct to say that some meaningful effort has been made to fund the universities. The questions in one’s lips that, to what use have the various sums of money allocated to the universities been put internally? Has accountability (internal efficiency) been held hostage within the universities? And what are the implications for sustainable development in the ivory tower that has tilted?

Table 5: Community Accountability and Transparency Initiatives for Universities (2007)

S/N	University	Overheard Expenditure		Capital Expenditure		Grand Total (₦) 2 yrs
		2005	2006	2005	2006	
1.	University of Agriculture, Umudike	676,661,137	4,696,908,116	187,370,000	137,606,780	5,698,546,033
2.	University of Agriculture, Makurdi	1,259,143,222	4,696,908,116	250,880,000	110,512,588	6,317,443,926
3.	University of Agriculture, Abeokuta	1,025,142,477	4,696,908,116	173,264,000	138,764,968	6,034,079,561
4.	University of Awka	1,937,688,338	4,696,908,116	1,822,800,000	6,470,005,250	9,104,396,979
5.	University of Uyo	1,605,043,974	4,696,908,116	1,568,000,000	209,704,560	6,668,456,650
6.	University of Abuja	837,941,067	4,696,908,116	593,096,333	186,679,040	6,314,624,556
7.	Federal University of Technology, Yola	760,223,779	4,696,908,116	153,272,016	45,380,000	5,655,783,911
8.	Federal University of Technology, Minna	936,370,220	4,696,908,116	288,456,728	221,182,600	6,142,917,664
9.	Federal University of Technology, Akure	905,097,338	4,696,908,116	55,560,000	140,360,000	5,797,925,454
10.	Federal University of Technology, Owerri	1,543,144,823	4,696,908,116	204,232,000	140,360,000	6,584,644,939
11.	Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi	798,409,143	4,696,908,116	156,800,000	140,360,000	5,792,477,259
12.	University of Port Harcourt	2,288,547,266	4,696,908,116	211,680,000	154,360,255	7,251,495,637
13.	University of Ilorin	2,270,219,381	4,696,908,116	227,360,000	155,211,000	7,349,698,497
14.	Uthman Dan Fodio University, Sokoto	1,037,694,916	4,696,908,116	138,728,801	288,691,680	6,162,023,513
15.	University of Maiduguri	1,869,113,932	4,696,908,116	290,432,800	N.A	6,856,454,848
16.	Bayero University, Kano	1,317,659,777	4,696,908,116	191,540,040	155,211,000	6,361,318,933
17.	University of Calabar	1,983,235,365	4,696,908,116	211,680,000	191,540,040	7,083,363,521
18.	University of Jos	1,754,420,895	4,696,908,116	482,160,000	154,293,260	7,087,782,271
19.	University of Benin	2,416,705,660	4,696,908,116	180,000,000	154,293,260	7,447,907,036
20.	Obafemi Awolowo University	2,753,732,997	4,696,908,116	207,760,000	223,759,368	7,882,160,481
21.	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria	2,508,050,665	6,241,508,278	313,600,000	339,049,040	9,402,207,983
22.	University of Nsukka	2,963,879,646	6,293,311,971	295,724,800	384,350,850	9,937,267,267
23.	University of Lagos	2,963,879,646	4,102,514,712	143,455,840	325,316,160	7,535,166,358
24.	University of Ibadan	3,600,454,845	5,841,890,560	352,940,883	174,493,560	9,969,779,848

Source: Federal Ministry of Education, Abuja.

## Facilities

For the university system to achieve its set missions and goals, facilities no doubt are very critical in this assignment. Meaningful teaching, learning and research cannot take place without adequate facilities both in quantity and quality. Facilities like buildings, equipment, supplies, workshops, laboratories, libraries information technology, among others are purposefully needed to house the various programmes mounted by the universities. As a major resource input, they are required for optimum sustainable development in our universities. The question again is whether these facilities are there and if they are, in what quantity and quality?

The provision of adequate tool and infrastructure for the workforce to work with is one major way by which an organization can realize its goals. However, Nwagu (1997) observed that the shortage of infrastructure and facilities characterize all levels of Africa's educational system. Where some facilities are provided, they are grossly inadequate. According to International Labour Organization (ILO, 1990), it was observed that overcrowded classes leads to overwork and stress which can cause lasting damage to health; the unsafe and unsanitary conditions of school buildings and the dearth of the teaching materials constitute a major factor affecting the productivity of teachers and their students alike.

Due to the increase in the number of universities in Nigeria (about 100) problems like underfunding, strike, economic recession and enrolment explosion (among other problems), the Nigerian university system is perpetually undergoing crisis. Commenting on "quantity and quality in university education in Nigeria, *Education Sector Status Report* (ESSR, 2003) noted that due to these problems, the universities have been thrown into the "crisis of facilities, dilapidation, project abandonment and unprofessional conduct by staff." Federal Ministry of Education (FME, 1990) reported that "as student enrolment in the federal universities grew from 97,631 in 1982/83 to about 134,532 (138%) in the 1988/89 academic session, the overall result was the fall in the quality of university education. The major resultant effect is the quantity of graduates churned out annually from our universities.

Collaborating the position of the ESSR (2003), the Longe Commission (1992) on the Review of Higher education in Nigeria observed that "Nigerian universities had established standards comparable to the best in other parts of the world" but that it was appalled by the following physical conditions of most of the universities with dilapidated workshops, equipment and laboratories; inadequate facilities such as libraries, lecture rooms, laboratories and work farms.

Examining specifically, the case of the University of Benin, Osagie (2001) observed, that with students enrolment of 22, 958 in the 1999/2000 academic session, the physical facilities like hostels, classrooms, laboratories are over stretched and used. Hostels designed to accommodate two students per room now takes eight or more; classroom space which is not adequate is converted by students as rest places in the night; laboratories meant for few students now hosts more than its capacity with the attendant problem of equipment overuse and abuse. In some universities across the country, some lecturers have no offices (or are squatting) not to talk of tools to teach and carry out research.

The poor state of facilities in our universities have since been acknowledge by the National Universities Commission (NUC) hence in collaboration with the then Overseas Development Agency (ODA) and European Economic Community (EEC), in 1986, set up five pilt Equipment Maintenance and Development Centres (EMDCs) in five Nigerian Federal Universities at Zaria, Ile-Ife, Nsukka, Calabar and Bauchi. The aim of the project was to establish maintenance culture in Nigerian Universities. The pilot centres were to serve as models for other universities to draw experience and expertise for establishing their own Equipment Maintenance Centres (EMCs).

However, after over two decades of running the project, the National Universities Commission considered it necessary to assess the impact of the project on curriculum delivery and to determine the level to which the project has met its objectives of retooling and rekitting the Equipment and Maintenance Development Centres (EMDCs). The NUC management constituted five teams to visit four to six universities within the zone it was assigned to carry out the impact assessment. The teams used three instruments viz Key Informant Interviews, (KLLs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and questionnaires administration.

Nevertheless, in its 5<sup>th</sup> February 2007 publication from the office of the executive secretary, the NUC gave the highlights of its Impact Assessment Study of Equipment maintenance project in Federal Universities when it revealed that:

1. Majority of the centres are still struggling to operate to expectations;
2. The common problem to virtually all the EMDCs/EMCs is poor funding and lack of support by the university management;
3. Another area of concern is lack of staff training and inadequate of technical staff. Most of the technologists and technicians are quite competent on repairing older equipment (which they had used to develop their skills over time) but find it difficult to repair state of the art equipment due to lack of adequate training and exposure on them;

4. The non-availability of spare parts to affect repair when equipment has been diagnosed also hinders the smooth operations of the centres. Some universities complained of lack of regular power supply, tools, workshop space and utility vehicle, among others.
5. These problems notwithstanding, the technologists and technicians are able to maintain some of the equipment using the experience acquired over time and the willingness to face challenges and surmount them;
6. The university management, technologists and technicians agree that the centres are central to the maintenance of equipment in the universities and should therefore assist to draw up equipment specifications during procurement exercise.
7. The general opinion was that the project has impacted positively on curriculum delivery even though it has not met all its objectives;
8. Respondents unanimously agreed that NUCs support is necessary towards achieving the goals and objectives of the project. In this regard, it is expected that the NUC should encourage the universities to make their EMCs functional and well equipped. 251 respondents was used for the assessment.

With the present predicament of the university system in Nigeria, it does appear that sustainable development is almost a mirage and the nation is the worst loser.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It has been frontally observed that university education in Nigeria is in a state of decay (FME, 2000). Government is therefore conscious of the fact that the situation portends danger to the country particularly as poor quality graduates who may not be able to effectively run the wheels of national development are currently being produced. The rot manifests variously as staff and student exhibit indiscipline, poor remuneration and poor service conditions, dilapidated facilities, bad administration, politicization of education, poor funding, enrolment expansion beyond the capacity of facilities, cultism, examination malpractice, prolonged strike actions, brain-drain, crises of succession of university leadership, sexual harassment, drug abuse, work ethics, apathy to work and learning, quality assurance, among others.

It is the considered view of this paper that if the universities in Nigeria are to achieve their universal and fundamental mission of promoting the life of the mind through intellectual inquiry and to “generate, store and transmit specialized knowledge and sophisticated expertise, higher forms of culture and ethical basis of conduct”, there has to be a proactive re-engineering of the system by all stake holders – government, university management (including lecturers), students, philanthropist, the organized private sector, international donor agencies, non-governmental organizations, among other interest groups.

If Nigeria university system is to have sustainable development and contribute to national development, the following recommendations may serve as benchmarks:

- Less-politicization of education through sufficient funding, engagement of qualified human resources and provision of facilities/tools in quantity and quality to enhance teaching, learning, research and community service;
- The push and pull factors that bring about brain-drain should be checkmated through improved conditions of service and work environment for the staff;
- University autonomy and academic freedom should be promoted through the reduction to its barest minimum various forms of interferences;
- The university through its management should show quality leadership through prudent management of the various resource inputs - man, money and materials through realistic strategizing and planning;
- The NUC as the clearing house for the universities should advise the Government strongly and realistically on the true state of the universities instead of positioning the universities to deliberately distort facts and window dress programmes to achieve accreditation;
- Effort should be made by the university authorities, government, students, parents and other stakeholders to give our certificates content validity both in character and learning through emphasizes on standards and quality assurance;
- Nigerian universities should be specialized in one way or another especially in the areas of agriculture, science and technology as a way of reducing multiple-duplication of programmes that has no relevance to self-actualization and national development. This will also reduce the bookish nature of some programmes and make way for the world of works;

- A book policy should be developed especially in science and technology by the government such that copyright agreement can be instituted to reduce the cost of books.
- As a way of cost-recovery, the universities should be allowed to charge “minimal” fees that are commensurate with the inputs in training students.
- Equipment procurement and maintenance policy should be advocated for each university whereby the advice of the EMDCs/EMCs is obtained before the purchase of a new piece equipment. This is to ensure that technical suitability and viability of the piece of equipment are accorded due consideration in the procurement process.
- The NUC in consultation with CVC should agree to set aside 4% of the funds for teaching and research equipment for maintenance activities.
- Universities should diversify their sources of funds through the establishment of small scale investments-printing press, poultry, table water facility, shares in quoted companies, etc.
- Institutions should establish exchange programmes with universities abroad.
- Universities also should put in place strategic plans that will guide them in the scanning of their environment with the intention of taking the advantages of opportunities around them, identify their weakness and remove elements of threat to their mission and vision.
- Increase and improve capacity building through training and re-training of academic staff.

### Future Research Plan

Future research work need to be carried out on the internal efficiency of the Nigerian University system

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