

**NIGERIA EDUCATION SECTOR ANALYSIS:
AN ANALYTICAL SYNTHESIS OF PERFORMANCE AND
MAIN ISSUES**

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

| | |
|---------|---|
| CBO | Community Based Organization |
| CDLCE | Center for Distance Learning and Continuing Education |
| FCE | Federal College of Education |
| FCE (T) | Federal College of Education (Technical) |
| FGN | Federal Government of Nigeria |
| IIEP | International Institute for Educational Planning |
| JAMB | Joint Admissions Matriculation Board |
| LGA | Local Government Authority |
| LGEA | Local Government Education Authority |
| NABTEB | National Business and Technical Education Board |
| NCE | National Certificate of Education |
| NMEC | National Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education Commission |
| NPE | National Policy on Primary Education |
| NPEC | National Primary Education Commission |
| NSEC | National Secondary Education Commission |
| NBTE | National Board for Technical Education |
| NUC | Nigerian Universities Commission |
| SPEB | State Primary Education Board |
| TC | Teachers Certificate |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |

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NIGERIA EDUCATION SECTOR ANALYSIS: AN ANALYTICAL SYNTHESIS OF PERFORMANCE AND MAIN ISSUES

Teboho Moja

A Introduction

Nigeria is currently anticipating another “independence” following the end of British colonialism in 1962. The country’s populace now looks forward to liberation from a long history of authoritarian and rapacious military regimes that have ruled the country – except for brief intervals of democracy – for most of the intervening four decades. Nigeria’s independence in the 1960s ushered in an opportunity for the transformation of Nigerian society through the development of locally responsive national policies and locally managed development programs. Today, recent political changes again provide Nigeria with the opportunity for a fundamental review of policies and social programs that will prepare the country to meet the challenges of the new century. Nowhere is this more timely than in the education sector.

Over the past decade, Nigeria has been plagued by frequent political unrest. This political instability has generated negative effects on the education system. Although education had been in crisis for many years, the situation has recently been made worse by frequent strikes staged by students, faculty and teachers. Much of the difficulty lies in the fact that the sector is poorly funded. This results in shortages of material and human resources for education: lack of qualified teachers; a brain drain from the public sector; few instructional inputs, shortage of classrooms, and a host of other problems.

These difficulties have been most pronounced at the foundation levels of education. Both primary and secondary school levels have been negatively affected. In 1997 the Federal Minister of Education, following a nation-wide tour of the schools, stated that the basic infrastructure in schools such as classrooms, laboratories, workshops, sporting facilities, equipment, libraries were in a state of total decay. The physical condition of most schools was reported to be pathetic.¹

Nigeria as a reconstituted democracy has to address issues of a dual transformation. The country needs to re-examine its past and focus on development plans that will meet the challenges of the future. The need to work out a new developmental plan puts pressure on the political, social and economic sectors of the country. The new government has declared education as one of its priorities. The goal is to have a reformed system of education that will provide access at all levels of education and to improve the quality and efficiency of the entire education system. While these are lofty goals, the real challenge will lie in the successful implementation of them.

Education has been at the top of the priority lists of some previous Nigerian governments yet the education system is still far from being ready for the challenges of the new century. Nigeria is not the only country whose education system is unprepared. A closer examination of many systems, especially in a developing context, indicate that most of the educational systems in developing countries are not yet ready to prepare students for the contemporary global world. The education needs of an emergent Nigeria are well articulated by Pai Obanya² when he suggests that Nigerian education should be marked by a continuous search for excellence supported by the political will for good governance and transparency.

Nigeria's "National Policy on Education," published in 1977 was revised in 1981 and 1990. The policy document has been revised to ensure that the policies address the perceived needs of the government in power and to try to ensure that the education sector is supportive of government development goals. Following recent political changes, which saw the reintroduction of democracy in the country, the government acknowledged the need to revise and update the National Policy on Education once more to ensure that the education system meets the needs of a new democracy.

The entire education system would benefit from coherent national policy development rather than piecemeal reforms. The revision of educational policies is being considered as a long-term goal, due to other pressing needs. The discussion of new policies would benefit from careful attention to the recommendations made and adopted at international meetings hosted by UNESCO and other donors for the various sectors of education. New policies have to address the needs of a new democracy, its role in the new global order, while reflecting the realities of Nigeria's economy.

The new democratic government has already demonstrated its political will in working to rebuild the Nigerian economy. Education is once more a priority in its broad national development strategy. The work done thus far would benefit greatly from internal and external support by foundations, business, NGOs and international development agencies to ensure that the goals set are realistic, meet the needs of a new democracy and are economically sound. It is quite clear that the challenges the country will face if it is to reform the education system will include financial constraints, the need for new expertise, and a broad range of technical assistance. In addition it must be recognized that funding needs for education compete with a range of other critical needs in health, public safety, and social welfare. This presents enormous challenges for the new government and to the donor community.

Universal primary education has been a stated priority of every Nigerian government since its introduction in the seventies. The actual commitment of the different governments to the scheme, however, has varied substantially. The economic problems encountered have also contributed to the difficulties experienced in its implementation.

Successful implementation will depend on the availability of adequate resources, the sharing of responsibility amongst different levels of government, greater community and

student participation. In recognition of the need for greater participation of the stakeholders in the implementation of the scheme, the previous government passed legislation that spells out the responsibilities of different levels of government and those of various stakeholders. Other initiatives included the re-instatement of the National Primary Education Commission and other management structures from 1993. The objective at that time was to improve the management of the education system. A number of initiatives have also been taken as basic steps to promote increased access to education since 1990.

The new government re-launched the Universal Basic Education Scheme in 1999 as one of its top priorities. The government has also committed itself to implementing international agreements such as the implementation of “education for all by the year 2000,” adopted at the “World Declaration on Education for All” at the Jomtien (Thailand) World Conference in 1990. The funding and management of primary education have also been changed. The functions of the National Primary Education Commission have been restructured to exclude the management of the primary education budget. The new role is more professional in nature and includes planning for the implementation of universal primary education and the need to address issues of quality, equity and access in the system, with emphasis on gender issues.

Other priority areas have been identified through a Nigeria-UNESCO collaboration mission in October 1999. The areas targeted for immediate attention and the estimated costs of the projects have been listed as follows: *

- i) Access to basic education (179,5 million Naira ³)
- ii) Massive reduction of illiteracy as part of a strategy for poverty alleviation (1,6 billion Naira)
- iii) Improvement of quality in higher education (7,050 billion Naira)
- iv) Technical and vocational education (1,1 billion Naira)
- v) Teacher training (11 billion Naira)

The costs given for each area are estimates but indicate the scale of funding – roughly USD 210 million – needed for the anticipated reforms. Long-term goals were identified as: the urgent need to revise the national education policy document, curriculum reform, and improved access to higher education through distance education.

The system of education at all levels has undergone rapid changes and growth within a context of an unstable economy. The education sector continued to expand even though there were substantial economic setbacks. The economic crisis has had a negative impact on the education system and played a major role in the decline of the quality of education offered. New policies have to address, *inter alia*, issues of equity, access, funding, quality and management of the educational system.

* Exchange rate in January 2000: USD1.00 = Naira 98.00

B Education Sector and Selected Aspects of the System

1 Background

The education system is based on the National Policy on Education (NPE) document of 1977 (last revised in 1990). The policy document addresses the issues of imbalance in the provision of education in different parts of the country with regard to access, quality of resources and girls' education. Education is organized into 6 years of primary education, 3 years of junior secondary school, 3 years of senior secondary education and 4 years of university/ polytechnic/ college education.

The Federal Ministry of Education has the responsibility for the coherence of national policy and procedures and for ensuring that the states' policies operate within the parameters of national policy as adapted for local needs. Co-ordination of policy at the political level takes place through the National Council of Education. This is the highest policy making body, chaired by the Federal Minister of Education and includes all the State Commissioners of Education. This body is advised by the Joint Consultative Committee on Education, which consists of all the Federal and State Directors of Education, Chief Executives of education statutory bodies, and Directors of University Institutes of Education. The Director of the Federal Ministry of Education chairs the Committee.

Responsibility for educational institutions is shared between Federal, State, local government, communities and private organizations. The Ministry of Education has the major responsibility for education but other Ministries also play an important role. The Ministry of Information has the responsibility for publicity and awareness of some of the educational policies and programs offered. The Ministry of Women's affairs and Social Welfare together with the State Commission for Women also play a role in promoting the education of women and girls.

The administration of the education system is shared mainly amongst the Federal and State Ministries of Education as well as statutory bodies referred to as Commissions. There are Commissions established for different sub-sectors of the education system and are charged with various responsibilities for the sub-sectors. There is a National Primary Education Commission (NPEC), the National Secondary Education Commission (NSEC), the National Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education Commission (NMEC) and the National Universities Commission (NUC). In addition there are other major role players at local government level, district level and in the immediate environment where the school is located.

The system grew rapidly in the late seventies and early eighties. The growth was mainly in size and not in quality. There have been problems in the implementation of policies for the expansion of the education system that have contributed to their failure to assist in the social and economic development of the country. Lack of capacity for planning and management, limited financial resources, inadequate information systems and monitoring

systems are some of the problems that led to rapid and unplanned growth. More attention had been paid to the expansion of the system due to political pressures than from a concern about the provision of greater access to quality education.

The expansion program has not been matched by a comparable increase in funding, to ensure that the quality of education is maintained. Inadequate funding has had an impact on the organization and management of education at all levels. There is a need for the reconstruction of the infrastructure to ensure quality learning and teaching. Concerns about quality and standards have been raised over and over again. Major stakeholders such as the private sector and the public have lost confidence in the system. The education system is fraught with malpractice in admission practices and administration of examinations, strikes (both staff and students), as well as growing secret cult activities.

Other problems are a result of a complex combination of need for greater access to education on the part of the society and political pressure on politicians to satisfy their constituencies, in return for continued political support. As a result, political decisions were taken in a number of areas including staff and administration appointments, as well as revision of admission policies. For example, merit as an admission criterion has been lowered to 12 percent of the new intakes into the Federal secondary schools and 40 percent for the Federal higher education institutions. Emphasis has been put on other criteria, such as set quotas for numbers of students admitted from the States into Federal institutions, quotas for students from the defined feeder zones and some discretion by administrators. Admission malpractice includes bribery, corruption, and nepotism in favor of less qualified candidates. This has led to growing mediocrity as politics began to play more of a role than concerns about high quality academic standards. Examinations that determine access to the next level of education are fraught with cheating which has become embedded in many parts of the system. The introduction of special tribunals for speedy trials and stiff penalties has not stopped a practice that is deeply engraved in the system.

Government initiatives to reform the education system in the 1990s included the revision of the National Policy on Education document and two studies of the education sector. The first study “A Situation Analysis Policy Study” (SAPA) was conducted in cooperation with the United Nation Children’s Education Fund (UNICEF). The study was undertaken to analyze the factors that inhibit access to education and factors that affect the quality of education. This study was conducted between 1991 and 1992. The second study was conducted in 1997 for the purpose of assessing learning achievements of Nigerian primary school children at level four. The results of this study indicated that the children lacked basic numeracy and literacy competencies⁴.

Another initiative by the government during this period was the introduction of a free and compulsory nine-year schooling program in 1992. It covered primary education and junior secondary education. The main objective of the program was to ensure that there was a smooth transition from primary education to junior secondary school. It also aimed at ensuring that learners remain in school long enough to acquire basic and life skills.

2 Funding Issues

The 1970's were the period of the oil boom in Nigeria. The economy expanded and with it came rapid growth and development of the education sector. By the 1980s, in contrast, major economic problems were encountered following the decline in revenue from petroleum products. The decline in the real gross domestic product in the 1980's and 1990's was estimated to be 6%. By 1994, the central bank of Nigeria reported that the money supply, particularly by way of deficit financing, had increased tremendously in a period of ten years. By 1995 the value of the Naira had fallen from a US\$ ratio of 1:1 in 1985 to one of 85:1. For budget purposes the rate used at present is N100: US\$1. The rate of inflation remained high and this had a negative impact on the education sector as well. Funding responsibilities during the crisis were transferred from one level of government to another, as well as to families, to help subsidize education through fee payments at secondary school and in higher education.

The total expenditure on education as a percentage of the GNP has dropped from 1.4 percent in 1990 to 0.9 percent in 1995. According to 1995 data, the total education budget represent on average 11.5 percent of total government expenditure. The education share of the budget dropped in 1991 and 1992 but remained stable in the range of 12 to 14.5 of the total Federal budget for a number of years. Table 1 indicates the percentage allocations of the total budget for the mid-nineties. The education budget remain a huge share of the annual budget but it is still not sufficient to address existing problems as well as cater for new needs. The implications are that new sources of funding should be sought while government also increases its share of the cost units per pupil.

Table 1: Education Budget as Percentage of Total Budget

| Year | Total Budget (Billion N) | Total for Education | Percentage of Total (allocation to education) |
|------|-----------------------------|---------------------|---|
| 1994 | 69.30 | 10.30 | 14.87 |
| 1995 | 111.45 | 12.70 | 11.42 |
| 1996 | 127.47 | 15.35 | 12.33 |

Source: International Bureau for Education. World Data on Education, 3rd edition, 1999.

During the oil crisis in the eighties, the administration and funding of the universal primary education scheme was decentralized. The rich states managed to maintain it while it collapsed in the poor states. At college and university levels, the changes included the termination of the student teachers bursary awards and subsidized feeding for students in higher education institutions.

A cost-saving mechanism used in higher education was that of establishing state-owned universities that were financed in part from tuition fees. The fees charged are relatively low in comparison to other countries where higher education is not free. Some of the

Federal universities were merged, resulting in staff retrenchments and reductions in enrolments. In the late 1980's the succeeding government separated the institutions that were merged by the previous government. They also did away with fee increments as part of the political agenda to mobilize public support.

Recent initiatives have been taken by the government in the funding of education. The FGN/ODA Nigeria Community Education Program introduced in 1996 is aimed at addressing the needs of rural communities in three States of the Federation, namely, Abia, Bauchi, and Akwa-Ibom and to meet the needs of the nomadic communities in the North Eastern part of the country. The objectives of these initiatives are to increase equality and access for women and girls in the targeted communities. Other initiatives are in the restructuring of education funding arrangements.

The funding formula was also revised by the previous government in 1994 so that the states would share 50% equally, educationally disadvantaged states 25%, pupil enrollment 25%, and population of the states 10%. In August 1999 the new government abolished the National Primary Education Fund (NPEF) and reconstituted it under another name (the National Primary Education Commission). This action was taken in recognition of the states' and local governments' constitutional responsibility for financing and managing primary education.

Alternative sources of funding education have been explored. In 1995 the government established the Education Tax Fund in which companies with more than 100 employees contribute 2% of their pre-tax earnings to the Fund. Primary education receives 40% of these funds, secondary education receives 10%, and higher education receives 50%. Primary education has in the past also received funds from the Petroleum Trust Fund for capital expenditure and provision of instructional materials. The Fund is currently defunct. Additional funds for primary education are allocated through the National Commission for Nomadic Education.

3 Primary Education and Universal Basic Education

The National Policy on Education made recommendations for a system of education that segmented the system into 6 years of primary education. The six years of primary education are part of the 6-3-3-4 system described earlier. The system was designed to allow an exit point after nine years of schooling to continue careers through apprenticeships or other vocational training programs.

The objectives for primary education put emphasis on a balance between physical and intellectual development. The objectives are stated as follows:

- ~~✍~~ To widen access to basic education.
- ~~✍~~ To eliminate present inequalities in enrollment and between urban and rural.
- ~~✍~~ To ensure greater retention.
- ~~✍~~ To ensure long-term permanent literacy for those children who had completed the program.

The primary school certificate examination has been abolished in preference for continuous assessment. The completion rates are generally very low. The recorded average completion rates are 62% for girls and 59% for boys. The average completion rate at the end of primary education as a percentage of enrollments in grade 1 are on average reported to be 55%, with a transition rate of 50.3% to secondary school.

It is estimated that about 80% of the primary schools are located in the rural areas. Schools are subsidized through additional funds contributed by communities to their local schools through Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA's), Schools, Councils, and Community-based Organizations. These funds are used for infrastructure construction, maintenance, and supply of basic equipment.

The infrastructure and facilities remain inadequate for coping with a system that is growing at a rapid pace. The school environment is therefore generally not conducive to learning due to the physical condition of most schools and lack of teaching and learning resources. The annual population growth rate, estimated at 3.3 percent, contributes to the problem of the large numbers of children who have to be accommodated in schools.

The financial crisis left existing facilities inadequately maintained and has retarded progress in building new facilities. Table 2 shows how the building of classrooms has not kept up with the increased enrollments. The National Policy on Education prescribes that the teacher-pupil ratio should be 1:40. The classrooms are overcrowded and in some instances schools have operated with teacher-pupil ratios of 1:76. The national teacher-pupil ratio reported in 1995 was 1:41. A program for classroom building, to support the implementation of a scheme for universal primary education was either never developed or if it was, it was not successfully implemented. The estimated enrollment figures for the 1994/95 school year were estimated to be 16,191 thousands school children, with an annual growth rate of 2.0 percent.

TABLE 2: Classrooms and Enrollments in Nigerian Primary Schools

| Year | Classrooms | Enrollments |
|-------------|------------|-------------|
| 1989 – 1990 | 375,726 | 12,721,087 |
| 1991 – 1992 | 377,439 | 13,776,854 |
| 1993 – 1994 | 447,859 | 15, 870,280 |

Source: Educational Data Bank, Federal Republic of Nigeria (1995)⁵

Due to shortages of classroom space, classes are offered in the open air and are subjected to all problems associated with outdoor teaching such as weather fluctuations leading to class cancellations and lack of quality instruction. Another solution used to address the problem of classroom shortages is the use of a platoon system. Double sessions get scheduled from 07h00 in the morning until 18h00 in the evening using the same teachers.

In other instances, as many as four classes are accommodated in one classroom that is already overcrowded and is in a poor state of repair.

The NPEC survey in 1995 estimated that 18 billion Naira are needed for the building of new classrooms and 82 billion Naira for the renovation of dilapidated structures. It is presently estimated that the figure could be triple the 1995 figure due to high inflation rates. To understand the scale of the problem, another survey might be necessary as part of the process for developing a plan for the implementation of universal primary education.

The quality of education offered is affected by poor attendance resulting in low retention rates. The physical facilities are in poor condition and the teachers are not adequately prepared for their roles. The morale amongst teachers is low due to the basic conditions of service such as the work environment, and low salaries. Even then, salaries in the past had not been paid out on a regular basis.

Teachers are generally dissatisfied with their basic conditions of employment and their working conditions. This has resulted in low moral and low esteem of the profession. The situation has improved slightly following the transfer of management of Federal allocations for primary school teachers' salaries and operational costs of schools to the National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) and the State Primary Education Boards (SPEB's).

It is worth noting that there has been an improvement in the supply of qualified teachers to the primary schools. The number of teachers with the National Certificate of Education increased to 31% between the period 1960 and 1996. During the same period, the percentage of untrained teachers dropped to 21%. Teachers with "teacher certificate level 2" remain the highest in numbers and make up about 48% of the teaching staff.

The gender disparity patterns differ regionally, with the Northern Zones teaching staff being about 72% male but only 37% male in the Southern Zones. National averages are 54.1% male teachers and 45.9% female teachers. These gender disparities are also reflected in the enrollment patterns between boys and girls.

The re-launch of Universal Basic Education in 1999 is aimed at providing free universal basic education for all, to enable all citizens to acquire appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, communicative, manipulative and life skills. The intention is to provide nine years of compulsory education that would span primary and secondary levels. Access to basic education as a national priority includes literacy and adult education, science and vocational training.

To implement the scheme, government has established two committees as part of its strategy to ensure that the goal is achieved. The Coordinating Committee and the Technical Committee are to be headed by the Vice President and the Minister of Education respectively. The plans include public information and community mobilization, provision of resources and the setting up of mechanisms to facilitate implementation of the programs.

Another major role player is the National Primary Education Commission. This commission was established in 1988, abolished in 1991, and re-established by decree No. 96 of 1993. The Commission has been unable to meet the demands of implementing Universal Basic Education Scheme due to the limited financial resources at their disposal. Two major programs have been identified and prioritized for implementation by the Commission's Special Projects Unit. The first is a short-term project – the “Catchment Area Based Planning Management and Monitoring of Primary Schools Project.” The objective is to build capacity and empower people at the community level to initiate projects that would contribute to the improvement of the quality of primary education and to ensure access of all school age children to the schools. It is hoped that the objective would be realized within 2 to 3 years. The implementation plan includes 3-day intensive workshops targeting 774 community leaders (i.e., 1 person per Local Government Authority) and they are to be conducted in the 10 zones demarcated by the Commission.

The second project – “Development of Skills Acquisition Centers in the Primary School,” is a long-term project. The primary objective is to encourage the acquisition of craft production skills and a culture of entrepreneurship amongst the primary school children, in a schooling environment that is more interesting and functional. It is hoped that acquisition of such skill in the early stages of development will address other social issues such as street begging, child street hawking, child prostitution, and early marriage, child labor and child abuse. Implementation strategies include regional workshops.

To successfully implement the Universal Basic Education Scheme, there is need to develop sound implementation plans. This would have to be preceded by a survey of the existing resources and capacity of the national and local planning structures to implement the plan and monitor progress made in order to detect problem areas and address them at an early stage.

Strategic planning and implementation are essential to the success of the nine-year program and for capacity building in the system as well as for its implementation. Failures in the past cannot be blamed entirely on low levels of funding but also on lack of capacity for planning and implementation at both national and local levels. National structures such as the Planning Division of the Federal Ministry of Education would need to be strengthened to ensure that there is capacity in those structures to monitor the implementation plan as well as to provide assistance to the local structures.

3.1 Planning and Management

Different levels of government and community organizations share the responsibility for primary education. The State Primary Education Board (SPEB) and Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) were establishment in 1993. They have been charged with the responsibility for the management and funding allocations in the primary school sub-sector. The Local Government Councils appoint Education Secretaries who then report directly to the SPEBs. These arrangements have resulted in general conflicting pressures on the Education Secretaries due to the different roles played by the SPEB's and the Local Government Councils (LGC's). There are also areas of overlap in the functions of different levels of management which need to be addressed.

The framework provided by the National Development Plan guides education plans. The responsibility for data collection and planning is shared between the Federal and State planning units as well as the NPEC. The planning capacity is weak and this has led to delays in the processing of data and the production of reports. Late in 1999, the NPEC had not completed processing the data for 1997. Data collection and processing at the Federal level has also been very poor.

Significant changes and improvements have taken place since the re-instatement of the NPEC in 1993. Teachers' salaries have been paid out generally on time and their overall conditions of service have been somewhat improved. These changes have raised the morale of teachers from its very low point. Previously, the education system had suffered from problems of high turn-over and difficulties in recruitment and retention. These improvements in the stability of teacher assignments have, to some extent, contributed to improved enrollment figures and better retention rates of pupils.

Another notable change has been the effort to update the curriculum even though the teaching and learning materials were inadequate to support it. A national committee for the improvement of the curriculum was also established and has started to function.

Democratization of school governance structures can often create new problems even as it solves others. Conflicts may emerge when the roles of stakeholder representatives are not clear, or when stakeholder representatives not adequately trained and supported to play their new roles effectively. In addition, there are no clear legislative guides to describe the roles of new decentralized governance structures. The PTA's, School Committees and CBOs have been reported to operate and act on an ad-hoc basis. Their activities are therefore characterized by a general lack of transparency and by low expectations for accountability.

Changes in management structures within the education system have helped to halt the negative trends relating to timely payment of teachers salaries, provision of basic equipment, maintenance of school buildings and the supply of instructional materials. This has led to some restoration of public confidence in the public school system and to associated gains in school enrollments. However, much remains to be done in this area.

3.2 Funding

Federal and State governments, LGAs, PTAs, NGOs, and local communities provide funding for education at the primary school level. The government has primary responsibility for education but the funding levels are very low. Funding allocations from the Federal Government have remained unchanged, despite the high rise of annual per pupil costs. For example, the costs rose from Naira 891 in 1995 to 1030.40 in 1996 but the allocation from Federal government stayed at Naira 50 per pupil. Expenditure by parents ranges between 1000 Naira and 2400 Naira per pupil per year for various costs such as LGA levies, registration costs, stationery etc.⁶

The total public funds allocated to primary education have been halved in the period between 1994 and 1996. State allocations in the same period decreased. In 1996 there was no allocation by the Federal government.

There is high reliance on Federal Government allocations because the capacity for local governments to collect revenue is small. Local government revenues are sometimes as low as 10 percent of the required funding. It is estimated that budget allocations for primary education recently represented about 1.2 percent of the GDP. In 1990 it was 1.5 percent.

There are differentiated funding allocations based on the formula used for the poor and the rich states as part of addressing inequities amongst the states. Funding allocations are based on a formula that was revised in 1994.

Personnel costs remain high, leaving little or no funds for other expenses such as instructional materials. There are disparities between rural and urban areas in terms of expenditure. On average the personnel costs in rural areas are as high as 99 percent of the budget allocations. In the urban areas there seems to be slightly more funds in the budget for minor expenses. Local communities contribute supplemental funds and there is also a disparity between contributions made by urban and rural communities. In some instances SPEBs are reported to have taken over some of the responsibilities assigned to the LGEAs and the accompanying budgets. The management problems experienced at school level are as follows:

1. Inadequate book-keeping and records;
2. Shortage of support and administrative staff;
3. Inadequate budget control mechanisms.

To improve the management of school budgets, the administration must become more goal-oriented. In addition, there is a need to establish transparent and democratic funding mechanisms with increased accountability. This would entail the use of generally acceptable accounting procedures by school administrators.

3.3 Quality

The overall responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Education is to ensure quality within the system, to encourage and initiate innovations, and to ensure that the schools maintain minimum standards of acceptable educational practice.

The public perception is that the quality of education offered is low and that standards have dropped. These perceptions are based on lack of adherence to acceptable educational practice. Teacher qualifications are low. The learning environment does not promote effective learning. Basic facilities, teaching and learning resources are generally not available. Teacher-pupil ratios are high. General performance in examinations is poor and the graduates have low levels of competencies in the work environment.

A detailed survey commissioned by the Federal Government of Nigeria in partnership with UNICEF and UNESCO in 1997 also confirmed that the quality of education offered at the primary school level was low.⁷ Three competencies were measured, namely, literacy, numeracy and life skills. The level of numeracy competence was found to be generally low and performance in literacy was the worst amongst the three competencies measured. The pupils performed better in life skills learnt through the curriculum as well as those that were acquired outside the school environment.

Teacher qualifications also impact directly on quality. There are attempts to improve the level of qualification amongst teachers. The Grade II qualification (post secondary school teacher training certificate) is gradually being phased out as a minimum requirement for teaching. The numbers of teachers with NCE (post-school teacher training certificate) has increased and the country seems to be moving towards achieving a goal of having the NCE as a minimum qualification for teaching in the primary schools.

There are few ongoing staff development programs that seem to be effective. The inspectorate system has not included staff development as part of its activities. The teacher education programs at pre-service levels have been criticized for being too theoretical and for their lack of a sound practical base needed for good classroom practice.

3.4 Access and Equity

The participation rates of children aged between 6 and 11 years in 1994 were estimated to be 63.5% of that age group.* In 1999 it was estimated that there were 19.5 million primary school age children in Nigeria. Of the total numbers estimated, 15.7 million were reported to be in school and the remaining 3.8 million were on the streets.

There are regional disparities between the Southern and Northern zones with regard to enrollments. The enrollments were as high as 95% in Southern zones and as low as 19.91% in the Northern zones. There is need for research on problems pertaining to specific zone areas, such as attendance fluctuations due to seasonal variations, and for suitable strategies to overcome them.

Gender disparities exist and are also similar to the general patterns for enrollment in different regions. Female enrollments are low in the North. In the Southern zones, female enrollments are higher than male enrollments in the Southeast and on par with male enrollments in the Southwest.

There are disparities between rural and urban environments in enrollment and performance patterns. There are higher attendance rates and more overcrowding of classes due to space shortages in the urban areas than in the rural areas. The learning assessment study also indicated different levels of achievements between boys and girls, rural and urban schools, and between States.

* Due to poor national demographic statistics, this estimate is probably not accurate.

The average dropout rate at the primary school level between the period 1986 and 1992 was estimated to be 43.2%. A further analysis of the data indicates that more girls drop out of school than boys. The Situation and Policy Analysis (SAPA, 1992) survey estimated the wastage rate in primary schools through dropout to be 17%.

Equity issues cut across many aspects of the education system. There are major equity issues to be address relating to access, quality and funding.

3.5 Curriculum Transformation

The curriculum is centrally determined. It is based on the NPE guidelines of 1981 and tends to be outdated in outlook. There is need for curriculum transformation in order to take into consideration the changes that are taking place in the nation as well as in the world.

The transformed curriculum will have to be responsive to new needs in society and be updated to include new knowledge. Social issues, such as those pertaining to HIV/AIDS and to the introduction of new technologies, need to be addressed in appropriate ways as part of curriculum change.

Curriculum transformation will have to take into consideration the availability of teaching and learning resources as well as the support facilities such as libraries, laboratories and computer facilities.

3.6 World Bank Role

The World Bank has been the only major development agency during the 1990's to support the primary education sector in Nigeria. It focused its role in supporting the implementation of the universal primary education. The Bank provided assistance in the form of a credit to support the Primary Education Project that was implemented in two phases. The project was aimed at upgrading and monitoring quality in primary education, improve planning and research capacities, and contribute to the improvement of resource allocations. The first phase was more of a consolidation phase that provided support for planning UPE. The second phase was more focused and concentrated upon a limited number of schools throughout Nigeria. Five main issues were addressed: human resource capacity, access and equity, quality, and information for decision-making. These choices were strategic and based upon the experience gained in the first phase, such as the capacity within the country, the cost of interventions, the need to make an early and visible impact, and the contribution that could be made by all levels of government and local communities.

There seems to have been some improvement in the implementation of the UPE since the Bank got involved and as a result of the restructuring of NPEC. The progress made could be attributed to the changes in the Bank's approach to the implementation of the project. The Bank's approach to the implementation of the project was more participatory and

encouraged ownership by the stakeholders. These changes created an opportunity for the government to be informed in advance of the amount of money required for the following fiscal year. The value of the project over the last ten years lies in the valuable experiences and lessons learnt for future operations. The World Bank Report sees these outputs as important in informing future UPE planning.

4 Literacy and Community Education

The Federal Ministry of Education and the States have responsibility for literacy and community education. The new government has included literacy and community education on its priority list as part of a development strategy for poverty alleviation. Other role players are non-governmental organizations, governmental organizations at other levels, the formal education sector and international agencies.

The establishment of the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in 1990 was part of a national drive to eliminate illiteracy in Nigeria. The Commission is charged with the responsibility to develop strategies for the eradication of illiteracy, to coordinate programs for the implementation of a National Mass Literacy Campaign, to monitor and promote literacy and post literacy programs, to organize in-service training for staff, and to develop and disseminate teaching materials.

At the inception of the Commission the national literacy rate was 51% with 39% for women and 62% for men. In 1995 the literacy rate was estimated to be about 56.1%. The functional literacy for women had risen to 47% and that for men to 67%. However, a survey on women's education conducted by the Federal Government of Nigeria and UNICEF in 1993 indicates a drop in the average rate of literacy to 27% from 29% in 1992. The survey revealed a high dropout rate (86%) at women's education centers. The situation has thus deteriorated over one year.

The National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education submitted a proposal for UNESCO's assistance. The submission requested an increase over its existing funding to realize its objectives of making 150,000 learners per state per year functionally literate. The goal is to raise the literacy rate to 67% (estimated to be at the rate of 5.55 million people per year) within four years at a total cost of US\$31 million. A large proportion of the assistance needed is for training purposes. The delivery strategies in the submission are for basic literacy, functional literacy that will include skill acquisition and distance education for further education. The illiterate classification includes groups such as the Girl Child and Adolescent Girl, Adult Illiterates, Out of School Children and Youth, Nomadic Communities, Children on the Street, and School Dropouts.

Within two years of establishing the Commission, 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory set up autonomous government agencies and increased the provision of non-formal education to address the problem of illiteracy and continuing education. The result has been a need to increase funding to cover the costs for additional personnel in the

field. The program includes basic literacy, post literacy, woman education, nomadic education, continuing education, Arabic integrated literacy (Ajami), literacy for the blind, “Each One Teach One” (EOTO), worker education, functional literacy, vocational education and literacy for the disabled. The non-formal system is flexible, allowing for exit and re-entry points as well as movement between the formal and non-formal sector.⁸

The Commission has succeeded in creating awareness through its sensitization and mobilization workshops at the national, state and local government levels. The 1995 data collected from about 50% of the states indicated that the total enrollment in the UNDP assisted mass literacy classes was 678,407, of whom 386,599 (57%) were females and 291,808 (43%) were males. It further indicated that a total of 15,505 instructors were trained across the nation, of whom 8,140 (52.50%) were males and 7,365 (47.50%) were females. Moreover, a total of 1,495 supervisors and organizers were trained, of whom 815 (45.52%) were females and 680 (45.48%) were males.⁹

A National Center for Adult Education, established in Kano in 1985, and three institutes, established in Uyo (1952), Maiduguri (1976) and Bauchi (1978) are part of the resources available for literacy education. The Center serves as a national non-formal education library, documentation and resources development and production center. The institutes offer training courses for mass literacy personnel. In-service training for the staff involved at state agencies for mass literacy and NGO literacy programs is conducted at the Center. In addition the Center carries out research on adult education and develops institutional and follow-up materials for nation-wide distribution.

There is a network of literacy committees, organized by the National Commission for Mass Education (NMEC), in conjunction with the state agencies. Participatory committees have been set up (at class/center, village/ward, local and state government levels) to coordinate activities and aid material distribution; disseminate information; and provide feedback to the agencies¹⁰.

Learning centers have been established for the different categories of illiterates, such as:

- a) Centers for adult nomads and migrant fishermen which offer literacy programs for them and their children, because they have been found not to make maximum use of the mobile school provided for them.
- b) The functional literacy centers for adult women have been established nationwide by the Federal, State and Local Governments, NGOs and philanthropic individuals. A survey conducted in 1995 indicated that there are 720 women's functional literacy centers all over the country with a total enrollment figure of 157,554 learners.
- c) Special schools for girls' literacy have been established with the goal of using the programs as a bridge into formal schooling and as a strategy to increase girls' access to education.
- d) The educational needs of street children and other under-served children have attracted increasing attention from governmental organizations. As of 1995, the number of such children in Lagos was estimated to be at least 10,000. A study of street children in Lagos made the following recommendations:

- ?? the setting up of drop-in educational and vocational centers by education authorities and concerned NGOs;
- ?? an increase in the funding and expansion of non-formal remedial vocational continuing education programs which should be flexible and varied to meet the street children's needs and permit a wide choice of options for those with aptitude;
- ?? the training of education and welfare workers in the right methods of approach to street children.

There is need to integrate elements of basic education into Koranic schools that have been offering informal education in the country for generations. The process has already started in at least three states (Kano, Katsina and Niger) and provides access to over two million pupils.

Other educational outreach activities are being established. Community-based programs are offered through community-based rural markets, daily urban market centers, and community-based women's cooperative society centers and by some mosques and churches. A home and community-based informal low-cost participation initiative is used in the delivery of non-formal education at the pre-primary and primary level. There are plans to collaborate with the British Overseas Development administration (ODA) on a community-based program at the primary level¹¹. The need in this sub-sector is for the development of programs in areas such as health, civics and life enhancing skills as part of the programs that are offered in the literacy and community education centers, to compliment the work done through literacy development.

5 Secondary Education

The Federal Government funds 66 secondary schools and the rest are funded by the State governments. The administration, management and funding of the schools are shared between the State Ministries of Education, the National Secondary Education Commission and other agencies as prescribed in the legislation.

Education at this level is supposed to be offered free of tuition although students are expected to pay levies as a contribution to the costs of running the schools. Secondary education is divided into three years of junior secondary and three years of senior secondary school. The education that is offered at this level has two purposes. The one purpose is to prepare pupils to exit school with the necessary skills to find employment, and the other is to prepare them to continue with academic careers in higher education.

The students are channeled through placements into specific programs after the completion of junior secondary education. The options are senior secondary schools, technical colleges, vocational training centers, or apprenticeship schemes. Placement into different streams is determined by the results obtained from the continuous assessment processes and tests that are supposed to determine academic ability, aptitude and vocational interest. In addition to individual results, a formula aiming at achieving

60% for senior secondary schools, 20% for technical colleges, 10% for vocational training centers, and 10% for apprenticeship schemes is used.

The approach adopted for the curriculum has been an integrated curriculum as opposed to emphasis on single subjects. The Comparative Study and Adaptation Center in 1984 and the Federal Ministry of Education in 1985 provided guidelines for this integrated approach. Implementation of the curriculum, however, indicates that the teachers as implementers never understood the underlying approach. Teachers continued to teach the way they themselves were taught. The failure in implementation was due lack of support through rigorous re-training of teachers and continued support during implementation.

Secondary education as a sub-sector also grew rapidly, especially in the seventies. There was increased demand for places in the secondary schools following the introduction of the universal primary education scheme. A quota system for admission into the Federally controlled secondary schools, based on merit, feeder zone and discretion, was introduced due to shortages of space in the schools. The estimated enrollments in 1994 for secondary schools were reported to be 4.4 million, with an expected annual growth rate of 10.4 %.

Inadequate planning and funding as well as the inadequacies of the monitoring processes for the implementation of national policy on education contributed to a lack of classroom space in the sub-sector. Table 3 indicates that expansion of the system has not happened in parallel with the expansion of the infrastructure needed to support it. The national average for teacher-pupil ratio at secondary level was estimated at 1:29 in 1994. It can be safely assumed that the range in the figures would be substantial between rural and urban areas resembling the patterns at the primary school level, with higher ratios in rural areas. There were no data available on the retention rates in junior secondary education. The transition rate from junior to senior secondary schools was estimated at 96%. That from senior secondary to higher education was estimated to be about 66% for the 1992/93 academic year.

TABLE 3: Classrooms and Enrollments in Nigerian Secondary Schools

| Year | Classrooms | Enrollments |
|-------------|------------|-------------|
| 1989 – 1990 | 76,819 | 2,749,528 |
| 1991 – 1992 | 82,930 | 3,123,277 |
| 1993 - 1994 | 104,693 | 4,032,083 |

Source: Educational Data Bank, Federal Republic of Nigeria (1995)¹²

Many problems have been encountered in the implementation of the national policy as laid out in the National Policy on Education. For example, it was originally planned that junior secondary schools would be free, but so far none of the States in the Federation have been able to accomplish this. Another example is that of the transition from primary to junior secondary school that was also originally planned to be automatic but was never implemented. As a result of increased demand, in the context of limited spaces, many states opted to introduce competitive entrance exams to select candidates for admission to junior secondary schools.

5.1 Vocational and Technical Education at Junior Secondary Schools

One of the objectives in splitting secondary education into junior and senior secondary education was to create an exit point after completing junior education. The implementation of the terminal objective plan at the end of junior secondary has been problematic.

Prior to 1982 the Nigerian secondary education system prepared students for basic white-collar jobs and consisted of little more than basic numeracy and literacy education modeled on the British system of education. A scarcity of jobs led to high unemployment and a high failure rate that proved to be expensive for the state. It was for this reason that a new structure for the education system at this level was introduced.

New policies contained in the National Policy on Education proposed a system of education that would be cost-effective while simultaneously making students more marketable by equipping them with skills for a wide range of employment opportunities. The revised system placed emphasis on terminal objectives aimed at providing practical skills for those students who were judged to lack the ability to continue with an academic career in a higher education institution.

The implementation of the terminal objective became problematic due to the need to achieve uniformity in test administration, lack of capacity for planning and management, and lack of the necessary resources. An assessment study conducted in 1997 in Oyo State, evaluated the success of the implementation of the terminal objective.¹³ This study indicates that failure was mainly due to staff shortages, the inability to keep records for continuous assessment, failure to provide career guidance to students. The system in general faced problems of shortages of teachers, in particular teachers with qualifications and experience to teach pre-vocational subjects.

Problems were experienced due to shortages of teaching and learning resources needed for meaningful education to take place. For example, schools did not have workshops for the practical subjects and those that had them were not adequately equipped and thus not functional. In the sample used for Oyo State, over 50% of the schools had not even installed equipment provided by the government in 1987 due to lack of expertise, inadequate basic facilities such as space, and lack of amenities such as electricity. There were disparities similar to those experienced in other areas of education with regard to urban and rural schools, between boys and girls, and in the transition from junior secondary school to senior secondary schools, that favored boys.

Continuous assessment also proved to be a problem due to variations by schools in its implementation. There were differences in the quality of tests and other instruments used as well as differences in scoring and grading of various assessment instruments. The variations were a result of the failure of government to provide common instruments for assessment. Government intervention, late in the implementation process, to address the problem of continuous assessment and to provide common standards for assessment was not successful.

Disparities exist in the distribution of qualified guidance counselors between urban and rural schools. The quality of service provided by guidance counselors is also questionable due to work overload. Many also have teaching responsibilities that limit the amount of time available for counseling services. The problem is compounded by lack of offices for the counselors which would provide privacy during counseling sessions.

The National Board for Technical Education (1994) adopted an integrated approach to vocational and technical education. The underlying philosophy was based on the belief that a broad introduction to vocational and technical education was better than the compartmentalized single subject approach. But teachers never understood the integrated approach to teaching pre-vocational subjects and there was no support mechanism to assist them in the implementation of the transition from single subject approach to the composite teaching approach.

Overall the implementation of the terminal objective has not been successful. Some of the hindrances to success have been due to: lack of support by the schools, policies that required the implementation of a quota system, and the feeling of some teachers that the system was not based on systematic logic. The quota requires that 10% of the students be channeled into vocational and technical education.

Public perceptions on the status of blue-collar jobs also created problems. Parents and students were not keen on blue-collar careers in a society in which social advancement depended much more on academic careers.

Lastly, state governments facing a shortage of resources were not keen on running expensive technical education programs. As a result, more students were encouraged to opt for less expensive academic programs.

5.2 Business Studies at Junior Secondary School Level

A business studies program was introduced in 1982 into the Nigerian secondary school curriculum in order to address the countries economic and technological deficiencies. The objectives were to create an opportunity for students to have a broad understanding of business activities, their functions, interrelationships between business organizations, and to provide students with skills for processing information.

The approach adopted was similar to the approach adopted for the prevocational and technical studies, i.e. the integrated approach. The business studies subjects were meant to be integrated as opposed to being taught as individual subjects, with each subject covering its own specific sphere and nothing else. It was believed that having a basic broad knowledge of all business concepts was far more beneficial than specialization in one specific field, especially for emerging graduates who needed to be job creators rather than job seekers.

Ekpeyong suggests that the integration of business studies subjects has not been successful.¹⁴ The research report concludes that in an attempt to integrate the system, subjects were merely clustered arbitrarily together. Three approaches used in other countries are suggested, namely, organization around a theme, teaching methods being left to the discretion of the teachers, and the need for sequencing the materials to be learnt. The whole implementation process of the business studies curriculum in the junior secondary school needs to be reviewed.

5.3 Science Education in the Senior Secondary Schools

There is a high rate of failure in science subjects. Various studies in the seventies and eighties have been conducted to establish the reasons for such poor performance. These studies all conclude that in addition to the poor state of education in the country there are other reasons which impact negatively on science teaching. Amongst the reasons given are the fact that science teaching is taught by unqualified teachers and lack of resources for science teaching. The problems were exacerbated when the education budget got tighter and there were budget cuts. That led to shortages of facilities and equipment needed for science teaching. Other problems were experienced including the under-preparedness of students throughout the entire system.

5.4 Management of the Secondary Schools

Management of junior secondary school at both the Federal and State levels put more emphasis on supervision or inspection at all levels of the schooling sector rather than adopting a developmental approach. The NPE (1981) made a shift from supervision towards development but the stigma remained prevalent. Inspection is still associated with old practices of punishment and revenge upon schools. The role of inspectors was redefined to be advisors, guides, catalysts and sources of new ideas. The government promised to run in-service courses for inspectors and for new ones joining the service.

It is essential to ensure that there is adequate implementation of policies that redefines the role of inspectors, as well as reverse negative perceptions about educational support that is to be provided by inspectors. There is literature that suggests that the change process could benefit from the use of more up to date approaches and strategies.

Recommendations have also been made for the Federal Government to appoint a statutory body that would liaise with local educational agencies, faculties and institutes of education in universities and colleges, and international agencies promoting quality education in secondary schools.

6. Science, Technical and Vocational Education

6.1 Introduction

Science and technology has been part of the NPE policy since 1981 but very little progress has been made in its implementation. Science and technology education should be offered at all levels of education through both formal and non-formal programs.

In the last decade, a number of studies have been conducted on attitudes about science and technology development.¹⁵ Such studies have indicated that public awareness of the importance of science and technology is essential to development. Since science and technology are part of the national strategy for development, science and technology literacy is essential. Part of what is needed to enhance that process is public pressure to encourage more Nigerians to study science and technology.

Vocational technical education is said to have suffered enormous setback in Nigeria due to the low status accorded to it in general. Part of the problem seems to emanate from the various interpretations of vocational and technical education by policy makers as well as by the implementers of policies on vocational technical education. New policies are needed to clarify the importance, role of vocational technical education, and to address the requirements in various sectors of society.

The National Board for Technical Education (NTBE), established in 1985, gives recognition to three broad classifications of technical institutions and their different missions in meeting the needs of their society. The three groups of institutions are vocational schools, technical colleges and polytechnics/ colleges of technology/colleges of education (technical).

The policy measures intended to expand and improve technical and vocational education have not been effective. As with many good policies, problems are experienced in the implementation process. The general problems of vocational technical education in developing countries include: limited resources for expansion, exclusion of technical and vocational education from the main stream curriculum, lack of guidance services, inadequate training of vocational teachers, and the lack of teaching resources.

In addition to the general problems, Nigeria faces additional challenges. First, there is a problem with public perceptions of vocational technical education as low status. Second, there is the tendency of well-trained vocational technical teachers to seek jobs in the private sector rather than the public sector due to higher salaries offered and the prestige attached to such appointments. Third, there is a significant mismatch between training

and practice, especially amongst teachers trained abroad or trained in Nigeria by expatriate staff in contrast to those trained at Nigerian institutions. It is worth noting that the Technical Teacher Training Programme, which was a scheme to train teachers abroad, has been discontinued. Fourth, the existing policies on vocational and technical education are said to be inadequate, and are not informed by experiences elsewhere, which might suggest strategies to produce both highly skilled professionals as well as technical assistants. Lastly, the merger of technical education with science education units at the Federal Ministry of Education has impacted negatively on technical education due to lack of understanding of the peculiar funding needs for vocational education and occasional diversion of funds from vocational technical education to other sectors.

The government recognizes the need to develop this aspect of education as part of social and economic development. There is a separate Ministry of Science and Technology which has been involved in a campaign to mobilize the public and create awareness of the importance of science, technology and vocational education. The government has also been involved in the process of providing equipment to some of the technical colleges and polytechnics. Science, technical, and vocational education at primary level is to be part of the new Universal Basic Education Scheme.

Science education is part of the general curriculum and is offered at all levels of education. Vocational education and aspects of technical education are offered both in the public sector as well as in the fast growing private sector, in the form mainly of apprenticeships. As in many other areas of education, there are problems of quality monitoring and control. These problems are made worse by the poor conditions of training facilities.

Several measures have been taken to remedy the situation. The Federal Ministry of Education and its ancillary agencies have organized workshops and conferences as well as other forms of campaigns to create public awareness of the need to improve the quality of science and technology education. A number of programmes have also been established as part of a strategy to encourage positive attitudes towards science and technology. For example, the Junior Engineers, Technicians and Scientists (JETS), the running of the Technical Teacher Training Programme (TTTP) in Nigeria rather than abroad, the establishment of the National Business and Technical Education Board (NABTEB), and the introduction of the National Youth Employment and Vocational Skills Development Programme.

There is also interest in updating the policies for technical and vocational education and to streamline the policies in keeping with the recommendations of the Second World Conference on Technical and Vocational Education which was organized by UNESCO in Seoul, Korea in 1999. The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) in partnership with the Federal Ministry of Education had plans to conduct a workshop in Kaduna in November 1999. A follow-up is necessary to get a grasp of the key issues raised.

The purpose of the workshop was to understand the issues faced by the sector, to analyze problems, and to suggest policies needed to address these issues. The recommendations of the workshop are intended to feed into the proceedings of a National Education Summit planned for the year 2000.

6.2 Gender Related Issues:

An issue of major concern is the significant level of gender disparity in science and technology programs in comparison with other areas of study. The progression of women students through the schooling system is also of great concern because it has been low with a large dropout rate. For example, the training of a cohort of students, who entered the system between the periods 1979/80 and 1991/2, indicates that, on average, only 18.64% girls proceeded to secondary schools, with an average dropout rate of 80.16% amongst girls. The average dropout rate from secondary school to higher education institutions in the period 1980/81 to 1991/92 was reported to be about 93.15%.¹⁶

Table 4: Female Enrollment in Vocational and Technical Education Programs

| Institution | Total number of students | Female Students | Percentage of Female Students (%) |
|-------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| FCE (T), Akoka | 641 | 251 | 39.16 |
| FCE (T), Asaba | 245 | 136 | 53.54 |
| FCE (T), Bichi | 305 | 46 | 15.08 |
| FCE (T), Gombe | 1845 | 183 | 9.19 |
| FCE (T), Gusau | 270 | 270 | 100.0 |
| FCE (T), Omoko | 616 | 272 | 44.16 |
| FCE (T), Potiskum | 433 | 150 | 34.64 |
| FCE (T), Umunze | 750 | 474 | 63.20 |
| TOTAL | 5114 | 1782 | 34.85 |

Source: NCCE 1994

The total enrollment of female students in the vocational and technical education programmes at 8 Federal Colleges of Education (Technical) for the academic year 1991/92 was 34.85% (See Table 4). For the same period, the total enrollment of female students in science programs was 41,19% of the new intakes at nine Federal Colleges of Education (See Table 5).

Table 5: Female Enrollment in Science Programs

| Institution | Total number of students | Female Students | Percentage of Female Students (%) |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|--|
| FCE, Abeokuta | 114 | 57 | 50.00 |
| FCE, Ilaro | 89 | 23 | 25.84 |
| FCE, Katsina | 85 | 22 | 25.88 |
| FCE, Kantagora | 189 | 48 | 25.40 |
| FCE, Okene | 93 | 54 | 58.06 |
| FCE, Yola | 134 | 58 | 43.28 |
| FCE, Zaria | 118 | 83 | 70.33 |
| FCE, Oyo (special) | 229 | 115 | 50.22 |
| Adeyemi, Ondo (COE) | 549 | 199 | 36.25 |
| TOTAL | 1600 | 659 | 41.19 |

Source: NCCE 1994¹⁷

The figures are not necessarily representative of Nigerian demographics of the ratio of men to women, but what is of more concern is the need to do further analysis of the success rates and the employment opportunities for women in the labor market. Female academic staff members were reported to be 21.83% and 20.64% at the 9 Federal Colleges of Education and the 8 Federal Colleges for Vocational and Technical Education respectively.

6.3 World Bank's Role in the Sector

The World Banks' involvement in the period between 1965 and 1982 in the education sector in Nigeria was limited. The total investment during that period was US\$91.3 million. The involvement in the subsequent period between 1985 and 1995 was much more substantial resulting in an investment of over US\$37 million per year.

A Technical Education Project came into effect in 1989 and lasted until December 1995. The main objectives were to support the government's program for improving the quality of middle-level technical institutions and to strengthen the capacity of the planning and implementation structures. The project was reported to have been only marginally successful due to the problems encountered, especially in the early stages of the project, coordination and management problems, as well as low levels of commitment and ownership.

7. Teacher Education

The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) has responsibility for teacher education in Nigeria. At present there are fifty-eight colleges, of which nineteen are controlled and funded by the Federal Government, thirty-six by state governments, and three are owned by private agencies.

The National Commission for Colleges of Education was established in 1990 to lay down minimum standards for all programs of teacher education and accredit their certificates and other academic awards after obtaining the prior approval of the minister. The Commission was also given responsibility to approve guidelines setting out criteria for accreditation of all Colleges of Education in Nigeria.

Three levels of pre-service teacher training have been established:

- ?? Teacher Training Colleges that used to be part of the secondary education program. They awarded the Teacher Certificate, Grade II, which in the past was the qualification required for primary school teaching across the country. However, since the National Policy on Education made the National Certificate in Education (NCE) the minimum qualification for teaching in the country, the Grade II colleges are now being phased out.
- ?? Colleges of Education offer post-secondary National Certificate in Education training programmes. The NCE is also the qualification required for teaching in junior secondary schools and technical colleges. Colleges of Education used to train teachers for junior secondary school, but now they also train primary teachers. The NCE has become the minimum qualification for primary school teaching as from 1998. Some of the colleges also offer NCE pre-primary courses in order to produce teachers for the pre-primary level of education.
- ?? Universities in Nigeria offer the Bachelor of Education degree programs to both senior secondary school graduates and senior secondary school teachers who already have NCE qualifications.

The requirements for admission for teacher trainers differ from one level to the other in terms of academic qualifications. For admission into colleges of education, prospective candidates must have at least three credits in the senior school and two other passes. At the university level, the entry requirement is five credits which must include the chosen major teaching subjects. Prospective colleges of education students are required to sit for and pass the Polytechnic/College of Education Matriculation Examination, while prospective university students are required to pass the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board examination.

The NCE is the minimum basic qualification for entry into primary school teaching. This came about in an attempt to create a uniformity of standards. In the past, affiliated staff of other faculties and departments had carried out functions, which should have been carried out by qualified teacher education staff. The result was that there was no uniformity in standards, particularly in B.Ed programs.¹⁸

In 1998 the teaching qualification requirements at the senior secondary level were the Bachelor of Education degree or the single subject Bachelor's degree plus a post-graduate diploma in education. However, holders of specialized qualifications like the National Diplomas (awarded by polytechnics) can be employed to teach in secondary schools and technical colleges. For teaching in colleges of education, at least a Master's degree is required, while a doctoral degree is required for teaching in universities. Lecturers in colleges of education are required to have a Teaching Qualification, in addition to their degree.

Some of the major issues in teacher education that need attention are:

- ?? The shortage of primary school teachers needed to attain the proposed 1:30 (1:40 in the transition years). The teacher-pupil ratio is far from being met and is more currently operating at 1:76
- ?? The low numbers of graduates going into the teaching profession are of grave concern. The major causes are due to inadequate funding levels and poor salaries. However, the prompt payment of salaries in 1998 improved the situation.
- ?? The fact that teachers have become marginalized and the profession is the most impoverished of all sectors of the labor force in Nigeria (UNESCO 1996). In almost every area of the system the conditions of the work environment, access to information, resources needed for supplies and equipment, salaries and benefits are extremely poor. Access to new technologies is virtually non-existent.
- ?? Teacher quality throughout Nigeria is unequal. There are also inequities in the availability of qualified teachers in the different States.
- ?? Most current primary school teachers have yet to attain the minimum qualification (NCE) as required by the National Policy on Education.
- ?? Most Colleges of Education offer courses which are not appropriate or relevant to the level and needs of most primary teachers. Teachers largely receive an education that is suited more to junior secondary level. The courses are largely of an academic nature as opposed to the development of processes, skills, and career development geared towards the primary school.
- ?? There is an oversupply of NCE and graduate teachers in some disciplines and subject combinations while there is a general shortage of teachers in Physics, Mathematics, Home Economics, Business Education, Technical Education, Primary Education Studies, Nursery Education and Computer Science.
- ?? The leadership in colleges needs to be streamlined by the NCCE. Not all colleges are led by professionally qualified and competent staff with at least a higher degree in education.
- ?? The serious gender imbalance in some states is of concern, particularly a decline in the numbers of male teachers and their importance as role models.

Government initiatives are in place to maintain minimum standards in various aspects of primary education. A national committee has been established for the reform of the primary school curriculum. Complaints about financial mismanagement are taken seriously and conditions of service for teachers are been improved. For example, a pension scheme has been established for retired teaching and non-teaching staff.

In-service education and training of teachers needs to be reviewed. Extensive programs for in-service training are needed in the place of one off, highly centralized mass training workshops in which many teachers participate. The level of information transfer to actual classroom practice has been reported to be minimal. There are other in-service training programs such as:

- ?? training in designated institutions and educational resource centers;
- ?? training through seminars and workshops usually organized during long vacations for the dissemination of new ideas and innovations;
- ?? distance teacher education programs offered by the National Teachers' Institute for under-qualified or unqualified serving teachers;
- ?? correspondence degree programs offered by the Center for External Studies of the University of Ibadan and the Correspondence and Open Studies Institute of the University of Lagos;
- ?? the Teacher In-service Education Program (TSEP) and the Nigerian Certificate in Education by correspondence course of the Institute of Education of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria;
- ?? undergraduate course in education offered by the Open Studies Unit of the University of Abuja;
- ?? correspondence courses run by the Abia State University College of Education, Uturu.

In-service training for principals and inspectors is offered through holiday programs, seminars and workshops. The curriculum largely covers educational planning, administration and management. The National Institute of Educational Administration and Planning, set up in Ondo in 1992, has been expected to play a crucial role in meeting this need. Refresher courses continue to be arranged for teachers to strengthen their pedagogical skills, as well as to increase their competence in handling continuous assessment data. The need for teachers to acquire this skill has gained urgency because the issuing of primary school certificates has become the sole responsibility of each head teacher nationwide with effect from 1993. There is also an appreciable continuous assessment component in the award of the Junior Secondary School Certificate and Senior Secondary School Certificate.

8. HIGHER EDUCATION

8.1 Introduction

The Nigerian higher education system is comprised of universities, polytechnics and colleges offering programs in areas such as teacher education and agriculture. It is the largest and most complex higher education system on the continent. There are 37 public universities and approval has recently been granted for the opening of 4 private universities. The other higher education institutions are estimated to be over 139 in number. The Federal Ministry of Education has responsibility for 25 universities, 13 Polytechnics and 19 Colleges of Education. The remaining higher education institutions are primarily controlled and funded by the State Governments, although private higher education is now getting started.

The literature reviewed focused mainly on universities with minimal reference to other components of the system. Issues raised are mainly issues affecting the university system. It is assumed that the trends observed in the Federal universities are similar to those that are found in State universities and other components of the higher education system. The university sub-sector in itself is diverse and complex due to its organization into institutions funded by the Federal government and institutions that are funded by the State governments.

Major reform initiatives such as the World Bank project in the early nineties targeted the Federal universities only. The main objective of the project was to improve the effectiveness and relevance of university teaching and research and to encourage the universities to be more cost-effective. The project was successful in bringing about changes in operational matters such as management efficiency and limited quality improvement but encountered difficulties in bringing about changes in areas that needed policy changes by the government, such as growth in the system and funding arrangements.

The system has expanded rapidly in terms of the numbers of institutions established, new programs, and the numbers of students admitted at higher education institutions. For example, in the period between 1962/63 to 1992/93 the number of institutions increased from 4 to 31. By 1992/93 the enrollment figures were 58 times greater than in 1962/63, i.e. the enrollment figures increased from 3,646 to 216,200 and the graduate output grew from 425 to 46,975 in the same period¹⁹. Demand for greater access to higher education continues unabated due to its social benefit, especially in a society in which social mobility depends largely on the level of education acquired. Nigerian higher education institutions operate at a higher capacity than they were originally established for, yet the demand for access continues to rise. High unemployment rates of graduates, particularly in their specific fields of training, remains a problem, but this has not served as a deterrent to those seeking admission into institutions of higher learning.

The need for higher education is partly based on the fact that those with higher education qualifications have a better chance of securing a job in a tough market compared to those without higher education qualifications. Such surpluses make the system wasteful because training is obviously not matched to the needs of the economy. It is worth noting that despite great demand for higher education, the overall participation rate of the age cohort (5%) in higher education institutions is lower than that of many developing countries. Low participation rates in this situation cannot be attributed to low demand but to the failure of the system to provide enough places to meet the demand.

The higher education system has been criticized for being inefficient and ineffective, making it irrelevant to the needs of a new democracy. For the most part, major issues in higher education are similar to those in most countries around the world. There are also issues that are unique to the Nigerian context like cultist practices that impact negatively on the activities of higher education institutions. Problems such as access, quality, funding, efficient and effective management, and governance have been mentioned in the literature as some of the major issues facing the Nigerian higher education system.

The Nigerian Universities Commission as part of the UNESCO/Nigeria collaboration identified a number of priority issues. The list and estimated costs are as follows:

- ✍ Establishment and development of UNESCO chairs in universities (US\$625,000.00)
- ✍ Staff development outside Nigeria (US\$405,840)
- ✍ Rehabilitation of physical facilities in Federal Universities (US\$21.1 million)
- ✍ Equipment and books for laboratories and libraries (US\$1.5 million per year)
- ✍ Improving Universities Management (US\$140,000 total for four years)
- ✍ Modern Communication and Globalization of Information (US\$ 2,243,400)

8.2. Access

The Ashby Commission raised the problems of equity and access in higher education as early as 1959. The Commission reported then that there was an imbalance in educational opportunities between the southern and northern parts of the country and that opportunities for enrollment were inadequate for the needs of the country.²⁰ Access to higher education and the lack of capacity of the system to absorb the numbers of students seeking admission to higher education institutions continues to pose a serious problem. For example, it is estimated that out of 400,000 JAMB candidates seeking admission to university education, more than 320,000, which is about 80% are not able to gain admission to any of the 37 Nigerian universities.

Attempts have been made to provide equitable access to the limited places by prescribing admission quotas to Federal institutions. The formula for access to higher education makes provision for admission based on academic merit, residential zones, and

discretion. Competition for access to limited places has led to practices such as cheating in examinations, bribery for admission, and manipulation of examination scores.

Distance learning was considered by the previous governments to be an alternative mode of delivering education to a greater number of students in order to increase quality, meet demands for university admission, and to produce highly skilled labor for an economy that must compete within the new globalizing context. As part of the solution to making higher education accessible, the government intended the University of Abuja to also operate as a distance learning institution. Numerous problems resulting from inadequate funding have impacted negatively on the success of this program. In a proposal for support for the program, the problems listed included staff shortages, outdated equipment, custom-made software programs with built-in security that the present staff cannot operate, and the inability to cope with document processing needs of the academic programs.

Funding allocations for the delivery of distance education have been inadequate and numerous other factors have impacted negatively on the delivery of higher education via distance learning. A proposal for the provision of higher education through distance teaching was shared with the UNESCO mission to Nigeria. The estimated costs for the establishment of a distance learning communications network was US\$5.4 million. However, this would be only 5% of what would be required to physically develop the first phase of the University of Abuja's permanent site.

Overcrowding problems on campuses have resulted in criminal activities such as extortion, rapes, and inter-cult rivalry. The emergence of secret cults in the Nigerian higher education is of great concern. The literature suggests that new subcultures are emerging as a response to the failure of both government and the institutions themselves to address the problems. Violence associated with these subcultures is part of a defense mechanism used by some members of the university community who feel threatened. Cult activities include violence against innocent victims and torture as part of their initiation rites. Cult activities impact negatively on learning at the higher education institutions. Classes are disrupted, students live in fear, and faculty and management members and their families are constantly harassed or live under threats for failing students who do not perform well²¹. There is need to address the issue of cultism in the society as well as on campuses. To date, government attempts to stamp it out through legislation have not been effective.

8.3. Quality

Concern has been raised about the decline in the quality of the Nigerian higher education system. Earlier literature indicates that the quality of education in some Nigerian institutions in the 1970s was comparable to high quality education offered by top world universities. The quality of education offered by higher education institutions at the present time has deteriorated substantially. The poor quality of many Nigerian university graduates has accelerated. As a result, there is high unemployment amongst graduates especially in fields such as engineering. There is also concern about the lack of recognition of Nigerian degrees by overseas universities.

The quality of higher education programs at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels at Federal institutions is the responsibility of the Nigerian University Commission through its accreditation activities. There is need to rethink the accreditation processes in order to promote and restore quality in the system of higher education. It is often assumed that the accreditation process promotes quality too. This has obviously not been the case in the Nigerian system of higher education. There is need to focus on quality promotion activities such as the provision of adequate resources linked to institutional plans, rationalization of academic programs in institutions, and in the regions, through cooperation activities, and staff development programs.

Overcrowding at institutions and inadequate funding resources are contributing factors to the decline in the quality of higher education. The system has far outgrown the resources available to it to continue offering high-level quality education. Inadequate funding has resulted in problems such as the breakdown and deterioration of facilities, shortages of new books and current journals in the libraries, supplies for the laboratories, and limited funding for research.

Institutional and system planning is critical for the restoration of quality in the system. The plans developed must be linked to realistic budget plans. Through planning, issues of uncontrolled growth in the number of students, programs, and institutions, could be addressed. Regional and national development needs could be met through regional collaboration as well as by improvement of efficiency of the system. Regional collaboration will not be easy amongst institutions that by nature are competitive. Nevertheless, it could be promoted through cost-sharing activities and quality improvement that will allow institutions to collaborate effectively. Other forms of academic cooperation used internationally need to be explored. Institutional mergers could also be considered, bearing in mind the complexity of the exercise, extensive time investment, skills and resources needed.

Other factors contributing to the decline in quality are the unstable environment due to frequent strikes by students or staff, the quality of students admitted to programs, and the quality of the academics recruited. These factors need to be taken into consideration in rethinking quality promotion.

8.4. Funding

The Federal government is the major funder of higher education. Funding allocations at the university level have been higher than at other levels of education partly due to the expansion in the number of universities. However, the growth in expenditure has been inconsistent over the years. The funding pattern has not reflected inflation rates and the growing enrollment figures.²² In addition, students are charged low fees and thus contribute an insignificant proportion of the total income of the institutions. The funding allocations to higher education institutions have been inadequate and the government has been unwilling to increase the fees charged to students to make up for the short fall.

Funding allocations by the Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC) have increased by about 11% in the almost ten years from 1985/86 financial year to 1994/95 (See Table 6). Despite the increase in allocations, in real terms the recurrent financing per student has declined by more than 30% while student enrollment increased by 88%. There is a huge

gap between the NUC parameters for funding and Federal government allocations to higher education. As the government allocations have increased so has dependency on government funding as the main source of funding the institutions.

Table 6: Funding Allocations by the NUC

| Year | Percentage |
|---------|------------|
| 1985/86 | 85 |
| 1990/91 | 86 |
| 1991/92 | 86 |
| 1992/93 | 93 |
| 1993/94 | 96 |
| 1994/95 | 96 |

Source: Omoregie, P.O and Harnett, T (1995) Financing Trends and Expenditure.²³

The NUC provides guidelines similar to those used in developed countries on how the funds should be shared between academic activities and administrative support. The guideline is 60:40 respectively but the institutions have found it hard to stick to the guidelines. The variations have ranged in 1992/93 from lows of 25:75 in Maiduguri to 43:57 at institutions such as Owerri, Kano, Sokoto, and Nsukka. The imbalance in functional resource allocation between academic and administrative services is an issue of concern in terms of the efficiency and effectiveness of the institutions.

There is very little financial support from the public to the universities through gifts or endowment funds. Minimal additional income is derived from income generating activities such as farm product sales and consultancy services. There has been actually a decrease in income to institutions from these additional sources (See Table 7). Institutions have recently started paying more attention to income generating activities to supplement their funds. The World Bank project report on the reform of Federal universities concluded that it might not be cost effective to develop university income generation activities and warns that such activities might undermine the main university mission of teaching and research.

Table 7: Income from other Sources

| Year | Percentage |
|---------|------------|
| 1990/91 | 13% |
| 1992/93 | 7% |

Source: Omoregie, P.O and Harnett, T (1995) Financing Trends and Expenditure

It is worth noting that the International Institute for International Planning (IIEP) has recently completed a study on the management of university –industry relations. The study highlights the growing trend and the need for improved management.

Student fees account for about 5% of the university income. There has also been a decrease in the percentage of income derived from tuition fees (See Table 8). Universities have started exploring alternative sources of funding such as fee-paying students and improved relations with industry to supplement their income. There is an increasing demand and willingness to pay for chargeable programs offered on a part-time basis. Many Nigerian universities are starting to rely on this mode of income generation as an alternative source of funding for other programs within their institutions. “Satellite” campuses in some instances have been set up to cut down on non-academic costs such as accommodation. Short-term courses offered on a part-time base have become popular among part-time students who are already employed and can afford to pay fees or have their employers paying their fees.

Table 8: Income from Tuition Fees

| Year | Percentage |
|---------|------------|
| 1991/92 | 3,7% |
| 1992/93 | 0,2% |
| 1994/95 | 1,6% |

Source: Omoregie, P.O and Harnett, T (1995) Financing Trends and Expenditure

Financial income is also derived from the proceeds from staff and student accommodation and interest earned on bank deposits. Investment income has also decreased (See Table 9).

Table 9: Investment Income

| Year | Percentage |
|---------|------------|
| 1991/92 | 6% |
| 1992/93 | 3% |

Source: Omoregie, P.O and Harnett, T (1995) Financing Trends and Expenditure

There is virtually no information on the financial situation in the higher education system beyond the 1994/95 academic year. Due to the deepening economic crisis of the period, it is highly unlikely that more money was allocated to education. Alternative sources of funding higher education need to be explored, including the review of policies on tuition fees, as part of a realistic and sustainable financing strategy for higher education.

8.5 Efficiency and Effectiveness

Efficiency will require the improvement of management in universities and continuous support for managers of those institutions.

There is high unemployment amongst graduates in general, especially in the engineering fields. In a country in need of highly trained engineers, this is an indication of the lack of confidence of business and industry in the training system. The problem is made worse by the general perception of lowered standards and quality in education. The perception is based on inadequate instruction affected by the poor quality of the training facilities and outdated equipment as well as the perceived lowering of standards of admission. Some interpret the administration of equity policies as part of the problem since they require not only merit, but also the need to meet set quotas for catchment areas and by disciplines.

Documents are largely silent on the critical issue of the relationship of higher education institutions to their socio-economic environments. In other parts of the world this is an issue that has moved high on the political agenda of many governments and includes plans for lifelong learning to continuously provide high level skills training for a world in which new technological innovation is the norm.

The issues of quality and unemployment of graduates in fields like engineering could be addressed through improved relations between higher education and industry. Close links between university/ industry, technologists and engineering is common in many countries. They work well when they are well managed and are mutually beneficial. The benefits include the attraction of additional funding for research and teaching as well as supplemental income for staff and the institution through consulting services. In addition, the students benefit from improved training and employment prospects especially when student internships are part of the program. For the staff such links provide not only opportunities for badly needed salary supplements, but also the opportunity to adapt curriculum and programmes to changing business and industry needs, as well as exposure to the latest technology.

9. Distance Education

Distance education is being considered as an option for delivering education to a large number of students who need access to education at all levels. The following discussion is separated into two categories, i.e. basic education and higher education.

9.1 Basic Education

Distance education is being explored as an option for providing broader access to basic education. Distance education within this sector is linked to the general goals of mass literacy, adult and non-formal education. The conceptual framework is informed by the need to develop a knowledge-based society, the anticipated challenges of the 21st century, as well as new strategies for providing youth and adult education programs. Distance education has been identified by the National Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education Commission (NMEC) as one of the three best strategies to deliver further education to people requiring additional education, without requiring them to go into formal schools after graduating from literacy classes. There is also need to provide continuing education in the form of secondary education programs for the masses of high school dropouts and primary school graduates who are often employed as apprentices but need further education and training.

Current plans call for this effort to be undertaken in collaboration with other organization, government and non-governmental, institutes, training centers and universities. Set up costs will be substantial, including the need to build capacity in the institutions to be involved, the provision of equipment, and training costs. The mode of delivery would be radio, television, print, audio and videocassettes, computers and face-to-face contact.

9.2 Higher Education

Demand for access to higher education, and university education in particular is higher than can be accommodated effectively. The existing institutions are presently operating beyond their capacities. The University of Abuja, which is centrally located in the Federal Capital Territory, was mandated by law to offer distance learning throughout the country. It was originally intended to operate as an Open University. As a first step to this end, the University set up a Center for Distance and Continuing Education (CDLCE). An assessment conducted in August 1999 of the available resources for delivering distance education at the CDLCE indicated that the facilities are inadequate for both present and future needs.

Computing facilities are outdated and none of them were reported to be Y2K compliant. There is a shortage of skilled personnel to operate programs that were custom designed with in-built security measures, causing them to be utilized at levels far below peak capacity. These facilities are also used for routine computing which overloads the system. Since there is no electrical power back-up supply, computing facilities, limited as they are, are periodically inoperable due to regular prolonged power failures.

Processing of course materials has also been problematic leading to prolonged delays in the review of material and delays of up to a year for publishing manuscripts. Attempts have been made to improve the document processing equipment but there remain problems of inadequately trained staff and inappropriate software for Desktop Publishing.

The CDLCE facilities were originally set up to deliver service nationwide. Due to high operating costs, however, the service was scaled down to provide service to students and staff only within Abuja. There are plans to expand the service in terms of the number of programs offered and student enrollments. The plan is to increase the number of programs offered from 14 to 18, and ultimately to 20 in the near future, if funding can be secured. The plan is to increase enrollment from the current 7,000 students to 10,000 students and ultimately to 20,000.

The benefits and utility of distance education need to be considered carefully in order to both increase participation rates and deliver higher education in a more cost-effective way. The cost of upgrading the existing facilities has been estimated at US\$3.53m excluding operational costs. If such funding is a realistic option, further analysis is needed to explore cost effective ways of achieving these goals.

C. General Observations

Any analysis of the Nigerian education sector is particularly challenging due to the lack of adequate data. Most of the literature available only provides information up to the mid-nineties. Data available was primarily for the eighties or early nineties. The last reporting date on record for Nigeria in the 1999 UNESCO Statistical Yearbook and the 1999 World Data on Education (produced by the International Bureau of Education) was for 1994 in contrast to most other countries. In some instances where data were available, they were outdated. This raised concerns about data credibility in that some of the tables that remained unchanged over long periods of time. The data available for this review were therefore inadequate for the kind of precise analysis that was desired. There were many gaps where data had not been provided at all and the figures used (if any) were estimates. For example, there were no data on Federal and State government budgetary allocations to the education sector from the early nineties to the present. There is thus urgent need to re-examine and improve the Information Management Systems for education in Nigeria. It is critical that measures be taken to update and streamline data collection, analysis and presentation in order to provide reliable data for strategic planning, public policy formulation and system performance monitoring, and to assess what changes are needed as part of reforming and improving the education system.

A number of significant changes have already been proposed for the education system. There seems to have been a shift in the education system to emphasize practical applications of knowledge necessary for future employment and skills development for self-employment. There is also a shift to “social development” within the system of education as part of a strategy to address social problems such as poverty. Another shift being made is the emphasis on the needs of what must become a technology-oriented nation. But several studies have indicated that the policy objectives set out in the past have not been achieved to date and that the general public has lost confidence in the system. No evidence was found to contradict this view.

There are many issues in the Nigerian education system that require urgent attention. Several major challenges emerged over and over in the literature reviewed. Issues such as access, equity, quality education, human resource needs, problems caused mainly by inadequate financial resources, cut across all sectors of education. There are also issues that are unique to specific sub-sectors. For example, the problem of cultism is specific to higher education and the problem of subject integration in business and technology studies is specific to junior secondary level.

This document attempts to identify major issues of concern in the literature on education in Nigeria that has been produced during the last decade. A number of key issues have already been identified. It is likely that other important issues that have not been identified in this literature review will become apparent in the coming months or years. While issues facing Nigerian education are similar to many of those found in other developing countries, they differ markedly in key respects because of their context, scale, and the importance of Nigeria to all of the West Africa and beyond.

Many of the issues identified are similar to those identified during the NIGERIA-UNESCO collaboration in October 1999. The Federal Ministry of Education took the initiative to approach UNESCO, seeking a partnership in addressing Nigeria's reform needs for the entire education system. It is expected that this partnership will assist Nigeria by providing expertise on policy formulation and help with the government's search for potential funders to assist with the reform plans. UNESCO appointed a Mission Team to work with national experts and consultants to identify areas in need of urgent attention. The UNESCO mission report focused on four components of the system: Universal Basic Education, Community Education, Technical and Vocational Education, and Higher Education – with particular emphasis on the educational quality of the system. These four priority areas are recognized by the Federal Republic of Nigeria and are consistent with the issues generally raised in the literature. The UNESCO mission report is intended for use as a guide and for evaluating the government's plans and actions in the education sector.

The following section summarizes the major issues identified and in need of urgent attention:

1 Infrastructure Provision and Rehabilitation of Existing Buildings

A shortage of space currently exists in all the sub-sectors of the educational system. The expansion of the education system, mainly through the introduction of universal primary education, has put pressure on education facilities that did not expand at the same rate as the school population.

The existing buildings are in a state of decay due to lack of maintenance and repair. The present conditions of buildings impact negatively on the quality of education offered. Such conditions have encouraged a brain drain of teaching and administrative personnel out of education to other sectors of the economy or out of the country. Dilapidated school environments contribute to the high dropout of

learners from school. The amount of funding needed for new buildings is high and the estimated cost of the rehabilitation of the existing infrastructure is even higher. The need for provision of adequate education facilities at all levels of education is urgent.

2 *Human Resource Capacity Development*

The development of human resource capacity for the delivery of an effective education is critical. There are human resource needs for administration, management, research and teaching as well as for support and technical staff. Lack of well-trained human resources is a problem in almost every area of education. There is an urgent need for capacity building in the various Commissions charged with responsibility for governing and managing different aspects of education.

Planning, supervision and monitoring mechanisms for the entire education system have been very weak. Management problems within the system have been cited often as a factor that impacts negatively on the success of projects that have been supported by international development agencies.

Data on the education system have not been collected in a timely manner or processed in a way that is adequate for planning. The system has thus suffered from lack of adequate planning for the implementation of the policies that are vital to improved quality and expansion. There was uncontrolled growth in the system, especially at the basic levels, and later in the higher education sub-sector. An infrastructure for providing leadership was put in place, but without the necessary resources to undertake the required changes.

Government efforts to encourage higher entrance levels for teachers in the profession have been somewhat successful. The problem, however, arises due to the poor quality of much of the training provided at the colleges of education responsible for training teachers. The training methods and approaches are outdated and do not take into consideration the changes taking place in both the teaching environments in which teachers are likely to work and the requirements of a more technological global environment. For example, the business studies curriculum and the vocational and technical studies curriculum require teaching that integrates a number of subjects. Nonetheless teachers continued to be trained in single discipline subjects.

At the school level, teachers in service and administrative officials do not have opportunities for high quality staff development. Teachers' knowledge and skills are often outdated and the inspectors are not providing the necessary pedagogical support for further development. There is need to rethink supervision and its role in promoting effective teaching and learning. The previous government tried to move away from the traditional form of supervision, but with minimal success.

At the higher education level, post-graduate programs must be improved if Nigeria is to emerge from a long period of economic decline. There is an urgent need to

develop research capacity at Nigeria's best institutions. High-level post-graduate skills are critical for a knowledge economy that requires constantly changing skill levels – an area in which Nigeria has fallen far behind the developed world.

3 *Access and Equity in the System*

Access in education remains an issue at all levels of education. The demand for access has not been fully met in a society where social mobility depends more on academic achievement than anything else. The issue of access has been manipulated by various regimes as a source of political power and in seeking political support. Such activity has opened up opportunities for malpractices that now run deep in the system. Far too many students, who should have been denied access, presently gain access to higher education institutions, thus contributing to the decline in quality.

Disparities between Northern and Southern regions are evident in terms of teaching and learning resources, and the participation of males and females in education. There are also disparities between urban and rural schools and between education institutions owned and controlled by the Federal Government and those owned and controlled by the States and private agencies. The entire system reflects privilege and differentiation, with merit and quality usually the victims.

Gender disparities in enrollment numbers are quite evident in the system as a whole and particularly noticeable in completion and in retention rates. Although government has made efforts to address some of these issues, a lot more work needs to be done to make the programs effective. For example, there are programs designed to increase female access to education, particularly amongst communities and regions where the denial of access is steeped in religious or cultural practices, which do not encourage females to participate in educational activities.

4 *Quality*

The decline in quality of education in Nigeria has been a major concern due to the rapid expansion in student numbers without comparable expansion in resources, staff and facilities. This rapid growth has not been matched by substantial increases in the funding of education institutions. Government acknowledges that as part of improving quality in educational institutions, physical facilities have to be upgraded and resources such as libraries, laboratories, modern communication and information technology equipment have to be provided.

Poor quality at all levels of education is compounded by a lack of instructional materials for effective teaching and learning. There is a shortage of textbooks in the schools due to the high cost of books. The problem is more serious at higher education levels. A recent World Bank²⁴ study indicated that less than 1% of primary schools have access to textbooks and that in general textbook availability in schools is 10% of what it should be. The study further indicated that there are disparities in textbook availability, ranging from 80% in elite schools to virtually no textbooks in some rural schools. At the higher education level, most of the textbooks are imported at high cost and are unaffordable by the average student.

Other factors that have had a negative impact on the quality of education are the low morale of teachers, the poor quality of teachers, and lack of adequate professional support for teachers in the system. Teacher training programs have not really taken into consideration the changes that are needed to implement the innovative curriculum introduced in the schools, especially at the junior secondary education level.

5 *Funding Mechanisms*

Government funding of education has been inadequate. The funding of education is shared among different levels of government and supplemented by funds from other sources such as business, community organizations, and levies charged to parents. The revenue collected through fees constitutes an insignificant proportion of the revenue of the institutions. Inadequate funding of education has been one of the most significant causes of the low quality of much of the education offered at all levels.

Funding allocations have been in flux during the last decade. Overall, there has been a drop in the funding level of education. For example, the recent estimate for the funding of primary education indicates that funding allocations have dropped from 1.5% of GDP in 1990 to 1.2% of GDP in 1999.²⁵ At the higher education level, Government recurrent allocations as a share of the Federal budget, increased from 5% in 1990 to 22% in 1993 then fell to 16% in 1996.²⁶

The funding mechanisms for education must be re-thought. A sustainable financing arrangement must be developed if Nigeria is to regain the ground it has already lost and become a serious player in the new global economic, social and political order. Financial efficiency is critical and could be attained through the improvement of administrative and management practices, rationalization, much better and more realistic planning.

6 *Literacy and Community Education*

Non-formal education is also a large sub-sector that different regimes have tried to reform. This sub-sector has suffered from similar problems to those encountered in the formal sub-sector including poor quality of programs, shortages of space, under-qualified trainers, high dropout rates, gender and zone disparities, etc. In addition, there are other problems in need of attention that are unique to this sub-sector emanating from the nature of the targeted groups. The targeted groups include non-traditional learners such as learners in the Koranic schools, nomads, migrant fishermen and their families, large numbers of street children, etc.

The infrastructure for providing literacy and community education appears to be in place. But there is need for integration of development programs in other areas such as health, civics and life enhancing skills. Resources for the development, production and adaptation of programs to the needs of local situations should be identified and provided.

7 *Curriculum Relevance*

Issues about the relevance of the curriculum for the needs of Nigerian society have been indirectly referred to in the context of the failure to teach science, technology, and business studies effectively. There is concern about the relevance of teacher training programs for the school curriculum and the lack of flexibility to accommodate the changes needed in the school environment. Overall, the issue of how relevant the curriculum is to the changing needs of both Nigeria and the international arena has not been dealt with in a serious way.

The curriculum would benefit from serious review at all levels of education to make sure that it meets the needs of a democratic society, economy, and the Nigerian people. Curriculum relevance is vital for ensuring that social issues – such as the impact of HIV/AIDS, the introduction of communication and information technologies, and the alleviation of poverty – are addressed appropriately.

Making higher education relevant to the requirements of the new global economy is critical to support a national economy that is expected to change following a long period of stagnation and decline in the GNP per capita during the nineties. Concerns have been raised about the skewed growth of post-graduate education, mainly in disciplines for which there is low demand in society. Attempts to use funding as a steering mechanism for the development of post-graduate education by the NUC have been slow and the funding for this purpose has been limited. The need for high-level skills to help stimulate the economy has been underplayed in the debate in general – as evident in the proceedings of a conference organized by the NUC in 1996. The country needs to pay much greater attention to the development of high-level skills through post-graduate training for the production of new knowledge to meet the needs of Nigerians in their daily lives and for national survival in the global economy.

8 *Cultism in Higher Education*

The practice of cult activities is a problem that has its root in the society and has infiltrated the entire higher education system. The conditions in higher education institutions, such as overcrowding, deteriorated facilities, admissions malpractice and inadequately challenging academic programs have been blamed for encouraging the emergence of secret cults in the system. Cult activities have had an extremely negative impact on learning and discipline in the institutions.

Cult activities have been made illegal but the practices continue due to loopholes in the system which make it difficult for university authorities to prove allegations of membership in secret cults and the danger posed by returning cultists to campus after serving their punishment.

Safety on campuses and creation of a learning environment is essential for effective education and for the elimination or lessening of the anger and alienation that contribute to the attractiveness of cult activities. The challenges in this area are staggering due to the fact that they are rooted in the society and the political system. Cults operate underground with members not using their real names. Government legislation seems to be ineffective in stamping the practice out of higher education. This issue needs sustained attention by both government and individual institutions because it impacts negatively on the quality of the education offered.

9 *Examination Malpractice*

Intense competition for access to the system has led to widespread cheating in examinations for the purpose of obtaining higher scores to improve the chances of gaining admission to the next level of education. Cheating takes place in all areas for which examinations are required. Legislation has been passed to discourage this behavior, but enforcement has not been effective in addressing this problem.

Another factor contributing to examination malpractice is the early channeling of students into specific areas of study based on examination scores. The literature that raises questions about the benefits of channeling students at an early stage needs to be taken into serious consideration. Other issues that need to be addressed in channeling processes are problems relating to factors such as inequities in the provision of education and the uneven quality of education offered – especially in situations where the future welfare of individuals may be determined.

D. Conclusions

Major educational transformations are required in the Nigerian education system. The tasks ahead are numerous and daunting. It is quite clear that it will be impossible for these tasks to be tackled by the Government of Nigeria alone or with the help of a few international partners. The involvement of major Nigerian stakeholders, complemented by multiple partnerships with international agencies, NGOs, foundations, will be essential if the goals and potential of Nigeria are to be realized. The experience already gained through the implementation of various projects by the World Bank in the sector, particularly with the involvement of local stakeholders, has demonstrated the value of ensuring community ownership of projects. Lessons learnt from past experiences should inform future plans in the reform and development of education in Nigeria.

Nigeria has the potential to play a major role in the development of the West Africa. The transformation of its education system will have far reaching consequences throughout this region. The country's population represents 47% of the region's population and 43% of the region's GDP. Nigeria has played a leadership role through the West African peacekeeping force as part of international efforts to restore peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone.²⁷ It is also viewed as an educational reference point by many neighboring countries.

One of the great tragedies of the last decades is the collapse of an education system which was founded on sound developmental goals. The higher education system in Nigeria once boasted world class universities. These have now deteriorated to such an extent that local employers are not keen to employ their graduates and overseas institutions often have to put Nigerian graduates into remedial classes for them to cope with graduate studies. Given the hostility of the previous government to higher education, in particular, the return to democracy creates an opportunity to reform of the entire education system.

Now is an opportune moment for international agencies to renew their earlier cooperation in the reconstruction and development of Nigeria and its education system. These efforts should be informed by the lessons from successful projects in the past. There is evidence that the new government is serious about addressing the substantial problems of corruption that, in the past, served as a major constraint on national development and as an obstacle to international collaboration. Indeed, the New York Times (November 23, 1999) quotes a senior officer of *Integrity*, a group financed by American sources that monitors corruption worldwide, as saying that President Obasanjo has already achieved far more in the battle against corruption than was expected by Nigerian society. Perhaps the new century can herald the beginning of sustained development in Nigeria.

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