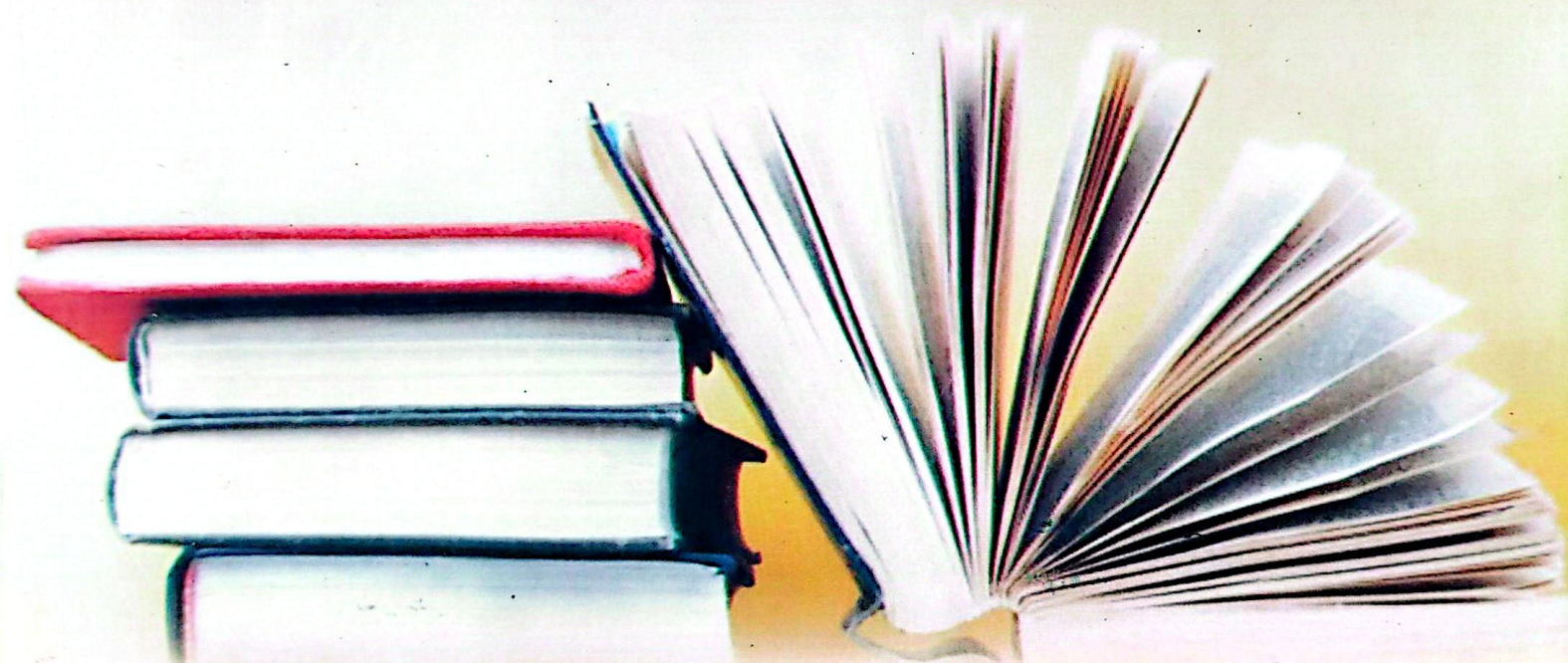


MANAGING FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION FOR LEADERSHIP, VALUES RE-ORIENTATION AND SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



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Challenges Haunting University Education and Best Practices in the 21st Century Nigeria.

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Abstract

This article focused on “University Education” as one of the major weapons to bring about the all-round development of the Nation. Some challenges and best practices were discussed. In doing so, certain factors such as: Resources (human and Materials), Bureaucracy, Examination Malpractice, Staff welfare, Funding, University Autonomy and academic freedom were perused to drive home points made. Conclusions were reached and suggestions were proffered. Hopefully, if and when adhered to, can bring a turnaround in revamping the University education system in Nigeria to bring about advancement, growth and development not only to the graduates but also to the Nation.

Keywords: Nigeria University Education, Challenges, Best Practices.

Introduction

Education in general and higher education in particular are fundamental to the development of knowledge, economy and society in all Nations (World Bank, 2004). Developing Countries like Nigeria have found it extremely difficult to reach this destination because of the numerous problems besieging the system. These problems are numerous amongst them are: human and material resources, bureaucracy, Examination malpractice, staff welfare, funding, University autonomy and academic freedom. There are many others but this paper will only focus on these seven (7), in order to determine their present impact and best practices.

Every organization is set up to actualize set goals, the University as an organization is not left out. One of the goals of University education is to breed competent and skilled graduates for self-reliance, National development and technological advancement to benefit the whole world. Having this in mind, no wonder the five main goals of Nigeria as stated in the National Policy of Education of the Federal Republic of Nigeria are coined out to pursue these vision (FRN, 2013). Thus: University Education shall make optimum contribution to National development by:

- Intensifying and diversifying its programmes for the high level manpower within the context of the needs of the Nation;
- making professional course contents reflect our National requirements;
- Making all students part of a general programme of all-round improvement in University education, to offer general study courses such as history of ideas, philosophy of knowledge, Nationalism, and information Technology (IT); and
- Making entrepreneurial skills acquisition a requirement for all Nigeria Universities.

In general, education is a magical tool to turn a Nation's developmental strides to a success and specifically, the University education has the magical wand to produce high and advanced levels of manpower for Nations technological needs. The above stated education objectives of the Nigeria Universities are indeed beautiful but to actualize them is another ball game all together. The University goals are pursued through its main functions and activities of teaching, research, dissemination of information, service to the communities and being a store house of knowledge. Education can only deliver her merchandise when all the ingredients needed for her goals to be actualized are available and adequate.

Education is a social responsibility. Specifically, it is referred to as the National programmes of Government, intended to promote the welfare of the population through assisted measures guaranteeing access to sufficient resources for food, shelter and promotion of health and wellbeing for the population at large (Aghenta, 2006). The education and awareness of individuals about contingencies, social security and available services are instrumental to ensure an adequate level of social protection of the population. It has been observed that those Countries which have achieved appropriate levels of social protection coverage for their population have also developed sophisticated educational programmes for citizens, motivating the content of which is derived from the experiences of Countries in the developed world (Babalola, 2008).

The University as an entity, has responsibility to actualize set goals; before these responsibilities can be effectively and efficiently tackled, certain measures are needed to be put in place for effective delivery. Every stakeholder agrees that indeed Nigeria's standard of education is not living up to her expectations particularly the University education which is besieged by a lot of problems some of which have been mentioned earlier. Attention will be made to run through some of these problems one after the other.

Human and Material Resources

In every organization men and materials are needed to actualize goals. The first essence of human resources is that people are the lifeblood of any organization. They are brought together in a hierarchical set up, making use of tool, equipment in order to attain set goals and objectives (Chike-Okoli, 2013).

Series of studies on human and materials resources in Nigeria Universities over the years since inception, University education in Nigeria Such as : Phelps-Stokes(1922), Asquith and Elliot (1943) federal ministry of education, (2007) Babalola, (2008), Okecha (2008), Osarenren-Osaghae (2015), Arubayi (2016), Ogunu (2016) e.t.c have always and still coming to the conclusion that (1) there is unavailable, sometimes inadequate quantity and quality of human and material resources for the teaching and learning of courses. Coming to the University to learn is a big deal in any part of the globe, it is an ivory tower that supposed to engrace every student passing through it with knowledge, skills, confidence, and readiness to contribute meaningfully to the society he/she belongs and the world at large. The importance of adequate quantity and quality human and materials resources in the production of sound articulate graduates cannot be over emphasized. The outcome of unprepared graduates are numerous problems, amongst them are difficulty in securing a job, lack of confidence in mist of other international graduates, unskilled and therefore cannot function, incompetent graduates becomes a problem to himself and his community e.t.c.

Availability and adequacy of human and materials resources for the actualization of set goals in the University is a zenith requirement. It is the paramount responsibility of the proprietors of the school to make sure that these all- important factors are supplied in its quantity and quality to be able to produce sound, skilled and competent graduates for the growth and development of the Nation. In Nigeria however, the efforts of the Government who is the proprietor of public Universities seem not to be enough and this is observed in the low accreditation of programmes in the Universities, quality of teachers, incompetent and unskilled graduates produced, inadequate infrastructures, facilities instructional material, work overload on low leverage of technology, braindrain, inadequate human capital lecturers. (Babalola, 2008)

The University being the highest learning institution anywhere in the world, that produce manpower in skilled technologies, that trains youths who are the future leaders and caretakers of the Nations, that empower the "generation next" to take over, ought not to be handled in a *laissez-faire* way, otherwise, how do one explain Universities, not having the necessary human and material resource infrastructural and instructional facilities to carry out tasks which include teaching, research, supervision, compilation of result etc. Universities are still incapacitated to do what they were set up to do. Studies have proven beyond reasonable doubt that the Universities in the 21st century Nigeria, especially the public ones are yet to be adequately supplied with adequate quantity and quality of human and material resources and this has made it difficult for them to actualize their goals of producing competent and skilled graduates. Now, what is the use of producing graduates that cannot function? It causes more harm than good for obvious reasons of incompetency, frustrated youths who are ticking time bombs, under developed society, increased societal vices e.t.c. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that proprietors supply in their quantity and quality adequacy of human and material resources in order to actualize set goals in the university.

Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy according to the oxford English dictionary is "The system of official rules and ways of doing things that a Government or an organization has, especially when these seem to be too complicated". Max Weber who was the proponent of bureaucracy, meant it for order and effective management of the organization but bureaucracy not properly implemented can cause untold hardship to the organization, staff, and actualization of goals. Effective communication is very important to any organization, on the other hand Bureaucratic bottlenecks in an organization can cripple or stifle effective communication, decision-making, smooth running of the organization. Urgent matters are not handled with the urgency needed, mails are left unattended when officer in charge is on leave or absent, this, encourages corrupt practices, slows down the pace of work. Babalola (2008), stated in his book, that the idea of weber was that rational organizations like the Universities should base its administration on rules, procedures, competence, contract agreements and Objectivity so that University authority could deal with routine and stable task.

The idea of bureaucracy by Max Weber is excellent because it helps to structure the organization effectively and gets goals actualized at a specified time. The Nigerian Universities still practice bureaucracy till date but a lots of challenges hallmark the practice. It has been observed that bureaucratic practice in the Nigerian Universities has a lot of problems which include: slow pace of work such that when the officer in charge is absent for

any reason, mails will have to wait until he/she resumes duty, absolute power and authority to position holders, incessant victimization of colleagues, disappearances of files, applications/requests letters from files, Abuse of office, evil connivance with opposition with intent to destroy something or somebody, eye service to those in the position of authority, special favours to family members and friends in their clicks, deliberate witch-hunting of members outside their clicks, corruption: such as using position to amass wealth e.t.c; these problems have negatively affected the management of the University and consequently affected the actualization of some goals at set times, brought back the hand of clock, schools reputation is tarnished, confusion, loss of confidence in the system.e.t. thus, max weber meant it for good but there are loopholes that create massive problems to the development of the University system in Nigeria .

The best practice in bureaucracy is that the advantages should be harnessed while the disadvantages discarded. The era of technological advancement, demand that offices be equipped with communication gadgets, internet services, staff be educated and constantly enlighten on how to use these gadgets, this is to enable staff "flow with the tide" as regards the rest of the world. These gadgets also need constant power supply to function effectively. This will be an asset to the development of the Nation. Nigeria needs to look into her system of bureaucracy in the organization and make adjustments where necessary if they are to move with the rest of the world.

Examination Malpractice

Examination malpractice is a gigantic problem that has eaten deep into the Nations educational fabrics. This problem takes place before, during and after Examinations. It happens between students and lecturers, parents and lecturers, non-academic staff and students, students and students, Azinge, (1993), Edobor, (2004), Whawo, (2015) Ogunu (2016). There are several reasons given by authors why Examination malpractice thrive in the schools in Nigeria, from primary schools to the University. Some of which are: unavailable instructional materials, inadequate knowledge of the subjects taught, inadequate invigilators to cope with large population in the Examination halls, strikes, students' study habits, lecturers made to face disciplinary panels, when cases of Examination malpractice are reported to the school authorities, in fact it has been observed that in some cases lecturers become victims at the end of panel sittings, this situation discourage them from reporting cases of Examination malpractices. This menace has become a big monster, that efforts over the years by Government and school authorities to eliminate or curb this problem has proven to be impossible. Graduates from these schools are supposed to be the future leaders of the Nation, how will graduates bred from these schools move the Nation forward technologically, when they do not have the prerequisite? There are implications of Examination malpractice, on the students involved, the school it occurred and the society where the students will eventually practice. Among these implications are; half- baked graduates, who have tarnished the image of their schools thereby negatively affecting societal views about the school, and graduates cannot contribute meaningfully to the progress of the society but become a problem to themselves, their parents and society.

The challenges facing modern day Examination in Nigerian Universities are overwhelming, findings from Examination bodies and individual scholars have shown and outlined different ways in which Examination malpractice take place, some of which include

the sanitary pad method, the stampede, the acid, false pocket under locker, note on the lap, the knee socks, the oxford bag, the expose, class teacher and ex-student method west African Examination council, (WAEC 2013), general common entrance (G.C.E. 2014) reports. For tertiary institutions they include: bullet/missiles, dubbing on tables, body writing or tattoo, walkie-talkie, computer inform of calculator, giraffe, super print, Ecowas, microchips, contractors, impersonator, Chukuli, none-academic staff serving as invigilator, even academic staff, pre-established network formed by the coalition of students, teachers and invigilators e.t.c.

Examination malpractice has become so dangerous that students carry weapons to Examination halls, beat-up invigilators who may also be their teachers, intimidate invigilators who dares to challenges them, students war with their lecturers who refuse to cooperate with them in their nefarious activities in Examination halls, students are now emboldened to commit this disgraceful act because, they have backing from high quarters such as parents or guardians in positions of authority in same school, Government or politics, etc. these insanity must stop !!! If Nigeria University will even actualize their purposes.

Itedjere (2017) has concluded by saying that Examination malpractice is a canker worm that has destroyed the fabrics of our educational system, it was further said that this has not only been limited to students but all stakeholders in education involved at varying degrees, such as parents, teachers, invigilators, examiners even police who are the custodian of law and order in Examinations. Disasters that could take place as a result of half-baked graduates were also enumerated. Over population of students have also contributed to Examination malpractices in Nigeria Universities. It has been observed for example that faculty courses have large population of students, a situation where students over two thousand, siting for an Examination with no adequate halls to contain them, not enough invigilators to cope with invigilation, sitting arrangements are crowded etc., why would there not be a malpractice in the Examination halls? Students can hardly be blamed in this situation.

Examination Malpractice can be curbed but Nigeria seem not to be ready to curb it, and this is the reason why, it is still flourishing for obvious reasons which include corruption, sentiments of helping friends and relatives, politics e.t.c. Educational managers must be ready to be serious about eliminating this “destiny destroyer” from the school system. In the United States of America for example there are measures put in place to ensure no Examination malpractice take place. Some of these include: Lecturers are not over burdened with academic work, for effective and efficient delivery of services. In other words, teacher/students ratio is strictly upheld, students attendance to class is mandatory, any student who does not meet the minimum standard attendance is not qualified to write examination, No sentiments! Measures are put in place to check students activities, video cameras are mounted, virtually everywhere. The manageable size of students to a lecturer makes it easy for lecturers to know their students in person, infact by their names. There is a personal relationship between academic staff and his/her students in terms of academics. Accepting bribes from students to pass an Examination is a criminal offence that is punishable by law and if found guilty, attracts summary dismissal to the lecturer and loss of studentship to the student without sentiments. Lecturers report students who wants to bribe them and likewise students report lecturers who demand for money or gifts in exchange for good grade and the

penalty is a dismissal if investigation prove to be true. Same dismissal, awaits any non-academic staff involved in Examination malpractice. Students are encouraged to bring to the knowledge of management any lecturer not doing his/her job of teaching, a written authorization is required to be absent from duty, for any reason. Any educational administrator/ Manager found to be involved in aiding and abetting Examination malpractice is summarily dismissed.

The Universities continue with the approved calendar despite public holidays. In other words, "no disruption". Every student is informed that Examination is not to witch hunt or victimize them but rather a medium to find out how much they have learnt, how much the students understand what is being taught, knowledge of students that need more help in understanding, students are made to be as comfortable as possible, not under tension in writing their Examinations. With the above structures, it is difficult for a staff or student to even think of Examination malpractice, it does not come up because everyone is enlightened. Provision of adequate and qualitative experts to teach, provision of infrastructure and instructional facilities are paramount.

These and more are practices that have brought Examination malpractice of any sort to its barest minimum if any, in American schools. Adoption of this structure is highly recommended for a better future in conducting examinations and producing results.

Staff Welfare

Staff welfare is another huge concern that affects virtually every organization in Nigeria. The staff welfare in the Universities, is taken with levity to the extent that most frequently, staff are on strike to press home their demands. Workers are not dedicated to their primary assignment, because they cannot make ends meet with their meager salary, they are involved either in another employment in addition to the one they have or have their own private businesses in addition to their employment. Inadequate welfare of staff has made a lot of lecturers to migrate to other Countries seeking for greener pastures, ("brain drain"), therefore, students are not learning. If youths are really the future of any Nation, one begins to wonder the kind of youths the Universities are breeding for future leadership in Nigeria and why the Government would deliberately not provide adequate necessities to make youths ready for future challenges.

Staff welfare is an integral part of all organizations because it is people who work in the organization that actually move the organization forward and actualize goals, not the machines. Therefore, the staff of any organization are a priority and an essential part of the organization that should never be neglected or abused, according to the human relations practitioners in the behavioural School of thought, researchers found a lot of evidence to support the fact that, not only economic benefits are necessary for workers' satisfaction. Workers are also happy and satisfied when employers care about their feelings, personal goals, advancement, challenges, empathize with them. e.t.c. These are all contributory factors to staff welfare. Salary alone is not enough to make staff happy and satisfied, employers must make sure they carry their staff along in everything including decisions. Employees must feel like a part owner of the organization. This is a strategy of some very few employers, who believe in the efficacy of workers to get work done much faster and better productivity, consequently, more profit. Provision of facilities they need to work is a prerequisite, allowance for employees to use their initiatives to carry out assignments, consistent payment

of salary/ remunerations as at when due is another. The behavioural school believes that when a worker feels loved and cared for, he puts in his best and remain as a worker in that organization until retirement but otherwise, attracts attrition.

The idea of staff welfare was a big contribution by the behaviourist school of thought whose proponents include among others Mary Parker follet, Hugo Munsterberg, Elton mayo, Fritz Roethlisberger in the Hawthorne studies of western electric, (Edobor, 2004). These studies gave birth to a whole new way of thinking about workers, unlike in the classical school where workers were treated with little or no compassion, workers' idiosyncrasies were not considered, in fact, this was one of the major reasons why the classical school failed, because of its rigidity and threats to workers.

In Nigeria the classical school ideas are still in force. A situation where workers are seen as mere workers and not a valued part of the organization, by using rules, regulation, punishments as a means to get them to work, it is not the best but because they need the money (salary) from the job, they can bear the pain and embarrassment but as soon they get a better job, they move, without looking back, this invariably affects the organization negatively because the workers go away with wealth of experience and another desperate inexperienced job seeker will have to fill that vacancy in order to actualize goals.

Observations have brought to knowledge that employers in Nigeria especially in public sector, don't use their initiative to enhance welfare packages, to sought inflation, they wait until workers agitate for it, which mostly end up in unrests and disruptions of the smooth running of the organization, employers disregard agreement reached between employer and employees, even when they know the right thing to do, they rather hope that their employees don't remember the agreement because of change of Government but employees cannot forget because they are stressed and need relief, therefore problems upon problems begin to emerge. Employers should begin to do the right things at the right time so as to minimize drastically corruption, which is the single major predicament haunting Nigeria and her people.

Funding

Many studies have shown that Universities in Nigeria have suffered untold hardship because of funding (Aghenta 2006, Nwangwu 2007, Okecha 2008, Babalola 2014, Arubayi 2016,). Funding is a major factor that gives stress to the University education in Nigeria, due to its inadequacy. The role of higher education in the overall National Development has never been in doubt. Economists have at various times emphasized the need to invest in higher education in order to build human capital for National development. This concept has led to the recognition of education as an instrument per excellence for achieving National Development as recognized by the National policy on education (FRN 2013). To achieve this, the schools, particularly, the higher education sector have to develop in their products, worthwhile skills and capacities which can aid National development. How is it possible to develop worthwhile skills and capacities without adequate funding? In spite of the positive relationship between investment in higher education and economic growth, Nigeria's economic growth rate indicators have not matched the existence of 150 functional public and private Universities. Inadequate funding causes hardship on every sector of the University, ranging from the provision of human and material resources, students learning, staff welfare, achievement of goals, University Administration, functional education e.t.c. Nigeria Government making

promises of funding the Universities, at times memorandum of understanding (M.O.U) are written but all to no avail, the Government even make budgetary allocation to education but releases the money in parts even in its inadequacy. The Government have not been able to meet up with UNESCO's advice of 26% for funding education. The Government claims not to have the kind of fund required for education but the same Government recognize education as an excellent tool for the Nation's all-round development, why can it not sacrifice adequate funding for her so that she can deliver her goods maximally. In agreement with Arubayi (2016), the facts remain clear that Nigeria, even in the 21st century, is still ill-prepared to abide by current global Framework for the establishment and management of University education.

There is no need dreaming of University Education without adequate funding. Therefore, if the Government really mean and believe in education as an effective tool to bring about National Development, seriousness must be put into funding university education; playing bad politics with education must stop in Nigeria if she is to meet up with vision 20:2020. Nigeria Government must re-think their stand as regards funding education. If education is not funded adequately, then who is deceiving who? What is adequate funding?, it means funding that is enough to revamp the system, steady the system and make the system grow to meet other universities standard elsewhere in the world. This is a lot of money but for education of the youths, it is worth it. Effort can be made to start with UNESCO's advice of 26% and gradually increase the funding until such as time when the Universities have been revamped and picking up, graduate are competent and skilled; to the extent that the graduates here can compete successful with the graduates in other Nations of the World. Adequate funding must be continuous and consistent, qualified educational administrators/managers must be held accountable for money release to institutions, because of corruption, monitoring committees must be set up to monitor projects, environment, staff, students e.t.c and report back to proprietors, which in case of public schools, are the Government (both state and federal), corrupt practices in Nigeria will need some drastic measure to get rid of. When a school manager knows he/she is being monitored, he/she takes practical steps to make sure he/she does not do anything that will earn him/her a sack and if monitoring team is not enough to caution the corrupt mind, then a step further is necessary to take care of him/her by applying administrative tools such as termination, dismissal, imprisonment and be made to refund the stolen money without fear, favour or sentiments. This will go a long way to stop embezzlements/corruption. Adequate funding is a necessity, If the universities are to actualize their goals.

University Autonomy

University Autonomy is integral to the very idea of a University. This concept has always been regarded as an indispensable tool to the Universities for the actualization of set goals. University has defended it. Because of its inestimable value (Onyeneoru 2008). University Autonomy is the power that is granted to the University to run itself without interferences from outside communities such as politicians, community leaders, parents, proprietors and other organizations, in the day to day running of the University. It has often been said that for Universities to play a meaningful role and discharge its responsibilities effectively, the system must enjoy high degree of autonomy. While citing examples from advanced countries of the world, the world bank demonstrated how financial and spending autonomy serve as incentives for quality improvement and efficiency in various higher education system (Babalola, Jaiyeola & Okediran 2007). Weber (2006) concluded in his research that the best Universities in his rankings were very autonomous.

The power of autonomy given to the Universities enable them to appoint key officers, determine the conditions of service of their staff, control their students' admission; academic curriculum, control their finances and generally regulate themselves as an independent legal entity without undue interferences from Government and its agencies (Fehnel 2000). University Autonomy is a beautiful concept but laudable as it is, Nigeria public Universities as at today (2017) are yet to experience its fullness. In fact, the autonomy in the Nigeria Universities keep nose driving even to this day and age. The Governments Feel that because they pay the salaries of staff, they hold the power to control whatever happens in the Universities because according to the saying that goes "he that plays the pipe dictates the tunes", therefore, vice chancellors are hand picked, sacked at will, University management are pressurized to take decisions and actions that will serve their selfishness, otherwise, sacked from office.

From observation, Government regularly infringe on the right of the school authorities to exercise their professional "competence", thereby infringe on the autonomy of the University. The Government put loyalist in management positions, so that the University is virtually ran from outside. Universities need autonomy to run itself and to actualize set goals, otherwise the whole idea of using University education as a tool to produce competent graduates for the National development is a mirage. Competent University managers should be allowed to use their expertise to run the University without interferences from outside. There are Governments agencies and organizations eroding the University Autonomy. Areas of erosion include: appointments of vice chancellors, usurpation of power by the National universities commission, quota system syndrome, Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), are all eroding the University Autonomy. e.t.c. As wonderful and laudable as these agencies are, their functional roles tend to impinge on the statutory functions of Nigeria Universities. These and other agencies controlling the Nigerian Universities emphasis quality over funding, instead of ensuring that there is adequate funding to enhance the quality of graduates. Adequate autonomy is a pre-requisite to manage the universities effectively and efficiently as to actualize set goals at the right time.

Academic freedom

Academic freedom according to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO 1950) is (1) the right to pursue knowledge for its own sake and to

follow wherever the search for truth may lead (2) the tolerance of divergent opinions and freedom from political interference (3) the obligation as social institutions to promote through teaching and research, the principles of freedom and justice of human dignity and solidarity and to develop mutually material and moral aid on an international level. Kirk (2005) also sees academic freedom as the principle designed to protect the teacher from the hazards that tend to prevent him from meeting his obligation in the pursuit of truth. The University goals of teaching, research, storehouse of knowledge and community service certainly requires an academic setting in which the scholar can express himself/herself freely and without inhibitions.

The academic staff in Nigerian Universities are yet to attain the height of academic freedom talked about here, because according to Adewale (2006) attempts to suppress academic freedom included planting of informants among students and lecturers, victimization of lecturers, denial of research and/or permits, such happenings played a key role in students and other social unrests which in turn led to violence and recurrent closure of the Universities which contributed to further erosion of educational standards, the obvious reaction from a dictatorial regimes was a further clamp down with the attendant subjection of students leaders and lecturers in detention, jail, intimidation. and various forms of harassments, the resultant effect was brain drain.

It has been observed that the provisions on paper that provided for the integrity of the University space? and the independent establishment of its internal organizations have often been severally violated by members of political parties that have been part of Government coalitions. Some lecturers described as "extremists" were no longer to be heard. These threats are infringement on academic freedom. Very many academic staff are not encouraged to carry out researches because it was observed that researches that were carried out in the past were not upheld or used for National Development, instead findings from these researches were lost in the pages of books, journals, theses dissertations etc. in the library.

The Government claim that education is the key to National Development and yet findings from genuine researches that can help in this regard are disregarded and hidden away, who is deceiving who? This is perhaps one of the reasons why academic freedom was found out to be significantly related to academic staff attitude to work, (Osawaru-Ogbegie, 2013). This perhaps also explains the non-challant attitude towards research and teaching, from observation, academic staff only carry out compulsory researches for the purpose of promotion, not really to go out of their way to carry out research for the school authorities or Government who would always complain of unavailable funds. Besides, the findings were never used for National development but rather stocked away and forgotten. This is not best practice of academic freedom.

Academic freedom in the University is the freedom given to academic staff scholars in the University to carry out researches unhindered and without being victimized by school authority or outside community. A situation where findings of critical importance are hidden away for fear of victimization, loss of job, imprisonment or even death is no more an academic freedom. An ideal academic freedom should be in a conducive environment, where the academic staff has all it will take in terms of funding, material and human resources to carry out the research successfully and publish the finding of same without fear or favour.

This can only happen in an environment where researchers can have freedom to think, security, money, men and materials. The researchers will not be afraid that the formula

will be stolen away by force, even Government assisted researches are treated like rubbish, the findings are never used to better the lot of her citizens, neither are they heard of again, this kind of attitude by Government will not encourage true and genuine research because if it is going to be treated like rubbish at the end of the day and not used for the purpose it was meant to serve, then, there is really no need to be serious about research. Seriousness in such research could amount to time and money wasted, energy sapping and family problems due to constant absence from home etc. Government should sponsor researches and use the findings for National Development.

Summary

This paper has examined "challenges haunting universities education and best practices in the 21st century Nigeria". The paper reviewed some challenging factors in the Nigerian universities which included: Human and material Resources, Bureaucracy, Examination Malpractice, Staff Welfare, Funding, University autonomy and academic freedom. Their best practices were also highlighted within the discussions. Application of the best practices for all the factors mentioned in this work are needful otherwise, the University system of education in Nigeria will never be revamped neither can she be able to produced competent and skilled graduates that can move the Nation forward technologically and a lot of our youths will be lost to other Countries, which invariably means that the Nation's future will be lost to other Countries that have been able to use "Education" as a tool to advance their Nations and better the lives of their citizens. The nation's wealth (youths) will be lost to other nation's when actions to turn around the already damaged university system are not upheld and implemented with all it will take.

Suggestions

The following suggestions have been proffered to help University education in Nigeria worthwhile:

1. The Government must be serious in adequately implementing the University education properly, if it is to actualize the purposes for which it was set up.
2. Adequate human and material resources must be provided for teaching, learning and building sound characters.
3. Bottlenecks need not be in Bureaucracy, Information/Communication Technology (ICT) should be updated and provided for all staff. Accordingly, staff must be upgraded constantly to know how to use these gadgets. Communication should flow without hindrances. There must be constant power supply to operate these equipment in the offices
4. Proprietors should listen and meet the needs of workers, so that industrial actions like strikes may be a thing of the past, proprietors should be proactive to the needs of employees.
5. Staff welfare should be paramount in the minds of proprietors and school authorities otherwise many things can go wrong such as risking the actualization of set goals, attrition, negative attitude to work, braindrain etc.
6. Adequate funding will naturally get rid of very many problems in the school systems, therefore, proprietors who wants to succeed in terms of achieving the purpose for which the school was set up, must be ready to adequately fund it or forget about

setting up schools.

7. The success of the University education is her autonomy to carryout responsibilities expected of her, therefore, expertise in the management of the University is essential to her success. The outside community should hands off the administration and if they must interfere, then, they should fund her adequately.
8. Scholars in the University must be given backing in research and publication without fear of harassment, victimization and threats. Academic freedom is necessary for academic staff to function maximally.

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