

# INADEQUATE FUNDING: A CHALLENGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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## **Abstract**

*Education is a veritable instrument for social, moral, economic and political development of nations. Higher Education especially is very critical for the development of Nigeria in the afore-mentioned areas. However inadequate funding has been a major challenge to the attainment of the goals of higher education. This paper discussed the benefits of higher education to the development of Nigeria, the need for adequate funding of higher education, and the causes of inadequate funding of higher education. The paper equally discussed the resultant effects of inadequate funding on higher institutions and the society at large. The paper finally made recommendations on the way forward to adequate funding of higher education to ensure quality and the attainment of the goals of higher education in Nigeria.*

**Key words:** Inadequate, Funding, Challenge, Higher Education, Effects

Education is a veritable instrument for social, moral, economic and political development of nations. This is why it is said that no nation can rise above the level of the education of her citizenry. Olorok (2017:5) commenting on the words of the wife of chief of army staff, Hajiya Umma Buratai on the cause of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, quoted her as saying:

*Education is the life of a nation; the live wire of its industries, and also the foundation of moral regeneration and revival of its people. It is also the force and bulwark of any nations defence and it has been observed that no nation rises above the level of its education''.*

She therefore blamed lack of formal education as the cause of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. Four levels of education are identified in Nigeria. These are the pre-primary level, the primary level, the secondary level and the tertiary level. However in the 9-3-4 system of education the junior level of secondary education and the primary level have been fused into what is called Basic Education. Tertiary education refers to the education that people acquire beyond the secondary level of education. It is also called higher education or post secondary education.

The Federal Government of Nigeria recognizes the vital role higher education plays in its socio-economic, industrial, political, cultural and moral development. This is why she described higher education in section 8, subsection 58 of the National Policy on Education as “the education given after secondary education in Universities, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics, Monotechnics, including those institutions offering correspondence courses (F.R.N, 2014).

The goals of higher education were also outlined. In section 8, subsection 59, it stated that the goals of tertiary education shall be to:

- contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training;
- develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society;
- develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments;
- acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society;
- promote and encourage scholarship and community service;
- forge and cement national unity; and
- promote national and international understanding and interaction.

The goals of higher education as outlined above shows the tremendous positive impacts higher education could make on both the economic, social, intellectual and moral development of both individuals and nations at large. It was also stated in subsection 60 that the goals of tertiary education shall be pursued through:

- teaching ;
- research and development;
- virile staff development programmes;
- generation and dissemination of knowledge;

- a variety of modes of programmes including full-time, part-time, block-release, day-release, sandwich, etc;
- access to training funds such as those provided by the Industrial Training Fund (ITF);
- Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES);
- maintenance of minimum educational standards through appropriate agencies;
- inter-institutional co-operation; and
- dedicated services to the community through extra-mural and extension services.

Nigeria as a nation needs higher education to be able to produce adequate and quality manpower that will serve the nation in different capacities and also be able to contribute to the all round development of the nation. This was why the cry of Nigerians for a higher education was answered in 1932 with the establishment of Yaba Higher College and the University College Ibadan in 1948, an affiliate of the University of London which later became the University of Ibadan.

Subsequently Nigeria has established many other Universities, Colleges of Education and other tertiary institutions at both Federal and State levels. Saint, Hartnett and Strassner (2004) reported that Nigeria possesses the largest University system in Sub-Saharan Africa, with 48 State and Federal Universities enrolling over 400,000 students.

A more current statistics of higher educational institutions as presented by Abdulkareem, Fasasi and Akinubi (2011) shows an upsurge in the number of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This is presented in table 1.

**Table 1: Number of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria**

Institutions	Federal	State	Private	Total
Colleges of Education	21	38	4	63
Colleges of Health Technologies and Allied Institutions	9	40	1	50
Monotechnics/Specialized institutions	23	2	2	27
Colleges of Agriculture	17	19	0	36
Polytechnics	21	38	22	81
Universities	40	39	50	129
<b>Total</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>386</b>

However, for these tertiary institutions to achieve the goals set for higher education in both quantity and quality terms, they need to be adequately funded. Nwangwu (2005), cited in Famade, Omiyale and Adebola (2015) agreed to this when

he said that the foundation of education is frail when education is not well funded and the products of such foundation of education are weak intellectuals

The thrust of this paper is therefore to carry out an expository study of the following:

- The benefits of Higher Education in Nigeria
- The need for adequate funding of higher education.
- The effects of inadequate funding of higher education
- Steps to the adequate funding of higher education in Nigeria.

### **The Benefits of Higher Education in Nigeria**

Higher education is of paramount benefit to both individuals and society. It helps to improve the quality of life of man, this is because it is a very potent means of social mobility. Famade, Omiyale and Adebola (2015) opined that higher learning takes the intellect to the next level of success and provides a deeper understanding of relevant subjects. It also provides the necessary foundation for economic growth. The acquisition of knowledge and understanding of relevant subjects in different areas of human endeavour enhances the production of manpower that will serve in different capacities and contribute positively and effectively to the socio-economic development of Nigeria.

Romina (2013, citing World Bank, 1999) also asserted that higher education is a fundamental instrument for the construction of a knowledge economy and the development of human capital all over the world. Citing Peretomode (2007), he also stated that higher education is the facilitator, the bed rock, the power house and the drawing force for the strong socio-economic, political, cultural, healthier and industrial development of a nation as higher education institutions are key mechanisms increasingly recognized as wealth and human capital producing industries.

Higher education is very beneficial because the knowledge disseminated, transferred and shared through teaching and research in higher institutions of learning has the capacity to augment productivity. Moreover, in this 21<sup>st</sup> century, knowledge has become a very important determinant of economic development. Abd Rahman, Alan and Moonsany (n.d.) also added credence to this when they opined that higher education is a powerful vehicle of human development that helps engender economic, social and political stability of a country. Other benefits of higher education include better job prospects and greater job stability (Statistics Canada, 2010).

Ashton College (2013) also elucidated more on the importance of higher education. The College noted that post secondary education will broaden an individual's horizons beyond what the person has learnt in the classroom. The individual also learns different essential life skills such as time management, interpersonal skills and critical thinking which are extensively used in the work place.

The personal and social benefits of higher education can be summarized in the following points below:

- (a) **Increase in knowledge:** Higher education exposes the recipient to a wealth of diversified knowledge which enhances the individuals usefulness to both himself and the society
- (b) **Improvement of self-confidence and self-esteem:** Researches has shown that education improves individual's self-confidence and self-esteem. This is possible because the individual is trained in school trained to speak fluently, is knowledgeable in different issues in the society and has learnt to participate confidently in discussions through participation in debates, classroom discussions, and presentation of group work, seminars and projects.
- (c) **Better job prospect, job stability and security:** Statistics has also shown that those who passed through higher education have better job prospects. In Nigeria today, for example, there is hardly any job for anyone with only secondary school certificate in civil service. However with higher certificates such as National Diploma (ND), Nigeria Certificate of Education (NCE), Higher National Diploma (HND) and Bachelors' Degrees, one has more prospects of being employed in civil service (Federal or State). The job is also more stabilized as it is permanent, confirmed and in most cases to retirement age.
- (d) **Better earnings:** It has also been established empirically and statistically that the higher one is educated, the higher the persons earnings. Higher education therefore affords individuals the opportunity to earn higher income than they would have without higher education
- (e) **Better career opportunities:** With higher education, and better salary, an individual also have better career opportunities. This is because opportunities of in-service training through workshops, seminars and conferences are given to workers. There is also opportunity to further studies thus improving on one's career.
- (f) **Investment into the future:** Higher education is an investment into the future: This means that in cases where one experiences few years of unemployment after acquiring higher education, he/she is assured that in the future, there will be employment for him/her. Just as the proverbial Igbo adage says" The hunger that has hope does not kill", the individual's certificate is an investment into the future. In case of an employed graduate, the deduction of his monthly contributions to his pension benefit is also an investment. With a higher salary obtained through the possession of

a higher certificate, he is sure of a reasonable amount of money accruing as his either retirement or pension benefit in the future

(g) **Enjoyment of fringe benefits:** With the acquisition of higher education, subsequent higher earnings and opportunities to work in prestigious and socio-economically recognized institutions in the society, the individual has the opportunity to enjoy other fringe benefits such as getting monthly leave with pay, conference or workshop sponsorships, and enjoyment of health care benefits for him and his family.

(h) **Contribution to community development:** Higher education gives individuals more understanding of their obligations to their communities and societies. Hence, they are more likely to contribute through community development programmes, SIWES, housemanship programmes and others to the development of their communities and societies. They can also offer volunteer service more freely than the less educated.

(i) **Better human relationship:** Reports from Ashton College (2013) showed that there is a clear relationship between educational level and tolerance for diversity for both people and opinions. Highly educated people are therefore more accommodating, tolerant and show empathy. They are less prejudiced and biased. This stems from the experiences they have had in the course of their meeting and interacting with a wide variety of people during the course of their studies, seminars and workshops. Hence they, maintain a better human relationship with others as they are less eccentric and understand the concept of cultural relativism. At the end of higher education, they are also subjected to one year service to the Nation through National Youth Service Corps Scheme. They can also easily build a network of contacts and friends and this helps them to appreciate the plural nature of Nigeria and its rich diverse cultures. In the process unity, tolerance and understanding which are necessary for the growth and development of the society are enhanced.

### **The Need for Adequate Funding of Higher Education**

Despite the enormous benefit of higher education to both individuals and societies, it is facing a lot of challenges. These include proliferation of private higher institutions, undue interference of government on the autonomy of tertiary institutions, poor policy implementation, under funding, frequent labour disputes and closure of schools, lack of resources and others.

Many authorities in education sector have affirmed that underfunding is the most pressing challenge faced by higher education in Nigeria. For instance Ezekwesili (2006) a former Minister of Education, affirmed that underfunding of education especially at the tertiary level has become a persistent occurrence in Nigeria as funds released to the tertiary sector can no longer meet the increasing demands and growth

of Nigerian tertiary institutions. Ahmed (2015) also posited that Universities in Nigeria require a significant amount of funds to achieve their goals and objectives, however that the funds allocated to University education in Nigeria continue to be inadequate. An extract from the Federal, State and Private higher education budget allocation (2010/2011) for Nigeria, presented below attests to the underfunding of higher education.

**Table 2: Higher Education Budget Allocation 2010/2011**

School	Total enrolment	No of staff	Budget request	Approved budget	Fund receipt
Osun State University	4,764	257	3,424,550,000	3,149,690,000	1,555,231,141 (45%)
Uniben	24,550	1,184	17,218,427,500	-	7,726,717,697 (44%)
Bowen University	4,673	176	2,742,100,000	2,592,060,000	2,311,845,000 (84%)

Source: Ahmed (2015 as cited in Ahmed and Adepoju (2013).

If as at 2011, higher education was inadequately funded, the situation is better imagined in this era of economic recession when it has become “difficult” for Federal and State Governments to pay salaries of civil servants as at when due. Gordon (2016) hence submitted that the national recession that began in 2008 forced every state to cut money for Colleges and Universities. This has affected Federal and State Universities not only in Nigeria but also across the globe. For instance, he stated that National surveys show that Louisiana has cut higher education funding, thus slashing the State aid by 55%. In Nigeria also some tertiary institutions in Nigeria, especially State owned tertiary institutions that get their allocation from state governments are being affected adversely by inadequate funding.

Fund is needed to meet various needs in higher education such as:

- Training and re-training of staff.
- Research and development
- Infrastructural developments
- Awarding of scholarships and other benefits to both staff and students
- Payments of salaries of staff.
- Buying of fuel/diesel to empower generators in the absence of electricity from Power Holding Company of Nigeria
- Administrative purposes

Teaching, research and development which can be said to be the most important goals of higher education as enshrined in the National Policy on Education cannot be

achieved if higher education is not well funded. The benefits of higher education to societies, especially Nigeria who needs to advance fast in knowledge, science and technology may also become a mirage.

### **The Effects of Inadequate Funding of Higher Education**

Inadequate funding has taken tremendous toll on the quality of higher education in Nigeria. Bamro and Adedeji (2010) noted that the quality of lecturing and research work has significantly declined over the years leading to overcrowding and uncondutive learning and teaching environment.

Romina (2013) has also affirmed that the problem of inadequate funding of education has been a bane to educational development in the country. Citing Onokerrhoraye (1995), he maintained that a major constraint to attaining academic excellence in Nigeria Universities is financial constraints which made many academics and non academics to be working under difficult circumstances.

In the same vein Rasheed, (n.d), Saint, Harnett and Strassner (2004) posited that the efforts to expand enrollments and improve educational quality are severely constrained by growing shortages of qualified staff. They noted that between 1997 and 1999, the numbers of academic staff declined by 12% even as enrollments expanded by 13%. Underfunding of higher education has led to increase in tuition fees and the introduction of new charges to students' payment in many higher institutions in Nigeria, especially State Universities. For instance in Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island Bayelsa State, a tuition fee of between N40,000.00 – N50,000.00 has been introduced for Non – indigenes while other charges which also affects both indigenes and non—indigenes have been either introduced or increased. This has affected timely payment of school fess by students, led to late registration of courses and delayed computation of semester and sessional results. Students are faced with confusion and emotional stress arising from lack of assurance on the status of their academic performance especially at the beginning of a new academic session.

This worrisome situation may lead and has actually led to violent demonstrations by students in some Nigerian tertiary institutions. Olumuyiwa., Onyekwere, Dare and Godwin (2014) agreed that incessant increase in school fees has been a prominent cause of violent demonstrations by students. A presentation of the new school fees in a private tertiary institution is presented for affirmation.

**Table 3: The New School Fees in a Faith-Based University, South-West Nigeria as at 2013**

S/No	Programmes	School Fees
1	Medical students	N3 million
2	Nursing	N1 million
3	Law	N2 million
4	Accounting	N1.5 million
5	Others	N860,000

Source Olumuyiwa et. al (2014, as cited in Belo-Osagie and Olugbamila, 2013).



Violent demonstration by students leads to wanton destruction of school properties, it may also lead to loss of lives.

Under-funding of higher education also leads to poor performance of students (Smith, 2013). As result of inadequate funding, students are made to bear extra burdens such as purchase of textbooks (which they may previously have access to in the university library), and payment for other statutory fees such as department, and faculty fees, in addition to feeding themselves at a higher cost when they should have got all these at a cheaper rate. For students who cannot afford all these, there is a resultant negative effect on their achievement at school.

Some of the students in this situation may eventually drop out of school. Mark and Kristi (2012) stated that according to Annual Education For All (EFA) report, many kids drop before finishing school. Some reasons given for that include the difficulty of getting to school and the cost of schooling. They stated that even when tuition is free, there are often expenses for lunch, uniform and examination fees. Poor funding leading to poor quality of education also forces students to pay for additional tutoring in order to pass their tests and examinations.

In Niger Delta University for instance, poor funding and the recent increase in school fees has led to many cases of deferment and suspension of studies by students in the last few academic sessions. The reason given mainly by students has been financial constraint. Students also learn in a very uncondusive environment where they have to study in poorly ventilated classrooms, and bushy environments because there are few labourers to cut low the grasses. This is because new employments are not made to replace either retired or deceased staffs.

Poor funding has also resulted to non-payment of staff salaries by many private institutions. In Niger Delta University for instance, the staff are still being owed six (6) months salary arrears and the payment of the current salaries are often delayed because of debates on government's intention to deduct one tax or the other.

Hence the effect of inadequate funding of tertiary institutions also affects both academic and non-academic staff in the following ways.

- Inability to meet up with their personal and family needs
- Poor attendance to conferences (especially where Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) is either unavailable or delayed)
- Lateness to schools, meetings and lectures (because of difficulty to fuel one's car on a daily basis)
- Temptation to collect illegal charges or gifts (in kind or in cash) from students.
- Uncondusive offices (no office at all or about four lecturers in an office, no fan or air conditioner, no light and so on)
- Brain drains -lecturers leaving Nigeria for other countries.

These and others not mentioned here can be summarized as general poor attitude to work, lack of commitment and poor productivity. Hence the standard of students being turned out from the higher institutions in Nigeria cannot transcend the present quality of their lecturers and the quality of infrastructures (both physical and material) that are made available for teaching and learning purposes. Quality education can only be guaranteed by quality funding. It is funding of education at all levels that will determine the quality of educational system that will be operational in any nation (Banabo & Ndiomu, 2014)

### **Conclusion**

Higher education in Nigeria is in a sorry state. This is not because of lack of qualified manpower, in terms of academic staff to keep the industry in a state of excellence. It is rather because as the proverbial adage says” it is money that makes a good soup”. Lack of adequate funding of this sector has been a major challenge of quality, excellence and productivity. This paper has re-affirmed the necessity of higher education to the socio-political and economic development of Nigeria. The benefit of higher education has been highlighted. However for these benefits to be actualized, the present level of funding of higher education Nigeria needs to be revisited. This is necessary in order to curb the adverse effects of inadequate funding on higher education. There is need for renewal and radical change in the funding of higher education in order to save it from the impending adverse effects of the crisis of values which both students, academic and non-academic staff are facing presently as a result of inadequate funding. Moreover, the Education for All (EFA) and Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) of Equal and Qualitative education (in summary) cannot be achieved.

### **Steps to Adequate Funding of Higher Education in Nigeria**

Based on the expositions made so far, these recommendations are made as steps towards adequate funding of higher education in Nigeria.

1. Federal and State governments, should increase the budgetary allocations to higher education. This is important so that the needs of research and development could be met at various levels and departments.
2. Private individuals and organizations (both within and outside the country) should be appealed to for contributions in terms of capital investments, building of infrastructures such as classrooms, laboratories, (ICT) centres, giving scholarship to deserving students and so on.
3. Tertiary institutions should not only rely on Federal and State Governments but source for other means of generating income internally such as setting up pure water factories, book publishing houses and others, depending on the needs of the environment.

4. University administrators should adequately manage the funds allocated to Higher Education. All avenues of mismanagement of funds should be adequately closed. This could be done by ensuring proper auditing of financial records on at least a quarterly basis.

5. All staff of higher educational institutions should be paid regularly and promptly. This is because salary is a very important motivational factor for improved productivity. It will also help to curb many social vices arising from inadequate funding such as collection of illegal dues and levies and examination malpractice.

6. There should be provision of adequate and functional infrastructures such as laboratories, classrooms and lecture halls, offices and very importantly ICT centres to enhance students involvement and participation in a knowledge based economy.

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