

Quality of University Education in Nigeria: The Challenge of Social Relevance

**Convocation Lecture at the 22nd and 23rd
Combined Convocation Ceremony**

University of Uyo, Nigeria

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1.0 Preamble

1.1 The Visitor of this University, The President & Commander in Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Muhammadu Buhari; Members of the Federal Executive Council and especially the Federal Minister of Education; The Governor and Members of the Executive Council of Akwa Ibom State; Members of the National and State Assemblies; The Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission (NUC), Professor Abubakar Rasheed, min, FNAL; The Chancellor of this great University, our revered and well respected Royal Majesty, Alhaji Adamu Maje, The Emir of Hadejia; the Pro-Chancellor & Chairman of Council, Professor Austin Awujo; The Vice Chancellor and our most learned Silk, Professor Enefiok Essien, SAN; the Immediate past Vice Chancellor, our ever smiling, vivacious and hardworking Professor Comfort Ekpo; Members of Council; Principal Officers of the University; Distinguished members of the Senate of this University; Honorary graduands, including and especially Alhaji Mohammed Indimi, an astute business and oil and gas magnate of international repute, a philanthropist with a difference, and a tremendously proud and detribalised Nigerian; Visiting Vice Chancellors, Registrars and other principal officers (both current and past) of all universities present here today; Captains of Industry; Our Royal Highnesses; My Lords both temporal and Spiritual; The Chief Judge of the State and other members of the Judiciary; Chief Executive Officers and Heads of all Federal and State Government parastatals; Heads and Representatives of all Non-Governmental Organisations; Members of the immediate community in

which the University resides; Members of the Press; Staff and Students, who have made this university what it is today; Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I feel really and highly honoured to be invited to give the lecture at this year's convocation ceremony. I am indeed quite fortunate to be invited to this combined convocation ceremony of the 22nd and 23rd sets of graduands. In those days, there was what was called combined honours degree. So, I count myself lucky to be asked to do this 'combined honours' lecture today and I am quite pleased that I came.

- 1.2 Exactly a month ago, I received the formal invitation from our indomitable Vice Chancellor and Learned Silk, Professor Essien, following an initial telephone discussion and invitation from one of the most energetic and easy-going Deputy Vice Chancellors, I have ever met, Professor Inyang Udofout, conveying the unanimous decision of the Convocation Ceremony Committee of the university to invite me for this year's Lecture.
- 1.3 Even though at that time, I was recuperating from a major surgery on both of my eyes, I was determined that, come what may, with God willing, I must honour this invitation which I consider very special to me. It is special for many reasons which I may not have the time to mention all and in detail. Let me briefly mention a few.
- 1.4 Although I have been associated with the University of Uyo for quite some time, and I cherish *every moment* each time I visited, this invitation to give the Convocation lecture of the combined 22nd and 23rd

convocation ceremony consolidates on all the previous formal engagements with and at the university.

- 1.5 From what I can recall, my first major official engagement here was in August, 1996, when I came from my post in Australia, to give a Special Keynote Address on *Fostering the Understanding of Science Concepts* at the 37th Annual Conference of the Science Teachers Association of Nigeria. The second was another Keynote Address at the Conference on *Education in Nigeria in the 21st Century* organised by the School of Continuing Education, University of Uyo held from 17 to 19 August, 2005, to celebrate the Retirement of our now departed dear friend and colleague, the late Professor Mbong Udofot. The third official major engagement was to write a Foreword in 2015 to the publication: ***Harvests from the Gown: Festschrift in Honour of Professor Comfort Ekpo***, which was done to mark the end of the tenure of the immediate past Vice Chancellor of this university; a remarkable woman of substance, beauty and brain. I still have fond memories of young Comfort at Ahmadu Bello University in 1983, two years after I had come back from my doctoral studies in the UK, combining the shelves of the University Library for materials in pursuit of her Master's degree studies. How time flies! Congratulations to Prof Ekpo for a successful tenure as VC of UNIUYO.
- 1.6 Of course, I also have non-formal and unofficial relationships with this university and the good people of this state. I have many friends from here and it looks like many people from my state and local government especially, are cementing the good relationship our two states have with

each other by marrying the charming, admirable and beautiful girls you have in abundance here. Besides, my people love good food and your girls are second to none when it comes to culinary persuasion! But this is not the main focus of my lecture.

1.7 The main focus of my lecture, as you are aware, is on **‘Quality of University Education in Nigeria: The Challenges of Social Relevance’**.

This is quite apt and very much aligned with the Motto of the University which says ***Unity, Learning and Service***. The main thread which will run through the lecture, derivable from the university motto is service. Service, in its simplest connotation, relates to social relevance. We shall revisit this at a later stage of the lecture.

1.8 From all the information that I have at my disposal about University of Uyo’s achievements, you must be given the thumps up for being socially relevant with your determined effort to direct your academic responsibilities (teaching, learning, research and scholarship) and service towards affecting and effecting the society you live in. It is a true representation of how the ‘town meets the gown’ scenario and how it makes your impact felt in the development of society.

1.9 I am aware that all your Faculties and major Departments have made sterling contributions towards being socially relevant. As time will not allow, permit me to list a few of these outstanding achievements. They include:

1.9.1 The establishment of an Ultra-Modern Hatchery complex in the State by AkwaPrime.

- 1.9.2 The design and construction of a prototype of a Cassava peeling machine in order to help farmers in Agro-processing of their farm produce.
- 1.9.3 Contribution towards a solution of climate change and energy through the design of multiple applications for savings in domestic energy consumption by appliances.
- 1.9.4 The engagement of the University's Law clinic in the provision of free legal services to indigent members of the public.
- 1.9.5 The production of Bacterised Biofertilizer for enhanced remediation of oil contaminated soil for higher productivity.
- 1.9.6 The production of NG/P.2016/355 Prosochit for the formulation of drugs having dissolution and permeation challenges.
- 1.9.7 For me and many others, all these I have listed above and many more of the physical hands-on demonstration of the achievements by your university is a testimony of your social relevance and quality education.
- 1.9.8 I would have easily said therefore that my case is made and the lecture is now delivered and over. Full stop. But I guess the Vice Chancellor and The Convocation Ceremony Committee would grumble that they did not bring me over here to say a few words in five minutes and close the function. So let me make everyone a bit happier by going ahead with the lecture. I will therefore expatiate on some of these points to make things more comprehensive and fulfilling.


2.0 More Congratulations and Commendation to the University of Uyo









- 2.1 I must again congratulate the University of Uyo for her remarkable achievements since its inception as a Federal University in 1991, after inheriting the staff, students and assets of the University of Cross River State which was established in 1983.
- 2.2 Operating within a difficult and harsh environment of funding and infrastructural inadequacies, the University has risen from virtually nothing to being the number 27 out of 153 universities in Nigeria as per the This uniRank **2017 Nigerian University Ranking** of all officially recognized Nigerian universities supervised by the National Universities Commission (NUC). The uniRank University Ranking provides a non-academic *League Table* of all Nigerian Universities based on unbiased and valid webometrics. Although some would say that the current rankings of universities all over the world do not adequately provide all the essentials of what each university does best, the fact that University of Uyo has been ranked well ahead of many universities including some of the first and second generation universities in Nigeria is no mean achievement. Given your track record charted up so far by the university, I have no doubt in my mind that the best is yet to come and the sky, as they say, is your limit.
- 2.3 A cursory look at the 2017 League table of the top 200 world Universities as shown below indicates that there seems to be a direct


association between the age of a university and their placement in the ranking system. The best ranked top ten universities in the world belong to the group of the oldest universities in the world, with many of them being established between 859 AD (when the oldest existing and continually operating educational institution in the world was founded as the University of Al-Qarawiyyin, in Fez, Morocco) to when modern universities began in the 19th Century. The University of Al-Qarawiyyin is recognized by UNESCO and the Guinness World Records as the first institution to issue educational degrees. A fantastic distinguishing feature of this world renowned citadel of learning is that it was founded by a woman called Fatima al-Fihri, a young princess who migrated from Tunisia to Morocco. By the way, the second oldest university in the world is Al-Azhar University, Egypt founded in 970 AD. Who says that Africa did not civilize the rest of the world!

- 2.4 According to the 2017 World University ranking, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the best ranked university, was established in 1861; Stanford University, the second best university in the world was established in 1885 while Harvard University, the third best university in the world was established in 1636.

Table 1: 2017 League Table of the top 200 world Universities

Rank	University	Country
1	 Massachusetts Institute of Technology Established in 1861, Massachusetts Institute of Technology is a non-profit private higher education institution located in the urban setting of the large town of Cambridge (population range of...	USA

Rank	University	Country
2	 Stanford University Founded in 1885, Stanford University is a non-profit private higher education institution located in the suburban setting of the medium-sized town of Stanford (population range of 10,000-49,999...	USA
3	 Harvard University Established in 1636, Harvard University is a non-profit private higher education institution located in the urban setting of the large town of Cambridge (population range of 50,000-249,999...	USA
4	 University of California, Berkeley Founded in 1868, University of California, Berkeley is a non-profit public higher education institution located in the urban setting of the large town of Berkeley (population range of 50,000-249,999...	USA
5	 University of Washington Founded in 1861, University of Washington is a non-profit public higher education institution located in the urban setting of the medium-sized city of Seattle (population range of 500,000-1,000,000...	USA
6	 Cornell University Founded in 1865, Cornell University is a non-profit private higher education institution located in the urban setting of the medium-sized town of Ithaca (population range of 10,000-49,999...	USA
7	 University of Michigan Founded in 1817, University of Michigan is a non-profit public higher education institution located in the urban setting of the large town of Ann Arbor (population range of 50,000-249,999...	USA
8	 University of California, Los Angeles Founded in 1919, University of California, Los Angeles is a non-profit public higher education institution located in the urban setting of the large city of Los Angeles (population range of...	USA
9	 Columbia University in the City of New York Founded in 1754, Columbia University in the City of New York is a non-profit private higher education institution located in the urban setting of the metropolis of New York City (population range of...	USA

Rank	University	Country
10	 University of Wisconsin-Madison Established in 1848, University of Wisconsin-Madison is a non-profit public higher education institution located in the urban setting of the large town of Madison (population range of 50,000-249,999...	USA

2.5 According to records available, universities as centres of learning have been around for hundreds of years. 'However, not all withstand the test of time. Over the centuries, many of the world's oldest universities have disbanded, split into autonomous colleges or become modernised beyond all recognition'. The continued existence of some ancient institutions is due to a number of reasons which include (i) their historic legacies, (ii) ability to adapt to modern contexts and, (iv) remaining relevant, resilient and persistent in a globally intense competition. It should be noted that many of the oldest universities in the world are also among the most prestigious and popular, drawing from an array of the best students from all over the world. The point I am making here is that today, the University of Uyo, after a mere 26 years of existence, is ranked number 27 best university out of 153 universities in Nigeria and in comparison with the oldest universities in the world, it is ranked number 7,542 out of the 23,238 universities in the world. I am sure I would be speaking the minds of all members of the University, and indeed of those at this venue today, if I say that you are aiming for the best and for the long haul. This would translate to mean that in more years to come, University of Uyo should become not only the best in Nigeria but the best ranked university in the world. My prayer is that, just like great wines, the best comes with age; may University of Uyo

continue to age gracefully and become the best in the world in the near future.

3.0 The Foci and Goals of the lecture

- 3.1 My brief is to speak on Quality of University Education in Nigeria: The Challenges of Social Relevance. The literature is replete with lectures, discussions, debates and opinions all over the world on the topic or closely related ones. If you comb through the pages of our newspapers as well as rely on what the electronic media provide the nation with, we are not in any way short of views about the topic. Typically, Nigerians claim proficiency in areas that they know next to nothing about, even though it affects them on a daily basis. Just like in football (soccer) in which spectators believe they know more about how to play it and score goals than the footballers, or coach or technical team hired to do their professional jobs, every Nigerian claims competence in education simply because their children, wards, relations are pupils or students. To some extent, and sadly too, even some proprietors of schools and institutions of higher learning do not know what exactly is meant by education, let alone quality education and social relevance. This is because all they are interested in is to run their institutions as a business enterprise purely to rake in money from unsuspecting and gullible public.
- 3.2 I would therefore attempt to simplify all I want to convey through this lecture in order to achieve four main goals as follows: (i) to explain what is meant by quality university education in general and within the context of Nigeria, (ii) to give a brief history of university education in

Nigeria and issues attendant to quality education, (iii) to list what, in my understanding, have contributed, over time, to the decline in quality in our university education, and (iv) make recommendations on what we should do as individuals, as a university and collectively as a nation to raise the quality of education on the fantastic trajectory it had started with in the 60s and what should be done to enhance it to ensure that our universities are amongst the world's best institutions of higher learning.

4.0 Hello, UNIUYO Graduands!

- 4.1 The major reason we are gathered here this weekend, is to fulfill one of the objectives of setting up the university; which is to award degrees, diplomas and certificates as entrenched in the Laws of the institution. Without the students who are graduating today, this year's convocation ceremony, of which this lecture is a major aspect, would not hold. In essence, the students are the most important part and indeed the central focal point or centre of attraction of today. I dare say that since they are the reason for our gathering today and the gigantic preparation for tomorrow's ceremony, the students are the reason for all we have undertaken to be here. Without them, parents, lecturers, the egg heads of academia gathered here and the distinguished audience we have today will not be here or if they are, it would be for something very different from honouring the graduands.
- 4.2 If, as we have argued, the graduands are the *raison d'être* of our gathering today, we must not treat them as an appendage to the ceremony. It should be preferred to address them now as I begin the

lecture rather than leave it till the end when, as is usual or natural, you and I might be tired of sitting in one place and listening to another boring lecture!

4.3 Let me therefore now devote the next few minutes of this lecture to the graduands who are all bubbling with excitement, grinning from ear to ear and wishing that tomorrow's convocation ceremony comes to an end sooner than planned for them to party and celebrate with their friends and families. I am sure you cannot believe that it has all ended. The daily lectures, gruesome laboratory sessions, endless tutorials, conformity to the rigid rules of the game, waking up at the wee hours every morning in readiness for boring lectures and months of struggle in the library and data collection and analyses (in all ramifications) are now a thing of the past. It is unbelievably over because everything that has a beginning has an end. After today, you will be as free as the air, ready for NYSC or to go brandishing your glittering certificates for employers to consider. You are a pride to our country, to your university (now your alma mater), community, family, friends and, indeed to yourself! In the face of all the celebrations, I would like you to pause and consider at least 100 points I have in mind. But due to time I will mention only **three** of them.

4.4 The first point is that you did not do it all alone. UNIUYO has made you what you are today and what you will become in the future. Your parents, relations and friends and also your communities gave all they have for you. Even the cleaners, drivers, cooks, gardeners, etc., have contributed to molding you at this university. Just look around at the

huge crowd you would have at your convocation tomorrow to confirm what I have just said. Above all, God has decreed and made it possible for you to graduate today. Only a fool says there is no God (Psalm 14:1). But the wise don't make a show of their knowledge, but fools broadcast their foolishness (Proverbs 12:23).

- 4.5 The second point is that in spite of the degree you are collecting tomorrow, (be it Bachelor, Master or even Doctorate), you need a lot more knowledge to deal with the larger society. In short, it must be continuous or what is now known as long-life and life-wide learning. Be warned, the degree you will receive tomorrow has a use-by-date of less than five years. In fact we are told that the half-life of all the knowledge we have in our brains is only 18months. Without going back to school and learning daily, you will quickly be out of date earlier than you think. More over in today's world, a first degree now measures no more like the West African School Certificate of some decades ago. You must make it a point of duty, even at great discomfort to yourself and family, to acquire more knowledge on a daily basis through several channels including, of course, the ubiquitous internet.
- 4.6 The third, and perhaps the most important, point is that you need much more than the daily acquisition of knowledge to deal with all the issues and concerns you will daily be faced with at home, work, community or at the world at large. You require a daily walk with God to skillfully meander through the obstacles and challenges of life. As a matter of fact, this is your most guaranteed insurance against failure or disenchantment with the world. The world is tougher than you think.

The protection and immunity you are used to on campus will fizzle away as soon as you step out of the gate of this campus tomorrow. My advice is that no matter the unwholesome ways, if any, you exhibited to get through your degree work, the world will not condone some of your past on-campus behaviours, which if exhibited in the larger society, will send you to the nearest prison out rightly.

- 4.7 For those students yet to graduate, my advice is to ensure that you hold to clean ideas and ideals, face your studies, work hard, shun bad companies, cultism, cheating, bribing lecturers with all that you have got so as to get all that you need. I understand that in some universities, thankfully not UNIUYO, some students take guns to schools and if necessary brandish them before lecturers and students to intimidate towards succumbing to their nefarious activities. Your stay on campus should assist you to imbibe the traditions of academia which include objectivity, the superior and strongest arguments win the day, the spirit of experimentation and investigation, serendipity, and using all the scientific thoughts to solve the equations of the day. You are the reasons why the university exists, indeed why our salaries are being paid. You therefore owe it to your parents and the nation to question and seek to contribute to all activities whether academic or social on campus in a decent and civilised manner. The university is the training ground for future leaders of this country and take it from me, you will in future look back and wish you could re-enact or re-live your university life as it would be your best time ever in your impressionable life. Put your lecturers on their toes by reading ahead and asking questions

constructively in class. Extend the frontiers of knowledge by thinking outside or indeed without, the box or by smashing the box, challenge yourself to greater heights and limits. The nation and the world of the 21st century need this of you.

5.0 Introduction

5.1 Now to the lecture!

5.2 The title of the lecture, so well constructed, gave me some food for thought and has forced me to deviate from my usual way of preparing and giving such important lectures as this. While deciphering the ***Quality of University Education in Nigeria: the Challenge of Social Relevance*** I have had to reminisce into my time and life as a University student, as a lecturer and a Professor and now emeritus Professor. In my sober reflections, I have had to dig deep into my residual memory to find answers to some pertinent and thought provoking questions which include: can I truly say that I have received quality university education? Are university teachers geared towards and committed to imparting quality education on their products? Were my previous researches and are my current research work directed to proffering solutions to the myriads of issues plaguing the society? Are my colleagues more concerned with the mind set of 'any research will do in so far as it contributes to my promotion rather than being socially relevant'? How often do we stop to think about providing students with the knowledge, attitude and skills as well as direct their understanding to ideas that would stand the test of time all through their working life? These and many more similar questions have forced me to unpack the three main 'bundles' of Quality, (University) education and Social Relevance.

5.3 As I go through the presentation of my thoughts through this lecture, I shall try to direct attention to these three bundles of ideas while reflecting on

my personal experiences and anecdotal information I have garnered to date, transcending through all the four and a half decades of my life in and out of the university campus and classrooms.

6.0 Our Nostalgic Past

- 6.1 Using the glorious past of academia and higher education development in Africa, and Nigeria in particular, as measures for progress, it is the belief of millions of Nigerians that quality of university education, indeed the quality of education as a whole is no more what it had been and we seem to be degenerating into mediocrity. I shall again refer to this later on.
- 6.2 The impression we are getting of the goings-on in the education sector is that the centre is not holding anymore and we must double our efforts to look for novel solutions to avoid any total breakdown.
- 6.3 The glorious heights of higher education have been lowered beyond the valley and we are now left to begin to pick the pieces. How and why did we descend so terribly low, you may ask? Let us now begin from the beginning and hopefully, we just might become wiser by hindsight!

Quality? What Quality?

- 6.4 The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) has listed, on page 5 of its recent newsletter, *Connections: Learning for Sustainable Development*, Vol. 22, No. 2, July, 2017, the top FOUR trends in higher education worldwide. I agree whole heartedly with COL in its assertion that:

“Higher education institutions are continuously developing new programmes, delivery methodologies and policies to respond to the demands of the global labour market and the growth of new and innovative information and communication technologies.” (p.5).

- 6.5 COL proceeded to list the following as the current 4 top trends:
- 6.5.1 Increase in blended learning programmes (best practices of traditional classroom-based learning with online and digital learning).
 - 6.5.2 Integrating life skills into higher education (imparting training in life skills in learners to be competent in the dynamic world of work).
 - 6.5.3 Rapid rise in micro-credentials (mini-degrees or certifications in a specific topic area that are geared towards providing hands-on training to supplement their learners’ education for better employment prospects).
 - 6.5.4 Growth and potential of mobile technology (the integration of mobile technology in higher education to increase access to education and offering learners high levels of interactivity, flexibility and personalisation).
- 6.6 This is what makes the theme for the 22nd and 23rd combined 2017 convocation lecture quite apt and amenable to what would appear to mimic an after-dinner conversation amongst colleagues and experts on quality education. As enthusiasts and veterans in higher education, we should look back telescoping our years of engagement in higher education to take stock of what has been done, where we are and where Nigeria should aim to be with regard to providing quality university education in Nigeria.
- 6.7 Quality is the attainment of fitness for purpose in a given situation in a systematic, reliable fashion to provide confidence to the client that

accurate and reproducible results indicate that the products or services meet or exceed customer expectations.

- 6.8 For me, the relevance of our university education system should be seen and directed towards its ecological significance or consequence within the development initiatives in Nigeria and in particular Akwa Ibom, the immediate environment of this University. If you take another look at what The Commonwealth of Learning has said about current trends in education world-wide, you will notice that they all relate to what quality university education should be at this day and age. Any University that does not strive to attain all the four trends listed by the COL is not offering quality education.
- 6.9 What I can deduce from the theme is that there is a less-than-quiet dissatisfaction with the way and where our education in Nigeria is right now. There is therefore an urgent need for a redress to make it suit our current and evolving needs as well as make it competitive or comparable with what obtains in other parts of the world.
- 6.10 I have a feeling that we are all on the same page, and indeed the same paragraph, on our views about the Theme and what should be contained in, and how we therefore wish, the conversation to proceed today. If this is the case, then all I need to do this afternoon is to provide some food for thought and supply the beacons to guide the conversation we shall undertake now and as we examine the various issues associated with the theme of my lecture.
- 6.11 I do hope therefore, that a consideration of the above as threads running through my narrative and conversation with you this afternoon

should assist us to decipher what we really mean by such a heavy duty Convocation lecture titled **“Quality of University Education in Nigeria: The Challenge of Social Relevance”**.

7.0 Education and Development

7.1 There is no gainsaying the fact that Education is the propelling power of any development in any nation or community. Whether political, socio-economic and other forms of development, no nation can make any appreciable progress without recourse to education which is the pivot on which all development sit. History is replete with the account of how nations have used education to directly raise the level of the living conditions of the citizenry of a nation, catered for their economy and drastically improve the other sectors.

7.2 Indeed it was the Late Nelson Mandela, an anti-apartheid revolutionary, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, and former President of the Republic of South Africa, who alluded to this when he said that:

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world. No country can really develop unless its citizens are educated.”

7.3 As succinctly stated by Acemoglu and Robinson (2012), there is a clear relationship between a country’s institutional governance frameworks, economic policies, incentive structures on the one hand, and its economic progress on the other hand as determined by the education offered its people. The lack of appreciable development in Nigeria as compared with other countries of the world is easily adduced to the low level of attention given to education.

7.4 For all the sectors to develop adequately there must be the abundance of well developed human capital to power them. Education is the manure which fertilises human capital development. Unfortunately, the contemporary commentary on education in Nigeria has not been very encouraging. This is one of the main reasons for the Presidential Summit on Education scheduled for 13 November, 2017 to critically look into the problems of education in Nigeria and proffer lasting and meaningful practical solutions to them. Our Minister of Education, Mallam Adamu Adamu, is resolved to use the Summit to break the yoke of lack of quality in our education with an added impetus of ensuring that education is socially relevant in the Nigerian ecosystem.

8.0 Nigeria's Vital Educational Statistics

8.1 Many of the countries of the developing world, including Nigeria, did not achieve the Education for All (EFA) goals by 2015. In economically poorer countries, an estimated 72 million children are not in school. It is also recorded that about 758 million adults still lack basic literacy skills – more than three quarters of whom live in only 15 countries. Nigeria, as an E9 country (one of the world's 9 most populous developing countries), is under performing on a number of educational indicators, and has its own fair share of these statistics as follows:

8.1.1 Nigeria's population grows by 2.7 % annually according to the UN Bureau of Statistics and the UN Population Division. It is projected that our population will double by the year 2066.

- 8.1.2 Currently we have over 110 million youth under the age of 25 years and should rise to over 200 million in 50 years' time.
- 8.1.3 22.1million out of 42.1 million Nigerian children are in primary schools;
- 8.1.4 Out of 33.9 million Nigerians eligible for secondary education, only 10.4 million are attending.
- 8.1.5 Nigeria, according to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2013, has the highest rate of out-of-school children in the world.
- 8.1.6 Nigeria requires about 1.4 million primary and secondary school teachers and 456, 500 tertiary education teachers (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2013, ES NCCE, 2012),and
- 8.1.7 Of all the students who sat for SSCE examinations, from 2006 to 2016, less than 25 per cent passed with credits in Mathematics and English.
- 8.2 At the higher education level, the 37th General Conference of UNESCO held in October 2013, while observing an increase in access was grossly dissatisfied with the quality of graduates.
- 8.3 A recent UNESCO survey indicated that there are FIVE main factors contributory to the low quality in higher education in Africa. These include:
 - 8.3.1 depreciating quality of teachers;
 - 8.3.2 research capacity deficit;

- 8.3.3 inadequacies in facilities for teaching, learning and research;
 - 8.3.4 lack of a regional quality assurance framework and accreditation system; and
 - 8.3.5 slow adoption of ICT for delivering quality higher education.
- 8.4 Nigeria suffers from all of most of the UNESCO indices of low quality university education as listed above. Why then are we surprised that the quality of our university education has depreciated tremendously, and embarrassingly.
- 8.5 What goes on in the education sector and at all levels of education does not show that our educational institutions are creating any values at all. Indeed, the values which our higher institutions had between the 60s and the early 80th have long disappeared and all we have is a skeleton of what excellence represented in those days.

9.0 In the Beginning...

- 9.1 Nigeria, as a 57 year old country, has come a long way. From days of colonialism, slavery and slave trade and, zero infrastructural development as per western indicators to an independent country, emerging as the giant of Africa in many respects, has taken modest strides in educational development and the economic emancipation of the people.
- 9.2 A detailed understanding of the journey through university or higher education in Nigeria is meaningfully grasped when looked at from how it developed on the African continent.

9.3 The arrival of higher education in Africa in the 19th century has an interesting past and was tied to the period of rapid and multiple changes in the Western world. Fourah Bay College (FBC), founded in 1827 can be identified with two of these changes with some special importance to Africa. In Europe at that time, there were moves for social reforms as a result of industrialisation. There was need for improved education, increase in parliamentary democracy, rise of an urban industrial working class, Evangelical revival, the missionary enterprise and abolitionist movement. The settlement of freed slaves in Freetown was a consequence of the abolitionist movement. FBC was therefore founded to do a number of things including the training of evangelists, middle level labourers who would develop export crops as alternative to the slave trade. The history books (see Ajayi, Goma & Johnson, 1996) have it that FBC was affiliated to Durham for three main reasons: (i) to find space to quieten the potential uprising of the educated freed slaves who had been repatriated and thereby engage them to do some things with their hands and a bit with their heads, (ii) it was to stop the export of unpaid African labour across the seas just as the Europeans desired to acquire territories in Africa for the exploitation of African land, human and mineral resources with African labour for the benefit of Europe. The third major reason for the establishment of FBC was as a direct response to the need to use the industrial revolution to bring to Africa scientific research, and vocational and professional training through the university for the benefit of the colonialists. Later on in the early 20th century, the

clamour for universities in Africa was muted as people learnt to cope with colonial rule.

- 9.4 The clamour was for modern universities with regenerative powers and reflecting the reforms of the 19th century. As a result, the young Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, on his return from his USA studies wrote a book in 1937 titled *Renascent Africa* in which he took up the issue of the nature and function of the African University. According to Azikiwe:

- 9.5 *Universities have been responsible for shaping the destinies of races and nations and individuals. The universities of Europe and America have been responsible for the great movements in the national history of these continents... Give the Renascent African a university.... With twelve million pounds there is no reason why the best libraries, laboratories, professors cannot be produced right here, and this continent can become overnight "a Continent of Light". Universities are mirrors which reflect the particular sociological idiosyncrasies. An African graduate of European or American Universities, unless he has developed his individuality, is nothing but a megaphone, yea a carbon copy of these societies. We need an indigenous university sustained through African initiative....maintained at (African) expense,*

- 9.6 So, as far back as the time when universities were being agitated for, people wanted Universities for the intellectual emancipation from both the limitations of the past and the shackles that colonialism placed not only on the mind, but also on the freedom of choice. Through a series of reports by several commissions (including: Ashby, Phelps-stokes, De La Warr, Channon, Elliot, Asquith), a number of University Colleges emerged in Africa. The University College of Ghana started in October 1948 with 92 students using the one million pounds sterling from the funds of the Cocoa Marketing Board. The University College, Ibadan

opened in January 1948 with 148 students while the Khartoum University College opened in 1947. University College of Makerere opened in 1949 for East Africa complemented by the Royal Technical College, Nairobi. Similarly, for the French speaking countries, an Institute of Higher Studies was established in Dakar in 1950 and in Tananarive in 1955. These followed the establishment of the Tananarive Medical Institute established in 1896. There was a very strict policy of control and restriction in the francophone countries making the establishment and governance of education much different from the Anglophone countries. The Catholic University of Louvain medical foundation and agriculture centre in Kinshasa later became Louvain University Centre in 1949 and the Catholic University Campus in 1950. A Free University was established in Kisangani in 1955 while the State University of Lubumbashi was established in 1956. The University College of Addis Ababa was granted a charter in 1950. In 1953 a University College in Mount Pleasant, Salisbury, Rhodesia was established.

- 9.7 The development of education in South Africa was fairly similar. The missionary societies there between 1840 and 1850 placed emphasis on post primary education, industrial and agricultural schools. The South African College at Cape Town established in 1829 for the English speaking community while the Victoria College in Stellenbosch was established for the Afrikaans-speaking community. In 1873 the University of Good Hope was established obtaining a royal charter to teach in 1877. By 1916 the union government of the Orange Free State

and Transvaal re-organised the university into the University of South Africa (UNISA) incorporating six university colleges of (Rhodes University College, Huguenot University College, Grey University College, Natal University College, Transvaal University College, Kimberley School of Mines and Technology became Witwatersrand University College). A few years later the South African College became the University of Cape Town and the Victoria College as the University of Stellenbosch designated specifically for the white communities. In 1921 the Dutch Reformed Church Christian College was incorporated into UNISA.

10.0 The Establishment of Fully Fledged Universities in Africa

10.1 As the years went by and the ground swell for independence emerged, people started to criticise the colonial education and colonial university colleges on four main grounds. These were that:

- 10.1.1 the colonial universities deliberately set to train an elite who would merely step into the shoes of outgoing colonial rulers and continue to exploit their own people;
- 10.1.2 the need to broaden the curricula to include liberal education which the colonialists excluded;
- 10.1.3 the need for reform to evolve new degree structures more relevant to the needs of each country and the continent; and
- 10.1.4 the need to discourage the ivory tower nature of the Colleges and streamline them closer to the community they serve.

10.2 By independence, the reforms of higher education had started in Nigeria. With the funding support from Carnegie Corporation, set up the Ashby Commission chaired by Sir Eric Ashby, the Master of Clare College, Cambridge. The Commission recommended three new Universities in Lagos, Enugu and Zaria. University of Nigeria, Nsukka started in 1960, Ahmadu Bello University started in Zaria in 1962 while the University of Ife started in Ibadan in 1962 moving to its permanent site at Ile-Ife in 1967. The Lagos University Act was passed in 1962 making it an urban non-residential university.

10.3 Immediately before and after independence, many African countries, including Nigeria, were assisted in creating excellent facilities in their universities and research institutions which produced outstanding achievements. In many of the universities, external funding and expatriate staff assisted greatly in creating excellent teaching and learning environments. Graduates of African universities were able to compete globally with products of European and American universities. From a continental workshop held in 1972 by the Association of African Universities (AAU) to set the agenda for African Universities in the following two decades, it was agreed that:

.... an emergent African university must, henceforth, be much more than an institution for teaching, research and dissemination of higher learning. It must be accountable to, and serve, the vast majority of the people who live in the rural areas. The African University must be committed to active participation in social transformation, economic modernisation, and the training and upgrading of the total human resources of the nation, not just of a small elite (Yesufu, 1973, p.4).

- 10.4 From the perspectives of many people, the beginning period of University education in Nigeria was with great quality and directed to responding to the need of the society. This means that our university education then, probably till about 15 years ago had quality and relevance.
- 10.5 The continuing rise for independence of nations in Africa throughout the 70s gave rise to many developments in education including:
- 10.5.1 The provision of fertile grounds for the establishment of new universities and other higher institutions of learning, and expansion of old ones.
 - 10.5.2 The acceptance by governments of higher education as necessary foundation for development and worthy of investment.
- 10.6 The evolution of national systems of education with centralised control of universities by government were developed.
- 10.7 The emergence of different ownership or proprietorship of institutions of higher learning to include states and private ownership (see Table 2 below).

Table 2: Higher Education Institutions in Nigeria

Type of Institution	Federal	State	Private	Total
Universities	40	44	69	153

Polytechnics	28	41	44	113
Colleges of Education	21	49	68	138
Monotechnics	22	2	2	26
Federal Colleges of Agriculture	17	19	-	36
Colleges of Health Technicians& Allied Institutions	19	11	6	36
Vocational Education Institutes and Innovative Enterprise Institutes	-	-	140	140
Totals	147	126	146	642

11.0 Higher Education in Nigeria

11.1 Okebukola (2017), in a recent lecture, has succinctly and eloquently distilled the history and all associated issues with higher education and I wish to adopt all he has written on it in the following paragraphs.

11.2 'Higher education which covers all forms of post-secondary delivery is typically the last four years of the 6-3-3-4 education system (National Policy on Education, 2014). It has a history dating back 94 years with the establishment of the Yaba Higher College (Taiwo, 1981). There are three main clusters of higher education institutions- colleges of education, polytechnics and universities. About 56% of the 148 colleges of education are publicly funded. Of these, 15% are owned by the federal government. State-owned colleges make up 32% of the total. There are 57 private colleges of education. There are also nine polytechnics and 14 other institutions offering the Nigeria Certificate of Education (NCE) programmes. The sub-system is regulated by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE). The polytechnic sub-sector has 406 institutions. This is made up of polytechnics, monotechnics, colleges of agriculture, colleges of health technology, and other specialised institutions. About 25% of these institutions are owned by the federal government with another quarter being state-owned. There are 95

privately-owned institutions in this sub-sector that is regulated by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE).

11.3 As shown on Table 2, by October 2017, the Nigerian university system has 153 universities made up of 40 federal universities, 45 state-owned and 68 private universities (NUC, 2017). The National Universities Commission (NUC) is the superintending and regulatory authority.

11.4 The global policy framework for higher education is provided by the National Policy on Education (2014). As stated in the policy, the goals of higher education are to:

- 11.4.1 contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training;
- 11.4.2 develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society;
- 11.4.3 develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments;
- 11.4.4 acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society;
- 11.4.5 promote and encourage scholarship and community service;
- 11.4.6 forge and cement national unity; and
- 11.4.7 promote national and international understanding and interaction.

11.4.8 Apart from the national policy provisions, all higher education institutions have enabling laws to which their operations are hinged. In turn, these laws are further strengthened by the laws of the regulatory agencies.

12.0 Origin, size and shape of the Nigerian University System

- 12.1 University education in Nigeria dates back to 1948 with the establishment of the University College, Ibadan. Two years after independence, the country had five universities owned by each of the three regions with the then Western region having three. The increase in oil revenue in the mid-70s coupled with the need to forge national unity following the end of the civil war influenced the creation of a national system of higher education. This was achieved through the reconstitution of the National Universities Commission into an autonomous body charged with additional responsibilities and powers in 1974.
- 12.2 The development laid the framework of the takeover of all the regional universities in 1975. The widespread agitation for an expansion of access to university education and increased high-level national human resource requirement and technological development contributed greatly to the establishment of the second generation and other specialised universities (of agriculture, technology) and a military university.

- 12.3 The placement of higher education under the concurrent legislative list in the 1979 Constitution allowed state governments to establish universities.
- 12.4 Private sector participation in university education commenced shortly after. However, in the absence of proper guidelines for their establishment, the private universities turned out to be universities only in name. All the 24 private universities established between 1980 and 1983 were abolished by the Federal Government in 1984. It was nine years later in 1993, that another law which allowed the establishment of private universities and spelt out procedures for such was promulgated.
- 12.5 To further widen access to university education, a National Open University was established in 1983, closed shortly after and re-opened in 2001 to offer education through open and distance learning mode and renamed the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). As stated earlier (Table 2), there are by October 20, 2017, a total of 153 universities made up of 40 federal universities, 44 state-owned and 69 private universities.
- 12.6 The past three decades have witnessed significant changes within the university system. Notable among such changes is the increase in the number of universities and programmes. By July 2017, there were about two hundred and thirty programmes across the entire universities with an academic staff strength of about 51,000.
- 12.7 By far, however, the greatest change has been in the explosion in student population and the number of aspirants seeking university

admission. The total student enrolment in all Nigerian universities grew from just over 2000 in 1962 to about 1.9 million in October (est.) 2017.

12.8 The stress put on the universities in terms of demand and the limited expansion in physical facilities and academic staff to cater for this demand has taken a great toll on the quality of programmes in the institutions. Employers of labour and the general public have expressed concern over the quality of graduates' (pp. 3-5).

12.9 The phenomenal stress put on universities with regard to access to university education can be appreciated from the figures in Table 3 below.

Table 3: JAMB Admission Statistics 2010–2016

Year	Number of applications	Number admitted	% admitted
2010	1,513,940	423,531	28
2011	1,636,356	417,341	26
2012	1,632, 835	447,176	27
2013	1,924,393	463,395	24
2014	1,785,608	437,704	25
2015	1,612,247	485,338	30
2016	1,598,330	–	–
TOTAL	11,703,709	2,674,485	28

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria

12.10 The table indicated that admission statistics from JAMB for 2010 to 2016 showed that a total of 11,703,709 applications were received, and a total of 2,674,485 students were admitted across the 36 states and the FCT between 2010 and 2015. This means that a miserable average of 28 per cent of students who applied for admission were admitted across the 36 states and the FCT in a given year (Table 3). This has created so many issues which of course have implication for quality.

12.11 As can be discerned from the Figure 1, 2 and 3 below, over 70 per cent of those who apply to our institutions of higher learning cannot be accommodated, not necessarily because they are not qualified but due to gross inadequacies in resources and facilities. There is a limit which any one classroom or lecture theatre can accommodate at any one particular time and location.

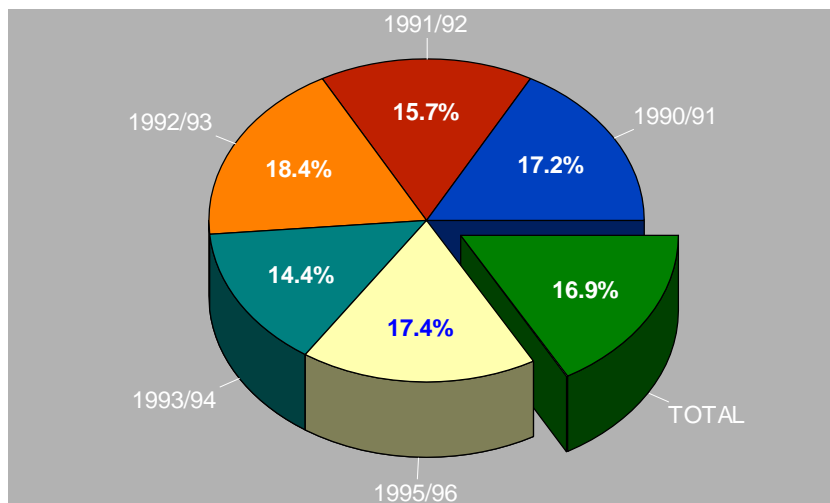


Figure 1: Provisional admissions as percentage of total applications into Universities

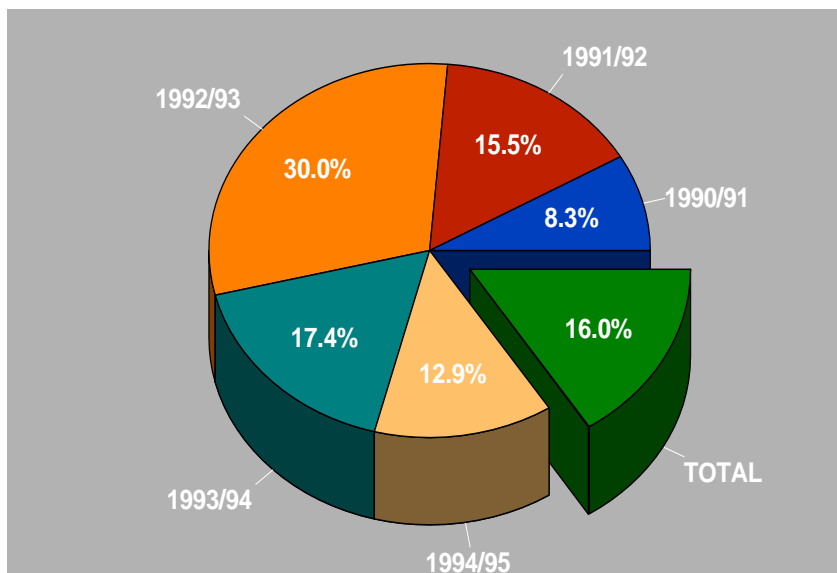


Figure 2: Provisional admissions as percentage of total applications into Polytechnics

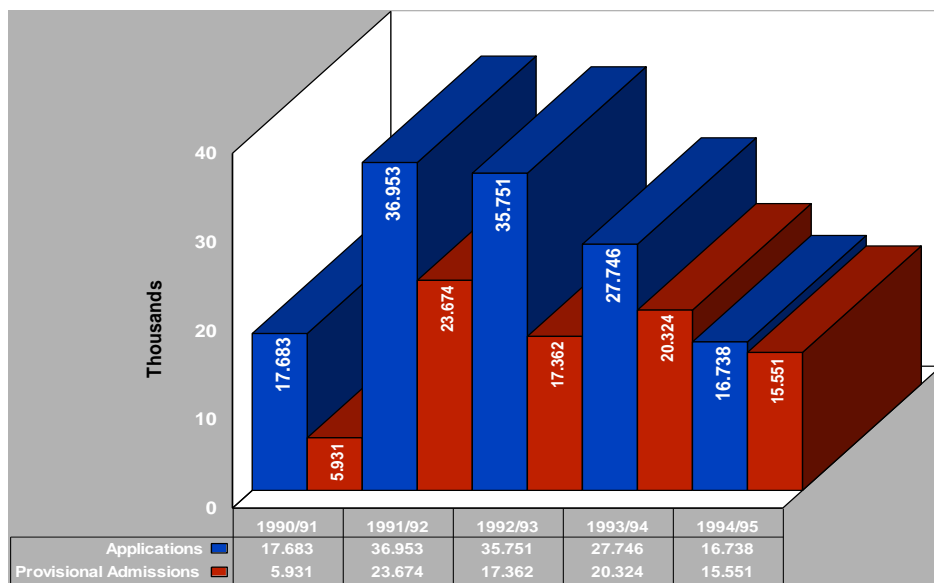


Figure 3: Provisional admissions as percentage of total applications into Colleges of Education

12.12 In spite of the discouraging SSSCE and NECCO annual examination results, Nigeria continues to have huge and continually increasing number of applicants to the Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board (JAMB) for admission into tertiary institutions.

12.13 On the average, out of over 1.5million Nigerians seeking admission to tertiary institutions, only about 26.5 per cent are successful.

13.0 Funding

13.1 In terms of funding in education and enrolment numbers, The World Bank says that African countries appear to be doing well. For example, The World Bank report of 2009 informed us that between 2005 and 2007, African countries expended more funds on education more than most regions of the world.

13.2 However, in recent times, as shown in Table 4 below, the amount being expended on education has been on the decrease both in real terms and

in percentages. The figures in Table 4 indicate that the percentage annual budget allocated to the education sector has continually decreased from 10% to 6.24% from 2015 to 2017. Needless to say that this has profound effect on quality of education.

Table 4: Nigerian Education Budget (2013-2017)

Year	Allocation to education sector	National Annual Budget	% of Annual Budget allocated to education sector
2017	455,407,788,565	7,298,507,709,937	6.24
2016	480,278,214,688	6,077,680,000,000	7.90
2015	483,183,784,654	4,493,363,957,158	10.75
2014	495,283,130,268	4,642,960,000,000	10.67
2013	427,515,707,889	4,987,220,425,601	8.57

Source: <http://www.budgetoffice.gov.ng/>

14.0 When and How Things Began to Fall Apart

14.1 By the 1980s things began to fall apart in African Higher education, after such a glorious start in the 50s and 60s, due to a combination of factors initially precipitated by the issue of ownership, academic freedom, the rise in the unmet demand for higher education and lack of adequate funding.

14.2 First, in almost all the independent African countries the ruling class, be they politicians or military began to detest universities for their stand on academic freedom and refusal to be under any rigid control by the state. From Tananarive through Addis Ababa to Khartoum student militancy grew and demonstrations occurred every so often forcing many of the governments to react violently. Many of the governments were up in arms to brutally control and suppress universities. As reported by Ajayi, Goma & Johnson (1996), in Zaire the military invaded the university

campuses in 1992 raping and killing students. Similar incidents happened in Burkina Faso in 1987, Niger in 1989, Cote d'Ivoire in 1992, and Kenya also in 1992. Rulers, both politicians and military, especially those who came to power through military coups were determined to curb the excesses of students and teachers. As a result, military rulers who in the first place are natural enemies of academia, as a result of their orientation, limited education and orientation, were quite ready to demonstrate by show of force, that they are in control and had the upper hand. Due to the bad blood between the universities and various governments in Africa, the appraisals of the role of higher education in national development were embarked upon.

- 14.3 Second, the defiant stance taken by rulers in African governments to suppress the universities and bring them under strict control had an unusual support from the World Bank and other influential foreign experts who began to drum it into the ears of African governments that universities were not making a good social return on investments. The World Bank report in 1988 on its study on Education in Sub-Saharan Africa was most damaging to higher education, to say the least. University education was seen by the World Bank as satisfying individual rather than the common national good. They lost faith in their earlier theory that universities were the most important instruments of social change. The World Bank began to preach structural adjustment on the economies of these fragile and emerging nations suggesting that they shift resources from higher education to elementary and secondary education. Governments then ordered many universities to begin to

generate their own funds while private universities started being encouraged. This forced Assie-Lumumba (1993) to ask:

'But how can the universities in Africa be expected to fulfill these roles when their development is being stifled?'

- 14.4 Many in Africa feel that the policies of the World Bank as applied in the past, or even now, do not favour development of African universities.... Yet countries in the modern world are developed by elites, who are responsible for their scientific and technological progress. The industrialised countries are aware of this and make higher education the engine of their development, which is based on a mastery of science and technology. Without higher education, Africa would be eternally dependent; participation in the creation of knowledge requires higher education.
- 14.5 Third, was the Jomtien 1990 World Conference on Education for All, followed in 2000 by the Dakar World Education Forum, both of which focused the world's attention on basic and primary education at the expense of higher education.
- 14.6 Fourth, many African countries began to experience serious civil wars as occurred in Liberia, Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea, Rwanda, Burundi, Namibia and South Africa. Higher education in these countries suffered total neglect and destruction. Africa began to suffer from economic decline and universities suffered total destruction and decay of infrastructure.
- 14.7 Except for probably Nigeria and Kenya, the growth and development of higher education and indeed the establishment of universities

stopped abruptly. Higher education began to suffer a sharp decline in many areas including and especially diminishing financial resources, and what UNESCO-BREDA (1993) labelled as 'physical, managerial and intellectual dilapidation'. The impact on human resources for Africa was wanton. While on one way Universities were no more producing the needed human resources to develop Africa, those that were available began to flee from their jobs or from their countries through what is variously called 'brain drain', 'brain circulation' or 'brain haemorrhage'.

- 14.8 Developments in university education in Nigeria continue to be as tremendous as they have been challenging to government and all other stakeholders. However, the challenges have never been as profound as they now are in recent times. The catalysts for educational reform, which include massification, equity and social justice, inclusiveness, expansion, employability, globalisation, skills and competencies shortage, and national development have continued to multiply.
- 14.9 At the same time issues of demography, funding, physical infrastructure, levels of academic support, qualified academic staff, and local challenges have continued to increase rather steeply. All these are occurring in an environment which demands that University education must focus on global competitiveness while it strives to be locally relevant and centrally placed to contribute meaningfully to sustainable total development of the individual, country and continent.

- 14.10 The emerging global landscape being drawn by recent developments has shown very clearly that knowledge capability and capacity, rather than natural resources, is the greatest determinant of a country's entry into, and effective participation in, global competitiveness. It goes without saying, therefore, that university education contributes significantly to the political, scientific, technological, economic, social and human development of any country.
- 14.11 What is therefore of great importance to us in the 21st century is how to make our University education relevant to social circumstances whether local, national or global.
- 14.12 Faced with the huge unmet demand in university education, governments' inability to properly fund education amidst the opening up of the terrain of university education, Nigeria is faced with students seeking admissions in institutions with varying, and many with questionable, quality profile.
- 14.13 Stakeholders including businesses will increasingly demand for better and relevant curricula, state-of-the-art infrastructure and graduates better prepared for the job markets. In addition, the social and economic dimension of providing education for all and laying solid foundation for sustainable development will face serious threat.
- 14.14 Needless to say that all the above would have significant impact on universities' local and international agendas, including their responsiveness to the demand of delivering quality university education in Nigeria.

- 14.15 As our universities struggle to become notable players in the global arena, they must grapple with a number of salient issues which include the need to rethink what university education means to us in the 21st century, address issues of balance between enrolment and quality of education, reassess the place of private universities and comparability, consider the shift from and tension between existing model of fixed campus environment and emerging concept of ODL, vigorously embark upon curriculum change and review key skills to be acquired in undergraduate studies, and properly situate postgraduate and research studies.
- 14.16 Refusal to seriously begin to address the deterioration in our university education has grave consequences which have begun to manifest through many situations.

15.0 The Collapse of the Educational system

- 15.1 ***While the prevailing education system in Africa is collapsing, that of Nigeria has totally collapsed, in my own opinion.***
- 15.2 Let me sketch from true events to demonstrate how our educational system has collapsed. In a recent discussion about the support that Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETF) is giving to research in Nigeria, I am told by two of those who assist in assessing the research proposals for funding support that less than 40 per cent of the proposals are readable while only 15 per cent of these readable ones are successful. A recent interview was conducted to select, out of our supposedly First Class degree holders in Engineering, suitable candidates to proceed to the UK

for post graduate training. Less than 10 per cent of these can be said to be marginally qualified. Let me state what you are already aware of with regard to teaching in our secondary schools. Many of those who teach in a number of our private secondary schools are school certificate failures. While only 20 per cent of those who sit for JAMB finally get admitted, less than 10 per cent of those who sat for NECCO in 2011 passed with Credits in English and Mathematics.

- 15.3 The pervasive issue of corruption in our educational system, partially caused by the large appetite for education with grossly inadequate plans to meet the need for access for all, the crave to get rich quick and reap where they have not sown, peer pressure, the greed and avarice of the society and many other factors exert tremendous pressures on educational processes, including admissions, certification, accreditation, promotion (see Daniel, 2016)..
- 15.4 The ugly stains on our educational system of the emergence of miracle centres and fraud in public and school based examinations, which I need to state are not limited to Nigeria alone, are causing serious havoc to the quality of university education.
- 15.5 One basic problem we have is the **refusal to admit the obvious**. The Nigerian is a wonderfully different breed who is either a die-hard patriot or ignorantly arrogant. The Nigerian never wants to hear that his country is being criticised. In fact, he gets more irate if he is being told by a foreigner of his terribly negative, perhaps near death, experience of his recent visit to Nigeria. Even when we know that these ills abound in the country, we do all we can to defend the indefensible. This is a classic

case of the ostrich burying its head in the sand believing no one sees him. And yet we sell ourselves cheap to the outsider. Otherwise, how can we explain one of the TV adverts on rebranding Nigeria that reared its ugly head a few years ago. It says something to the effect that *'come to Nigeria and share in our abundant wealth...'*. So, the only reason a foreigner is being invited to our country is to share our wealth that ought to be guarded jealously. In any case, the truth of the matter is that no tourist would go to a country where the roads and other means of transportation are death traps, where the unnecessary daily carnage on our roads are taken as given, where hotels are insensitively expensive coupled with horrible customer service, where the tourist sites suffer from daily neglect of simple care and maintenance, where the only response to a complaint of a bad product is *'make una manage am now, it is well'*. For how long shall we continue to **manage** our collapsed educational system that keeps churning out illiterates at all levels?

- 15.6 **'Please can someone help me, what are they really searching for?'** I was at a function recently when I overheard a heated discussion between a Police Officer and his friend seated at the next table. The civilian was relating his experience on the Ijebu to Ode-Ore road where at every kilometre of the 200 odd kilometre stretch, there is a police or a combined security check point with at least six to ten policemen, soldiers and other security personnel. The questions the civilian asked his police officer friend were: what are they looking for that the motorist will have to be subjected to a check at every kilometre? What is it that

the previous group forgot to locate that the next must search for? If the next group finds incriminating goods when the previous one did not, wouldn't this be an indictment on the training of the police men on duty? The most disgusting aspect is not just the carting of logs haphazardly put on the road and abandoned in the night as risks for accidents waiting to happen, it is the police greeting and saluting you as many times as he would announce that *'your boys are on duty here, Sir'* or insist on wishing you a happy weekend when it is only a Wednesday. The civilian ended his conversation with his police friend that he is told that it has become the most lucrative trade to be at the check points rather than doing the normal policing of the community. He concluded, 'no wonder armed robbers and kidnappers are having a field day in the cities abandoned by the police men for greener pastures at the road blocks'. Kidnapping has become so lucrative that the rescuing ransom for abductors is now in millions of naira. While I was enjoying the conversation, my only worry for the civilian was that there would be no accidental discharge which, of course, will go unpunished.

16.0 Urgently Required: Declare Education a Disaster Area needing Emergency rescue

- 16.1 We never learn from history. As a result, we keep falling into the same pit each time we make unplanned pronouncement to satisfy political needs.
- 16.2 In 1976, the government announced the establishment of four new universities and three university colleges. In 1977 all of them – Sokoto, Maiduguri, Jos, Calabar, Ilorin, Port Harcourt, and Kano were made universities without prior planning and the NUC had to be forced to take over the responsibility of overseeing the establishment of all the 7 universities with the identical Acts and structures handed down from the powers of the day. In 2011, Nigerians were rudely woken up with the news that Nine Federal Universities would be established in Bayelsa, Jigawa, Ebonyi, Ekiti, Gombe, Katsina, Kogi, Nasarawa, and Taraba. As we speak the Universities are still struggling to find their feet as they were never fully empowered to take off. These universities are fast becoming localised rather than national, even though they have federal proprietorship.
- 16.3 On October 17, 2011, the Acting Chairman of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Alhaji Abdullahi Bako warned that Nigeria may become a failed state, if corruption is not tackled headlong. I am sure that if he hears all the stories that make the rounds regarding parents sitting for or hiring others to sit for examinations for their children, or of undergraduates

buying examination papers from lecturers or that some criminals position themselves within the vicinity of a University to issue false results after the University Senate had approved the authentic results, he would review his warning and change his mind in favour of more serious advice.

16.4 Subscribing to the view that our education system is all but collapsed, the Federal Minister of State for Niger Delta Affairs, Professor Claudius Daramola, at an Education Summit organised by Ondo State Government recently, while lamenting the poor performance of graduates and suggesting that the situation in the education sector calls for urgent attention, declared that *'the state of education in Nigeria is already dead'* (October, 27, 2017). At the same event, the Governor of Ondo State, His Excellency, Rotimi Akeredolu *'expressed worry on what he described as the sorry state of education in the country'*. (27, October, 2017).

16.5 **Indices of Illiteracy and Evidence of a Collapsed Educational System.**

What I have recounted above and the hundreds of others you might care to quickly add, can only happen in God's own country, a.k.a Nigeria. Somehow you wonder if we are all not play-acting believing the real thing is yet to come.

16.6 But the sad reality is that things have gone terribly wrong with our education system. If, as has been shown above, our basic and secondary school system is all warped and the higher education sector is decadent, we must seek for solutions just as I have called for education to be declared a disaster zone.

16.7 What are the solutions?

17.0 Solutions/Way Forward

- 17.1 The fact of the matter is that all of society is responsible for the situation which education, especially university education, finds itself in the country today. In short, we all must plead guilty as charged, become remorseful and promise to turn a new leaf with all the seriousness it deserves.
- 17.2 Perhaps this is where the change agenda comes in. Effecting meaningful change that would comprehensively encompass the whole of society must start now otherwise the effects of the gradual build up of youth unemployment and restiveness we are currently witnessing would be child's play if the Nigerian youth are left with no other choice than to hit the streets en masse. The alarm bells are ringing much louder than before and we are running out of time to avert possible catastrophe! For them it would be a case of *'he who is down fears no fall'*, and hence would go all out to be as destructive as they can, since they have nothing else to lose.

18.0 What Must Nigeria Do to Stem the Tide?

- 19.01 Ladies and gentlemen, having discussed the problems we face with quality and social relevance in our university education system, let me now address what Nigeria must do to stem the tide.
- 19.02 Indeed, Governor Akinwunmi Ambode of Lagos State at a Colloquium organised by Government College, Ughelli Old Boys Association (Class of

September, 73)on the Topic: ***Raising a wise generation: Revamping Nigeria's secondary education***, while lamenting the '*decline in education standards from what obtained in pre and early post independence years, suggested that Nigeria must get post-secondary education right as a critical step to guaranteeing a stable and prosperous future for Nigeria.*' (27 October, 2017).

19.03 I understand that the buzzword or the current cliché is change. Since this is the cliché that people now choose to understand, let me use it just in case those that should listen might, for the sake of the use of their pet cliché, stop to think things through.

19.04 There are three lessons about change which we must all be aware of. **First**, change must begin from the heart, with individuals determined that it must be from the unit of human population. In other words, it must begin with me and you. **Second**, to change a decadent society begs the need to completely cart away the old and replace with new, more productive, efficient and relevant agenda. It has to be fearlessly done without minding whose ox is goad. **Third**, change must be strategic, comprehensive, sincere and focused. For far too long, the government of the day has deceived the people with clichés and, as soon as the people begin to sing the song, they turn the other way to continue with the usual, once the people have been successfully distracted from paying attention to their evil deeds of corporate deception. I shall address what Nigeria must do to stem the tide to the various segments of the Nigerian populace. For want of time, I will briefly address five

segments as follows: The Nigerian State, The Organised Private Sector, Universities, Academics and Academia, Parents and Home.

18.1 **Change at the level of the Nigerian State**

19. 1.1 The nation seems to be completely adrift and in many senses may have lost the moral right to call itself a nation that protects the interest of its citizens. How can we explain the abysmal level Nigeria has sunk in its bid to address the welfare of the Nigerian? Please turn with me to Table 5 below (see Obanya, 2011). In all the selected human development and human poverty indices, Nigeria fell within the lowest quartile. Note that there are 195 countries in the world. Nigeria, with a projected population of 190,886,311 has become the 7th most populous country in the world and has 2.5% of the world's population.

Table 5: NIGERIA – Selected Human Development and Human Poverty Indices

	Index	Value	Ranking (out of 182 countries)
1.	Human development Index (HDI)	0.511	158
2.	Life Expectancy at birth (years)	47.7	167
3.	Adult Literacy (% of age 15 and above)	72	112
4.	Combined gross enrolment ratio (%)	53	150
5.	GDP per capita (PPP US\$)	1,969	141
6.	Human Poverty Index (HPI)	36.2	114 (out of 135 countries)
7.	Possibility of surviving till age 40)	37.4	146
8.	Adult Illiteracy	28	112
9.	% lacking improved water source	53	142
10.	Proportion of children underweight for age	29	112

19.1.1 The resultant effects of all the above is our inability to arrest the increasing profile of poverty in a country that is by all indices, a rich developing country. The data on Table 6 and Table 7 speak for themselves.

Table 6: NIGERIA: Incidence of Poverty over the Years

Year	National	Urban	Rural	Absolute numbers (millions)
1980	27.2%	16.2%	28.3%	17.7
1985	46.3%	39.2%	51.4%	34.7
1992	42.7%	17.5%	46.0%	39.2
1996	65.6%	58.0%	69.3%	67.1
2004	54.4%	43.7%	63.8%	68.7

Source: UNDP

Table 7: Nigeria: Regional Variations in the Incidence of Poverty: 2004

Geo-political Zone	% of population living in poverty
South-South	35.1
South-East	26.7
South-West	43.0
North-Central	67.0
North-East	71.2
North-West	68.7
National	54.4

Source: UNDP

19.1.2 A number of observations can be made from the tables above on the incidence of high poverty. As expected, the rural dwellers are poorer than those who live in urban areas by far. Second, the absolute numbers of poor Nigerians keep rising by the year. With the population now about 190 million, I would not be surprised if over half the current population live below the poverty line. Third, needless to say that the effect of poverty on the education of children of poor

Nigerians is better imagined. Fourth, an ordinary Nigerian's poverty level depends on the geo-political zone he finds himself. From extrapolation, it could be argued that the more education penetrates a zone the less poor the people become.

19.1.3 According to UNRISD (2010) when a substantial proportion of a country's population is poor, it makes little sense to detach poverty from the dynamics of development and higher education. For countries that have been successful in increasing the well being of the majority of their populations over relatively short periods of time, progress has occurred mainly through state-directed strategies that combine economic, political with educational development.

19.1.4 Our major problem is bad, non-sustainable governance and deep seated characteristics of governance by deception. Nigeria has serious problems which those that govern us trivialise. Our society is characterised by a rapidly growing population of under-employed, unemployable and unemployed graduates who are restless. As I have mentioned elsewhere, difficulties in identifying the beacon of light for national development and lack of focus in the effort to govern Nigeria as effectively and appropriately as expected impact seriously on other sectors of the economy.

- 19.1.5 Bad governance and chasing irrelevancies exert their effects on a country's political, social, economic, health care and other sectors. Unfortunately, the damages it does to education only become visible after a number of years have passed, leaving everyone to wallow in ignorance and immeasurable decadence. Nigeria is no more reckoned with world-wide in education, as was our pride several decades ago when even our NCE graduates got admitted to pursue postgraduate programmes abroad. Graduates of our universities hardly come out with any employable skills. They find communicating in English an uphill task and those with master's degrees cannot define what research is or means to a nation, let alone to them.
- 19.1.6 Our educational system is driving in reverse full throttle without the use of the back or side mirrors. In the same vein, our secondary school graduates can best be described as half-baked illiterates who constitute a danger to the society and to themselves. Nigeria has regressed into a nation where mediocrity is the rule and being allowed to lead where we have intelligent people. I am told that faced with lack of gainful employment and other avenues to get education, our youth have taken to the three most popular careers they have

created for themselves. Ask any child what they wish to become in the future, s/he says footballer, comedian or a local government chairman – the easiest way out with illiteracy and making easy money in Nigeria!

19.1.7 Education is the best legacy a nation can bequeath its younger generations. Yet, we seem to be playing politics with establishing universities and no concerted effort is made to completely redraft from scratch our national policy on education, as the one we are currently panel-beating has outlived its usefulness. It is like using 19th century tools to solve 21st century issues and concerns in nation building. To add insults to injury, the nation has driven our youth into the hands of ‘militancy’ and ‘Boko Haramism’ – two perfect examples of a rudderless nation ridden with bad governance, lack of incisive accountability and breeding illiteracy and lawlessness faster than the rate maggots reproduce.

19.1.8 Let me use the analogy of volcanic ash to illustrate the educational cul-de-sac Nigeria has driven herself into. You would have heard on the news regarding the periodic eruption of the volcano in Iceland, throwing its ash all over Europe and beyond and making it impossible for airlines to operate their flights. The last time this occurred, up to six million passengers

worldwide were affected by the effects of volcanic ash from Iceland. Some of Europe's busiest airports had to close. Several precautions have now been taken on this matter because of the similar experience that occurred over Indonesia 19 years ago. According to the Weekend Australian Newspaper, "Eric Moody was the pilot of the BA Flight 09, a Boeing 747 that was flying over Indonesia when volcanic ash put all four engines out of action. After 14 minutes of silence, and aiming to ditch in the ocean, Captain Moody and his two flight officers managed to relight the engines and landed in Jakarta. The incident in June 1982 was the first such encounter with high-altitude ash. Captain Moody's announcement to the passengers after losing power has become part of airline wisdom. *"Ladies and gentlemen, this is your captain speaking. We have a small problem. All four engines have stopped. We are doing our best to get it under control. I trust you are not in too much distress."*

- 19.1.9 There is a greater and more serious problem affecting the Nigerian educational system today; it is no small problem; and one – sadly - that seems to be of little distress to us, especially those who rule and govern us. It is the failure of government and her people to seriously and honestly tackle the challenges of education in the 21st century. Other activities, like

volcanic ash, have endangered our journey to nationhood. Our economy is in shambles, our roads and railways are an eye sore, our hospitals still record that 2 out of every five expectant women in the labour room never return alive, and where 3 out of every 7 children die before they reach the age of 6 years.

19.1.10 As I have said earlier, and I wish to say it again, Nigeria must declare Education a disaster area needing emergency rescuing strategy. Without seriously addressing our educational problems, Nigeria will be like Captain Moody's jet with its engines out of action in mid-air and heading for disaster.

19.1.11 All is not lost because God always has a way for His creatures. God says that:

"at times I might shut up the heavens so that no rain falls, or command grasshoppers to devour your crops, or send plagues among you. Then, if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land. My eyes will be open and my ears attentive to every prayer made. But you must faithfully follow and obey all my commands, decrees, and regulations" (2 Chr 7: 13-17).

- 19.1.12 God has asked us to seek truth, knowledge, understanding and wisdom through Him without which we can neither serve Him appropriately nor serve humanity effectively.
- 19.1.13 Education is the main industry for the acquisition and nurturing of life skills, which I believe the University of Uyo, has instilled in our fellow citizens graduating today. Nigeria is sitting on a time bomb, which if left to mature or not defused, will blow up to engulf every segment of the population. A stitch in time saves nine.

19.2 **Change Through the Organised Private Sector**

- 19.2.1 Any genuine change agenda must of necessity involve the organised private sector because they, more than any other sector, consume the products of our educational institutions and use them to derive profits for their businesses. Apart from a few industries that strive to be responsive to their corporate social responsibilities, most of the industries in Nigeria care less about the people whose monies they drain daily even as they laugh to the banks every second through their marketing ploy. The Organised Private Sector must work co-operatively with the education sector, and especially

the tertiary level, to research and extend the frontiers of knowledge. Many of them are for profit only and nothing else.

19.2.1 We know how much the Organised Private Sector sinks into education in other parts of the developed world; but not in Nigeria. For many of them, it is minimum investment for maximum returns while they seek to repatriate 100 per cent of their profit. Nothing has changed from the colonial times when (i) industries use the locally available cheap labour in place of exporting of unpaid African labour across the seas , (ii) establish only the minimum infrastructure to derive maximum benefits for the parent country of the company, (iii) have the main research and development laboratories in the parent country and; (iv) deny the host country of the facilities and opportunities to engage in research and employ our best brains as part of the researchers.

19.2.2 According to the 2016 Africa Competitiveness Report, 23 African countries out of the 31 that were surveyed remain at the most basic stage of the competitiveness index of a **factor-driven** economy (that is, one whose ability to compete is based on unskilled labour and natural resources). The data available indicate that only five African countries –

Algeria, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa and Tunisia – have reached the second stage of competitiveness – the **efficiency driven** stage (which is driven by efficient goods, sophisticated labour and financial markets, a large market size and the ability to utilize technology effectively). No African country has reached the **innovation-driven** stage, that is, a stage based on an ability to compete with new and unique products, and the use of sophisticated production driven competition. Imagine therefore the catastrophe waiting to happen if importation of rice is banned or/ and the fuel subsidy is removed!

19.2.3 What many of the industries do is to take our best brains and graduates, retrain them for upward of three years to make them relevant for their heavily profit-oriented manufacturing ventures. If they are sincere, why not team up with our universities to collaboratively improve the curricula needed to tailor-train the undergraduates in the skills and knowledge required so that from day one they will fit perfectly into their jobs in the industries. The oil and gas and the banking sectors are most guilty of this. No wonder a nation that has so much oil cannot operate its refineries and go out to import refined oil. Indeed, we are told that very soon we shall begin to

import refined oil from Niger. Where is the shame of the giant of Africa? Our Organised Private Sector should demonstrate their sincerity and sense of purpose through collaborative efforts with government and the universities and invest massively in the development of the real type of graduates who are employable right from their graduating ceremony.

19.2.4 I am so pleased that the University of Uyo has thought it fit to honour Alhaji Mohammed Indimi with an ***honoris causa*** degree. From all I have gathered, this distinguished honorary graduand, is one with a difference. He is a humanitarian, a philanthropist, empathetic and very considerate international business magnate who, in his quiet ways, has helped to develop many places including academic institutions both overseas and locally. The University should seek to partner with him and his business organisation and affiliates to spin some developments here. Being a fully fledged member of this University, Alhaji Indimi would be most willing to contribute his own quota in the development of quality university education in this part of the country. The way to go is to help develop Uyo as the Nigeria silicon valley to enable our very bright minds

of between 17 to 25 years old to propel Nigeria into the next generation of global scientific and technological giants. Disaster comes when elites push society toward instability and eventual collapse by hoarding huge quantities of wealth and resources. This cannot be said of our new honorary graduand Mohammed Indimi, who has always placed his wealth and resources at the service of humanity. I am quite convinced of his readiness to be of immense assistance to the University of Uyo and the immediate environment.

19.3 **Change through the Universities**

19.3.1 Higher education plays a key role in the transformation of any society. The lessons from the developed countries and the news from the emerging economies of China, India and Brazil are very instructive on this issue. Since the days of our first generation universities and as a result of the bastardisation and dehumanisation of the academia by the military regimes we had in the 70s and the 80s, our universities continue to decline just as world class universities are being established in other parts of the world. Our universities are a shadow of what real universities should be.

19.3.2 At the last count as in Table 2 page 30 above, Nigeria has 153 recognised and over 46 illegal universities. Of the 153

recognised, 40 are Federal Universities, 44 are State universities, and 69 privately owned Universities. The trend is that we shall have close to 100 privately owned universities in the next five years at the rate we are going. Given the population we have, Nigeria requires more universities. But they must be well planned for, strategically conceived and stringently policed to ensure they meet the minimum standards. As observed by Adeniran (2011), *“while some of the private universities are administered admirably, with a clear vision, process, pattern and future promise which justify their establishment, many are being run purely as commercial ventures, with desperation for quick returns. The government universities, for their part, have for some time been suffering from regularly disrupted academic activities, structural and moral decay, a rather thin and obsolete curriculum structure that has not fully risen to the challenge of the twenty-first century knowledge economy, campus terrorism, inadequate strategic planning and funding. An unprecedented level of brain drain through the movement of the well-trained academic in quest of better facilities and remuneration and a calamitous decline in the quality of university education”*.

- 19.3.3 As a result of the above, our universities are retrogressing into being obsolete in ideas, pursuit of knowledge and

becoming irrelevant. Universities of the 21st century are embarking on knowledge-intensive development directed at capacity building and production of graduates with cutting edge training and know-how to meet the challenges of the prevailing employment market. Change is expensive, but if done properly and effectively executed, would yield results that far outstrip investment.

19.3.4 A combination of dwindling funds, dilapidating infrastructure, aging professoriate, dated curricula, absence of high tech research, lack of foresight and the absence of strategic planning have combined to erode our universities of the high reputation and international respect they had in the 60s, through to early 80s. Paradoxically, while the establishment of more universities continues to be directed at opening up access to higher education the quality of education offered culminate in products that, by world standards, can barely compare with an excellent secondary school graduate in other parts of the world. No wonder, no Nigerian university is ranked within the top 2000 universities in the world, none is ranked in the best 50 universities in Africa, and of the highest ranked 100 universities in Africa less than 10 are Nigerian.

19.3.5 It is not very clear what would emerge from the government's change agenda for universities but

whatever it is, it must address quality, access, strict adherence to minimum standards, and direct attention to cutting edge research which will use all the natural resources God has given us (sun, water, land and minerals).

19.3.6 We need to devise new ways of hiring senior academics, especially Vice Chancellors. Poor leadership arising from compromised appointment (either through the son of the soil system or my local government candidate or through some form of less than desirable methods) would inevitably yield poor governance and globally unacceptable products in an age of global competition. Meritocracy rather than mediocrity must be entrenched. It must be business unusual in order to restore the universities to those glorious days when professors were professors! The bitter truth is that our higher education system has degenerated to a sad level that Nigeria must be ashamed of. Take it or leave it we are not the giant of Africa as far as education is concerned, if the truth must be told. The only option for our higher education transformation is restructuring the governance of universities, embarking upon knowledge-intensive development and internationalising our campuses on all grounds.

19.4 Change through Academia and the Academics

19.4.1 My nostalgic recollection of an academic is a no-nonsense, strict-to-the-fact individual who, with great pride, pursues excellence in his teaching and research, is well respected by the society to which he contributes a lot in building. He faithfully prepares his lecture notes reviewing them as often as he hears of the latest in his field, guides students to unravel the facts and in the pursuit of knowledge, challenges his/her students to argue the basis of their decision and conclusion through experimentation and examination of alternative thoughts. He shuns self aggrandisement and ostentatious life and always presents himself as the embodiment of all that are desired and good in a person worthy to live, work and interact with others on a university campus.

19.4.2 The academic is a detribalised person committed to seeking knowledge from his peers no matter whom they are or where they may be. The ever forgetful professor can engage his peers and cohorts in meaningful academic discourse on campus well after the evening lectures and practical classes while forgetting to pick his child from school at 2pm; leaving his wife to come to the rescue once again!

19.4.3 Like the doctor, the academic always puts his students first knowing that he carries the heavy responsibility of

producing the next generation of Nigerians who will lead the country and champion development in all sectors of the economy. Oh, how things have changed. While many still stick to these worthy ideals, a significant minority have soiled the enviable apparel of academia. They engage in despicable acts that make the public avoid the academic like a plague. Many moonlight in as many as five universities on a weekly basis, and if they are not selling unauthorised and outdated hand outs to make a few more naira from helpless students, they are engaging in examination malpractices and sexual harassment of all kinds and proportions. Some have now adopted the language of the policeman at the check point, '*wetin you bring for your poor lecturer*' as a normal greetings to students just returning from holidays.

19.4.4 These days some lecturers put in very minimum effort to earn the maximum pay and allowances and, when they wish, through unionism, hold government or proprietors and parents to ransom. After all with so many new universities springing up by the day, it is so easy to become a professor within 5 years of earning a PhD! University academics easily explain that they are not teachers. It may be instructive to remind us about what Obanya (2011) says about teaching:

“Nigeria is now ‘teaching without teachers’. The system has always aimed at having qualified teachers, forgetting that:

A qualified teacher is not necessarily a competent teacher

A competent teacher is not necessarily an efficient teacher, and

An efficient teacher is not necessarily an effective teacher.

A qualified teacher is one who meets the basic requirements for qualification, for entry into the teaching profession. A competent teacher is the one who has mastered the rules, while an efficient teacher is the one who is capable of applying the rules, as learned. The effective teacher, on the other hand, is one who applies creativity to teaching and thus maximizes student learning. p.11” No wonder the latest World Knowledge Index as shown in Table 8 below puts Nigeria as Number 66 amongst the Lagging Followers.

Table 8: Group Description of Knowledge Index

Group I Frontier Countries	Group II Fast Followers	Group III Fast Followers	Group IV Lagging Followers
1. United States 2. Japan 3. Sweden 4. Germany 5. Switzerland 6. France 7. United Kingdom 8. Canada 9. Italy 10. Finland 11. Israel 12. Korea, Republic of 13. Austria 14. Hong Kong, China 15. Belgium 16. Spain 17. Netherlands 18. China 19. Norway 20. Denmark	21. India 22. Portugal 23. Ireland 24. Poland 25. Hungary 26. Slovenia 27. Turkey 28. Australia 29. Czech Republic 30. Mexico 31. Slovak Republic 32. Greece 33. Romania 34. Brazil 35. Bulgaria	36. Ukraine 37. Croatia 38. Pakistan 39. Malaysia 40. South Africa 41. Bangladesh 42. New Zealand 43. Belarus 44. Thailand 45. Estonia 46. Tunisia 47. Philippines 48. Russian Federation 49. Lithuania 50. Latvia 51. Jamaica 52. Jordan 53. Argentina 54. Egypt, Arab Rep. 55. Indonesia 56. Costa Rica 57. Vietnam 58. Colombia 59. Chile 60. Venezuela, RB	61. Kazakhstan 62. Moldova 63. Kyrgyz Republic 64. Guatemala 65. Peru 66. NIGERIA 67. Panama 68. Azerbaijan 69. Syrian Arab Republic 70. Ecuador 71. Gabon 72. Benin 73. Congo Republic

19.4.5 Bishop Kukah has, in a recent lecture which is actually a lamentation: *NIGERIA APPEARS TO HAVE COME UNHINGED*, succinctly put it more than I can convince you. He says:

Look at what has happened to us in England. In one fell swoop, seven of our sons and daughters were elected into the British Parliament, an unprecedented feat in the history of Democracy anywhere in the world. The following week, England won the Under 21 World Cup with the assistance of three young men of Nigerian descent. In the same England, just a few months back, our son created history by winning the World Heavy Weight Boxing title. Talk about the colony striking back! My people, what has God not done for us? Within the same kingdom, across the sea to Ireland, one of our favourite sons was also

making history. After about a hundred years, the Vatican announced the appointment of the first African as the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Jude Okolo to Ireland, the land of our missionary ancestors. After a hundred years, Rome announced the appointment of a Nigerian-born Most Rev. Dr. Eusebius Chinekezi Manugwu, as pioneer Bishop of Port-Gentil, in Gabon. After almost a hundred years one of our daughters is now Editor of the Harvard Law Review. Almost on a monthly basis, Nigeria has continued to receive news of the spectacular achievements of our children who are breaking academic records in America and Europe, feats that few people from any developing country have achieved. They are daily breaking the glass ceilings and scaling walls that racism and colonialism had erected for the black man. In almost every corner of the world, wherever black achievement is mentioned, if there are two names, both or one must be a Nigerian. My people, what has God not done for us? We parade the best writers with the greatest world recognition for any one country in the developing world. Our sons and daughters have won some of the most prestigious international awards there are in various fields of Arts, Science, Sports and almost everything. Our Medical personnel, Lawyers, Engineers, Professors, Scientists are in the most prestigious laboratories all over the world. It will be difficult to find any good University or institution of research and learning anywhere in the world that does not have Nigerians as their brightest and best teachers or students. So, what is going on? Are we under a tragic spell? My people, what has God not done for us?' (Kukah, 2017).

19.4.6 But the academic in Nigeria is no different from the academic of Nigerian descent in the diaspora who is achieving the best in the world. The difference is simply the

environment which provides him with quality education and a place and orientation to be socially relevant.

19.4.7 In other parts of the world, academics are no more hired on tenure, you earn your slot through contract or tenure track appointments after rigorous regular review by peers, students and your productivity. In some parts of the world, all lecturers on the same grade do not earn the same salary, they are rewarded according to their productivity and the number of postgraduate students they can attract as well as the number and volume of research grants they bring to the table. Daniel (2016) has listed about 29 major kinds of corrupt practices on university campuses.

19.4.8 A few examples are: *giving institutions licenses, granting degree-awarding powers, or accrediting programmes in return for bribes or favours.*

19.4.8.1 *altering student marks in return for sexual or other favours.*

19.4.8.2 *administrative pressure on academics to alter marks for institutional convenience.*

19.4.8.3 *publishing false recruitment advertising.*

19.4.8.4 *impersonation of candidates and ghost writing of assignments.*

19.4.8.5 *political pressures on higher education institutions to award degrees to public figures.*

19.4.8.6 *publication by supervisors of research by graduate students without acknowledgement.*

19.4.8.7 *higher education institutions publishing misleading news releases or suppressing inconvenient news.*

19.4.9 Some of our colleagues resort to very debasing methods like selling examination papers, or even sitting examinations for students and spend time either promoting cultism or writing petitions on why the VC or his Deputy must be probed or go! Some of our academics cannot stand their peers at international conferences and for those who brave it to present papers cannot defend their methodology or the results of their research because they may have cooked the results or plagiarised the paper from other sources. While admitting that what prevails on our campuses these days are an extension of the decadence in the society, academic campuses should be the last bastion of probity, integrity and humility in knowledge generation, character moulding and community service. Only the academic can reform academia and the university campuses. We must begin to redraw new codes of conduct for new generation academics. We must restore the dignity and wonderful traditions of academia.

19.5 **Change through Parents and the Home**

19.5.1 As strong stakeholders in higher education, and in education generally, parents have a very powerful voice in the education of our children. The interest parents take in their children's education is often seen in the turn out for such ceremonies like matriculation and convocation like we are having today and tomorrow at UNIUYO. Parents proudly announce to all who care to listen the degree and the class of degree of their children soon after convocation ceremonies. This is as it should be as our children are our investment and heritage; their success is an indication of ours as parents.

19.5.2 However, many parents, especially those who are educated, rarely take interest in the total educational journey of their children and wards. Apart from grudgingly giving the money their children incessantly request for, many parents care less whether their children attend lectures, dress appropriately and decently or even stay on campus for the duration of the semester. Some parents do not know the hostels, let alone the rooms, their children stayed in throughout the duration of their degree programme.

19.5.3 Indeed, some parents would offer to pay anything to anyone who can be contracted to sit for examinations, be it JAMB, NECCO or sessional examinations of their

children. They help to concoct results of homework and often aid the moral decadence on-campus through many undesirable means.

19.5.4 The home is the first classroom or laboratory for educating children. More often than not, children behave exactly the way they see their parents do. These include cultism, cheating and stealing, physical abuse, indecent behaviours, lack of respect for others, running down others and looking down on our unfortunate neighbours. Easily a child rusticated for bad behaviour in a Nigerian campus is quickly shipped overseas or to a neighbouring country to continue his/her education without the parents investigating what happened. Parents have been known to take interest in the affairs of their undergraduate children in so far as challenging lecturers for reproaching or punishing their children for bad behaviours. It is an open secret that some children of the highly placed are the perpetrators of heinous crimes in the society including kidnapping, armed robberies and drug trafficking; these are the results of being too busy at work by parents and thereby having no time to devote to their children and wards.

19.5.5 Wale Adefarasin (August, 2011), referring to the publication of Lord Lugard (The Dual Mandate, 1926) by

Lord Lugard (Governor General of Nigeria (1912-1918),
quoted his infamous statements as follows:

*“In character and temperament, the typical African of this race-type
is a happy, thriftless, excitable person:*

Lacking in self control,

Discipline (and),

Foresight,

(Full of) personal vanity,

(With) little sense of veracity (fond of music),

*(His) thoughts are concentrated on events and feelings of the
moment,*

*(And he) suffers little from the apprehension for the future or grief
for the past,*

(He) lacks the power of organisation, (and is conspicuously),

Deficient in the management and control alike of men and business,

*(He loves the) display of power, but fails to realise its
responsibility...”*

19.5.6 He challenged all of us by saying that

*“Lugard’s statements speak of a culture that is devoid of the values
of truth, honesty and humility. A nation that fails to plan and
prepare for the future is trapped in living for today”.*

19.5.7 He concluded by advising that,

*“Nigeria must change. And change is possible but only if we
engender a total reorientation of our worldview. We must raise our
children with a ‘can do’ mindset. We must pass on a legacy of hard
work and an expectation and hope for the future, a legacy built on
truth and justice, not ‘survival of the fittest’ or ‘winner takes all’. We*

must reward diligence, honesty and selflessness, and punish those, whatever their station, who violate our laws”.

19.5.8 I submit that parents can contribute to the upliftment of university education by their interest and involvement in the activities of the universities, attending as many events as possible, helping to raise funds and interrogating the academics on the quality of education. The same parents who complain of the unacceptable competency level of those they meet at interview halls are those who easily shy away from taking interest in the education of their children.

19.5.9 As parents, your interactions with the universities would facilitate the meeting of the town and gown and allow free flow of ideas and provide current information to the society about university education. Universities need the community, of which the parents are a significant part, much as the community needs the university.

20 Conclusion

20.1 I introduced this lecture beginning with a trip to our nostalgic past in the development of higher education, how our immediate post-colonial effort in university education was laced with quality and relevance. I explained what quality means with regards to university education. I gave a brief historical account of university education in Nigeria, how things started to fall apart and how the education

system has collapsed. From the review of the state of education in Nigeria, I stuck out my neck to say that what the country urgently requires is to declare education a disaster area and requires emergency rescue. I then proceeded to proffer solutions for the way forward to ensuring that quality university education and how to overcome the challenges of social relevance returns to our educational system. Essentially, the solutions involve undertaking conscious changes at various levels and by all stakeholders which include the nation, the organised private sector, the university system, academics and academia, parents and the home. What I now have left is to conclude and relieve you from the boredom of this lecture.

- 20.2 A university, as its name implies, is a congregation of minds devoted to finding solutions to the needs of the society through a disciplined way of learning. The next decade will be most challenging for universities in the world, and especially Nigeria. Any university that misses the nuts and bolts that tie in quality with growth and development in an ambience of social relevance will be left for the junk yard. UNIUYO must forge ahead and overtake others in the global race to be relevant, creative, innovative and responsive to the needs of the stakeholders and the larger society.
- 20.3 Our attempt to change must be socially relevant, locally and globally. This means we must ensure that we work towards achieving the goals of sustainable development. From what has gone on in Education since the beginning of Independent Nigeria, our Education system has failed

our people and has not been able to prepare our children for their own generation. The system did not work very well for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) given the score card for every country as reviewed by UNESCO.

- 20.4 From all indications the system does not appear to be geared towards achieving the goals of sustainable development (SDGs) if we do not embrace change. UNESCO (2016) in a Press Release of 5th September, 2016 has emphatically pronounced that *“Education needs to fundamentally change if we are to reach our global development goals”*. The road towards achieving the sustainable development goals was paved on 25 September 2015, when the United Nations General Assembly formally adopted the universal, integrated and transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, along with a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 associated targets. UNESCO is entrusted to lead Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all - through the Education 2030 Framework for Action (FFA).
- 20.5 Sustainable development should *‘meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’*. We must prepare the next generation for sustainable living in the 21st century. Education must prepare them for the jobs of the future. To do so adequately, education must be a disruptive force in our development and enshrined in all our future strategic plans.

20.6 While preparing for a sustainable development and through that prepare the youth for the future world of work in an emerging technologically dependent environment, we need to be mindful of the following:

20.6.1 Millions of job we currently engage in will disappear to our amazement due to automation, robotics and nanotechnology and will result in businesses with a shrinking consumer base.

20.6.2 Analogue skills will be inappropriate for the digital world of teaching and learning, and work.

20.6.3 We must urgently create millions of jobs in specialised areas such as computing, mathematics, architecture and engineering (different from what we know them to be right now) to answer to the need of the future directions of skill development and employment opportunities.

20.6.4 For University education to adequately respond to the requirements of quality education and social relevance, the changes to be undertaken must involve the interaction of FOUR areas of:

20.6.4.1 The 2^{1st} century Skills.

20.6.4.2 What are needed to prepare for the future.

20.6.4.3 Strategic and concrete interventions, and

20.6.4.4 Sustainable Environment using the sustainable practices in the various academic and professional sectors as Health, Agriculture, Technology, etc (see Figure 6 below).

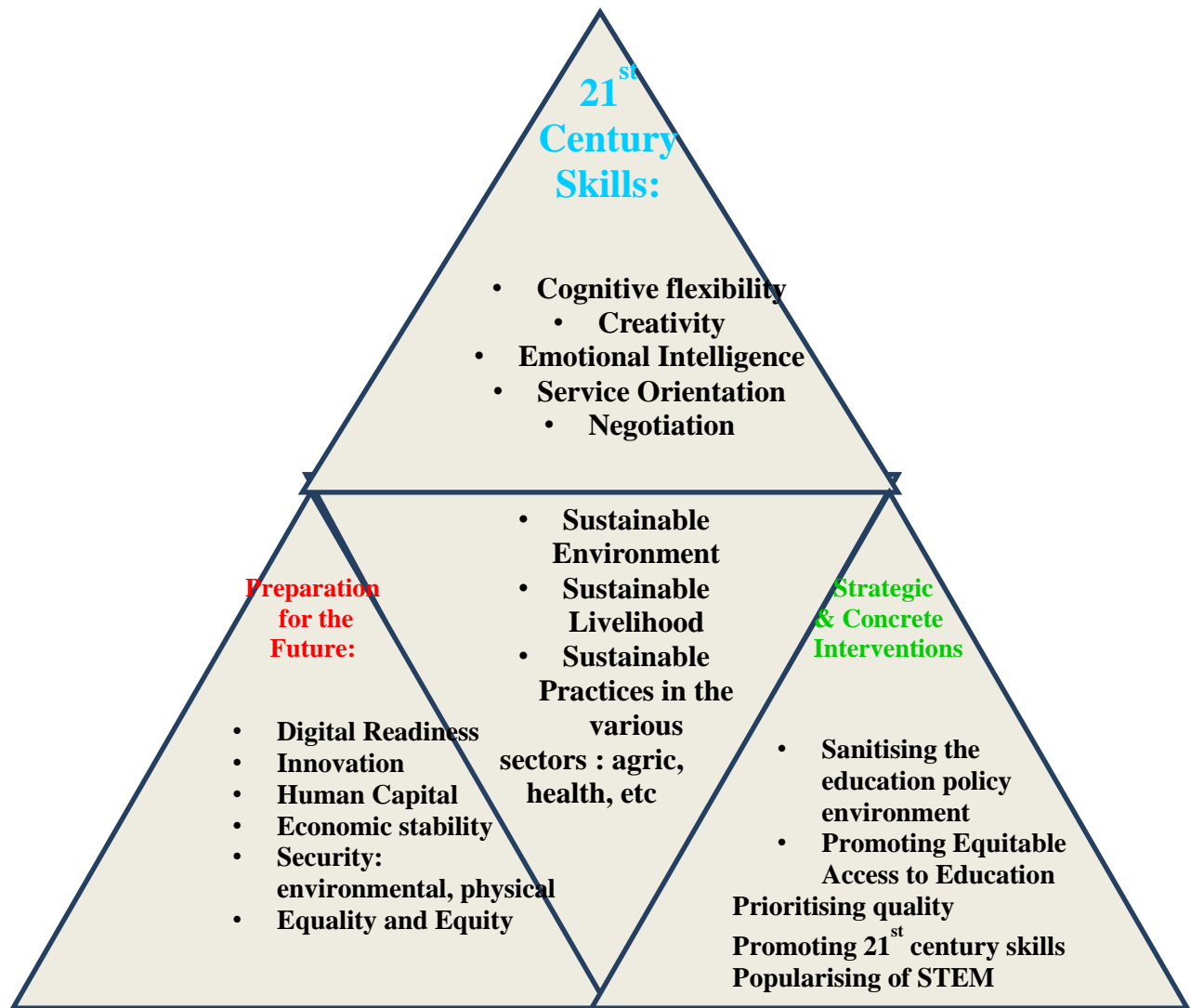


Figure 4: Integration of Changes in our University Education System with 21st Century Sustainable Development

20.7 There is also a crucial global humanist trend we must not fail to take cognizance of in Nigeria. If we ignore this trend (dangers) we will miss out on a significant opportunity to solve our problems as a nation both individually and corporately. The trend has been succinctly outlined by the Revered "Father of the Indian Nation", Mahatma Gandhi in his seven dangers to human virtue as shown in Figure 5.

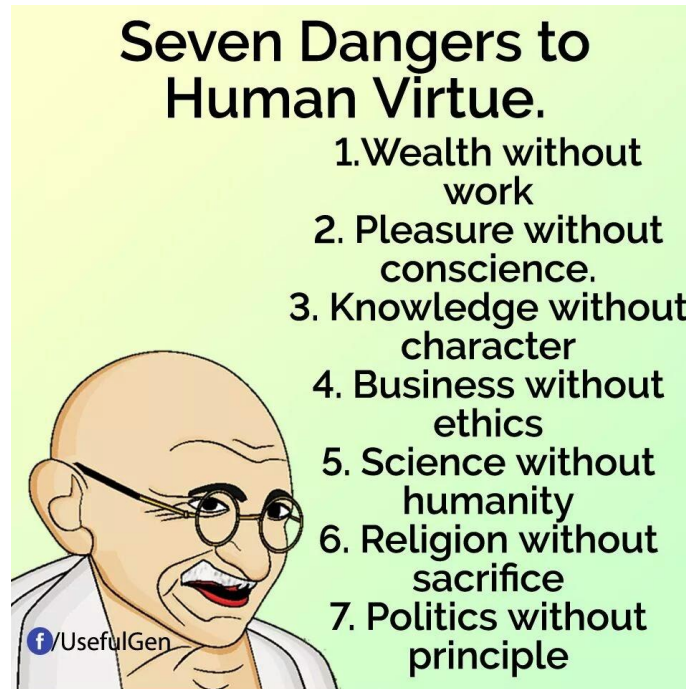


Figure 5: Seven Dangers to Human Values

- 20.8 According to Target 3, point 43 of the Framework for Action Education 2030, *'A well-established, properly-regulated tertiary education system supported by technology, Open Educational Resources (OERs) and distance education modalities can increase access, equity, quality and relevance, and narrow the gap between what is taught at tertiary education institutions and what economies and societies demand. The provision of tertiary education should be progressively free, in line with existing international agreements.'*
- 20.9 To actualise the potentialities of the society through the students we train, would require that we all, as stakeholders, work together mindful of the critical challenges, planning together, focused and not giving up until specific goals and vision of the individual, the university, the society and the nation are realised. It is in view of this and the hope that all of us would key into the social relevance of our education, to the

best of our abilities that I thank the University of Uyo for the invitation to deliver this year's Convocation Lecture and I wish to dedicate the Lecture to our hardworking, committed, indefatigable, humble and goal-oriented Vice Chancellor, Professor Enefiok Essien, SAN, the longest serving Dean and Chairman Committee of Deans at this University, who has resolved to bringing developmental changes to the University of Uyo that we can all be proud of.

20.10 Thank you for your attention and May God be with you all.

Professor Olugbemi JEGEDE

03 November, 2017

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