The Challenges of Access to University Education in Nigeria

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Abstract—Access to university education in Nigeria has become a serious issue due to sector's inability to provide an equal access to students that result in lowering the rate of student enrolment in higher education. This paper examines the issues entailing the education sector of Nigeria and inhibiting the process of providing equal access to university education. The research investigation shows that Nigerian Education sector is facing multiple issues related to administrative, social and infrastructural domains, few of the issues are, limited carrying capacity, quota system, inadequate fund, poor economic background of students, and absence of technology. To address these issues research recommends that introducing eLearning will enhance student's access to education and its cost effectiveness will equally bring access to economically or culturally restricted sector of Nigerian populace. ELearning is the most effective response to current educational access challenges and should be immediately pursued to achieve the positive outcomes in enhancing equal access to universities.

Keywords—Kinematic viscosity, McAllister model, specific gravity, petroleum fraction

I. INTRODUCTION

NIGERIAN education sector has not been able to achieve equal and easy access for the students and masses at large in connecting with university that result in lowering the student's enrolment and education standards. According to Usoro & Akuchie, (2014) technological enhancement is affecting every social structure of the world at large, the education sector is affected as its goal is to achieve the educational standards that surpass in connecting with the learner and inculcating the skills required to gain a healthy living. Hence the information and technology in the shape of eLearning enhances the ability of education sector to achieve its goals and objectives. The research explores the deficiencies in the Nigerian education system that is hindering the growth of education with in the country and tries to address it via eLearning techniques.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Understanding Access to University Education

United Nation and Universal declaration of human rights put forward the idea of the education attainment that reflects and emphasise on the humans right to gain education (Burke,

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2013). According to Meyer & Bradley, (2013) freedom of education attainment and its full access refers to the unbiased and robust educational opportunities at every stage, polishing of knowledge, skills, and abilities to participate in the improvement of the society. Therefore, lack of the accessing to the education institutes refers to various reasons such as, failure of enrolment, no opportunities to attend school usually, incompletion of programme of study, lack of opportunities of attaining desire objectives and also for the transitioning to the next level of the education (Ebisine, 2014).

B. Access issues in University Education

As for universal education it is meant to achieve by those students who access the primary, secondary and higher level education. In developed countries like America, the higher education demand and enrolment ratio is 100% whereas in Nigeria its 5% (Babalola, 2007). According to United States Embassy in Nigeria, (2012) Nigerian Ministry of Education has declared as shown in the figure that the average enrollment in 2010 was 37.6% for women and 62.4% for men Many of the youth even cannot matriculate keeping population size of Nigeria it becomes a major factor causing a decline. The demand and desire of the education in Nigeria is increasing and Nigeria needs to improved ad enhanced infrastructure in their universities number to accomplish the desires.

III. CHALLENGES TO ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

A. Administrative Issues

Quota System

Nigerian federal government introduced the quota system in the universities. The Federal Character Commission describes that it minimizing the entry requirement of states. It allotted 45% merit for the student's enrolment, 20% for less developed educated, 25% for catchment areas and 10% for prudence of vice-chancellor (Ukiwo, Education, horizontal inequalities and ethnic relations in Nigeria, 2007). Quota system is highly disadvantageous in the case that if a student from north who even scored less would get the enrolment instead of the student of south who even scored 300 from 400. Similar is the case with kwara region. Universities are losing the bright and more qualified students just because of this quota system and it also has the huge impact on university's efficiency (Akpan & Undie., 2007).

Carrying Capacity

University education demands are enhancing with the growth of the population. Universities ratio should also be increased with the increase in the demands. The desire of expansion for universities is started to known as carrying capacity. Researchers identifies that many universities are already carrying more students than their capacity. Over-populated universities refer to the facilities overstretching. Over populated universities means that the students are more enrolled from the limits of facilities available in the university. Such policies increases the quality but many of the students still remain uneducated because of the inaccessibility to the universities. In the year 2009, 90,000 candidates passed the university admission test but only 6000 get admission in the university because of university's carrying ability (Aluede, Idogho, & Imonikhe, 2012).

Funding

Expansion of the universities directly associated with the funding. Enhanced funding will accomplish the expansion phenomenon. In the year 1999, the budget of 11.2% allocated for education reduced to 5.9% in 2002 and 1.83% in 2003 (Aluede, Idogho, & Imonikhe, 2012). 8.42% of the budget was allocated for education uplift in 2012 for Nigeria. 26% is the minimum standard for the emerging countries. Lack of funding is also the major reason of reducing the access of many students to the universities.

B. Social issues

Socio-Economic Background

Ehiametalor (2005) publicized in his study that 70.2% of Nigerians are living with one dollar a day. Mohammed (2004) supported this fact that 89 million out of the 126.2 million Nigerians are poor and can't afford to pay for their children's education. Private educational institutes in Nigeria are not able to afford for majority of the people. High socio economic class with the privilege background can afford such private universities.

Sex Discrimination

By tradition and the religion sex discrimination is the major issue that cause the great hindrance in accessing the universities. Many of the young girls got married in their adult age due to their traditional and culture. Males are more preferred over the females in the culture of the Nigeria. Ehiametalor, (2005) stated that 353,834 females took the matriculation exam in 2004 and it drops down to 438,703 in 2003.

C. Structural Problems

Infrastructure/FacilitiesChallenge

Insufficient and superseded infrastructure and equipment and the poor library and laboratory facilities have become the major threat to the university. 15-30% of the infrastructure and the equipments are outdated. Moreover, the environment of the classrooms and the laboratories of the Universities of Nigeria

are not according to the standardized level of teaching and learning (Okebukola, 2008).

Inadequate Public Financing

According to Ajayi & Haastrup., (2011) usually it is observed that the lack of funds is the major cause of inaccessibility to the universities. According to the peer review the quality of the education in the Nigeria is directly affected by the funding system. Nigerian government spends 4% and 16% per year on their education department. This poor financing in Nigerian educational sector causes the inaccessibility to the universities. A very sparing number of candidates were being able to get enrolled in the universities.

Economic Constraints

According to Okebukola, (2013) Nigeria's annual income is lowest internationally and it is ranked as the world's 168th developing country. Nigeria faces the economic and population challenges like many countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Development of the population in Nigeria involved in aggravating the economic, social and environmental troubles. High rates of reproduction, high infant mortality and aged people further increase the population number that leads to the poor economic condition (Omole, et al., 2011).

Labour Market Failure (Low Absorptive Capacity of the Economy)

Ajayi and Adeniji in (2009) describes that the unemployment is the basic cause of the institutional failure. The high population growth and the economic failure is the cause of unemployment. Furthermore, the GDP rate of the Nigeria was 2.8% while the population is 2.6%. The development f the GDP rate to the 2.8% is showing the development of the economic.

D. E-learning

According to Garrison, (2011) if an individual is learning using the contemporary technologies, like that of ICT then it can be stated that the learning process is via eLearning. The following table shows statistics for Nigeria for eLearning enablers.

Indicator	Value
Population	140 Million
GDP (US Dollars)	393
Phone subscribers per 100 inhabitants	14.5
Computers	860,000
Internet hosts	1,094
Internet Users	750,000
Radio house holds	15.3 million
TV house holds	6.3 million

Source: (zercomsystems, 2009)

The E-learning can be employed at any stage of the learning process as it complements the learning and improves the learner's retention. In pre-school stage the students can be involved using an interactive game that involves learning spellings, so the child will learn while playing (Huang, Lin, & Huang., 2012). Similarly the eLearning is even more effective for the university students as it has the power to engage the

students in the process of learning virtually from any place with any dependence on face-to-face learning (Paechter, Maier, & Macher, 2010).

IV. NEED FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

The need for Open and Distance Education (ODE) in Nigeria is an important issue for several cogent reasons. Firstly, the vast majority of the population lives below poverty level. They are unable to attend urban based institutions and thus remain deprived of higher education despite their superior merit. Secondly, those who joined workforce without completing their studies or education due to family commitments are unable to combine their work with studies and very few of them who have strong desire for higher studies could not do so because of the limited offer in the traditional institution of higher learning. Thirdly, the tradition of childhood, early marriage and religious belief in the country deprives the majority of female population from higher education. Besides, there are some other usual factors like physical disabilities, remoteness of localities, exorbitant tuition fees in most privately owned Universities and so on. These are some of the major issues responsible for why millions of Nigerians are deprived of higher education despite their knee interest and eligibilities. ODE provides avenues for higher education for such a vast under-privileged population. Nigeria is generously endowed with human resources that need to be well equipped with literacy and skills to contribute to economic development, which is badly needed for this country. Thus, it is crystal clear that the way forward is to embrace ODE using both hands and supported by all necessary financial and infrastructural commitments.

A. Basics To E-learning

The e-learning strategies when employed can enhance the learning outcome and can allow the students to access the university from anywhere in Nigeria (John, Pfalzer, FAPTA, Glickman, Masaaki, & Sabus, 2012). The E-learning will raise standards of education, Improve quality, remove learning barriers, inculcating employment skills, and along side widening participation to achieve the educational goals (Brophy, 2013).

B. E- Learning A Logical Strategy

Sam, (2011) while discussing the potential of e learning argues e learning is very practical and logical strategy to enhance the learning environment of Nigeria using the technology. He continues that incorporating the ICT technologies is integeral to execution of such a strategy. ICT work as a road map to revamping the education sector and allowing increased access to the students in the universities. E learning strategy has been defined by many researchers as an appropriate strategy to redefine education, the researchers explain that students are empowered to connect with teachers from their home or even bedroom hence entering a classroom room is noway a necessity. This is a very effective strategy since housewives and other members that are too busy or financially constraint to visit the university campus can interact with teachers to learn new skills and enhanced knowledge without having any dependency of a classroom environment.

Mason, Mastro, & Wirth, (2013) has identified that Nigeria lacks the infrastructural capacity to implement the e learning strategy and this situation aggravates due to lack of access to the technology. Furthermore, it has been argued by researchers that universities in Nigeria lacks the commitment that is required for the enhancement of means to impart education and providing equal and easy access to the masses (Kamba, 2009). The universities in Nigeria are not enough to meet the need of the population of right and access to education hence it is very much imperative to improve the existing infrastructure where e-learning is the most viable strategy and its not just allowing access to university rather it is about fulfilling the most basic purpose of the educational institutions that is to impart skills and creativity among masses so that they become aware on a cognitive level and become a positive force of the development of country (Wagner, Garippo, & Lovaas, 2011).

V. DISCUSSION

The usage of e-learning being an effective technique of learning and teaching could make the curriculum system effective and faster. E-learning refers to the electronic media delivery system which includes internet, intranet, audio, video, CD ROM and interactive TV. Implementation of the eLearning system will eventually enhance the university performance and turn towards the complete automatic system of administration, which will run through the software of the learning management system (LMS). Littlejohn & Pegler, (2014) explains eLearning method as a different from the traditional classroom environment, student's support and collaboration is required for the success of the program. Students' performance rating system is easier on e-learning system than any other system like, their performance will be recorded and tracked through the system and then the teacher can easily distinguish the high achievers among the average and low achievers (Wang & Ran, 2011). Egbokhare & Iyawe., (2013) explains eLearning can reduce the hurdles and provide a systematic way forward for Nigerian universities. If the universities apply the e-learning system in their institute's students will acquire education even sitting at home (Egbokhare & Iyawe., 2013).

Superseded infrastructure, outdated equipment and the poor library and laboratory facilities have become the major threat to the universities in Nigeria. 15-30% of the infrastructure and the equipments are outdated. Advanced technology and the standardized, updated equipments enhance the overall performance of the institute. Provision of books and journals, global library and information resources from all over the globe can be accessed by the e-learning system. Students can get benefits of global digital library and can have better rescuers and results than the university outdated library. E-learning technique could be the best technique to engage more students and it fills the capacity gap to some extent as well.

Students can learn from any part of the university, classroom presence is not essential and required (Oye, Salleh, & Iahad, 2011). Meaningful process of the e-learning will engage the five cognitive stages i.e. selecting words, image selection, words organizing, image organizing and integration. Learner will surely and effectively learns when the teacher will engage the learner in theses five phases (Oye, Salleh, & Iahad, 2011).

According to Anasi & Ali., (2014) Nigerian culture and tradition usually don't allow the adult girls to acquire education. By tradition and the religion sex discrimination is the major issue which cause the great hindrance in accessing the universities. Many of the young girls got married in their adult age due to their traditional and culture. Males are more preferred over the females in the culture of the Nigeria. E-learning could facilitate those girls, who want to acquire education. Through e-learning technique girls can learn from anywhere.

Teacher is the major factor which affects the institute's mission, vision, and the performance. It is describes that the surplus researchers verifies that the teacher's quality and motivation affects the institutes considerably. University student's enrolment, participation and achievements are associated with the academic staff. Federal Ministry of Education (2009) identifies that there are 27394 academic staff members in the Nigerian university system in 2006 but 50,000 members are required for effective course delivery and performance. The short fall and reduction in the academic staff members would lead the university towards the ineffectiveness, low productivity and the fall in quality of teaching in the University of Nigeria. All these problems required a comprehensive, viable, effective, efficient and cost beneficial solution which can enhance the productivity by keeping the benefits and the most viable solution is e-learning for such problems which can be beneficial for the educational institutes.

Analysis of literature presented by various authors have led to the findings that eLearning facilitates learning of students that are enrolled in regular or even distance learning programs. As from the research it is evident that Nigeria lacks the requisite infrastructure that is imperative for the successful implementation of the eLearning system eventually allowing access to the millions of students in an effective manner. Moreover, the facilities available to the universities are adequate enough to kick start the growth of eLearning strategy. the power issues in Nigeria are seriously threatening the implementation of the eLearning as a primary strategy. Human resource is critical to the success of the eLearning experience where more the interactive communication is made more one learns how and why should be strategy implemented.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Training and Development & Retention of Skilled Workforce

Teacher is the major factor that affects the institute's mission, vision, and the performance. ELearning enables

teacher to communicate, teach, evaluate and maintain records more effectively. It also helps in reduction of dependencies on various factors like physical presence. Nigerian University System can increase ICT as a teaching medium and in this way majority of the lecturers will teach through ICT. It creates a new system of online teaching that opens a way for the students to access the University. These techniques will enables large number of students to get education from their homes cost effectively. Admissions and quota systems will no longer be the problem for the students to take admission in Nigerian university.

Mandate all Universities to Establish Distance Learning Programs.

Federal ministry of education should direct all the universities of Nigeria to implement and use the e-learning technique in their institutes, which will provide the accessing opportunity to the students to get education from the universities easily. This way of mandating all universities will help the students to access the universities easily and acquire their education. ELearning can reduce their hurdles.

Revision of Education Trust Fund Support

The Education Trust Fund provides the funds to the universities for the production of journals and the books. Such financial assistance should engage the establishment of the e-learning centre and the manufacturing of the online education resources. Greater number if the students who don't get enrolled in the universities would surely get education from this medium. ELearning will provide the platform to the students who desire university education to learn and develop their capabilities, skills and knowledge.

Deploying Enhance Project Management Principles

The Universities or the Government doesn't require gathering all the educational funds by themselves and initiating every project at the expense of taxpayer. The educational institutions with the backing of government can deploy project management principles and form public private partnership, where government will be offering some concessions to the participants to attract their cooperation.

Curbing of Financial Waste in Nigerian University System

Scope and Quality eLearning programs depend upon the financial effectiveness where the universities need to control their finances and curb the waste to be effective Universities ruined their budget on irrelevant and unessential elements which if well utilized can make difference. University's wasted finances should be used in the expansion of the facilities of university to accommodate more students and facilities. A University running on an effective financial system is capable of managing advancement in eLearning that is imperative for the success of the program. The more facilities will get better the more students will be to acquire education.

VII. CONCLUSION

Nigeria is certainly the popular African country that is famous for the Nigerian Universities. Various challenges of

access to university education in Nigeria such as quota System, carrying capacity, socio-economic condition etc. could be minimized by the eLearning. Effective implementation of eLearning programs in various ways providing training and development for Nigerian university faculty, retraining of academic staff that is experienced in using ICT for delivering education to embrace e-learning. The research has advised the government to take action and make it mandatory for all universities to establish distance-learning programs so that maximum students can gain access to the university education not just young but also housewives can gain education even from their homes so this strategy will ultimately enhance the access to education and increase the education rate. ELearning provides the platform to the students who desire university education to access the university, learn and develop their capabilities, skills and knowledge.

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