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**BOOK CHAPTER**

# PERSPECTIVE ON TERTIARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA



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# PERSPECTIVE ON TERTIARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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## CHAPTER TWO

**PUBLIC UNIVERSITY SYSTEM IN NIGERIA:  
PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS**

By

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**Abstract**

Public universities in Nigeria remain the backbone of the national higher education system, serving as critical centers for manpower development, research, innovation, and community service. Since the establishment of University College Ibadan in 1948 as an affiliate of the University of London, the Nigerian university landscape has evolved through successive generations, shaped by government policies, regional aspirations, and socio-economic realities. Despite significant expansion, the system faces persistent challenges, including inadequate funding, infrastructural decay, lecturer shortages, governance weaknesses, corruption, insecurity, and frequent strike actions. These issues undermine the quality and global competitiveness of Nigerian universities. This chapter examines the historical development, conceptual foundations, types, governance structures, and major challenges confronting public universities in Nigeria. It also explores practical solutions, including enhanced funding strategies, academic autonomy, accountability mechanisms, technology integration, leadership reforms, and stronger security frameworks. By linking problems with corresponding remedies, the chapter argues that revitalizing public universities is central to achieving sustainable development and positioning Nigeria as a knowledge-driven economy in Africa and beyond.

**Keywords:** Public universities, Higher education, Governance, Challenges, Nigeria, Prospects

**Introduction**

Public universities are special universities established by-laws to provide education to the general public at the higher education level. The public university is an organized education that is centered on teaching, research and provision of community service and for the production and training of manpower for national development. Public universities in Nigeria are dated to 1961 when the first public universities were established.

Public universities play a crucial role in our society by providing accessible and affordable higher education for individuals of all backgrounds. These institutions allow students to pursue their academic passions and achieve their career goals without the burden of excessive debt. Additionally, public universities are often centers for research and innovation, driving economic growth and contributing to advancements in various fields. Furthermore, by promoting diversity and inclusion, public universities foster a more inclusive and equitable society.

The purpose of this chapter is to:

1. Trace the historical evolution of public universities in Nigeria.
2. Clarify the key concepts related to their structure and governance.
3. Examine the features and types of public universities in Nigeria.
4. Identify major challenges facing the system.
5. Suggest solutions and prospects for strengthening the system.

This analysis provides both a scholarly contribution and a practical guide for policymakers, administrators, and stakeholders concerned with higher education reform in Nigeria.

### Current Landscape

According to the National Universities Commission (NUC, 2023), Nigeria currently has:

- 63 federal universities
- 63 state universities
- 147 private universities

This expansion reflects both opportunities and challenges. While access has improved, quality assurance, governance, and funding have become more pressing issues.

### Clarification of Concepts

To avoid ambiguity, key terms are clarified:

- **Public University:** A university established, funded, and managed primarily by federal or state governments. It operates under legislative acts and serves public interest.
- **University Autonomy:** The degree of independence granted to universities in financial management, curriculum design, staff recruitment, and internal governance.
- **University Governance:** The structures and processes (Governing Council, Senate, management boards) through which universities are managed and held accountable.

- **Indigenization/Domestication of Principal Officers:** The demand by host communities for the appointment of their indigenes as vice-chancellors or key officers of universities located in their regions.
- **Strike Action:** A collective withdrawal of services by university staff unions (e.g., ASUU, SSANU, NASU) to protest poor funding, conditions of service, or government breach of agreements.

### History of Public Universities in Nigeria

The first public university was established in 1948; the University College Ibadan was founded as an affiliate of the University of London. University College continued as the only University Institution in Nigeria until 1960 (Jubril, 2003). In April 1959, the Nigerian government commissioned an inquiry (Ashby Commission) to advise it on the higher education needs of the new nation for its first two decades of Independence. Before the submission of the report on 2 September 1960, the Eastern Region government established its university at Nsukka. (University of Nigeria Nsukka in 1960). The recommendation of the Ashby Report includes among others:

1. The Federal Government should give support to the development of new Universities in Nigeria, planned in 1955 and open a few weeks before the publication of the Ashby Report in 1960;
2. A university should be established in the north using the old site of the Nigerian college in Zaria as its base;
3. A university should be established in Lagos with day and evening courses in business, commerce and economics;
4. University College Ibadan, should move away from its conservative position, widen its curriculum and develop into a full university;
5. All universities in Nigeria should be national in outlook;
6. There should be wider diversity and greater flexibility in university education;
7. All the universities should have B. A. (Education) degree courses;
8. Courses in engineering, medicine, law, commerce and agriculture should be offered;
9. All new Nigerian universities should be independent of one another and each should confer its degrees;
10. A National Universities Commission should be set up to have undisputed control over the affairs of the universities, particularly in terms of finance, staff and courses.

In the Eastern Region, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka was founded in 1960; in the West, the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife (formerly, the University of Ife came to be in 1961; and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria was established in the North in 1962. In 1962, the University of Lagos was born, while in 1962, the University College Ibadan transformed into a substantive university. This made UCI, Ibadan and the University of Lagos became the first two federal

universities in Nigeria while the other three were regional. In 1970, the newly created Bendel State established a university known as the University of Benin.

The 6 universities established during this period 1960-1970 are referred to as first-generation universities. In 1975, all the six universities mentioned above became federal universities while seven new ones were in existence by 1977 to reflect the nineteen states structure of Nigeria as of 1976. These second-generation universities as they were referred to include the University of Calabar (1975); the University of Ilorin (1976); the University of Jos (1975); the University of Sokoto (1977); the University of Maiduguri (1977); the University of Port Harcourt (1977); and Bayero University Kano (1977). They became federal universities under Decree 46 of 1977 which provided for the Federal Government take-over of all universities in Nigeria.

The 1979 constitution's transfer of university education from the exclusive to the concurrent legislative list meant that state governments were free to establish state-owned universities if they so desired. As a result of this development, between 1979 and 1983, the following universities were founded: Bendel State University, Ekpoma; Anambra State University of Technology, Enugu; Imo State University; Etiti; Ogun State University, Ago-Iwoye; Ondo State University, Ado-Ekiti; Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt; Cross River State University, Uyo; and Lagos State University, Ijanikin. Seven Federal Universities of Technology emerged between 1981 and 1985. These were the Federal Universities of Technology Bauchi (1982 / 1982); Markurdi (1981 / 1982); Owerri (1981 / 1982); Yola (1982 / 1983); Akure (1982 / 1983); Abeokuta (1983 / 1984); Minna (1983 / 1984). The Federal University of Technology, Yola, became an outpost of the University of Maiduguri. The University of Jos absorbed the Federal University of Technology, Makurdi as the outpost of the former, while the Federal University of Technology, Abeokuta became a campus of the University of Lagos (Okon, 2006).

Following the dawn of the third republic (from May 29, 1999, till date), there has been an increase in university establishment across the nation. The fourth-generation universities are those established between 1991 to date. They included more state universities, National Open Universities and private universities. Students' numbers are in scores of thousands. As for Polytechnics and Colleges of Education, they are in excess in number respectively as captured by (NOUN 2012).

### **Meaning of Public University System**

Public universities in Nigeria are universities owned by the government. Public universities are universities owned and managed by the government for the provision of public higher education for the masses in the country. Public universities are universities established by laws and they are saddled with the responsibilities of manpower development and training. The public university is an organized and well-defined corporate institution owned and controlled by the government, but which also has substantive independence in the conduct of its affairs. It is a body that can be used

to improve the economy and develop the manpower of the country. The public university is that form of public institution which is created as an autonomous institution, by a special Act of the Parliament or the State Legislature to provide educational services that cover teaching, researching and provision of community services.

### **Features of public universities in Nigeria**

Public universities' features include;

#### **i. Special Statute**

Public University is created by a special Act of the Parliament or the State Legislature. The Act defines its powers, objectives, functions and relations with the ministry and the Parliament (or State Legislature).

#### **ii. Separate Legal Entity**

A Public University is a separate legal entity with perpetual succession and a common seal. It has an existence, independent of the Government. It can own properly; make contracts and file suits, in its name.

#### **iii. Capital is Provided by the Government**

The capital of a public university is provided by the Government or by agencies controlled by the government. However, many public universities in Nigeria have also begun to raise money to support the subvention received from the government.

#### **iv. Financial Autonomy**

The public university enjoys financial autonomy. It prepares its budget; and has authority to retain and utilize its earnings for its operation.

#### **v. Management by Governing Board:**

Its management is vested in a governing board, appointed by the Government. But there is no Governmental interference in the day-to-day working of universities.

#### **vi. Own Staff**

The public university has its staff; whose appointment, remuneration and service conditions are decided by the governing boards.

#### **vii. Service Motive**

The main objective of a public university is service-motive; though it is expected to the self-supporting and earn reasonably from internally generated revenue.

### viii. Public Accountability:

The public university has to submit its annual report on its work. Its accounts are audited by the Auditor General of the federation. Annual reports and audited accounts of public universities are presented to the Parliament or State Legislatures, which are entitled to discuss these.

#### Types of public universities in Nigeria

Public universities in Nigeria are in two forms. The first is the federal-owned universities and the state-owned universities.

#### Federal Universities

Federal universities are controlled by the federal government. Federal Universities are *Tertiary Education institutions that are run and managed by the Federal Government of Nigeria*. Abu (2022) maintained that Federal Universities are Tertiary Education institutions that are run and managed by the Federal Government of Nigeria. There are 40 federal universities in Nigeria. Federal universities in Nigeria are not as expensive as Private Universities as they are funded by the Federal Government, In terms of Tuition most federal Universities' School fees are Below N100, 000. Federal Universities are larger than private and State universities in terms of Space and student population. They also offer Diploma and More Bachelor Degree courses than Most Private and State Universities. Some Federal Universities are specialized in Agriculture, Science and Technology. Federal Universities have large student bodies, Students from different parts of the country with different backgrounds and religious beliefs are enrolled. This allows intakes to learn the lifestyle, behaviour and values of different people. More or less Students in Federal Universities become street smart and can adapt in almost any part of the country.

In federal universities in Nigeria, most rent apartments close to the university and live off campus. Federal University students inevitably learn how to hustle. This is because there are so many students competing for limited resources such as Classroom space, water etc. The Campus is also pretty large so most times you could have a class ending by 10:00 Am and another class by 10:00 Am in a building that is far and you can't afford to be late. You have to figure out how to get there in time. Examples are *Federal University Oye-Ekiti · Ekiti, FUOYE; Federal University Wukari · Taraba, FUW; Michael Okpara University of Agriculture*.

#### States Universities

State universities are run by the state government. *State University is a university owned by the state and established to provide higher education for its citizens and other nationalities*. Some of the state universities are larger than private and are the second largest universities in terms of Space and student population in Nigeria. They also offer Diploma and More Bachelor Degree courses than Most Private and State Universities. Some States Universities are specialized in Agriculture, Science and Technology. States Universities across Nigeria have large student bodies, Students

from different parts of the country with different backgrounds and religious beliefs are enrolled (Abu 2022). Examples include; *Abia State University*; *Adamawa State University* Mubi, and *Adekunle Ajasin University*.

### **Specialized Universities:**

- Focus on specific disciplines such as technology, agriculture, defense, or distance learning.
- Examples: Federal University of Technology Akure (FUTA), Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Nigerian Defence Academy, and NOUN.

### **Problems hindering the development of public universities in Nigeria**

Many problems are hindering the development of public universities in Nigeria. Some of these problems include; poor funding; shortage of lecturers, inadequate infrastructure facilities, lack of full autonomy, strike actions, corruption, political interferences, indigestion problems, insecurity problems and weak administrators.

#### **Poor funding**

The major issue in educational development is a shortage of funds. The issue of funds is central to every human endeavour because it is the lifeblood of every organization or society (Ayeni, 2017). One of the most serious problems threatening the survival of the educational system is that of dwindling level of public funding in the face of rising demands and hence rising cost of higher education. This shortage of funds affects job performance and the growth of the institution. Higher educational institutions cannot perform optimally without funding. This situation calls for increased funding initiatives from both the government and educational stakeholders to sustain the tempo and growth of the education industry. The inability of the Nigerian government to objectively accept and implement the 26% funding formula for education recommended by UNESCO impact negatively on the performance and sustainability of higher education. On this note, Akinola (1990) was worried about the funding situation and commented thus: “Our higher institution education systems are in dire need of money.....to cater for both their capital and recurrent needs. For a few years past, the budget has been cut back from year to year by the federal government. This cutback has affected both capital and recurrent expenditures. In many higher institutions capital projects embarked upon are few years ago, are yet to be completed due to lack of adequate funds”. Okebukola (2018) concluded that all the 14 universities sampled for the group reported inadequate funding as a critical challenge that militated against the smooth operation of institutional affairs in 2017. Some of the specific funding issues raised are irregular, insufficient and reduced subvention; low generation of Internally Generated Revenue and inability to access funds from TETFund.

### **Shortage of lecturers**

Public universities in Nigeria are also facing the problem of a shortage of lecturers. Lecturers are critical to the development of universities. Lecturers' roles in the realization of the university's goals cannot be underestimated. The lecturers are responsible for the implementation of the curriculum in the universities. They also plan the lecture notes, organize the instructional resources, present the lectures, assess the students, and supervise the students' projects and students' excursions. With all the crucial responsibilities, it is unfortunate that many public universities cannot boast of adequate lecturers in the faculties, departments and colleges. National Universities Commission data as quoted by Punch (2019) indicated that federal universities in Nigeria suffer a shortage of full-time professors and academic staff. 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 per cent; Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, 35.80 per cent; Federal University of Technology, Akure, 27.28 per cent; Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, 27.25 per cent; the University of Abuja, 25.33 per cent; the University of Benin, 23.26 per cent; University of Port Harcourt, 21.26 per cent; the University of Calabar, 21.20 per cent; and the University of Ilorin, 21.12 per cent.

### **Inadequate infrastructure facilities**

Infrastructure facilities refer to resources used to support the implementation of teaching and learning in educational institutions. Infrastructure facilities are very important in the implementation of the curriculum of people with special needs because of their special need's cases. The vital role of infrastructure made it the primary responsibility of the government to provide those amenities that empower (Ayeni, Sani, Idris, & Uzoigwe, 2019). Infrastructure is expected to empower members of the university community when provided. School facilities must be designed to support the movement of people with special needs in the school environs. School toilets, sports centres, libraries, ICT centres and halls must be built to accommodate all forms of disabled people to aid their learning in the schools. It has been observed that most tertiary institutions across Nigeria do not have enough facilities that support education of the people with special needs. Ogunode et al (2023a) noted that many public universities in Nigeria are not having adequate facilities. NOUN (2011) observed that there is an unprecedented infrastructural dilapidation at the national, state, local and institutional levels in Nigeria. It may be difficult to implement any educational policy or plan effectively with the situation on the ground. The school facilities and equipment are in total disrepair at all levels of education. The school buildings are collapsing, the ones still standing are either with leaking roofs or no windows and doors. The reason for the shortage of infrastructure has been explained by scholars who argued that the provision of infrastructure that ought to be provided has been sacrificed for stomach infrastructure that cannot bring about sustainable development (Ayeni, Tusayi, Joseph & Obatayo, 2018). Most

schools have few good chairs and tables left for the use of teachers and ever-increasing enrolment. Many schools have no library, workshop or science laboratory. Students are only exposed to practical classes in the sciences when final examinations are approaching. Many schools are not connected to electricity and water, and even where they do, the services are either epileptic or hardly provided. The shortage of infrastructure facilities in educational institutions in Nigeria hinders the effective implementation of educational policies.

### **Lack of full autonomy**

Another fundamental problem facing public universities in Nigeria is the lack of full autonomy. The public universities enjoy only partial 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, institute et cetera. 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. Aiyedun et al (2021) noted that for Nigerian universities to meet up with the global best practices and be ranked among the best universities worldwide, there must be financial, academic, human resources and administrative autonomy in all aspects of the university's operations known as total or complete autonomy. Autonomy is a principle upon which the higher education system normally operates and through which operational stability and actualization of goals of the higher educational institutions are ensured. When autonomy is enthroned in the right perspective, it then facilitates academic freedom and accountability. The survival of the higher education system is directly proportional to, or to a large extent dependent on the institutionalization of autonomy (NOUN, 2012). Because autonomy is vital for the sustainability of universities, the academic staff union of Nigerian universities have been insisting the Nigerian government give the universities full autonomy.

### **Strike actions**

According to Hornby (2001), a strike is a period when an organized group of employees of a company stops working because of a disagreement over payment or certain conditions. Those that are often involved in these strike actions are described as strikers. Disagreement or conflict is a common phenomenon in any organization owing to the diversity of workforce in an organization; and the difference between individual and organizational goals. Once there is strike action, institutions schools are forced to close down and there will be a temporary stoppage of teaching and learning activities in the concerned institutions. This temporary refusal of lecturers to work will in turn result in developing and redesigning a new academic calendar to make up for the period. Due to this strike action, public university students may not be able to complete their

academic work within the prescribed period as stated in the prospectus. For instance, a 4-year degree programme in the universities may take more than 4 years due to the strike action as it is currently being experienced in the country (Adavbiele, 2015). Strike actions in the Nigerian public universities is another problem facing the administration of public universities in Nigeria. The Nigerian public universities are known for continuous strike actions by different union groups in the public universities. The continuous strike actions by these different union groups are frustrating the administration of public universities in Nigeria. The reasons for the strike actions by different union groups include; underfunding of the public universities, inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor implementation of agreements reached with union groups and poor working conditions. The implications of the continuous strike actions on the public universities include; disruption in the academic programme, poor quality of education, bad image for the universities, poor ranking internationally and poor patronage of public universities in Nigeria (Ogunode, 2020). The challenge of tertiary institutions that often led to strike action has been explained by scholars who argued that the extent of success or failure of any human society or organization has its root in leadership at all levels (Muhammed, & Ayeni, 2018; Ayeni, 2018).

### **Corruption**

Corruption in the public universities in Nigeria is another problem preventing the effective administration of public universities in Nigeria. The high rate of corruption in Nigerian public universities has hindered the effective administration of the universities. This corruption is so prevalent in Nigeria to the extent that it has become a source of in the country (Amaechi, Ayeni, & Madu, 2019). Many public universities are in the present condition because of the corruption in the system. Funds provided for the implementation of the programme, provision of infrastructural facilities, employment of staff and programme development ended up being looted or diverted into private accounts. Punch (2020) submitted that much of the little funds that go into the universities are stolen. In the course of the face-off, the government claimed “The fraud in the universities is amazing and you will be shocked. ICPC did a system check recently, and it was so shocking. The worst two organizations they mentioned are the Teaching Hospitals and our universities.” In 2018, the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project claimed that there were allegations of corruption in several federal universities relating to the unfair allocation of grades; contract inflation; truncation of staff’s salary on the payroll; employment of unqualified staff; certificate scandal; examination malpractice; sexual harassment; and issuance of results for expelled students to graduate.

### **Political interferences**

Another big challenge facing public universities in Nigeria is the political influence. The public universities have been designed to function with political officeholders or politicians in the country. The school administrators of public universities are answerable to the governing council constituted by the government to manage the affairs of the public universities in the country. It has

been observed that one of the major problems hindering the development of university education in Nigeria is the problem of political interference. Political interference in the administration of tertiary institutions is defined as the act of using political power to influence decisions in the management of tertiary institutions (Yawe, 2015). Political interference is the attempt to gain a partisan or regional advantage by influencing policies and decisions in the management of tertiary institutions. Political oversight becomes interference when politicians seek to impose pressures regarding prices, standards, and the like that are outside the procedures (Gonsalves, 2020). Moreover, unchecked political influence has spurred the unplanned proliferation of tertiary institutions, aggravating resource constraints and creating disparities in educational quality (Giner, 2020). This interference also disrupts strategic planning and location decisions for these institutions, hindering long-term educational goals and equitable access to quality education. This interference has been explained by scholars who noted that the ruling elites employed laws and politics to rule Nigeria to their advantage at the detriment of the citizens (Godwin, Ayeni, & Peter, 2021). In essence, political interference poses multifaceted challenges to Nigerian tertiary institutions, necessitating concerted efforts to uphold academic integrity, governance, and strategic development.

### **Domestication of principal officers of public universities problem**

The problem of domestication of principal officers of public universities within the host communities or states is another serious problem hindering the development of public universities in Nigeria. Ogunode and Agyo, (2022) defined the domestication of principal officers of the tertiary institution *or* indigenization of principal officers as a former request by the indigenes of a host community to the government to appoint their sons and daughters into the positions of principal offices of the institutions located in their communities. Domestication of principal officers of the tertiary institution *or* indigenization of principal officers is an agitation by host communities of tertiary institutions to produce the principal officers of the institutions. Ogunode and Agyo, (2022) reported that Tertiary institutions especially universities recently faced the problem of indigenization of principal officers of institutions by the host communities. For instance, the Indigenes of Ife land have appealed to form administration to allow a competent son of the soil to be appointed as the next substantive Vice-Chancellor of Obafemi Awolowo University located in the town. The community urged the University Senate, Governing Council and other stakeholders to consider competent indigenes for the office. Also, in 2020, the Indigenes of Ibadan in Oyo state appealed to President Muhammadu Buhari to appoint one of the four of them vying for the position of Vice Chancellor of the University of Ibadan. They also want an indigene appointed as the next Chief Medical Director (CMD) of the University College Hospital, (UCH) Ibadan. They said they had been marginalized in past appointments to the position. The apex socio-cultural group in Ibadan, Central Council of Ibadan Indigenes (CCII) noted that the University of Ibadan, which was established in 1948, has not had an Ibadan indigene as vice chancellor. UCH has also never had an Ibadan indigene as CMD (Bidemi, 2020).

Moreover, the Indigenes of Jos appealed to the federal government to allow a competent son of the soil to be appointed as the next substantive Vice-Chancellor of the University of Jos located in the town. The community urged the University Senate, Governing Council and other stakeholders to consider competent indigenes for the office. In 2021 when a new vice-chancellor was to be appointed at the University of Jos, Plateau State. Some persons believed that it was unacceptable for a non-indigene of the state to be appointed as the VC, while some argued that merit and competence should take precedence over ethnic or tribal considerations. Eventually, Prof Ishaya Tanko from Kebbi State was named the new VC. In addition, the Prominent Indigenous Lagosians, under the aegis of Omo Eko Pataki, have again called on Governor Babajide Sanwoolu to do what is right and just by appointing a qualified indigene as the next Vice-Chancellor of Lagos State University (LASU), vowing that they would continue to resist with all legal tools those they said tried to manoeuvre in the dark to distort the truth about the situation of things (Badmus, 2021). Ogunode and Agyo, (2022) concluded that the domestication of principal officers of public universities within the host communities or states is a very serious problem facing the Nigerian universities system and which must be corrected because of the implications for the universities.

### **Insecurity problem**

Insecurity is another problem facing the administration of public universities in Nigeria. Nigeria is facing an insecurity challenge and this is affecting the entire educational institutions in the country. Thus, it has been noted that insecurity is a social challenge that demands the involvement of stakeholders like security institutions, political institutions and tertiary institutions (Ogunode, Ayeni, & Olorundare, 2024). The Islamic sect called Boko haram meaning Western education is forbidden is attacking educational institutions in the Northern part of Nigeria and has caused a lot of insecurity in the country. Many public universities located in Northern Nigeria have been victims of continuous attacks. Many students, lecturers and administrators have been killed while others kidnapped. The various attacks on the universities have resulted in school closures leading to unstable academic programmes.

### **Weak administrators**

Leaders in some universities are weak, uncoordinated and lack administrative skills. Some do not have administrative knowledge or skills. According to Taiwo (1980) in Ekaette (2001). A lot of higher education system managers do not possess the charisma or good human relations needed for effective and efficient leadership. As a result of the poor leadership and ineffective style of administration, a lot of programmes or activities are not carried out in such institutions such as the provision of grants for research and publications, staff welfare is neglected, no adequate control of staff and students, no vision for the University. Such leaders also do not have the zeal for supervision and monitoring of institutional activities. This can affect the performance of the system in that, workers can result to a nonchalant attitude toward work and hence no sustainability or continuity of good track records of performance in the system. Nigerian Higher Educational

System needs leaders who can position it to an envying height of success and progress contributing to society's quest for self-reliance Ujomu (2001).

### **Possible solutions to problems militating against public university education in Nigeria**

The possible solutions to the Nigerian public universities' problems include; adequate funding of public universities in Nigeria; employment of lecturers, provision of infrastructure facilities, provision of full autonomy to public universities, implementation of agreements entered into with different unions, deployment of technology to curtail corruption in universities management, provision of adequate insecurity problem and recruitment of competent universities administrators.

**Adequate funding of public universities in Nigeria:** The federal and state governments should ensure adequate funding of public universities to a quantum as recommended by UNESCO. The suggested solution will enable public universities to produce graduates who are employable in the labour market in addition to creating jobs.

**Employment of lecturers:** The federal and state governments should employ adequate lecturers to make the public university deliver on its promises.

**Provision of infrastructure facilities:** The federal and state governments should provide sufficient infrastructure in public universities to empower members of the university community to carry out their day-to-day activities.

**Provision of full autonomy to public universities:** The federal and state governments should provide an enabling environment that grants full autonomy to public universities. The suggested solution will bring an end to disruption in the school calendar of public universities.

**Implementation of agreements entered into with different unions:** The federal and state governments should ensure that they honour every agreement entered into with all unions in the public universities.

**Deployment of technology to curb corruption in university management:** The federal and state governments should make provisions for adequate technology that will curtail corruption in the university system.

**Provision of adequate security problem:** The federal and state governments should work cooperatively to ensure that adequate securities are provided to secure all public universities.

**Recruitment of competent university administrators:** The federal and state governments should ensure that government regulatory agencies like the National University Commission ensure strict compliance with the merit system in various appointments in public universities.

### **Conclusion**

The history of public universities in Nigeria was discussed and the concept of public university in Nigeria. The features of public universities in Nigeria as captured by the administration and management were also critically expatiated and the types of public universities in Nigeria. The chapter also looked at problems hindering the development of public universities in Nigeria which include; poor funding; shortage of lecturers, inadequate infrastructure facilities, lack of full autonomy, strike actions, corruption, political interferences, indigenization of principal officers problems, insecurity problem and weak administrators and concluded by identifying various possible solutions to problems militating against public university education in Nigeria which covers adequate funding of public universities in Nigeria; employment of lecturers, provision of infrastructure facilities, provision of full autonomy to public universities, implementation of the agreement entered into with different unions, deployment of technology to curtail corruption in universities management, provision of adequate insecurity problem and recruitment of competent universities administrators.

Nigeria's public university system has evolved significantly since 1948, expanding from a single colonial-era institution to over 120 federal and state universities today. However, chronic underfunding, poor governance, infrastructural decay, and instability threaten the system's sustainability and relevance. Addressing these problems requires deliberate reforms anchored on autonomy, accountability, innovation, and adequate investment. Public universities remain indispensable to Nigeria's aspiration for sustainable development and global competitiveness. Their revitalization is not optional but an urgent national priority.

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