

Political and Institutional Factors in the Funding of Higher Education in Nigeria

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Abstract

The demand for higher education all over the world is on the increase as the expectations of every recipient of higher education is to acquire knowledge needed for a meaningful and better life in all aspects. Stagnant economy and increasing global inequalities have reduced governments and households' educational financial resources, and in Africa the challenge is severe. This increasing demand for higher education has generated a lot of pressures leading to concerns and debates on how the sector should be funded and who does the funding. In Nigeria, for example, one of such concerns is that public universities have been closed down since February 2022 due to an industrial action embarked on by members of academic staff under the aegis of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) over issues of funding of universities. It is of concern that the budgetary allocation to education in Nigeria in the past seven years has been less than eight percent while a chunk of the budget goes to the political class which unfortunately the spending cannot be accounted for. This study interrogated the political and institutional factors associated with the funding of higher education in Nigeria. The study adopted social justice approach to the access and funding of higher education in the country. Using the social justice framework, this study investigated the political and institutional interplay influencing the funding structure in universities in Nigeria. The study, through a critique of the current form of capitalist political system in Nigeria advanced the system of social democracy, a socialist system of government achieved by democratic means and the collective good of all and not just a few which is obtainable in the current capitalist system in place. The study contributed to the existing body of knowledge by advancing a realistic, sustainable but equitable funding model (s) of higher education in Nigeria.

Keywords: Higher Education, Funding, Politics, Institutions, Nigeria.

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1. Introduction

Higher education is a form of education provided at the post-secondary level. This is provided primarily in institutions such as universities, polytechnics and colleges of education in Nigeria. The major goal of higher education is to provide high level manpower development for recipients in order to bring about national development. In Nigeria, there are designated agencies that regulates each of the three main providers of higher education. The National Universities Commission (NUC), the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and the National Council for Colleges of Education (NCCE) for universities, polytechnics and colleges of education respectively. It is important to state that Higher Educational Institutions (HIEs) in Nigeria can be classified into two broad categories, public and private. While the public HEIs are owned and financed by the government either at the Federal or State levels, the private HEIs are owned and financed by individuals, faith-based organisations as well as non-governmental entities.

For the purpose of this paper, attention will be focused on universities. The reason is that most of the graduates from secondary schools prefer to attend the university as against the two other categories of HEIs. The Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission, Professor Abubakar Rasheed, disclosed in 2021 that more than 2.1 million population of students are currently studying in Nigerian Universities. This is far more than the number of students in polytechnics and colleges. The fact that universities is a preferred choice for students seeking to gain admission makes demands on it so much and thus calls for greater attention in terms of funding and assurance of quality. Nigeria currently has 211 universities registered with NUC of which 49 of them are owned by the Federal Government, 59 are owned by various state governments and 111 owned by private individuals and faith based institutions. (NUC News Bulletin). The Federal and State owned universities are funded by the Federal and State government respectively and also draws fund from a public agency called the Tertiary Education Trust Fund. While the private universities are funded by their founder which makes the charges higher than what is obtainable in public universities. Reports indicate that 95% of students attend public universities while just about 5% attend private universities. One major reason for this is the cost of schooling in private universities. The fees in public universities have been highly subsidized by the federal and state government in an effort to fulfil its obligation of educating its citizens as enshrined in the Constitution.

Gambo and Fasanmi (2019) noted that the history of University Education funding in Nigeria dated back to

the period of establishment of tertiary institutions which is traceable to 1948 when the University College Ibadan (UCI) was established following the Elliot Commission's recommendation in Nigeria. The Elliot Commission was set up in the year 1943 "to report on the organisation and facilities of the existing centres of higher education in British West Africa, and to make recommendations regarding future university development in that area" (Fafunwa, 1971, in Gambo and Fasanmi, 2019). At creation, UCI operated as a college affiliated to University of London, it was however accorded the status of University in 1962 and named as University of Ibadan (UI). Ukeje (2002) noted that UCI was funded from two main sources. The Nigerian government provided 70 per cent of the funds while the United Kingdom provided 30 per cent of the total recurrent cost. Since then and up till now, there is low level of University education funding and this has been a source of concern for stakeholders with its effects on quality of university education in Nigeria.

2. Situation Analysis

2.1 ASUU and funding Higher Education in Nigeria: Historical and Distributional Perspective

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) was founded in 1978 which succeeded the former National Association of University Teachers NAUT established in 1965. (Chukwudi and Idowu, 2021). NAUT which later became ASUU is a body of academics in federal and state owned universities which represents the interest of academics in labour related matters. Apart from ASUU, there are other four registered trade unions in Nigerian public universities. These include the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) which comprise of senior members non-teaching staff such as administrators and bursary staff, the second is the National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT) which comprise of academic technologists and instructors in laboratories and technical units and departments, and the third is the Non Academic Staff Union of Universities (NASU) which comprise of middle level administrative staff and other support staff who are not involved in teaching activities.

ASUU's activities has not only been limited to representing its members' interest in labour related matters alone, it has continually made the government see the need to fund the tertiary educational system. Public funding of education in Nigeria has been a source of concern to relevant stakeholders in Nigeria particularly Nigerian academics who are involved in teaching in universities. Nigerian government has not been able to fund higher education adequately in order to achieve best result. Ajayi and Ekundayo (2006) noted with concern that the Nigerian government over the years has not met the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) recommendation of 26% of the total budget allocation to education sector despite the government's allocation towards education on yearly basis. The World Bank in 2010, cited in Gambo and Fasanmi (2019) reveals that the problem of higher education financing, especially University education is more serious in Africa than the rest of the world. They further noted with concern that in Nigeria, apart from global economic crisis which is ravaging the economy, other factors like huge foreign and domestic debts, declining revenue from the oil sector which the government highly depend upon, high cost of governance, huge budget that government earmarked for debt servicing on yearly basis, mismanagement of economic resources, high rate of corruption in all sphere of the economy etc. had made it difficult for the government to allocated adequate resources to fund the public tertiary institutions in the country all of which are inexcusable given the importance of education to the nation.

The poor state of funding of public education in Nigeria and the struggle for the survival of public universities has resulted in a lot of face-off between ASUU and the Federal and State governments in Nigeria. One of such struggles gave birth to the Education Trust Fund (ETF) which is now known as Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund). It is important to state that TETFund is a product of industrial action by ASUU, saying that the system needed intervention. ASUU, out of strong concern about the poor state of funding of tertiary education by the government and the cost of such neglect advised the government under the military leadership of General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, the military Head of State between 27th August 1985 and 26th August, 1993, that two per cent of the taxes collected from corporations should be kept aside to fund public universities. The government accepted the proposal and in line with the 1993 Education Tax Act, No 7, the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) was set up as an intervention agency for the provision of infrastructures in public tertiary institutions. The Tertiary Education Trust Fund Establishment Act, 2011 replaces the 1993 Education Tax Fund Act No. 17 and the Education Tax Act, Cap. E4, laws of the Nigerian federation, 2004. It establishes the Tertiary Education Trust Fund agency, giving it the mandate to oversee, distribute and monitor the education tax to government owned Nigerian tertiary institutions. In order to allow TETFund policy fulfill its objectives, the 2011 TETFund Act imposes a 2% education tax on the assessable profits of each registered organisations in Nigeria. (Popoola and Ajayi, 2021). The funds realised from this tax arrangement are being used by almost all tertiary institutions; and even private universities are requesting to benefit from the TETFund interventions. It is however worrisome that the government lists whatever intervention from TETFund as part of its obligation, using that as an excuse to not allocate enough funds in their annual budget to education in general and tertiary education in particular. (The Punch Newspaper, 2022)

Aside from the fact that ASUU has been actively engaged in making government see reasons to increase the funding of higher education, the body has equally been involved in community development. One of such is the provision of scholarship for indigent students under the initiative it called ASUU Indigent Students Scholarship Scheme. Indigent students are registered students in universities who are from poor background and lack adequate financial support from home to support their study. The selection process for the scholarship is usually a thorough but fair one. The academic performance of applicants usually form part of the eligibility criteria. In 2021, the National Secretariat of ASUU gave about 73 students across all public universities a scholarship worth One hundred thousand naira per session, while individual ASUU branches in universities also give awards to their indigent students. Aside from the offers given at the national level of the academic union, the various branches at zonal offices also gives scholarship to their students. For example, on 22nd December 2021, the Ibadan Zone of ASUU awarded twenty-two students scholarship under the ASUU Indigent Students Scholarship Scheme. (Vanguard Daily Newspaper, 2021)

2.2 The State-Federal Dynamics in the Financing of Higher Education in Nigeria

The provision of education is on the concurrent list of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This implies that each level of government has the responsibility of providing education for its people. There is however a regulatory agency established by the central government to ensure coordination of activities and quality assurance in the provision of education by the federal and state government. In the case of universities, the National Universities Commission (NUC) is the responsible for the coordination and regulation of activities of both federal and state-owned universities as well as private universities. While the federal government is responsible for the funding of federal owned institutions, the state government is responsible for the funding of state universities through their budgetary allocations.

Aside the budgetary allocation of federal and state governments to universities. The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) also provides funding interventions for public universities in form of physical infrastructures, procurement of laboratory equipment, library books and electronic library, institution based research funding, funding of PhD research of staff in training, provision of funding support for academic publications, funding of learned conference among others. However, there is a rising concern on the low budgetary allocation to education by the government while laying claim on the various interventions of TETFund and counting them as part of its funding allocation to education. This may not be entirely correct because TETFund is private sector funded and it was established as an intervention initiative and not to serve as a replacement for government funding through its budgetary allocation. It has been observed that most of the newly founded and even older universities are tagged “TETFund” universities because most of the buildings and facilities in these institutions are product of TETFund interventions and not government funded as it is now being acclaimed. From the fore-going, it is important for the government to fund the education with all sense of priority and responsibility.

2.3 Political Factors in the Funding of Higher Education

One of the most populous definition of politics was that of David Easton who defined as the authoritative allocation of values, or the distribution or the distribution of rewards in wealth, power and status that the system may provide. Harold Laswell defined Politics as who gets what, when and how? These definitions indicates that politics cannot be separated from the funding of different sectors of the economy including the critical sector of education. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria states that it shall be the responsibility of the government to provide quality education for its citizens. This places the political institutions at the centre of funding of not only tertiary education but basic and secondary education.

One of the political factors that has been associated with the funding of education in general and tertiary education in particular in Nigeria is the low budgetary allocation to education. A quick review of budgetary allocation to education in Nigeria in the last eight years. In 2015, the last budget made by the outgoing President, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, allocated 10.79% to education. In 2016, the first budget made by the newly elected government of Mohammadu Bahari, allocated 6.7% to education. In 2017, education got 7.38%, In 2018, 7.04%, In 2019, 7.05%, in 2020, 6.7%, in 2021, 5.68%, in 2022, 5.39% (Muazu, 2022) and in the 2023 budget that has just been recently presented to the joint session of the National Assembly by the Nigeria’s President, 5.2% has been allocated to education for 2023 fiscal year. (The Nation Newspaper) The above data corroborates the fact that the education sector has not been adequately funded by successive regimes in Nigeria.

A close review at the yearly budgetary in Nigeria over the time reveals that a large percentage of the allocation goes to governance and for public officers’ salaries and emolument. The concern is that more budgetary allocation goes to servicing of political officeholders who represent a minority compared to critical sectors such as education and health. In the 2023 budget for example, the large chunk of the budget went to the Presidency and the National Assembly. While it may not be out of place to incur cost on governance, such must not be at the expense of a critical sector such as education. The President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

during the presentation of the 2023 Appropriation to the National Assembly noted that the government alone can no longer fund tertiary education. While this may be reasonable, it is equally important as a rejoinder to the President's assertion to probe the budgetary allocation to education in the past seven years under the present administration headed by the President. The highest budgetary allocation under the present administration as noted above was 7.38% in 2017. The percentage has so far dwindled thereafter. Suffice is to say that, even if it is not sustainable for government alone to fund education, efforts must be made to show more commitment to education by increasing the budgetary allocation to education and cut the cost of governance as much as possible.

Discussion on political factors in the funding of higher cannot be complete without making mention of the issue of corruption in public offices. Corruption in Nigeria has become a structural problem. It has infiltrated into every sector of the nation. However, corruption among public office holders is dangerous as it becomes a point of reference for civil servants and indeed the younger generation. Most young people in Nigeria prefer to go into politics because they see it as a lucrative enterprise because that is where a large percentage of the national budgets goes to. It was reported that Nigerian lawmakers are the highest paid in the world. Professor Itsey Sagay a Senior Advocate of Nigeria and the Chairman of the Presidential Advisory Committee Against Corruption (PACAC), noted that a Senator in Nigeria earns 240 million naira (about 1.7million US dollars) in salaries and allowances and a member of the House of Representative (the lower legislative arm of the National Assembly) earns 204 million naira (about 1.45million US dollars) per annum. The Professor noted that this rubs insult to injury for the average Civil servant who earns 46 to 120 US dollars per month. This accounts for the wide gap between the rich and the poor in the country and unfortunately the gap keep increasing as the large portion of the 2023 budget has been given to the Presidency and the National Assembly. Another case of unjustly rewarding people who are not making any contribution to the larger society is the case of a Media aide of the President whose work is to post on behalf of the President on the internet earns far more than a University Professor. This alludes to the reason why many people desperately want to find their way into politics in Nigeria.

Another dimension of corruption in the corridor of power in Nigeria is misappropriation of public funds which over the time has been done with impunity. A very recent but unfortunate incidence is the alleged diversion of a whopping sum of 109.4billion (265million US dollars) by the Accountant General of the Federation (AGF) in Nigeria, in person of, Ahmed Idris. The last development about the matter was that the AGF appealed for plea bargain by the anti-graft agency, i.e. the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) which quizzed him for the financial impropriety. (Vanguard Newspaper, August 11, 2022). Although, the AGF was relieved of his position, other visible punitive measures which should serve a deterrent measure for other public officers were not been administered on him. There are other cases of diversion of public funds in which the offenders were not appropriately punished which is indirectly legalising corrupt practices in the country. It is therefore important for the government to block the leakages in the system as a result corruption in order to show enough commitment to education and other critical sectors. It is also important for public officers to understand that public funds should be used for public good.

Another political factor in the funding of education is the issue lack of continuity in governmental affairs. A situation whereby change in government brings about complete neglect of the policies and programmes of previous government due to conflicting political interest. In the education sector for example, particularly in the public owned universities, the administration headed by Dr. Goodluck Jonathan between 2009 and 2015 signed an Agreement with the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) to release certain amount of money for the revitalisation of the universities as well as review of conditions of service of academics in federal owned universities. The government released a tranche of the revitalisation fund before its expiration in 2015. The succeeding government have not been able to substantially fulfill the commitment of revitalising the universities as well as the component of the review of working conditions of academics. This account for the current strike action embarked upon by the academic union which has led to the closure of public universities for eight months keeping students who represent about 95% of the entire population of university students in Nigeria idle for eight months. The remaining 5% attends private universities which not many people can afford. The government also stopped the salaries of members of the striking academic union.

2.4. Institutional Factors in the Funding of Higher Education

The university and other HEIs operate as institutions. There are therefore some institutional factors that needs to be discussed in this section.

Government policy on free tuition for students which makes it difficult for university authorities to charge commensurate fees from students has made the running of universities challenging for the Management. In 2021, the then Vice Chancellor of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, located in the southwestern region of the country, lamented that the University spends 960 million (2.2million USD) on electricity bills and 24million (55 thousand USD) on diesel annually. Vanguard Newspaper, June 9, 2021). In the same 2021, OAU was shut out of power supply for about a month because of the failure of the university to pay their outstanding power bills. The University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) located at the south eastern part of the country spends average of N75 to

N80 million monthly on electricity. Bayero University, Kano located at the northern region of the country spends 30million naira on electricity monthly. The University of Lagos (UNILAG), located in the commercial headquarters of Nigeria was reported to have been thrown into darkness just like OAU as mentioned over unpaid debt of about N200 million it was billed for electricity consumption. The Vice Chancellor of the 60 year old university confirmed that the university from January 2020 to June 2021 had paid N1.123billion naira in electricity bills. He lamented that the whopping sum was huge and burdensome was paid from its monthly internally generated revenues (Guardian Newspaper, 2021). From the above accounts, it is becoming challenging for heads of tertiary institutions to run the universities with the internally generated revenue which the government still expect some percentage to be remitted to the federation account. Apart from the fact that the monthly subvention that the government releases to these institution is inadequate, there are equally irregular which make internal running of the universities very challenging for the Management team.

Another issue of concern about institutional factors in the funding of universities is the manner at which the available funds are utilised. There are lot of reported corrupt and sharp practices among the Governing councils and Management team of Nigerian universities. In 2018, the Auditor General of the Federation, AGF, was said to have asked the authorities of the Michael-Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUAU) in Abia State located in the south eastern part of Nigeria headed by the then Vice Chancellor Professor Francis Otunta to explain how 3.5billion naira was expended under questionable circumstances. Earlier in 2017, the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), the student umbrella body in Nigeria petitioned the Economic Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and the Minister of Education, Malam Adamu Adamu to immediately institute probe against the Vice Chancellor of the same university, MOUAU. The then NANS President, Comrade Chinonso Obasi who led the protest on the streets of Abuja, the administrative capital of Nigeria, demanding for probe and removal of the Prof. Otunta, said the students have to storm the Ministry of Education, EFCC, and ICPC, on a protest following the expiration of seven days ultimatum given for the Vice Chancellor to resign honourably from office in order to face the charges of corruption against him in a Federal High Court. The student body lamented and quoted as follows that “A lot of our administrators have ruined the tertiary institutions, looting resources meant to build, train and educate our nation’s manpower for future development as a people and nation. (Nigerian Tribune Online, 10th February, 2017). There are many other cases of mismanagement of funds among administrators in Nigerian universities. The implication of this is that the limited available resources which ought to be judiciously used for the day to day running of the universities are diverted and thus constitute a setback to the system.

One of the rules guiding the administration of Federal universities in Nigeria is that the Federal Government should send a visitation panel (VP) to universities to audit the activities and finance of the university as a measure of putting university administration under check. The Vice Chancellor who heads the university’s Management Team has a single tenure of 5 years. It is therefore that expected that the VP evaluate the activities of each Vice Chancellor before the expiration of the tenure. It is however unfortunate that the Federal Government has been defaulting in its responsibility of sending the VP as the law stated. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) concerned with government’s failure to send the VP after so many years and the alarming cases of corruption in the universities, had to embark on an industrial action in order to awaken the government to its responsibility. The Federal Government set up the visitation panels and sent them to the Federal Universities in 2021, but after a whole year, it has failed to release the ‘white paper’ i.e. a comprehensive report of the findings of the panel to the public domain so that university administrators who are found culpable can be prosecuted under the law. Part to the reasons for the 8 months old strike action by ASUU was the need for the Federal Government to release the white paper on the VP sent by Federal Government to federal universities in 2021. Relevant stakeholders within and outside the university community have continuously faulted the Federal Government on why it will spend tax payers money to set up and service a visitation panel and refuse to publish the white paper of the VP. Tribune Online, a registered national daily newspaper reported that President Muhammadu Buhari on April 13 2021, inaugurated the visitation panels of 38 federal universities, four Inter-University Centres, 25 polytechnics, 21 Colleges of Education to review the performance of the institutions.

It was further reported on 31st August, 2021 that the Federal Government has received the reports of the Presidential Visitation Panels to 88 Federal universities and other tertiary institutions in the country. The reports was submitted to the Minister of Education, Malam Adamu on Tuesday 31st August, 2021 in Abuja by various chairmen of the panels. It is however surprising that after one year of receipt of the Reports of the Panels by the Federal Government, it is yet to publish the white paper of the VPs on the performance of the institutions in the areas of governance, standards, quality assurance, management of finances and relationship between management and staff. One of the major findings of the panel which calls for concern indicated that tertiary institutions give priority to Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) at the expense of the quality of the system. It is dangerous for the universities to abandon its role of transmitting knowledge and solving problems through research while focusing on revenue generation. This further calls to question the stand of the Federal

Government to partially fund the universities while mandating the universities to generate revenue internally to run the system.

3. Theoretical Framework: The Social Justice Framework

Social justice can simply be described as the principle of fairness and objectivity in any setting be it formal or informal. Social justice has been defined as the fair and equitable distribution of power, resources, and obligations in society to all people, regardless of race or ethnicity, age, gender, ability status, sexual orientation, and religious or spiritual background (Van den Bos 2003, in Erin, Melanie and Sally, 2011). Some key principles underlying this definition of social justice include values of inclusion, collaboration, cooperation, equal access, and equal opportunity.

Khechen (2013) viewed social justice as a normative concept centred on the notion of fairness and the principles of equality, equity, rights and participation. Four key principles of social justice could be identified from Khechen's definition, these include equality, equity, rights and participation. At the individual level, the absence of justice often lead to frustration, anger, aggression, dissatisfaction, increased physical and emotional suffering as well as greater vulnerability to crisis situation. When there is social justice, the gap between the rich and poor will be minimal. This will also help to engage the productive members of the population, the youths and young adults and this will consequently reduce the level of crimes and other forms of social vices. Social justice is geared towards the collective goal of promoting the welfare of citizens and every member of the population.

The Social justice theory was formulated by John Rawls which states that the idea of free and equal moral persons is achieved only when society and individuals respect the basic rights of everyone and willingly meet the demands set by the basic social institutions, the latter regulated by principles unanimously agreed by these rational and reasonable persons (that is, by the parties that represent it) in the original position. (Rawls's, 1999a in Marcos Paulo, 2016). The social justice theory is hinged on the principles of equity, equality, rights, participation and order. The theory advocates the need for societies to respect the right of all its citizens, uphold the rule of law which implies supremacy of the law and equality before the law.

The implication of social justice theory to this study is to the extent that there should be equity and fairness in the allocation of resources especially in the budgetary allocation of government. Committing a chunk of the national budget to the servicing of members of the ruling class at the expense of other sectors that concerns the majority is a clear violation of the principle of social justice. Policy and decision makers must be guided by the key principles of social justice which include equity, equality, rights and participation. This will help to guide against any form of deprivation or marginalisation which is capable of leading to frustration, anger and depression.

4. Recommendations on Funding Models for Nigerian Higher Education

The current funding structure in Nigeria public HEIs is majorly from the government such that the tuition fee paid by the students who attend public institutions and university in particular have been highly subsidized. It has however been argued that although tuition fees are subsidized, the parents of student in public universities still incur some other costs in the course of sponsoring their wards. Such costs include, accommodation (a lot of undergraduates in Nigeria public universities stay off campus because there are no enough accommodation for them on campus), other costs include feeding, transportation, cost on textbooks and other academic materials among others. All these associated costs forms part of the cost of training an undergraduate. This is in a country where the minimum wage is 30 thousand naira (67.98 US dollars). In a study conducted in January 2022 by Picordi researchers which covered 64 countries with a government-set minimum wage. The scope of the countries cut across Europe, North and South America, Africa, Asia and Australia. The study found out that the minimum wage in Nigeria cannot meet the basic needs of workers and their families not to talk of meeting other needs such as paying the school fees of their wards and paying other bills. (Premium Times Newspaper, 2022). This is also coupled with the rising spate of inflation in the country which is reported to be 20.5% as recently reported by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics. With all of these challenging situations faced by an average worker who have to send his wards to school and still bear the associated costs mentioned above, it may then not be correct to say that the government is responsible for the entire financing of university education.

The recommended model of funding university education in Nigeria will be the socialist approach which advocates for the equitable distribution of resources. There is the need for a paradigm shift from the existing order of allocating so much to some few individuals holding political offices at the expense of the majority. As a matter of priority, the government needs to increase its budgetary allocation to the education sector. This is achievable if government sees education as a priority. It will equally need to drastically cut the cost of governance and also take proactive steps at blocking the leakages in the system due to corruption. If public money is used for public good, quality education will be provided for the citizens without placing so much burden on parents who are earning little and struggling with the rising spate of inflation and still have to ensure

the proper education of their wards. There have been some recommendations on introducing education loans such that students get education loans to study and the pay back after completing school from the wages from work. This option is not viable in the current day Nigeria due to the high rate of graduate unemployment. A lot of graduates who are willing to work and have the capacity to work are not gainfully employed. How then do such unemployed graduates have the means to pay back the loans?

Other funding models could be through endowment funds, funds from research outputs from the universities, patented research, public-private partnership (PPP), donations from ALUMNI (graduates of the institutions giving back to their alma mater) and through corporate social responsibilities initiatives.

5. Conclusion

This study took a critical look at the political and institutional factors in the funding of higher education with specific interest in universities which houses over 80% of higher education seekers in Nigeria. The study noted with concern the meagre budgetary allocation to education by successive government in Nigeria which poses a big question on the level of priority placed on education by the Nigerian government. A situation which has resulted in a lot of strike actions which has continuously crippled academic activities in Nigerian public universities. A very recent case was the eight months strike that took place in 2022 which shut down academic activities in the public owned universities which led to the exit of many academic staff from the country in search for greener pastures while s. One of the demands of the striking union was the need for revitalisation of universities which is said to be grossly underfunded. The efforts and activities of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in putting the government on its toes to do the needful in the funding of universities were also discussed in this paper. The state-federal dynamics with regard to the financing of higher education were examined. The various political and institutional factors in the funding of universities were equally discussed. The study concluded by recommending the socialist approach to the funding of education in general and universities to replace the existing capitalist approach which has proved unhealthy for the growth of the university system.

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