Technology Advancement and University Education in Nigeria: History, Trade Unionism and Pattern-Shift

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Abstract-**University education is currently the climax of the educational learning processes in Nigeria. It is an imperative and most critical part of human development given to the fact that it is a base for high-level skills acquirement and an essential qualification for the labour market. Universities empower and release graduates who turn to become workforce and are suitable and extremely useful for economic development. The education sector in Nigeria is relatively thriving and somewhat productive to the stakeholders especially during the advent of the fourth republic. In 1999, the Federal Government of Nigeria licensed the public to establish private universities to create room for competition regarding academic standards and infrastructural facilities that will support qualitative education for the people.**

Keywords: **University Education, Technology Advancement, Trade Unionism, Federal Government of Nigeria**

1. INTRODUCTION

It is imperative to note that the Nigeria university education system birthed in 1948 with Nigeria's premier university, the University of Ibadan which was established in January 1948 following the Elliot Commission Report on Facilities of Higher Education in British and the West Africa (1945), as an affiliate and a College of the University of London. It became independent of London University in 1962 and thereby converted to a full-fledged University of Ibadan.

However, in anticipation of the needs, especially for manpower development for the soon-would-be independent nation of Nigeria school system.

According to Eric Ashby Report of 1960, the government set up an 8-man Commission on Higher Education chaired by Eric Ashby, in 1959, "to conduct an investigation into Nigeria's needs in the field of post-School Certificate and Higher Education over the next twenty years". In a comprehensive report, which was submitted in 1960, the Commission noted the need to expand university places and recommended the establishment of a University in Lagos, then the capital of Nigeria, and one each in the three regions as they were called.

Partly in response to these recommendations, four universities were established between 1960 and 1962, namely: University of Nigeria, Nsukka; University of Ife, Ile Ife; Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and the University of Lagos, Lagos. Of these, only that in Lagos was established by the federal government, the others came into being on Acts of Parliament that were enacted by their respective regional governments, even though the universities were all eventually handed over to the federal government.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Prof Afe Babalola SAN (2009), in the 1962/63 academic session, 5 universities were established with a total enrolment of 3,646 students and 423 academic staff. In 1985/86 academic session, there were 135,783 students and 11,016 members of academic staff (Ogunu, 1990).

As stated by the National Universities Commission (2021), there are 49 Federal Universities, 54 State

Universities and 99 Private Universities and organizations making it a total of 202 Universities in Nigeria at present with an astronomic increase in the number of staff and students. These universities make up the Nigerian University System (NUS) and their activities are coordinated by the National Universities Commission (NUC) in consonance with some aspects of the recommendation of the Ashby's Commission for the establishment of such body.

The administrative formation and mode of operation of universities in Nigeria differ and depend to some extent on their stated institutional objectives, the orientation of their proprietor(s), and the university's area of specialization if any (Altbach, 2015). These structural and operational details are usually clearly stated in a document that is enacted into the enabling Law or Decree of the particular university by the federal government in the case of federal and privately-owned universities and state governments for universities owned by them (El-Khawas, 2018). The Enabling Laws, Acts, Policies and Decrees, define the governance structure and clearly spells out the responsibilities and limitations to the powers and authority of each of the organs and officers of the university (Liu et.al, 2019).

Despite the differences that may exist, there are many common areas in the way universities in Nigeria administer and run their affairs. The tradition is essentially British and is a throwback to the University of Ibadan, with its origin from the University of London and which, by virtue of its foremost position in the NUS, has produced a large pool of university administrators in Nigeria of a particular mold (Lambert, 2016). These similarities are existing whether the universities are organized in the Collegiate, School or Faculty Systems. Many universities in Nigeria function through the following officers and bodies; The Visitor, the Chancellor, the Pro-chancellor, the Governing Council, Vice-Chancellor and other principal officers, Senate, Congregation and Convocation Committee, the Colleges/Schools/Faculties/Departments and the staff (Dele, 2015). The staff is classified into the academic and non-academic staff. The academic staffers are the lecturers/teachers and the technologists while the non-academic staff is the administrative, security and other support staffers.

III. TRADE UNIONISM IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

Trade unionism in Nigerian universities, notably those by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), the National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT), the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) and the Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU) are the decision making bodies for the categories of staff in the university (Waters, 2017).

The size of the university administration system has resulted in managing a larger number of staff and students and even a large amount of data often generated (Wende, 2019). These data are to be well managed to avert complications in transmission and other confusing problems. This is seen as the major reason at which some universities lag behind in some real-time services like the result computation, dissemination of information, transcript and certificate issuance. Worthy to remember is that Ifedili and Agbaire (2011) noted that record-keeping in Nigeria Universities was below average. They emphasized that the essence of good record keeping is to avail the right information to the right person in the right order at the right place and time with the most minimal cost and very liberal terms and without encumbrances.

Nwagwu (2008) also noted that there is an existence of low-level exploitation of the web for information sharing and dissemination of local content produced from the Nigeria Universities. Almost all the Nigerian Universities have web portals which ought to support Information Technology (IT) contents to the university management system. It is most surprising that the Nigeria University administration system is profoundly challenged even with the availability of university web portals. Emeagwali (2009) while speaking on the role of technology as a change agent contended that intellectual capital and technology now rule the world and that natural resources such as gold, diamond, and oil are no longer the primary determinant of wealth.

Most businesses and organizations, especially in advanced countries, have become aware that they must adapt to the change in technology or be left behind. In order to remain afloat and relevant in a competitive world, a sustainable society is one that meets its needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs (Akpan, 2007).

IV: ADMINISTRATIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

Nigeria Universities adapt to technology that is absolutely prevalent in advanced countries as there is no gainsaying to the fact that Information Technology (IT) has changed the way we live, think and engage businesses within our clime. It has enhanced and keeps changing the way we do things in our various homes, offices, and schools and has eminently changed on how ideas are communicated at the moment.

Nigeria as a developing nation cannot afford to be isolated from the train of globalization, the wind of change that is blowing rapidly across the globe (Iji and Adejo, 2007). Information Technology is now a change agent that we should take seriously and never to ignore. It has savaged the world as a global village and hence the precise application of IT or nonapplication of it will definitely affect way at which we relate with others in the ever-increasing global community.

V: CONCLUSION

Nowadays, almost every aspect of social, economic and physical developments are powered by IT in advanced countries. No doubt, this has enhanced the essence of life and made things easy for the citizens. Regrettably is to note that research has put it to bare that IT development and penetration in the West African sub-region are extremely low.

In advanced countries, most of the offices are automated. An automated office is the one that combines various technologies to reduce the manual labour required in operating an efficient office environment. These technologies include voice mail, e-mail, scheduling software, desktop publishing, word processing, and fax.

University administration should not only be automated but ought to adopt a virtual administrative system.

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