

## **The History and Development of Public Universities in Nigeria Since 1914**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examines the historical development of public University in Nigeria, giving the fact that the missionaries and the colonial administrations left no plan for Nigerians to obtain certificates of international recognition rather its main aim was for them to serve as low-level manpower or middle level manpower in the capacity of interpreters and clerks. Education still plays a significant role in balancing the imbalance in social and political development as well as improves the quality of life. It further revealed that the university education is plagued with various crises of funding, strikes action, etc. The study concludes that Nigeria should implement education policies that will exploit science and technology as the hub of university development. The following recommendations are proffered among others; the Nigerian governments should endeavour to meet the UNESCO recommendation of 26% of annual budget.*

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### **Introduction**

The development of public universities in Nigeria dates back to 1948 with the establishment of university college, Ibadan. It is the fulcrum of this paper to trace the origin, development of public universities in Nigeria and carefully discusses the various challenges faced by these universities and proffer solutions.

### **Development of Public Universities in Nigeria**

The Yaba Higher College became the first institution of higher learning to be established in Nigeria. Although, as at 1930 other forms of post-secondary education were introduced in some government departments like the Railway and Agriculture. For example, Agriculture was at Moon Plantation, Ibadan, Samaru near Zaria, Veterinary science was at Vom, and Engineering in Lagos. Within the period, nationalists were getting more vocal in their request for an institution of University rank in Nigeria (Kosemani & Okorosaye-Orubite, 1995).

Consequently, the few students available at the Yaba higher college were offered courses in civil engineering, medicine, agriculture, survey, and teacher training for secondary schools, later commerce, forestry and veterinary science. The major objective for setting up the college was to train Africans to hold positions of responsibility whether under government or otherwise and would in effect be able to do a large portion of the work in Nigeria for which Europeans are employed to do. This is because, it was

becoming expensive to foot the bill of the expatriate quota involved in the colonial administration. Hence, if the Africans take over the junior positions as administrative officers, Pharmacists, Medical officers, etc, allowing the senior level to be occupied by Europeans, this will reduce the high expatriate wage bill.

The certificates awarded by the Yaba College were criticized by the Nigerian public especially the nationalists on the following grounds that:

- The aims of the college were very narrow and as such were inferior to a university. This was unacceptable to the nationalists who had all the while clamoured for the establishment of an institution of university rank.
- Admission was through a competitive entrance examination which was of the same standard as the London Matriculation Examination.
- Graduates of Yaba were expected to occupy junior posts (mostly technical) in the civil service while those from comparable institutions in Britain went into the intermediate level of the civil service.
- The Yaba Diploma had no international recognition.
- The number of years spent in the college was long enough for anybody to obtain a degree in the same course in a university and in some cases longer.

Nigerians made more agitations for a comprehensive higher education and this led to the setting up of Asquith and Elliot Commissions on Higher Education in 1943.

Asquith and Elliot Commissions submitted their reports in 1945, the Asquith Commission unanimously recommended among others the followings:

1. The establishment of residential university Colleges which will eventually grow into autonomous universities in the colonies where such colleges were not in existence.
2. The colleges should liaise with London University to ensure the adaptation of the syllabus.
3. The relationship between technology and university education was poor to local conditions as well as maintaining London university standards.

Asquith and Elliot Commissions had split decision that resulted to majority and minority reports. Both of them agreed on the urgent need for the development of university education in West Africa but the members disagreed on the number and type of institutions to be established. There were two different opinions and reports of majority and minority. This difference went along political lines. Because the majority report was signed by the members of the Conservative Party and West Africans on the commission recommended the immediate establishment of three university colleges in West Africa which were to be sited at Ibadan, Achimota, Gold Coast (now Ghana). Meanwhile, the minority report was signed by members of the Labour and Liberal parties recommending only one West African University College at Ibadan, and four territorial Colleges to be sited at Ghana formerly Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, Gambia and Nigeria to serve as feeders to the main institution in Ibadan and should provide intermediate courses. The reason for the minority report was that West Africa cannot provide enough

qualified candidates to fill up three university Colleges (Okafor in Kosemani & Okorosaye-Orubite, 1995).

Consequently, as the Labour party came into power after the British general election in 1945, the government adopted the minority report and rejected the majority report. This caused serious protests from the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone. Based on the recommendation of the Asquith commission in 1946, it sent out delegation led by Sir William Hamiton-Fyfe to West Africa to do more study along the lines of the minority report. The delegation submitted its report in January, 1947 and recommended the establishment of a university college at Ibadan (financed by the government) and another in the Gold Coast to be funded by the territory. So at last Nigeria gained and the University College was born in 1948. Entrance examination into the college was conducted in November 1947 and on January 1948, the university college, Ibadan opened on a temporary site at Eleyele, Ibadan as an affiliate of the University of London with 104 students and 13 instructors. The remaining students of the Yaba College became the first batch of undergraduates in the new university college (Okafor, 2001). The establishment of a university was long expected in West Africa and indeed Nigeria.

### **The Ashby Commission of 1959**

In April, 1959, the Federal Ministry of Education appointed Ashby Commission on Post-School Certificate and Higher Education to conduct an investigation and recommend to the government among others on the needs for higher education in Nigeria. The Nine-Man commission was set up by the Federal Ministry of Education composed of three members, one from each region, three Americans and three Britons. The commission submitted its report few weeks before the opening of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The commission's report cited in NOUN in Abdulrahman-Yusuf (2015) was so comprehensive that it embraced the secondary, technical, commercial, veterinary and higher education needs in Nigeria. It also projected the manpower needs of the country up to the 1980s and worked out effective strategies for realizing such through the various levels of our education.

The recommendations of the commission on university education are summarized in the government White paper titled "Investment in Education" among others:

1. to concentrate higher education in university institutions through providing degree courses suited to Nigerian needs;
2. to increase the university population in Nigeria;
3. to concentrate the Federal Government's resources on existing centres of Lagos and four separate and independent universities, one in each region and one in Lagos, each offering its own degree;
4. university College Ibadan, should move away from its conservative position, widen its curriculum and develop into a full university;
5. all universities in Nigeria should be national in outlook and unnecessary duplication of expensive courses should be avoided;
6. professional qualification in commercial subjects should be gained through courses leading to degree programmes;

7. each university should organize extension work in its own area and should seek sponsorship from a well-established university overseas;
8. universities seeking federal funds, should negotiate through a National Universities Commission, not directly with the Ministry of Education;
9. the international aid should be sought both in money and in the temporary loan of university place and of young graduate teachers from overseas;
10. a University should be established in the North using the old site of the Nigeria College in Zaria as its base.

The federal government in conjunction with the regional government and other interested organizations and individual decided to accept the recommendations in principle after careful study of the report of the commission. But the federal government made amendments mainly in respect of targets. With the recommendations, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka was formerly opened on 7<sup>th</sup> October, 1960. It became the first autonomous university in Nigeria with an American orientation. Other universities established were the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife (Formerly, the university of Ife came to be in 1962; and Ahmadu Bello university, Zaria in 1962. The University of Lagos, a non-residential university was born in 1962, while in 1962 the University College, Ibadan was transformed into a substantive university (Kosemani & Okorosaye – Orubite, 1995).

It should be noted that the establishment of the University of Ife, Ile-Ife was not as a direct result of the Ashby recommendations. Rather it was Dr Sanya Onabamiro, a member of the commission who became the Hon. Minister of Education, Western Nigeria who contended that four universities that is currently financed by the federal government would not be adequately meet the needs of Nigeria in the next ten years. He then, recommended an additional regional university in each region which will bring the total number to seven. Thus, Abdulrahman – Yusuf (2015) summarized the number of universities established between 1948 and 1962, namely “First Generation Universities as;

1. University of Ibadan, Ibadan, 1948
2. University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1960
3. University of Ife, Ile Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), 1962
4. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 1962 and
5. University of Lagos, Lagos, 1962

Consequently, on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1970, the University of Benin was recognized by the National Universities Commission as the University of Benin.

### **The Second Generation Universities:**

The third National Development Plan of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in 1972, proposed to establish four new universities between the period of 1975-80 under the Federal Government leadership and control. However, the geographical distribution of the educational facilities and site of the university posed some problems across the nation. Consequently, Federal Government in April, 1975 announced the establishment of the universities to be sited at Calabar, Jos, Maiduguri and Sokoto.. In addition, three

university colleges to be established in Ilorin, Port Harcourt and Kano but became full – fledged universities on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1977. These seven universities were often referred to as “second generation universities”.

However, when the nineteen state structures were created in 1976, there was need for geo-political balancing of citing of Federal Universities in all the nineteen states. Consequently, in 1980, the federal government approved the establishment of a University of Technology to be sited in each of the then seven states that did not have a Federal University located in their geographical areas.

### State-Owned Universities

It is noted that the first and second generation’ Universities were established and owned either by the regional or Federal Government. However, the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria transferred the University education from the exclusive list to the concurrent legislative list, meaning federal and state legislation. By this, the states were allowed to establish their own Universities if they desired. Thus, between 1979 and 1983 eight states – owned Universities were established, Rivers State University of science and Technology, Port Harcourt, Lagos State University, Ojo, Bendel State University, Ekpoma, Anambra State University of Technology, Enugu, Imo State University, Etiti, Ogun State University, Ago–Iwoye, etc. Therefore, by 2015 there exist in Nigeria eighty degree awarding institutions of Federal and State government Universities made up of:

- Federal Universities - 40
- State Universities - 40

### There are 23 specialized Federal Universities as follows:

- 16 Universities of Technology
- 3 Universities of Agriculture
- 1 Defence Academy
- 1 Open University
- 1 Nigeria Police Academy
- 1 University of Petroleum Resources

Table 1.1 below shows the list of Public Federal Universities in Nigeria.

**Table 1.1 – List of Federal Universities in Nigeria**

| S/N | Universities                       | Year founded | Location            |
|-----|------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| 1.  | University College (now UI) Ibadan | 1948         | Ibadan, Oyo state   |
| 2.  | University of Nigeria              | 1960         | Nsukka, Enugu state |
| 3.  | University of Lagos                | 1962         | Akoka, Lagos state  |
| 4.  | Ahmadu Bello University            | 1962         | Zaria, Kaduna state |
| 5.  | University of Ife (now OAU)        | 1962         | Ile-Ife, Osun state |
| 6.  | University of Benin                | 1970         | Benin, Edo state    |

|     |   |      |                            |
|-----|---|------|----------------------------|
| 7.  | University of Calabar                                     | 1975 | Calabar, Cross River state |
| 8.  | University of Ilorin                                      | 1975 | Ilorin, Kwara state        |
| 9.  | University of Jos   | 1975 | Jos, Plateau state         |
| 10. | Bayero University, Kano                                   | 1975 | Kano, Kano state           |
| 11. | University of Maiduguri                                   | 1975 | Maiduguri, Borno state     |
| 12. | University of Port Harcourt                               | 1975 | Choba, Rivers State        |
| 13. | Usman Dan-Fodiyo University, Sokoto                       | 1975 | Sokoto, Sokoto state       |
| 14. | Federal University of Technology, Owerri                  | 1980 | Owerri, Imo state          |
| 15. | Federal University Of Technology Yola                     | 1980 | Yola, Adamawa state        |
| 16. | Federal University of Technology, Akure                   | 1981 | Akure, Ondo state          |
| 17. | Federal University of Technology, Minna                   | 1982 | Minna, Niger state         |
| 18. | Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA) Zaria                      | 1985 | Zaria, Kaduna state        |
| 19. | University of Abuja                                       | 1988 | FCT, Abuja                 |
| 20. | Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi                 | 1988 | Bauchi, Bauchi state       |
| 21. | University of Agriculture, Makurdi                        | 1988 | Makurdi, Benue state       |
| 22. | University of Agriculture, Abeokuta                       | 1988 | Abeokuta, Ogun state       |
| 23. | University of Uyo, Uyo                                    | 1991 | Uyo, Akwa Ibom state       |
| 24. | Michael Okpara University of Agriculture (MOUAU), Umudike | 1992 | Umudike, Abia State        |
| 25. | Nnamdi Azikiwe University                                 | 1992 | Awka, Anambra State        |
| 26. | National Open University of Nigeria, Lagos                | 2002 | Lagos state                |
| 27. | Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Efurun         | 2007 | Efurun, Warri Delta state  |
| 28. | Federal University, Dutse                                 | 2011 | Jigawa state               |
| 29. | Federal University, Dutsin-Ma                             | 2011 | Katsina state              |
| 30. | Federal University, Kashere                               | 2011 | Gombe state                |
| 31. | Federal University, Lafia                                 | 2011 | Nasarawa state             |
| 32. | Federal University, Lokoja                                | 2011 | Kogi state                 |
| 33. | Federal University, Ndufu-Aliki Ikwo                      | 2011 | Ebonyi state               |
| 34. | Federal University, Otuoke                                | 2011 | Bayelsa state              |
| 35. | Federal University, Oye-Ekiti                             | 2011 | Ekiti state                |
| 36. | Federal University, Wukari                                | 2011 | Taraba state               |
| 37. | The Police Academy  | 2012 | Kano State                 |
| 38. | Federal University, Birnin-Kebbi                          | 2013 | Kebbi state                |
| 39. | Federal University, Gusau                                 | 2013 | Zamfara state              |
| 40. | Federal University, Gasua                                 | 2013 | Yobe state                 |

**Sources:** Wikipedia.org. Free encyclopedia/culled from the university Matriculation examination brochure, 2011-2015. Retrieved 20/5/15

The decision of the then military administration to make the establishment of universities an exclusive preserve of the federal government was described by the NUC report as “Controversial” as it raises a number of national issues.

See Table 1.2 below showing State-owned Public Universities in Nigeria

**Table 1.2- List of State Universities in Nigeria**

| S/N | Universities                                    | Year founded | Location     |
|-----|---|--------------|--------------|
| 1.  | Rivers State University of Science & Technology | 1979         | Rivers State |

|     |   |      |                   |
|-----|---|------|-------------------|
|     | (RSUST), Rumulemini   |      |                   |
| 2.  | Enugu State University of Technology, Enugu                       | 1980 | Enugu State       |
| 3.  | Abia State University (ABSU), Uturu                               | 1981 | Abia State        |
| 4.  | Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye                            | 1981 | Ogun State        |
| 5.  | Imo State University, Owerri                                      | 1981 | Owerri            |
| 6.  | Ambrose Alli University (AAU), Ekpoma                             | 1981 | Edo State         |
| 7.  | Lagos State University, Ojo, Apapa                                | 1983 | Lagos State       |
| 8.  | Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho               | 1988 | Oyo State         |
| 9.  | Kogi State University, Aiyigba                                    | 1988 | Kogi State        |
| 10. | Ekiti State university, Ado-Ekiti                                 | 1988 | Ekiti State       |
| 11. | Delta State University (DELSU) Abraka                             | 1990 | Delta State       |
| 12. | Benue State University (BSU), Markudi                             | 1995 | Benue State       |
| 13. | Eboyi State University (EBSU), Abakiliki                          | 1996 | Eboyi State       |
| 14. | Kano State University, Bagauda                                    | 1998 | Kano State        |
| 15. | Adekunle Ajasin University of Technology, Akungba-Akoko           | 1999 | Ondo State        |
| 16. | Anambra State University (ANSU), Uli                              | 2000 | Anambra State     |
| 17. | Kano State University of Technology, Wudil                        | 2000 | Kano State        |
| 18. | Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island                        | 2000 | Bayelsa State     |
| 19. | Adamawa State University (ADSU) Mubi                              | 2002 | Adamawa State     |
| 20. | Cross River State University of Technology (CRUTECH), Calabar     | 2002 | Cross River State |
| 21. | Nasarawa State University, Keffi                                  | 2002 | Nasarawa State    |
| 22. | North-East University, Kano                                       | 2012 | Kano State        |
| 23. | Kaduna State University, Kaduna                                   | 2004 | Kaduna State      |
| 24. | Gombe State University  | 2004 | Gombe State       |
| 25. | Plateau State University, Bokkos                                  | 2005 | Plateau State     |
| 26. | Ibrahim Babangida University, Lapai                               | 2005 | Niger state       |
| 27. | Kebbi State University, Aliero                                    | 2005 | Kebbi State       |
| 28. | Bukar Abba Ibrahim University, Damaturu                           | 2006 | Yobe State        |
| 29. | Umaru Musa Yar'Adua University, Katsina                           | 2006 | Katsina State     |
| 30. | Osun State University, Osogbo                                     | 2006 | Osun State        |
| 31. | Ondo State University of science and technology, Okitiputa        | 2008 | Ondo State        |
| 32. | Tai-Solari University of Education, Ijebu-Ode                     | 2008 | Ogun State        |
| 33. | Taraba State University, Jalingo                                  | 2008 | Taraba State      |
| 34. | Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt             | 2009 | Rivers State      |
| 35. | Kwara State University  | 2009 | Kwara State       |
| 36. | Sokoto state University, Sokoto                                   | 2009 | Sokoto State      |
| 37. | Akwa Ibom State University of Science & Technology (AKUTECH), Uyo | 2010 | Akwa ibom         |
| 38. | Bauchi State University, Gadau                                    | 2011 | Bauchi State      |
| 39. | Technical University, Ibadan                                      | 2012 | Oyo State         |
| 40. | Jigawa State University, Kassim-Hamsa                             | 2013 | Jigawa State      |

**Sources:** Wikipedia.org. Free encyclopedia/culled from the university Matriculation examination brochure, 2011-2014.

## **Challenges Facing Nigerian Public Universities**

University education in Nigeria is confronted with several challenges. It is a combination of inadequate funding, curriculum content and delivery, strike actions, decline in quality of research in the universities, issues of autonomy, lack of integration of information and communication technology (ICT) in the Universities, brain drain syndrome, inadequate infrastructural facilities and equipment, cultism, and political interference in establishing public universities.

### **1. Poor Funding of Public University Education**

One of the major challenges facing the management of this sector of education is inadequate funding. The budgetary allocation devoted to education has been considered to be grossly inadequate considering the phenomenon increase in students' enrolment and increasing cost, which have been aggravated by inflation. A serious problem confronting Nigerian public university education today is that of scarcity of fund. Government financial policies on education have therefore been subjected to constant review with the intention of allocating more resources to university education. Even though there appears to be absolute increase in fund allocation to the education sector over the years, yet there is financial crisis in education (Uzoka, 2007). The issue of funding university education has caused the development of the education to be stagnant and acquire degree certificates at the expense of acquiring skills that will enable them to be self-reliant. Even the meagre sum of money made available is often mismanaged; hence, Ogbondah (2010) noted that inadequate financing of universities has been one of the major problems facing university education today. Much money is required to maintain the existing infrastructure, execute capital projects, embark on educational research and pay salaries of staff. Thus, Dare (2008) in Ogbondah (2010) asserted that in spite of the inadequacy of allocations to the public university system, any fund made available often go down the drain through the corrupt practices of those entrusted with the implementation of university programmes due to inadequate monitoring of university income and expenditure, such is the grim state of affairs, thus the future will need a paradigm shift.

### **2. Curriculum Content and Delivery in the Public Universities**

Curriculum is the broad programme of activities designed by the government or school in order to help achieve the general goals or objectives of education. It refers to prescribed courses of study, which learners fulfill in order to attain goals of education. Adepoju (1998) refers to curriculum as planned actions for instruction, and should be derived from the needs of the neighbourhoods in which the school is located, reflecting the neighbourhood interests and changes in living. Adepoju (1998) contends that good curriculum should be made to be dynamic and flexible. A systematic approach should therefore be taken in order to effect a change in both the content and context of the school curriculum. The idea of curriculum relevance in our universities is to make university education more responsive to the needs of the country, to update and modify our curricula for relevance to both national needs and global demands.



### 3. **Strikes Actions of the Public Universities.**

It has become a known fact that students across various universities in Nigeria are constantly faced with industrial actions embarked upon by the Academic and Non-Academic Staff Unions of various institutions. The disagreement or lack of understanding between government and unions arising from non-implementation of agreement reached, often results in deadlock that usually disrupts academic calendar. As academic activities are suspended for a long period, the students reading abilities fell. Even the previous knowledge acquired is even forgotten by some students. This mostly turns some students into certificates seekers than knowledge seekers.

The situation was more vividly captured by Ahunanya and Ubabudu (2006:135) while citing Ayo-Shobowale when they noted that:

*the perception of falling standards coupled with the escalating incidence of examination malpractices, low rate of completion of university programmes at the required time due to closures and strikes all confirm and provide bases for the fear of the public regarding the outputs of higher education and has cast serious doubts on the credibility of Nigeria's degrees and certificates both within and outside the country.*

### 4. **Decline in the Quality of Research**

It is important to make research the hub of university education considering the problems Nigerian universities now face. Research in the higher institutions contributes to the acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and society. Today, this function is saddled with poor attitude of governments towards research and inadequate funding of research programmes. Okafor (2001) argued along the same line when he stated that lack of funds is affecting research in the universities and that there is no indication that this problems will not continue in the future. The universities are supposed to engage in research, not only to push out the frontiers of knowledge, but to solve the problems of the society. Okebukola (2002) noted that, there is diminishing scope of mentoring junior researchers by seasoned and senior researchers due to brain drain.

### 5. **Issues of Autonomy and External Control**

Autonomy is a principle upon which the university education system tries to maintain its operational stability and actualization of goals. When autonomy is enthroned in the right perspective, it then facilitates academic freedom and accountability. However, in 1973, universities in Nigeria started what would be called first threat letter to university autonomy. A trade dispute ensued between the governing council and universities teachers in 1973 over the issues of autonomy and review of the conditions of service. The review of their conditions of service was thwarted by top officials of the Federal Ministry of Education. The university lecturers were ordered by General Yakubu Gowon to go back to work or face dismissal and ejection from their official residences.

Babalola (2014) defined autonomy for Nigeria universities to mean the right of a university to enjoy the core privileges of academic freedom, substantive independence, and procedural self-independence, subject only to public accountability. University scholars must be free to air out results of findings without fear of intimidation by government and other agencies.

In an era where many key university appointments and decisions are made outside the university, meritocracy is eroded and replaced with nepotism, god fatherism, lobbying and political patronage. This usually results to system where the most eligible persons are often frustrated and left without promotions. The survival of the university education system is directly proportional to or to a large extent dependent on the institutionalization of autonomy.

#### **6. Lack of ICT Integration in the Universities**

The concept of information and communication technology (ICT) is about the process of acquiring, processing, storing and disseminating of information by means of electronic devices. In developed countries, various kinds of technological devices have been used to improve educational system especially in research and development. It is therefore the raw material for making decision, for creating knowledge to make a society become a global village. Odetunde (2004) however, defined information and communication technology as the application of computers and communication technology to information handling. As noted by Ololube, Umunadi and kpolovie (2013), automation of library and information systems and services has today become an acceptable norm being the most realistic way and means of providing timely, accurate and efficient information services. However, E-learning, E-library, E-booking, etc, is most essential in our universities today. Magal and Magal (2009) opined that e-learning is an innovative technique or a form of information and communication technology used in providing learning experiences to the students online through the use of internet services and web technology of the computers.

However, a study carried out by Okorie, Agabi and Uche (2005) to examine how far public and private universities in Nigeria demonstrated moderate capacity for ICT application, revealed that actual application is moderate for private universities and low for public universities.

#### **7. Faculty Exodus/Brain Drain**

Nigerian public universities are faced with rapid faculty exodus or brain drain. Some faculty members abandoned universities for other sectors of the economy where professionals and scientists receive higher salaries and greater social recognition. Odetunde (2004) commented that, there was mass exodus of many brilliant lecturers to the business world and others left Nigeria for better services. Oni (2000) added saying that many experienced and young lecturers are fleeing from the frustration of university life into more rewarding and more challenging sectors of the economy and even migrate to oversea countries. The result of the faculty exodus is observed in the quality of graduates that our universities produce.

#### **8. Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities and Equipment**

University infrastructure and equipment are fast decaying in terms of maintenance. All the required resources for education production process are in short supply that poses hindrance to learning and research work. A good number of Nigerian universities are offering technological education programmes. The question is how many of these universities have basic infrastructure to run the programmes. For example, in universities offering computer course, you have students graduate without touching computer. The dearth of infrastructure in the universities is sickening and runs short of ideal academic environment. Today, students are learning in dilapidated buildings. Enogholase (2013) stated that students were using kerosene stoves instead of gas burners to conduct experiments, specimens were kept in bottles instead of the appropriate places where such specimen should have been kept.

### **9. Cultism/Insecurity and Campus Brigandage**

Most of the university problems are traced to cult-related activities among our students. It has become a monster in almost all the universities in Nigeria. The Government's efforts to eradicate cultism in these universities have not yielded any positive result. Cultism has physically, emotionally and psychologically maimed and rendered a good number of our youths useless. Cult-related activities in public universities in Nigeria is one of the burning contemporary issues that have not spared any one, high or low, academic and non-academic staff, members and non members, the students and the general public. Cult activities constitute a major obstacle to quality assurance of universities (Ogbondah, 2013). Without mincing words, the activities of cultists are threatening to undermine and erode the very essence of university education (Nwankwo, 2006).

### **10. Political Interference in Public Universities**

There has been political interference in the establishment of universities in Nigeria. With the return of civil rule in 1999, the spate of government's establishment of federal universities continued, beginning in 2002 when the Obasanjo administration resuscitated the National Open University, Lagos which was suspended in 1984. The administration also established the Federal University of Petroleum Resources (FUPRE), Effurun in 2007. The political crises that surrounded the establishment of this university in particular began to manifest when the Yar'Adua's regime attempted to relocate the university to Kaduna State. This attempt was met with brick walls as it was vehemently opposed by the people of the Niger Delta region through students' protests, and threats from South-South Governors' Forum. Thus, Ojameruaye (2009:10) writes:

*the governors of the South-South geo-political zone met in Asaba, Delta State to express their indignation over the purported movement of the University of Petroleum Resources from Effurun to Kaduna. At the end of their meeting, the governors threatened to withdraw from the amnesty deal of the Federal Government if the contentious issue was not resolved. It was after the Asaba meeting, that the Presidency sent the Minister of State for the Niger*

*Delta, Mr. Orubebe, to re-assure the Governors that the FG did not intend to relocate neither the PTI nor the FUPRE from Effurun to Kaduna as alleged.*

Similarly, in 2007, there was a proposed plan by Governor Rotimi Amaechi to relocate the Rivers State University of Science and Technology from its present site in Nkpolu to a permanent site in Ikwerre Local Government Area, as part of the Greater Port Harcourt City Project (The Port Harcourt Telegraph, 2012 in Nyewusira, 2014). It is pertinent to note here that Governor Amaechi hails from Ikwerre Local Government Area.

### **Recommendations**

For the way forward of our public universities, the following recommendations are made. They include:

1. There should be deliberate attempt by the governments (federal and states) to promote education through financing in order to meet UNESCO's budgetary prescription of 26% of annual budget.
2. Nigerian Public Universities should develop curriculum content that is relevant to the needs of the learners and that of the society.
3. There is need for adequate utilization of funds by the universities to provide and maintain infrastructural facilities.
4. There should be deliberate attempt to make research and development the centre of public university education activities.
5. There is need for universities to be granted autonomy to be free from external control.
6. Federal and State Governments should embark on policy of implementing ICT in the universities.
7. Governments should assume the responsibility of staff welfare and better working conditions to avoid exodus of faculty or brain drain.
8. There is need for collaboration of ALUMNI and partnership with banks and other non-Governmental Organizations for the building of hostels and other infrastructural facilities necessary for the university's development.
9. The university authority should devise means of using adequate securities to check cult-related activities.
10. Governments should discourage ideas of allowing politics to determine the establishment and locations of universities.

### **Conclusion**

It is important to recognize the challenges faced by the Nigerian universities today. Nigerian universities must seek to remove the constraints that prevent them from responding to the needs of a rapidly changing society. It is unfortunate that the university education in Nigeria is a reflection of colonial (British) education system which does not equip our graduates with practical skills of entrepreneurship. Hence, Nigeria should implement education policies that will exploit science and technology as the hub of university development.

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