

Issues to Urgently Address in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

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Abstract

Globally, tertiary institutions have been actively involved in society development especially in the areas of manpower development and community services provision. In Nigeria, tertiary institutions is contributing to the socio-economic and technological advancement. Recently, it appears the three major functions of tertiary institutions in Nigeria are been affected by the some internal and external problems that is calling for an immediately actions. The paper discussed some current issues to be addressed in the various tertiary institutions in Nigeria in order to keep them effective. The theoretical framework adopted for this paper was the General System Theory that was developed by David Easton in 1953. The paper used secondary data. The secondary data were collected from print materials and online publications. The paper identified the following pressing issues that is militating against effective operation of tertiary institutions in Nigeria to include; poor funding and faulty funding model, inadequate academic staff, infrastructure facilities deficit, political influence, proliferation of tertiary institutions, brain-drain, autonomy, poor remuneration and weak industry-academia collaboration. Based on the issues identified, the paper recommended the following; reform in the funding model of tertiary institutions, employment of adequate academic staff, provision of more infrastructure facilities, establishment of department in federal ministry of education to handle issues of tertiary institutions establishment by drawing of a national plan for tertiary institutions establishment across Nigeria, increment in the salaries of academic staff and grant of autonomy to tertiary institutions.

Keywords

Academic staff, Issue, tertiary institutions.

Introduction

The first higher institution in Nigeria was the Yaba Higher College and it was established in 1932. The agitation of Nigerians for a more comprehensive higher education provision led to the constitution of the Asquith and Elliot Commissions on Higher Education (NOUN, 2012; Jubril, 2003). This establishment been the development and expansion of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. NOUN (2012) submits that the Nigerian higher or tertiary education system comprised of Universities, Polytechnic and Colleges of Education offering programs in areas such as teacher education, agriculture and others. It is the largest and most complex higher education system on the continent.

Ogunode, Edinoh and Okolie (2023) defines tertiary education as a planned and organized educational system designed for the total development of man/woman and for the total transformation of the society through the utilization of teaching, research and provision of community service. Tertiary education can also be viewed as post basic and secondary school education that embraces advanced teaching, research and community service. Tertiary education is an advanced educational system meant for human capital development through teaching, research and provision of community service (Ogunode, Iyabode, and Olatunde-Aiyedun, 2022). Tertiary education is the third tiers of education that is designed for the production of skilled and professionals for the socio-economic and technology advancement. Tertiary institutions are micro section of the larger society. Tertiary institutions is an organized fraction of the whole society carved out for teaching programme, research and provision of community services. Tertiary institution can also be seen as a subset of the general society that is made of collection of different people, different culture, different life style and different value (Ogunode and Odo 2023).

Tertiary education is viewed by National Policy on Education (2013) as the education given after Post Basic Education in institutions such as Universities and Inter-University Centres such as the Nigeria French Language Village, Nigeria Arabic Language Village, National Institute of Nigerian Languages, institutions such as Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEIs), and Colleges of Education, Monotechnics, Polytechnics, and other specialized institutions such as Colleges of Agriculture, Schools of Health and Technology and the National Teachers' Institutes (NTI). Tertiary education is an instrument for national development and manpower development. Tertiary education can be described as an organized education saddled with the production and reproduction of knowledge for the betterment of the whole country. Tertiary education is a social agent of development for self and national-realization and for manpower production. Tertiary education in particular, are fundamental to the construction of a knowledge economy and society in all nations. The nation looks up to higher education through its traditional functions of teaching, research and community service to develop manpower and disseminate necessary knowledge that are needed in industry and other sectors (NOUN 2012).

Tertiary education in Nigeria is plagued with many problems and issues that is demanding urgent intervention and responses from the various managers and administrators in Nigeria. For instance, the ranking of the tertiary institutions by the various international institutions such as Webometrics, Crybermetric Lab, Times Higher Education and other ranking bodies are not encouraging according to (Ati, 2017; Anyira, and Imade 2020; Ogunode, Akin-Ibidiran and Ibidiran 2022). Also, the quality of graduate in the tertiary institutions is poor (Oluremi and Oyewole, 2014). It is based on this problems that this paper wish to discuss the current pressing issues and problems that needs to be urgently addressed in the Nigerian tertiary institutions by the respective managers and administrators in charge.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this paper is General System Theory that was developed by David Easton in 1953. The theory was adapted from the natural sciences, especially Biology in the works of Ludwig Von Bertallanty. The systems theory states that an organization is a single, unified system of interrelated parts or sub-systems. Each part of the overall system is dependent on the others and cannot function optimally without them. Therefore, if factors are present that adversely affect one sub-system within an organization, it's likely these factors may adversely affect other sub-systems, too. This can result in impacts on the entire system to a certain extent. This framework presents an organization as a natural ecosystem, where each element is interdependent. The systems approach is another term for this framework. Various components of a system also interact with each other regularly, which is true in a modern organization like a tertiary institutions.

Tertiary institutions can be liken to a system that is made up of different units and sub-units working together towards realizing the whole objectives of the tertiary institutions. The units and sub-units include academic staff, non-academic staff, funds, infrastructure facilities, policies, administration and students. These units and sub-units are expected to be sound and effective and be provided in right qualities and quantities because the malfunctioning or inadequacy of any of these units has adverse effects on the whole operations of the respective tertiary institutions which can lead to the production of half-baked graduate and poor quality of tertiary education and directly and indirectly affects national development because national development has linkages with quality of tertiary institutions. .

The relevance and application of this theory to this study is that, tertiary institutions administrators and managers should know that tertiary institutions is like a system that operate with many units and sub-units and each unit must be sound and must be adequately provided because each unit is playing a crucial role in the attainment of tertiary institutions objectives.

Issues to Urgently Address in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

This paper is considering the following pressing issues calling for an urgent attention such as; poor funding and faulty funding model, inadequate academic staff, infrastructure facilities deficit, political influence, proliferation of tertiary institutions, brain-drain, autonomy, poor remuneration and weak industry-academia collaboration.

Issue of Funding

One of the urgent issues calling for an immediate action in the tertiary institutions administration in Nigeria is the issue of poor funding and funding model adopted for financing the tertiary institutions. First, tertiary institution in Nigeria are poorly funded. Tolu-Kolawole (2023) submits that the funding of public

universities in Nigeria has long emerged as a critical challenge to the promotion of good tertiary educational standards, maintenance of physical infrastructure, training of lecturers and funding of research in the country, among others. These issues have caused friction between the staff of tertiary institutions and the government, leading to a crisis in the sector. Higher institutions in the country have often resorted to strike actions to press home their demands for better working conditions and funding. For instance, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), the umbrella body of academics in Nigerian Universities have gone on strike actions over 16 times in the last 23 years. The inadequacy or absence of funding for capital projects has overtly manifested in the dearth of well-equipped workshops, libraries, studios, classrooms, hostels, utilities and municipal services”. Oyeweso as cited by Ojo (2022) lament that “we need to recognise the fact that a poorly funded university cannot meet the standard of any world class university. It cannot meet the minimum standard for ranking by Webometrics, Crybermetric Lab, Times Higher Education and other ranking bodies. Nigerian Universities are in a state of anomie because successive administrations, policymakers and policy implementers have only been paying lip service to the education industry.” Secondly, the funding model adopted for the founding of tertiary institutions is not meeting the financial demands of the tertiary institutions. The funding model can be described as feeding bottle funding that places the tertiary institutions financing at the mercy of only the government funding. The funding model is one sided and limited the administrators from thinking outside the box. Ogunode, and Ibrahim, (2022) concludes that the funding model designed for public universities in Nigeria does not put into consideration of full financial autonomy. Nigerian public universities were established to solely depend on fundings from the government. This funding model has not helped the universities to survive on their own. Also, Ogunode (2022); Okani, Ogunode and Ajape (2021) and Ohiare Udebu, Ogunode and Rauf (2021) Olowonefa, Ogunode and Ohibime (2022) point out that the financial model of public universities in Nigeria is not the best because it makes the universities dependent on the government for funding. The funding model designed for Nigerian public universities from the onset did not favour financial autonomy and this has constituted a lot of problems for the autonomy status of the universities. The funding model has been formulated to make the universities depend on the government for funds to run the universities. A situation whereby government alone is providing the tertiary institutions with over 95%. For example, Dr. Yemi Ogunbiyi states: “No Government of Nigeria, now or in the future, can adequately fund higher education. Not even the laudable effort of such intervention funding institutions as the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) can fully reverse the current deterioration in the system”. Also, AriseTV (2022) reported that former Vice President of Nigeria, Osinbajo stresses that “funding in the university system (public universities) has to be diversified. “The system has to find a way to sustain itself. We really have to look carefully at how universities can make money independently. Whether it is an endowment or some other way, adopting a business model”. He emphasized that as budgetary allocations alone cannot sustain the running of public universities, the future of the university system depends on the adoption of independent but creative sources of funding, including the establishment of an endowment fund. The Vice President urged the management of OOU to adopt other approaches to funding its activities, noting that “depending on government alone or the Tetfund for development of infrastructure is not sustainable. Also ChannelTV (2023) reported that former President of Nigeria, President MuhammaduBuhari in 2023 submits at the National Assembly in the presentation of 2023 budget proposal of N20.51 trillion, he argued the fact that the cost of tertiary

education is “jointly shared” in most countries and conclude by observing that. “Distinguished Senators and Honourable members, it is instructive to note that today, Government alone cannot provide the resources required for funding tertiary education,” he told the lawmakers. “In most countries, the cost of education is jointly shared between the government and the people, especially at the tertiary level. It is imperative therefore that we introduce a more sustainable model of funding tertiary education.” The issue of poor funding and faulty funding model need an urgent attention for reform in order to reposition the tertiary institutions as agent for national development (Babalola, 2001; Ifeyinwa and Okemute, 2023; Ogunode and Onyekachi 2023).

Inadequate Academic Staff

Inadequate academic staff in various tertiary institutions across the country is another issue calling for an urgent attention by the administrators and managers of tertiary institutions. Academic staff are professionals trained in their field of specialization employed to teach, research and provide community services. Academic staff are professional in tertiary institutions translating the curriculum into action via teaching and research. According to the data, no federal university scored up to 50 per cent in the ranking of full professors. This implies that no federal university has the required number of full Professors. Some of the federal universities ranked in the top 10 are the Usmanu Dan-Fodiyo University, Sokoto, with 36.44 percent; Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, 35.80 percent; the University of Ibadan, percent; Federal University of Technology, Akure, 27.28 percent; Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, 27.25 percent; the University of Abuja, 25.33 percent; the University of Benin, 23.26 percent; University of Port Harcourt, 21.26 percent; the University of Calabar, 21.20 percent; and the University of Ilorin, 21.12 percent. Many reasons have been identified for the inadequate academic staff in the Nigerian tertiary institutions. For instance, Akinwale (2023) claims that the government’s policy had made it difficult to even retain good hands because to employ and get approval from Abuja may take up to a year and by that time, the good candidate has left for greener pastures. He said, “Vice chancellors cannot singlehandedly employ to replace staff as urgently as it is needed again. They have to contact Abuja for approval, which may take six months to a year, if not more, before they get approval. “By this time, the best candidate has gone to a more serious country that respects quality. Sadly, people from higher up there from the Ministry of Education to the legislators themselves want to dictate who the universities should employ,” he added. Aiyedun, Olatunde-Aiyedun and Ogunode (2021); Ogunode and Adamu, (2021) and Marks (2017) agrees that the issue of inadequate staff is a very serious problems that must be urgently address if the tertiary institutions must remained relevant in the mandate of manpower productions and technology advancement.

Infrastructural Facilities Deficits

Infrastructural facilities deficits have been identified as a major problem confronting many tertiary institutions across the country. Infrastructural facilities refer to social capital such as offices, hostels, classrooms, lecture halls, libraries, theater, electricity generation, transport facilities (including pedestrian paths, cycle ways, transfer facilities, freight storage and logistic areas, bus stops and layovers, ferry stops, taxi stops); sewage pump stations and sewerage treatments facilities, water supply pump stations, raw water storage, clear water storage, dams, weirs, bore field, ICT service and laboratories which are used for provision of academic services in tertiary institution. Most of these infrastructural facilities are lacking in

most tertiary institutions. Tolu-kolawole (2023) notes that several academic institutions in the country were also challenged by a dearth of infrastructural facilities which has led to the poor learning environment, among others. Also, Ogunode, Jegede and Musa (2021) ascertains that inadequate infrastructure facilities is another fundamental challenge facing the tertiary institutions in Nigerian universities. Many academic and non-academic staff in the Nigerian universities do not have offices to discharge their academic services effectively due to inadequate infrastructural facilities in the many universities in the country. Many academic staff share offices and some do not even have while many non-teaching staff seat under the trees and roam about from one office to the other because they don't have office to sit. Many academic staff do not have constant light in their offices and internet services to support their online teaching programme. The shortage of these infrastructural facilities is affecting the implementation of teaching programme, reasserting programme and community service programme. The problem of inadequate infrastructural facilities in most of the tertiary institutions need urgent attention according to Daniel-Kalio (2019) and Ishaya and Ogunode (2021) because no any meaningful teaching and research can take place without the availability of adequate infrastructural facilities.

Issue of Political Influence

The high level of political influence in the administration of tertiary institutions in Nigeria is not aiding the sustainable development of tertiary institutions. Tertiary institutions in Nigeria are programme and designed in term of operation to be answerable to the political appointees in the management. The situation is worse now that both state governors and federal ministers hijacked the appointment of principal officers, recruitment and siting of tertiary institutions. Emiko, (2023) reported the President of Association of Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Professor Emmanuel Osodeke to have said that the National Assembly is distracting university vice-chancellors from carrying out their duties through incessant invitations to Abuja to face committees. He observed that undue interference with the autonomy of the university system by the federal government is affecting academic activities negatively. He maintained that most vice-chancellors are being distracted from carrying out their duties by Ministries and other government agencies who frequently invite them to Abuja to face committees. The autonomy law for Universities enacted in 2003 is there. If we follow that law and allow it to run without interferences from the bureaucrat, the University system will be fine". "Let me read a section of the miscellaneous Act to you. The powers of the governing council which is going to run the University shall be exercised as the law and statutes of the Universities and to this extent, establishment circulars that are inconsistent with the law and statutes of each University shall not apply to the Universities". "But today, no Vice-Chancellor can employ a staff, a professor without getting permission from the office of the Head of Service. Is that done anywhere? Is that not interference? As of today, university governing councils cannot pay the salaries of its workers. Is that not interference? Those are the interference that we are talking about". He concluded that no vice-chancellor will not be invited less than two or three times in a month to come to Abuja and appear before a panel or committee in the National Assembly, House of Reps and Office of the Accountant-General. When will they have time to run their universities? Is that how it was in the 70s and 80s?. Ogunode, Atobauka, and Ayoko, (2023) and Ogunode and Musa, (2022) concludes that political interference in the management of tertiary institutions in Nigeria has affected the development of tertiary institutions and there is need to critically look for ways and free tertiary institutions from the political actors.

Proliferation of Tertiary Institutions

Another issue calling for an urgent attention in the administration of tertiary institutions is the issue of proliferation of tertiary institutions. The establishment of tertiary institutions in Nigeria is abused by the various political figures both at the federal and state level. According to that report, an analysis of the 63 bills on creation of new institutions being considered by both the Senate and the House of Representatives revealed that 26 bills are for Federal Universities; 33 bills for Federal Colleges of Education; Agriculture; Health; Technology; and Forestry among other specialised Colleges. The lawmakers also proposed four bills for the creation of new polytechnics. ASUU President observed, they are being established as lawmakers' constituency projects. Federal Character Principles are jettisoned in citing these institutions, while funding and sustainability are least considered. When institutions of higher learning are being established for campaign purposes, then, there is a problem. The ASUU boss said it was unfortunate that the same government that is not funding education has a National Assembly proposing to establish 32 more Universities. Tolu-Kolawole (2023) opines that Lawmakers, state governors and ministers have continued to champion the creation of new universities despite the little to no funding to the older ones. For instance, House of Representatives members since their inauguration have so far presented bills for the creation of 32 new Universities. Between 2020 and 2023, a number of federal, state and Federal Universities were created. In 2020, the Federal Government approved the take-off of two Federal Universities. In 2021, four federal Universities were approved by the Muhammadu Buhari administration. In 2022, just one federal University was approved, according to data obtained from the National Universities Commission. In 2023, shortly before the handover, Buhari approved the take-off of two federal Universities. However, the administration of President Bola Tinubu announced the take-off of six new federal Universities. On the other hand, several Universities were also established by state governors. Between 2020 and 2023, it was observed that two were established in Ekiti and Kogi States. In 2021, three state Universities were established in Delta State. In 2022, six state universities were established and so far in 2023, three state Universities have taken off. Apart from establishing new Universities from scratch, politicians have continued to convert other higher institutions of learning to Universities. Investigations by our correspondent revealed that no fewer than 24 state Polytechnics and Colleges of Education were converted to Universities. For instance, in 2023, the Tinubu administration approved the conversion of two Colleges of Education, namely the Adeyemi College of Education and the Alvan Ikoku College of Education, to Universities. Earlier in the year, the immediate-past governor of Kano State, Abdullahi Ganduje, converted the state-owned College of Education, Saadatu Rimi College of Education, into a University. Ogunode and Ohiosumua (2022) attests that tertiary institutions stakeholders need to look at the issue of tertiary institutions proliferation in Nigeria to help in sustainable quality education.

Brain-drain

Brain-drain is the movement of people from one country to another that is based on social and economic reason. It is the mass movement of professional from one state to another state seeking for a better education opportunities and employment. Ogunode, Haliru, Shehu, and Peter (2023) lament how academic staff are moving in mass from the Nigerian tertiary institutions to other part of the developed world because of poor motivation. Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) as reported by Wahaad (2023)

has raised the alarm over the mass resignation of lecturers from Nigeria's universities. It said most departments and units in Nigeria's public universities were short-staffed due to the resignation of lecturers in search of greener pastures. The union pointed out to poor and delayed salaries, unpaid allowances, poor infrastructure, lack of respect for the academic community, and the seeming dwindling hope were some of the factors responsible for the resignation of lecturers in the past few months. The chairman, University of Ibadan (UI) chapter of ASUU, Professor Ayo Akinwale, who stated this on yesterday in Ibadan, added that Nigeria's public universities were in a very pitiable condition with stress and frustration visible in the faces of poorly-remunerated lecturers. Akinwale confirmed that the union had received reports on how colleagues resign on a monthly basis because of the way lecturers are treated and poorly remunerated in Nigeria. Roy-Omonigho (2023) concludes that poor remuneration and seizure of salaries have caused various degrees of brain drain. Low salaries and poor compensation packages have driven very talented and experienced Nigerian lecturers to seek better opportunities abroad. There is a mass exodus of Nigerian lecturers to other countries where education and educationists are better appreciated. The difference between the remuneration is like the difference between light and darkness. This brain drain is already depriving Nigerian universities of skilled educators, leading to a decline in the quality of education. I must confess that majority of those left are either processing their papers to leave or are just marking time. There is need for the government and tertiary institutions stakeholders to find ways of addressing the various factors responsible for the mass exodus of the academic staff from the tertiary institutions (Mc Cowan, Janmaat, and Rao 2016; OffemAnashie, and Solomon, 2018)

Issue of Autonomy

The issue of autonomy is another critical issue that is calling for urgent reform in the tertiary institutions. Tertiary institutions especially the universities need administrative and academic autonomy. Autonomy in higher education especially in the universities according to NOUN (2009) implies that each institution must be governed according to the law that establishes it. Every institution has its law, edict or even decree which spells out the functions of the various organs, such as council, senate, congregation, faculty, department and institute etc. Autonomy in higher education relates to the protection of the institutions from interference by government officials in the day-to-day running of the institutions especially on the issues related to the selection of students; the appointment and removal of the academic staff; including the Vice-Chancellors/Rectors/Provost; the determination of contents of higher education and the control of standards. For the university to meet up with the global best practices there must be financial, academic, human resources and administrative autonomy in all aspects of the university's operations known as total or complete autonomy. Nigerian tertiary institutions is characterized with the issues of political interferences which has affected tertiary institutions. Ogunode, & Ibrahim, (2022) found out that integration of the federal tertiary institutions into the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS), centralization of the university system, centralization of admission, governing council dominance, integration of the federal tertiary institutions into treasure single account, poor implementation of the university Autonomy Bill and poor funding model of public universities are the problems that have undermined universities autonomy in Nigeria. The lack of full autonomy in the operations of tertiary institutions in Nigeria has hindered development in the sector and it is a problem that tertiary institution stakeholders need to find ways of addressing according to (Babalola, Jaiyeoba and Okediran 2007; Okoli, Ogbondah, and Ewor, 2016; Academic Staff

Union of Universities (ASUU) 2021 and Azenabor, 2022). Tertiary institutions academic staff in Nigeria are poorly paid.

Issue of Poor Remuneration

Tertiary institutions academic staff in Nigeria are poorly paid. The working conditions and policies attached to employment in the higher institutions according to Ogunode, Olugbenga, and Ezema (2022) are not attractive and this is responsible for the low placement of international academics in the various Universities in Nigeria. Ogunode, Jegede and Abubakar (2021) submits that Nigerian academic staff is among the poorly motivated in the world. Ogunode (2020) identifies poor salaries and poor motivation as responsible for inadequate academic staff in the various tertiary institutions. Comparing the salaries of Nigerian academic staff with other countries, Oludayo (2021) maintains that Assistant lecturer's monthly salary ranges from (N118,277 - N137, 334); Lecturer II with a doctorate degree (N129, 724 – N153, 563); Lecturer I with at least three years post-PhD experience on the job (N160, 809 – N203, 778); Senior Lecturer with at least six years' experience on the job (N222,229 – 314, 159); Associate Professor (with at least nine years' experience on the job: N277, 179 – N350, 169) and a full Professor with 12 and more years' experience on the job (N332, 833 – 416, 743). Also, Oludayo acknowledges that Nigerian lecturers get these after tax and other deductions. Before deductions, a newly appointed full Professor has N437, 499 and after deductions he is paid N332, 833 monthly. A Professor "at the bar", is one who has spent 10 years as a professor and that is when he/she can earn consolidated pay of N555, 351 and following deductions their net pay comes down to N416, 743 monthly!. In a comparison, Oludayo (2021) observes that in Ugandan public varsities, Assistant Lecturer earns \$1,631; Senior lecturer, \$2,432; Associate Professor, \$3,891 and Professor, \$4,054 per month, respectively. In University of South Africa, a Junior Lecturer earns N10, 453, 326 – N17,427,663; Lecturer, N12,547,744-N20,910,248; Senior Lecturer, N16,272,983 – N27,891,819; Associate Professor, N20,224,232 – N32,564,902) and Professor, N22,325,844 – N37,209,741 per annum. Roy-Omonigho (2023) observes that it is no news neither is it a fallacy that lecturers in public Universities in Nigeria are poorly paid. All attempts to make government see the importance and urgency of improving the conditions of service which had not been reviewed since 2009 (14years ago) have proved unsuccessful. Dialogues, appeals, reasoning and all methods deployed by the Academic Union of Universities (ASUU) seemed to be non-effective on the Nigerian government. Of course, the failure of government to listen to the plight of public University workers has led to the incessant strike actions which have constantly disrupted academic sessions in recent years. Victor, and Babatunde, (2014); Yahaya,, Jamari,, Mustapha, Abubakar, and Inuwa, (2019); Omale, Ojo, Ibrahim, and Yusufu, (2023) and Ogunode, Kasimu, and Ibrahim (2023) believes there is an urgent need to address the motivation, welfare and condition of services issues of academic staff of tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Weak Industry-Academia Collaboration

The issues of poor relationship between tertiary institutions and private institutions is another pressing issue that need an urgent attention. Ogunode, Edinoh, and Obanibi, (2023) notes that weak relationship between managers of tertiary education and private institutions in Nigeria is a major factor responsible for the mismatch of skills among graduate produced in the various tertiary institutions. Tertiary institutions are saddled with responsibilities of producing manpower to man various positions across the country. This

functions in recent times have been an issue to meet up by the various tertiary institutions across the country because bulk of graduate from the various institutions are faced with employability skills. Punch (2023) report that the Sub-Saharan African Skills and Apprenticeship Stakeholders Network gave reasons why the newly established Dangote refinery engaged 11,000 skilled workers from India while neglecting youths from Nigeria and other African countries. The network observe that the reason for the neglect was that youths from Nigeria lacked the adequate skills needed to be engaged in the assignment. It is unfortunate that many graduate of Nigerian tertiary institutions lacks 21st century skills and knowledge to be employed in most of the private institutions particular in Nigeria. Ogunode, (2023) notes that the problem of mismatch skills among Nigerian graduate can be linked to weak relationship between private employer of labour in the Nigerian economy and the tertiary institutions managers that has failed to engaged the major private employers on the skills, knowledge and qualifications they are in need of for the present positions and for the positions in future. There have been poor engagement and collaboration between the two institutions. Leadership Newspapers (2023) quoted Adewale-Smatt Oyerinde who identified skills mismatch, poor soft skills, limited entrepreneurial skills, lack of practical experience and limited industry-academia collaboration as major factors that hinder successful transition of Nigerian graduates into the workforce in Nigeria. This is an issue calling for urgent attention in Nigeria. Managers of tertiary institutions must look for ways to address the issue of poor relationship between tertiary institutions curriculum and the economy employability skills.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper discussed some current issues that needs to be urgently addressed in the various tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The paper identified the following pressing issues to include; issue of poor funding and faculty funding model, inadequate academic staff, infrastructure facilities deficits, political influence, proliferation of tertiary institutions, brain-drain, autonomy, poor remuneration and weak industry-academia collaboration issues. Based on the issues identified, the paper hereby recommended the following;

1. Reform in the funding model and increment in the funding of tertiary institutions. For instance, the best models in the world for funding public universities combine government funding, tuition, research grants and donor support in the form of alumni foundations etc. For these means to even work out, the government must mellow on the establishment of new universities because this alone is putting more pressure on the government purse.” (Oluwatoyin on Reform Education Nigeria)
2. Employment of academic staff in all tertiary institutions across the country;
3. Provision of more modern infrastructure facilities by increasing TETfund allocation;
4. Grant autonomy to tertiary institutions especially the Universities to reduce the political interference;
5. Establish department in Federal Ministry of Education to handle issues of tertiary institutions planning and establishment by drawing of a national plan for tertiary institutions establishment across Nigeria;
6. Increment in the salaries of academic staff to reduce brain-drain problem in the system;
7. Review salaries of academic staff in tertiary institutions. Pay all withheld salaries and earned allowances, and

8. The federal government should direct National Universities Commission, National Board for Technical Education and National Commission for Colleges of Education and their respective association of Vice-chancellors, Rectors and Provost to create a platform to engage and collaborate with major private employer of labour in Nigeria such as; Manufacturing Association of Nigeria (MAN), Bankers Committee and others. The Director General of MAN called for collaboration between employers and the higher institutions of learning to bridge the gap and foster the overall development of the workforce and the economy. According to him, there is the need to bridge the gap between the needs of industry and products of Nigerian higher institutions to provide work-ready talents, the alignment of education with industry needs which allow higher institutions to align their curricula, training programs and research with the actual needs of the job market. He noted that higher institutions must recognise the critical role of employers as the receiver of their products and should be willing to collaborate to their mutual benefit. He said, “A collaboration between employers and higher institutions creates a symbiotic relationship, where employers gain access to a skilled workforce and talent pool, and educational institutions stay current with industry trends, ensuring that graduates are equipped with the knowledge and skills that employers demand. There is no doubt that the synergy between the NUC, tertiary institutions and the private sector will serve to be effective in cultivating new frontiers in employability research for skills and career in Nigeria”(Ogunode, Edinoh, &Obanibi, 2023).

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