

Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and Development of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study attempts to investigate the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and development of Tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The importance of university education in a developing country such as Nigeria cannot be neglected. This is due to the fact that the overall growth and development of the nation is hinged upon the success of the educational sector. The goal of higher education in Nigeria is designed towards advancing Nigeria's economic growth and global competitiveness through the provision of accessible, relevant, high quality education in our Tertiary Education Institutions and to constantly attract, develop and graduate competent, knowledgeable and talented individuals from our Tertiary Education Institutions. The study concluded that TETFund contributes to the development of higher education in Nigeria. TETFund has been responsible for the distribution of intervention funds to the various public higher institutions in Nigeria. This includes the Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and other levels of education. Although the agency also takes responsibility for the funding of other lower levels of education within the country, however, their major task has been in the area of distributing and monitoring fund among tertiary institutions in the country. One of the recommendations made was that TETFund need to embark on periodic evaluation and supervision of projects it is supporting or funding in higher institutions in the region. This evaluation and supervision should not be restricted to capital projects alone. Projects on manpower development like academic staff training, conferences, workshops, engineering fabrications, supply of equipment among others should also be subjected to severe evaluation and supervision by TETFund.

KEYWORDS: Higher education, TETFund, Nigeria

Introduction

The aim of higher education is to meet the socio-cultural and developmental needs of a country. Higher education provides an opportunity for individuals to develop their potential. It fulfills the needs for high-level manpower in a society. Its objectives include cultural and material development to meet the learning needs and aspirations of individuals through the development of their intellectual abilities and aptitudes throughout their lives. Higher

education equips individuals to make the best use of their talents and of the opportunities offered by society for self-fulfillment. The ultimate goal of higher education is to produce graduates who will be effective leaders in their chosen professions, valued members of their communities, and responsible citizens of the world. Higher education institutions assure the relevance of their knowledge, identify skills gaps, create special programs and build the right skills that can help countries improve economic prosperity and social cohesion, adapt workforce development to the economy and changing demand for the new skills, develop relevant ideas necessary for promoting national cohesion and societal development. Thus, higher education in every country is guided by a philosophy which is concerned with specific problems arising from the existence of universities and higher education institutions (Saint, Hartnett and Strassner, 2003). It is the desire to develop higher education to the required level capable for encouraging sound national integration and development that all aspects of national life that contributed to the emergence of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) in Nigeria.

From 1980's and beyond, the decay of all tiers of education was monumental. Facilities had almost collapsed; teachers and lecturers' morale were at its lowest. Enabling environment for conducive teaching and learning was absent. The administration of President, Ibrahim Babangida mindful of the reality of the situation took measures to arrest the rot. In December 1990 the Federal Government constituted the Commission on the Review of Higher Education in Nigeria (the Gray Longe Commission) to review the post-independence Nigerian Higher Education after Lord Ashby's Commission of 1959. The Longe Commission recommended among others the funding of higher education through earmarked tax to be borne by companies operating in Nigeria. An implementation committee under the chairmanship of Professor Olu O. Akinkugbe was constituted to implement Grey Longe's Commission report recommendations also an Agreement was signed between the Federal Government and ASUU on the 3rd September, 1992 on funding of universities (Iruonagbe, Imhonopi and Egharevba, 2015).

Concept of Higher Institution

Higher education, any of various types of education given in postsecondary institutions of learning and usually affording, at the end of a course of study, a named degree, diploma, or certificate of higher studies. The goal of higher education in Nigeria is designed towards advancing Nigeria's economic growth and global competitiveness through the provision of accessible, relevant, high quality education in our Tertiary Education Institutions and to constantly attract, develop and graduate competent, knowledgeable and talented individuals from our Tertiary Education Institutions (Akinyemi, 2013). The ultimate goal of higher education is to produce graduates who will be effective leaders in their chosen professions, valued members of their communities, and responsible citizens of the world. Higher education institutions assure the relevance of their knowledge, identify skills gaps, create special programs and build the right skills that can help countries improve economic prosperity and social cohesion, adapt workforce development to the economy and changing demand for the new skills, develop relevant (Obasi, 2005).

The National Policy on Education is anchored on Nigeria's philosophy on education as enunciated through the nation's objectives. Nigeria has five main national objectives as provided by the Second National Development Plan and accepted as the necessary foundation for the National Policy on Education. Nigeria's philosophy of higher education is concerned with specific problems arising from the existence of universities and higher education institutions in the country. The aim of higher education is to meet the socio-cultural

and developmental needs of a country. Higher education provides an opportunity for individuals to develop their potential. It fulfills the needs for high-level manpower in a society. Its objectives include cultural and material development. Higher education can lead to many benefits, such as prosperous career and financial security. In the 21st century, education plays an even more significant role in other aspects of your life. Attaining a higher education can increase your opportunities and improve your overall quality of life. Poverty Reduction, connecting across borders, sense of accomplishment, more productivity, better communication, and critical thinking skills, identification of skills and greater sense of discipline are some of the benefits of higher education. These benefits also accompanied the acquisition of higher education knowledge in Nigeria like in other countries of the world (Okebukola, 2012).

Historical Development of Higher Education in Nigeria

Historical development of higher education in Nigeria is a tale full of numerous sacrifices made by the country's founding fathers. Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country. Before the 18th century, there was little or no difference between Europe and Africa, but the slave trade coupled with the industrial revolution in Europe changed the socio-economic equation. Africa became the trading subordinate of Europe and later its colony. A review of the Nigerian educational system from 1842 to 1959 revealed that there was absolutely nothing in the Nigerian educational system that promoted "national consciousness", "national unity", "patriotism" or the like. In fact, the colonial government never pretended to build a Nigerian nation. The citizens were either British subjects or British protected persons whose loyalty was supposed to be for the British Empire and the King or Queen of England. The consequent effect of this was that instead of training the people in the area of technology, majority of the citizens were educated in the area of civics as they were meant to assist the British colonizers in some administrative duties (Fafunwa, 2003).

The first higher educational institution in Nigeria, the Yaba Higher College, was established in 1932. The agitation of Nigerians for a more comprehensive higher education provision led to the constitution of the Asquith and Elliot Commission on Higher Education. Their reports in 1943 favoured the establishment of universities in Nigeria. Consequently, in 1948, the University College Ibadan was founded as an affiliate of the University of London. The University College continued as the only university institution in Nigeria until 1960 (Jubril, 2003). In April 1959, the Nigerian government commissioned an inquiry (Ashby Commission) to advise it on the higher education needs of the new nation for its first two decades of independence. Before the submission of the report on 2nd September 1960, the Eastern Region government established its own university at Nsukka, the University of Nigeria Nsukka, 1960.

So, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka was founded in 1960 while the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife (formerly, the University of Ife) was established in 1961. Ahmadu Bello University Zaria and University of Lagos were both established in 1962 while the University College transformed into a substantive university also in 1962. In 1970, the newly created Bendel State established a university, known as University of Benin. Consequently, the six universities established during this period 1960-1970 became known as first generation federal universities. Higher educational Institutions in Nigeria include Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education. There are currently 129 approved universities in Nigeria comprising 40 Federal Universities, 39 State Universities and 50 Private Universities (NUC, 2014). Also, Nigeria has a total 128 approved polytechnics and 117 approved Colleges of Education in Nigeria, making it the largest higher education system on the

African Continent (Adesulu, 2013). Although Public Universities have dominated the higher education landscape in Nigeria for several decades, their failure to cope with admission pressure became more compelling from the 1990s.

Moja (2000) affirmed that “Access to higher education and the lack of the capacity of the system to absorb the numbers of students seeking admission to higher education institutions continues to pose a serious problem. For example, it is estimated that out of 400,000 JAMB candidates seeking admission to university education, more than 320,000, which is about 80% are not able to gain admission to any of the 37 Nigerian universities”. Also, Onyekakeyah (2005), stated that, “The Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) figures clearly show that the situation has not improved. According to JAMB figures, out of about 800,000 candidates that sat for the 2005 examination, only 147,000 were offered places in the existing universities, representing only 18.4 percent”. Another major problem facing higher education especially Federal and State Institutions is funding. Enrolments have increased more quickly than government’s capacity to finance these institutions. This has hampered education delivery, monitoring, inspection and other quality assurance activities.

Government has made efforts at addressing this problem; for example, in 1993, the Education Tax Decree was enacted to provide 2% of the profits of companies registered in Nigeria to be collected by government and paid into a fund called the Education Tax Fund (ETF) now Education Trust Fund (ETF) and recently, the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund). Despite increase in funding from over 11 billion naira in 1999 to over 90 billion naira in 2008, funding still remains a major challenge (Dawodu, 2010). This was the trend in Nigeria such that the admission crisis became more critical after 2001. The access rate had fallen by 2002 to less than 13 percent (Okebukola 2002). Based on this fact, the expansion of access through the establishment of Private Universities became one of the most reasonable policy options (Obasi, 2005).

Achievement of TETFund

So far, the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) have carried out various functions to assist in re-positioning the University system of education to an enviable height. Although a landmark is yet to be made in re-positioning the university system, however, some level of achievements has been made given the impact of the monitoring and coordinating functions of TETFund. Universities education in Nigeria has its role in a sustainable economy. However, the resources to meet this objective are scarce. This is where Management by Objectives becomes important in the achievement of such goals. According to Liu (2010), Management by Objectives is a comprehensive and democratic systemic management style which is work-centered and people-centered. As an intervention agency, TETFund has been responsible for ensuring that the objectives of the public tertiary institutions in the country are met through the provision of necessary resources. TETFund has been responsible for the distribution of intervention funds to the various public higher institutions in Nigeria. This includes the Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and other levels of education. Although the agency also takes responsibility for the funding of other lower levels of education within the country, however, their major task has been in the area of distributing and monitoring fund among tertiary institutions in the country (Ogunde, 2011). The TETFund is an interventional measure of the Federal Government to tackle inadequate facilities in our tertiary institutions. This is the major role which the agency has been playing over the years since it came into establishment.

TETFund has assisted universities in a number of ways which includes:

- **Funding:** Funds literarily refer to a sum of money set aside for the execution of projects in an organization. The process of making this allocated money available for the facilitation of plans and programmes is referred to as funding. As one of the focus of the TETFund, funds are usually set aside to assist public tertiary institutions to execute most of their programmes whether it is in the short-run or long-run. This is to ensure that the presence of TETFund is felt in almost all the public tertiary institutions in the country.
- **Staff training and development:** The importance of staff training and development in any organized institution cannot be ignored most especially in the university system. According to Ebong and Ezekiel-Hart (2006) training is crucial as one of the staff development procedure. Most of academicians have also requested that the activities of the TETFund in terms of human capital should be extended to the non-academic staff just like their academic counterpart (Ogar, 2012).
- **Projects facilitation:** Aside the funding of Universities, TETFund also assist in the facilitation of projects. Project facilitation just like the funding function of the TETFund should be carried out with a zero exclusion ratio. That is, in monitoring and ensuring project execution, the TETFund should endeavor to monitor projects to the extent that such projects can make effective contribution to the administration of the university system where such projects are situated. Based on agreed criteria, the TETFund should ensure that the ratio of projects to teachers and/or students should be reasonable enough for efficient and effective teaching, learning, research and community development.

Challenges Faced by Higher Institutions in Nigeria

There are enormous problems facing the higher education system in Nigeria. Indeed, over the years, higher education in Nigeria has suffered much neglect manifested in the form of inadequate funding, inconsistent policy changes; lack of infrastructure and disruption of the school system. These problems in the higher education system have been very disturbing. In fact, budgetary allocations to education in Nigeria have been grossly inadequate leading to agitations by lecturers and students about obsolete equipment, old and outdated textbooks and journals including poor remuneration for lecturers especially at the tertiary level, which have also heightened the level of brain drain in the country as many of them moved to different parts of the world in search of greener pastures. There have been complaints by employers of labor within and outside the country that most graduates from Nigerian Universities are not properly trained to fit into the world of work in terms of desirable knowledge and skill. In developed countries, especially in Europe and America, most Nigerian graduates are seen as half-baked due to such issues as constant strikes, conflicts, disruption of academic calendar and cultism which have destroyed the quality of education in Nigeria including the dearth of qualified and experienced lecturers. Education is the engine that drives the growth and development of a nation.

Funding for education has not been commensurate with the demand of the education sector. Reportedly, the percentage of federal budgetary allocation to education has been dwindling. It was 7.2% in 1995 and 4.5% in 2004. The condition becomes more pathetic when Nigeria's Gross National Product (GNP) allocation to education is compared with those of less affluent African nations that allocate greater percentage: Ivory Coast allocates 5% of its GNP to education, Kenya 6.5% and Nigeria 0.76%. Lack of teaching tools and poor remuneration has contributed to "acute shortage of qualified teachers" that leads to the falling standards of

university education. More revealing is the 2006 ranking of African universities in which Nigerian universities, that were once highly rated, were behind universities in poorer countries. It is imperative to add that in 2004, the sum of N216, 708,206.00 was requested by the federal funded universities. The Federal government released the sum of N53, 406, 287. 01 representing 24.7% of the budget request from the Universities (Okuwa, 2004; Aluede, 2012). As espoused by Odebiyi and Aina (1999), the multiplier effects of this low level of funding include: poor laboratory facilities; limited number of field trips and academic conferences; inadequate and obsolete infrastructure and equipment; embargo on study fellowship and reduction in study grants. This is the educational situation in Nigeria that gave birth to the emergence of private universities.

Generally speaking, higher education refers to post-secondary education or tertiary educational institutions other than universities. The National Policy on Education in Nigeria (FGN, 2004) defines higher education as post-secondary education comprising universities, polytechnics and colleges of education including such institutions as may be allied to them. In Nigeria, higher education is involved in the traditional functions of teaching, research and community service so as to develop manpower and disseminate necessary knowledge needed in Industry and other sectors. Education in general and higher education in particular are fundamental to the construction of a knowledge economy in all nations (Adesina and Awonusi, 2004). The decade from 1990 witnessed an upsurge in the number of private institutions of learning in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. Before this decade, most African countries committed much of their expenditures on public education, which served as an instrument for building the nation, following independence. The establishment of higher educational institutions was in pursuit of meeting the global requirements of producing manpower that will serve in different capacities and contribute positively to the nation's socio-economic and political development in Nigeria (Abdulkareem, Fasasi and Akinubi, 2011). Federal Government of Nigeria promulgated enabling law to found higher education towards producing high level relevant manpower training, self-reliance, national utility through the establishment of both conventional and special universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and monotechnic in different parts of the country by the Federal, state governments, private organizations and individuals (Abdulkareem, Fasasi and Akinubi, 2011). Though, persistent problem affecting the funding of higher education in Nigeria has led to the transformation of the country's Education Trust Fund (ETF) into the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) aim at creating various avenue of investing in higher education in the country.

Conclusion

The study concludes that TETFund contributes to the development of higher education in Nigeria. TETFund has been responsible for the distribution of intervention funds to the various public higher institutions in Nigeria. This includes the Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and other levels of education. Although the agency also takes responsibility for the funding of other lower levels of education within the country, however, their major task has been in the area of distributing and monitoring fund among tertiary institutions in the country. This is the major role which the agency has been playing over the years since it came into establishment.

Recommendations

1. TETFund need to embark on periodic evaluation and supervision of projects it is supporting or funding in higher institutions in the region. This evaluation

and supervision should not be restricted to capital projects alone. Projects on manpower development like academic staff training, conferences, workshops, engineering fabrications, supply of equipment among others should also be subjected to severe evaluation and supervision by TETFund.

2. TETFund should ensure that the ratio of projects to teachers and/or students should be reasonable enough for efficient and effective teaching, learning, research and community development.
3. The government should enable budgetary allocations into TETFund for the upkeep of tertiary institutions.

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