

## Issues in Manpower Production Pattern of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria: The Way Forward

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### *Abstract*

*It is not a gainsaying that manpower are the pivot on which the development of a country rests. The development can even be enhanced by the number of high-level manpower it possesses, in view of their depth of knowledge. Even though tertiary institutions in Nigeria have produced a lot of manpower who have played and still playing key roles in different sectors of the economy, there are criticisms of their manpower production pattern and efforts. This paper is an examination of matters arising from the manpower production pattern of the tertiary institutions in Nigeria, such as the production of irrelevant manpower, production in disequilibrium with the economic needs, production of low quality manpower, as well as interference of tertiary institutions in the production of manpower. The paper also recommends a review of the curricula of tertiary institutions, adequate funding of tertiary education and institutions, provision of scholarships and bursaries to students, to correct the undesirable pattern in manpower production effort of the institutions.*

**Key Word:** *Manpower Production, Tertiary Institutions, Matters Arising, Way Forward, Nigeria.*

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### **Introduction**

According to Fadipe (2011), manpower, also known as human resources can be defined as the bulk of labour available for any particular kind of work. It involves human beings with the relevant skills, energies, talents knowledge and attitude that can be committed towards production of goods and services. (Fadipe, (2011) and Gbosi, (2003). Manpower production would then mean the training and production of skilful human resource required in all sectors of the economy.

The tertiary institutions in Nigeria are entrusted with the task of producing the manpower that will manage the economy of the nation. According to the National Policy on Education, Tertiary institutions are expected to:

- contribute to national development through high-level relevant manpower training;
- develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the society;
- develop the intellectual capacity of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments;
- acquire both physical and intellectual skills, which will enable individuals to be self- reliant and useful members of the society;
- promote and encourage scholarship and community services;

- forge and cement national unity, and
- promote national and international understanding and institutions (FRN, 2004, p.36),

In Nigeria, tertiary education has been receiving government attention, particularly in the provision of the needed human and material resources. There has been growth in number and enrolment of tertiary institutions, which is hinged on the fact that through it, the manpower in various categories, which are needed for the transformation of the country are produced. However, the national hope for national development through high level relevant manpower training appear dashed as there is large scale unemployment as well as a shortfall in the production of teachers in sciences, technical and vocational education. (Oghuvbu and Akpotu (2004). This is supported by the fact that at present, Nigeria ranked very low in terms of education, technological, and economic development. It is unfortunate that the country is still a developing one among her peers globally when all indices of national development are considered. A lot is however expected from tertiary education by the stakeholders, particularly the government, having provided the needed resources for its sustenance.

### **Scope and Purposes of Tertiary Education in Nigeria**

There are three major levels of education that operates in Nigeria, such as the primary, secondary, and tertiary. Out of these levels, tertiary education is the climax, which is aimed at enriching the knowledge of a child beyond the level attained at the secondary level. Such education can be acquired in the universities, polytechnics, monotronics, colleges of education, schools of nursing, schools of health technology, schools of midwifery, and others of higher status than the secondary (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004).

The university award degrees at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. It can either be conventional or specialized. When it is conventional, different kinds of programmes including the science and technology as well humanities are offered. A specialized university offers programmes in one area or discipline which can be science and technology or humanities. Minimum duration of programmes at the undergraduate level is four years for a candidate that gains admission through the Universities Matriculation Examination (UME) and three years in the case of those that gained admission through direct entry. At the post- graduate level, a candidate supposes to spend a minimum of between one to two years for master degree programmes and four years in the case of doctoral programmes.

A candidate supposes to spend two years for the Ordinary Diploma (OND) and two years for the Higher Diploma (HND) sub-degrees, with a bridge year which is usually spent for industrial training. In the case of the colleges of education, a candidate supposes to spend three years to acquire the Nigerian Certificate of Education (NCE) which is the minimum qualification for those willing to join the teaching career. Such tertiary institutions train teachers for primary and secondary schools in the country. The schools of nursing, health technology, and midwifery train nurses and other health technicians of different categories. Duration in the school of Nursing and health technology is three years while in the case of midwifery, it is one year. In this paper, attempt is being made to examine the pattern of manpower production in the country with the intention of bringing out its defects and on the bases of these, suggest ways through which these defects can be controlled or eradicated and thus move tertiary education forward in the country.

### **Trends in the Growth of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria**

Tertiary education is aged in Nigeria. Reports (Adesina, 1977; Fafunwa, 1974) indicate that the first tertiary institution in Nigeria is Yaba Higher College, Lagos, which was established in 1934 and serves as a precursor to the establishment of the University College, Ibadan in 1948 (i.e.as an affiliate of the University of London). This was then based on the need to produce more high-level manpower for the development of the under-developed economy. The attainment of independent status by Nigeria in 1960, also serves as an impetus for expansion of the educational system, particularly at the tertiary level. To this effect, government constituted the Ashby Commission in 1959, to examine the future high-level manpower needs

of the country (i.e. from 1960-1980). The implementation of the recommendations of this commission, led to the establishment of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; the University of Lagos; and the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife) in 1962. During the same year, the University of Ibadan, which was initially an affiliate of the University College, London, was upgraded to full university status, while the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, established in 1960, was formally inaugurated.

In 1970, the University of Benin emerged from the Midwest Institute of Technology, which together with the earlier universities, are now the ‘first generation universities’. Propelled by the need to produce additional manpower, to ensure the turnaround of the economy that was then under foreign control, Federal Government established additional seven universities in 1975, which were located at Kano, Jos, Maiduguri, Calabar, Sokoto, Port Harcourt, and Ilorin. Additional universities, which included the state universities also came on board within the decade 1980s and 1990s, as a result of the transition from the military to civil rule in 1979, which placed education in the concurrent legislative list among the three tiers of government (i.e. the federal, state, and local). Of particular interest in the history of tertiary education in Nigeria, is the approval for the establishment of private university in 1999, by the Federal Government, although twenty six of this kind of university were established in 1983 but could not see the light of the day due to the anomalies that were noticed in their operations (National Universities Commission, 1987). Three private universities which include the Babcock University at Ilishan Remo, in Ogun State; the Madonna University at Okija, Rivers State; and Igbinedion University at Okada, Benin City, Edo State were eventually established in 1999. Since then, private universities have been springing up alongside the state universities. As at year 2012, there were forty (40) Federal Government owned, thirty nine (39) states governments owned, as well as fifty (50) approved private universities in the country (Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria, 2012) while many are at the stage of being approved by the Federal Government. Another aspect of tertiary institution development in Nigeria, concerns the monotechs/polytechnics.

According to Adesina (1977), the implementation of the minority report of Elliot’s Commission, led to the establishment of Nigerian College of Arts, Science, and Technology in 1952, with branches at Enugu, Ibadan, and Zaria. These were later absorbed by three among the first generation universities (i.e. the University of Ife) (now Obafemi Awolowo University), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (Timilehin, et al, 2010), which later metamorphosed into the polytechnics and monotechs. Following the creation of additional regions and states in Nigeria, new polytechnics (owned by state governments) emerged. In order to ensure geographical distribution of the facilities for technological education, Federal Government has established federal polytechnic in various parts of the country. Colleges of education, which form part of tertiary institutions in Nigeria, take their root from the Advanced Teachers’ Colleges, the first set of which was established in the wake of independence (i.e. early 1960s), and located at Zaria (Northern region), Owerri (Eastern region), Ibadan (Western region), and Abraka (Mid-West region). The creation of additional states coupled with the increased demand for qualified teachers due to education expansion, led to the establishment of more Teachers’ Colleges, which were later renamed as colleges of education. Tables 1 below show the distribution of federal, state and approved private universities, polytechnics and colleges of education respectively in Nigeria as at year 2012.

Table 1: Number of Federal, State and Approved Private Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education in Nigeria

<b>Tertiary Institution</b>	<b>Federal</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Private</b>	<b>Total</b>
Universities	40	39	50	129
Polytechnics	20	38	17	75
Colleges of Education	21	43	37	101

Source: TRCN (2012).Statistical Digest of Teachers in Nigeria: 2011/2012

## Production of Manpower by Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria: Issues at Stake

While it cannot be contested that tertiary institutions in Nigeria have produced lots of manpower, some of who have been absorbed into the economy, a lot of issues are at stake in the high-level manpower production effort of these institutions, such as the:

### Production of Irrelevant Manpower:

In Nigeria, one of the goals of tertiary education is to make optimum contribution to national development, through the training of relevant manpower (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). In order to enhance her low scientific and technological development, in line with what operates globally, tertiary institutions have been mandated by Federal Government to produce more graduates in the area of science and technology than in the humanities. To this effect, Federal Government has instituted 60:40 science/humanities admission policy for the universities and 70:30 for the polytechnics, monotechnics, and colleges of education. In spite of this, both enrolment and outputs of tertiary institutions in Nigeria have been in favour of humanities.

Table 2: Graduate Outputs of Universities in Nigeria (Undergraduates and Postgraduates)

DISCIPLINE	2000/2001	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005
<b>HUMANITIES</b>					
Administration	14847	14078	19513	12893	8530
Arts	6656	7645	8743	6692	3829
Law	2927	4398	5896	3877	1681
Social Sciences	11689	18909	17355	14122	7283
<b>Total</b>	<b>36,119</b>	<b>45,030</b>	<b>51,507</b>	<b>37,574</b>	<b>21,323</b>
<b>SCIENCES</b>					
Agriculture	2247	2966	3012	2869	974
Engineering/Tech	5852	6497	7227	5808	2012
Environ Sc.	1787	1811	2187	1822	1502
Medicine	1921	2665	2895	2644	732
Pharmacy	355	494	417	710	42
Science	9174	9060	11308	8353	6702
Dentistry	41	68	97	79	2
Veterinary Med	119	205	254	118	61
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,496</b>	<b>23,766</b>	<b>27,397</b>	<b>22,403</b>	<b>12,027</b>
<b>Science:</b>	<b>37.31:62.69</b>	<b>34.55:65.45</b>	<b>34.72:65.28</b>	<b>37.35:62.65</b>	<b>36.06:63.94</b>
<b>Humanities Ratio</b>					

Source: Federal Ministry of Education (2007) Statistics of Education in Nigeria: 1999-2005

As indicated in Table 2, graduates in the area of humanities were 36,119 in 2001, which increased to 45,030 in 2001/2002 and to 51,507 in 2002/2003. In 2003/2004, it decreased to 37,574 and further to 21,323 in 2004/2005. Outputs in the Sciences were 21,496 in 2000/2001 but increased slightly to 23,766 in 2001/2002 and further to 27,397 in 2002/2003. It decreased to 22,403 in 2003/2004 and further to 12,027 in 2004/2005. The table further reveals that in 2000/2001, science: humanities outputs ratio was 37.31:62.69, 34.55:65.45 in 2001/2002, 37.35 : 62.65 in 2003/2004 and 36.06:63.94 in 2004/2005.

It implies from these data that the outputs in sciences were lower than in humanities during the period. Products of tertiary institutions that are humanities oriented have thus been flooding the labour market in search of jobs. In what appears to be a paradox, while millions of graduates are unemployed in Nigeria, many vacancies are not filled due to inability to get people of the right qualification and skills.

**Production of Manpower, in Disequilibrium with Economic Needs:**

In Nigeria, there is disparity in the education growth rate and that of the economy on which it depends. In the past, Ashby Commission reported that the outputs of tertiary education were 300, although Federal Government envisaged 10,000 students in 1970. Six years after attaining the independent status, (i.e.1966), the target was exceeded. The five universities then had a total enrolment of 8,000 students, which could have reached government’s target of 10,000 in 1968 (i.e. two years behind schedule (Fafunwa, 1974). Over five decades after, both enrolment and outputs of tertiary institutions in Nigeria have risen tremendously (Federal Ministry of Education, 2007; FRN, 2009), which have over heated the economy more than its carrying capacity. Consequently, there has been the lingering unemployment crisis in Nigeria.

Table 3: Unemployment Rates in Nigeria: 2002-2007

Survey Period	Composite	Urban	Percentage
			Rural
2002	12.6	8.7	14.2
2003	14.8	10.9	16.4
2004	13.4	9.5	15.0
2005	11.9	10.1	12.6
2006	13.7	10.2	14.6
2007	14.6	10.9	14.8

Source: National Bureau of Statistics: Labour Force Survey, 2009 Abstract of Statistics

In Table 3, composite unemployment rate in 2002 was 12.6 which increased to 14.8 in 2003 and decreased again to 13.4 in 2004.As at 2007, it was 14.6.

**Production of Low Quality Manpower:**

Scholars (Nwadiani, 1999; Dabaleen, A., Oni, B., & Adekola, A.O (2000) had criticised the quality of education being provided in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, where all points to their declining quality, which can be buttressed by indicators, such as the complaints from employers of labour, writing of qualifying examinations by Graduates of tertiary institutions, poor conversation of Graduates of tertiary institutions in public, inappropriate reports of accreditation panels on tertiary institutions, low ranking of universities (Gateway to the Nation (2010), Unfortunately, the low quality manpower being produce by tertiary institutions have permeated the work force and thus affecting the performance of the work force.

**Loss of Focus of Tertiary Institutions in Manpower Production:**

In Nigeria, each arm of tertiary education has assigned responsibility in an effort to produce manpower for the development of the country (FRN, 2004). While the universities are supposed to produce high-level manpower and award degrees at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, the polytechnics and colleges of education are supposed to train their clients for the award of sub-degrees, such as the National and Higher Diplomas, as well as the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) respectively. The desire to generate additional funds for their sustenance, in view of the inadequate financial allocation from government, has however led many universities into the running of diploma and certificate programmes, which ordinarily, are the responsibilities of the polytechnics and monotechnics. Some universities of science and technology that supposed to produce manpower in this area, to launch the country into scientific and technological greatness, are also running humanities programmes. Report also indicates that as at year 2012, nine polytechnics in Nigeria were offering NCE programmes (Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria, 2012) against what they have been established for.

## **Towards a Change in Manpower Production Pattern of Tertiary institutions in Nigeria: Way Forward**

To enhance the development of Nigeria in the area of science and technology, there is need for concerted efforts towards ensuring a change in the current pattern of manpower production. The following are recommended to achieve this feat:

### **Adequate Funding of Tertiary Institutions:**

Government should allocate more funds to education sector where tertiary institutions derive their funds. The UNESCO standard of a minimum of 26% of GDP should be complied with, to guarantee more funds in the sector and enable the tertiary institutions to get more funds, which can be used to purchase more facilities and put in place additional infrastructure for quality of teaching to improve in the campuses. Tertiary institutions should however reach out to the private sectors, to assist in the funding of institutions, particularly in the provision of infrastructural facilities.

### **Judicious Use of Fund Allocated to Tertiary Institutions:**

Tertiary institutions' administrators should make judicious use of the funds being allocated to them and shun corruption, which can lead to inadequacy of fund in the institutions.

### **Enforcement of Science-Humanities Admission and Enrolment Ratios:**

During the admission of candidates, tertiary institutions should enforce the 60-40 and 70-30 science-humanities enrolment ratios already stipulated by government.

### **Periodic Review of Curricula of Tertiary Institutions:**

There should be periodic review of the curricula of tertiary institutions, to ensure that they are in line with the present challenges.

### **Proper Focus of Tertiary Institutions in Manpower Production Efforts:**

Universities of Agriculture should run only the programmes in the field of Agriculture while Universities of Science and Technology should concentrate on the science and technology programmes. Polytechnics are also to desist from running education programmes. There is however the need for the supervising agencies, such as the National Universities Commission, National Board of Technical Education, and the National colleges of education Commission, to ensure strict compliance with this policy.

### **Improvement of Quality of Education in Tertiary Institutions:**

Lecturers should thus be committed to the job and ensure that they give out the best to the students, in terms of teaching.

### **Encouragement of Self Employment:**

Government needs to encourage the graduates of science and technology towards self-employment, rather than seeking white collar jobs. Granting interest free loan or loan with reduced interest to the graduates, so as to establish small scale and cottage industries will help in achieving this feat.

### **Carrying out Researches by Industries:**

There is need for the country's industries to carry out research to discover local sources of raw materials as this will help in ensuring sustenance in the face of odds of sourcing and over-dependence on foreign raw materials, to increase utilization and employment opportunities of science and technology graduates.

### **Periodic Appraisal of Reports of Accreditation Panels:**

Tertiary institutions' administrators should always appraise the reports of accreditation panel, to improve the state of activities in their institutions in future. There is need for Government to regulate the production capacity of tertiary institutions in Nigeria, in line with the economic needs. There should be a survey of the various sectors of the economy, to ascertain their manpower needs. Report of such survey should be discussed with tertiary institutions' administrators.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

In spite of the human, materials, and financial commitment of government to tertiary education in Nigeria, as well as the believe of the citizens that they are centres of academic excellence and production of manpower that can usher in the needed development in the country, they cannot be said to be living up to expectation. Although they have produced a lot of manpower for the country's development, lopsidedness can be noticed in their manpower production pattern. Apart from the fact that the production of manpower is in favour of humanities against the science and technological programmes, it is in favour of male, against the female. Unfortunately, Nigeria is lagging behind in science and technological development and for her to make remarkable progress in this decade and beyond, efforts needs to be geared towards changing the *status quo*.

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