

HIGHER EDUCATION AND POST GRADUATE REFORM FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Higher institution exists for the training and development of human resources for sustainable national development. It is very important for the leaders of higher Institutions to live up to expectation, taking cognizance of the needs and aspirations of the society. For higher institutions to achieve its goals. It largely depends on the type of leader in such institution. Therefore school administrators should take advantage of the reforms in educational sector to make a difference in their leadership. This has to be done so that the students trained under them can be self-reliance also contribute their quota to sustainable national development in Nigeria. Academic institutions essential exist for the transmission of knowledge, the pursuit of truth. The development of students as well as the society at large. At times these functions are not performed as it may be, generally an organization's, effectiveness is measured by the achievement of the objectives by which it was established.

Therefore it is very important that the higher institution leaders work with the employees in a more co-ordinated and organized manner to achieve the goals. Again it is also more importantly for higher institution leaders to reform their post graduate programmes to strengthen the development of the society, because the training the manpower in the country will go a long way to sustain the national development of the country in all aspects of human endeavor. Experience has shown that there is an alarming rate of students drop out at graduate level. Some will finish course work and cannot come with research. It is therefore worrisome why these matured scholars could abandone there programme of studies at the verge of graduation. This does not tell good of our post graduate schools across the country especially universities in Rivers State. This situation has resulted to having lower man power level across all the sectors in Nigeria economy.

Again the few that finished the programme do not have the entrepreneurship skills capable of making them self-reliance and sometimes employers of labour. The implication is that there is not difference between first degree holders and post graduates students who are supposed to help in the growth and sustainance of the economy at all levels and sectors.

This is why some universities and other higher institutions have started reforming their post graduate programmes.

In this paper, we shall be looking at the reforms in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Port Harcourt Nigeria as the case study in reformation of higher education.

Concept of Higher Education

Higher education is the level of tertiary education attained after the successful completion of post primary level of education. Peretomode (2008), posited that higher education is the level of education available for people who have completed secondary education and in which the course of study last for not less than two years, but more generally, from the three to six years.

Higher education refers to all organized leaning activities as the national policy of education (2004) defined tertiary education to include universities, colleges of education, polytechnic and monotechnics. Higher education institutions has a vital function to perform in the development of manpower. It is specially designed to provide the needed manpower for the overall turnaround of a nation (Ayo-Sobwale and Akinyerni, 2011).

Objectives of Higher Education

The objective of higher education as highlighted by FRN in Uzoechina and Obunadike, 2016) include:

1. To contribute to national development through high relevant manpower
2. To develop the intellectual capacity of individual to understand and appreciate their local and external environment.
3. To develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and the society.
4. To achieve both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society.
5. To promote and encourage scholarship and community service.
6. To forge and cement national unity.
7. To promote national and intellectual understanding and

Problem of Higher Education in Nigeria

- **Funding of Universities:-** It is a critical challenge of the 21st century. In Nigeria, virtually, no improvement can be made in any segment of the education sector without adequate funding. Research requires huge financial requirement which is often lacking in Nigeria universities. Universities have the challenges of sourcing for alternative means of fund which makes them capable to these finders as the saying goes “he who pays the piper dictates the tune. In some instances standards are compromised.
- **Inadequate Qualified Academic Staff:** - The intimidating shortage of qualified academic staff quite alarming. These counts for the use of graduate assistance in teaching instead of computing results and understanding the senior lecturers and the heads of department for administration of examination and result computation, rather they teach even up to final year courses. This anomaly is as a result of lack of qualified teachers in the school system.
- **Examination Malpractice (Sorting):-** Examination is the objective means of assessing knowledge and choosing between competitors. The sanity of examination should therefore be at the root of our tertiary institution value system. This is because the integrity of the certificate or degree obtained at the institutions and that of the institution itself depends on it, but it has become a tradition in most higher institutions in Nigeria to sell grades as mere commodity, where grades are now bargained for, this is more dangerous than acquired immune deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)(Nnadi, 2016).
- **Cultism:-** Higher institutions in Nigeria have been the center of cultism and its attendance consequences. Cultism has crept into our higher institutions and it is rapidly destroying Nigerian youths. It was also alleged in recent times that some lecturers are sponsors of cultism in higher institutions. Therefore cultist should be fished out and death with accordingly, lecturers that supports them should also be shown the way out. This is the stand of Rivers State Government now. To rebuild our higher institutions we must have zero tolerance for cultism and deviant behaviours for the university system to achieve its goals.
A situation where examination are conducted with fear, lecturers teach with fear and anxiety. This tension in the university environment inhibits good performance, and good administration of the system.

- **Inadequate Infrastructure:-** There is wide spread of population explosion in almost all the Nigerian university without a corresponding facilities to take care of the population. Lack of classrooms, hostel accommodation, staff offices and so on.

No administrator can do well in this situation, therefore tertiary institution leaders should not rely on the government for these provisions Internal generated revenue should be explored for the provision of these basic infrastructure in the school for effective teaching and learning, as this will contribute to the development of the higher institution and the Nigeria society at large.

Concept of Reform in Education:

Reform is a change made in a system or organization in order to improve it. It is to improve on something by alternation and correction of erros, renewal of defects and putting into a better form. A reform could be a drastic change that is extensive, massive and sweeping and could be difficult to effect casually and easily (Akpan, 2007). It is a planned and designed change undertaken to tackle deficiencies and needs with the conviction that substantial progress can be made in the development process of a nation through adjustment in education (Mbacha, 2011).

According to Isife and Ogakwu (2012), reform entails changing the culture of the classroom, the school and others which tend to change slowly. Again Obunadike (2013), opined that reform means to transform to form, remove defects to make better and to bring a better way of life. It further explained that it is through the effective implementation of reforms that the expected goals will be achieved.

However, Reform in education according to Efurhievwe (2007). Is an art to improve the educational system by making or causing something to happen that which will bring changes and innovations which affect individuals as well as the society positively.

It is described as the adoption of innovation with the ultimate goal to prove educational reforms in Nigeria, touch the school calendar, curriculum content and structure, institutional adjustments and duty changes.

Agu and Obunnadike (2018), highlighted some of the major reasons for reforms in education to include the need to:

- Have education relevant to the need of the country
- Equip students with the relevant knowledge to change their private and professional lives

- Make education accessible to more people and pay more attention to science and technology.

Others include the desire to intimate students with contemporary aforementioned and communication technology skills, equip schools with adequate resources, improve teaching methods and educational practices, improve financial and management of education, improve the school assessment system and prepare the citizen of the country to take the challenges of globalization.

Postgraduate Reform Programmes in Nigerian Universities

1. Duration of course of study: Masters' programmes are run for maximum of one year.
 2. Doctor of philosophy are run for 2 years
 3. Visiting lecturers are employed to assist the existing manpower to strengthen the programme. They are employed on partime bases and are paid through internally generated revenue.
 4. Convocation programme are done on yearly basis.
 5. Certificate are issued at the point of graduation.
 6. Skill acquisition are strongly emphasized in the post graduateprogrammes in Nigerian Universities, especially in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Port Harcourt. A fast growing university in Transshara Africa.
- In the past, the post graduate programmes are for those who have made up their mind to stay for years in the university running a single programme of study. Master's pogramme at times may last for 4 to -7 years as case may be, while Ph.D programme is to be run for good number of years. This has made a lot of people abandoned their programme due to frustration arising from the duration of the course of study. But today for instance in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, the duration of Master's programme is just one year while Doctor of Philosophy is 2 years as the case may be.
 - Another reform in ige:f an University as regards the postgraduate programme is the employment of visiting lecturers to strengthen the already existing manpower and the programme at this level The school management pays them internally.
 - Another area of reform is e convocation of the students each year of their graduation. Days are gone when convocation are kept for years at this Level before

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they can return from where ever they are residing and working for just to attend their convocation ceremony.

- Certificates are also issued at the point of graduation. In Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Port Harcourt, certificate are issued to the graduates at the point of graduation. This is indeed a good reform in this regard where students are expected to go with their certificate and not success letter as they were issued before this reform in the post graduate programme.
- Skill acquisition is strongly emphasized in the post graduate programme now like never before where the master's students are taught entrepreneurship programmes for self-reliance. This is a welcome development because student is expected to learn one form of trade or the other for self-reliance and for national development.

It is imperative for the reforms in post graduate programmes to help in creating sustainable improvements in the quality of life of all people through increase in real income per capita, improvement in education, health and general quality of life. The reform in post graduate programme that emphasize entrepreneurship skills support that graduate should possess some specific salable skills in so that they could be self-employed and also employers of labour for national development. The resultant effect is that the graduate becomes better and more useful human beings both at home and in the society. The implication of this for the national economy is obvious. In addition to reducing unemployment and its adverse social effects, the gross domestic product is increased. This is time because individuals will have an opportunity to contribute to the growth and development of the nation, hence sustaining the economy for improved living standard.

Conclusion

Higher education exist for the transmission of knowledge, the pursuit of truth, the development of students as well as the society. At times these functions are not performed as well as they might be. Generally, an organization's effectiveness is measured by the achievement of the objectives by which it was set up.

In organizations like universities and colleges, one of the pertinent issues has been whether the persons involved work together in a co-ordinated manner to attend shared goals. University administrators should we up and embrace these reform packages in their postgraduate programmes for sustainable national development.

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