



## UNIVERSITIES, KNOWLEDGE SOCIETIES AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: VALUES, INSTITUTIONS AND CAPACITIES

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**W**e live in a historic epoch when new social and technological forces are imposing monumental changes in the world we inhabit. In the process they are redefining our world, restructuring the institutions of our society and imposing on us new values and new cultural manifestations – globally, nationally and locally. These new forces impose the necessity to re-examine the nature and mission of the university as the primary institution that shapes the intellectual landscape, defines and conserves the values of the society even as it projects new visions of a desirable future in the emerging new world. It is a world in transition: intellectual, social, economic, cultural and political. In this new world of constant change, what

will be the nature and character of the university? What will be the new mission and vision of the university and what new roles and new functions would we expect from it in the Nigerian situation?

### **The Global Environment**

In the last few months the world has watched dumbfounded and nearly helpless as the dramatic changes in the global financial market have

overwhelmed one national economy after another. This has demonstrated most poignantly how inter-linked and integrated the global economy has become. Even our peripheral economy, despite the assurances, is not immune from the contagion. The inter-connectedness is one more illustration of the phenomenon of the globalisation of relationships amongst the nations of the world, which is why our new world has been euphemistically referred to as 'the global village'.

It has been facilitated by the phenomenon of instant communication made possible by modern technologies that facilitate the transfer of vast amounts of money or other data across national boundaries at the touch of a button. But the economic is only one facet of the changes in the global environment. Thus, it has been claimed, we are in the midst of webs of worldwide economic, cultural, political and technological interconnectedness, the driving forces of which are to be found in the dynamics of technology, communication, international relations and the global diffusion of risks from the ecological to the financial. It is a world in flux – a world in which the dialectics of change and uncertainty enforces the global and the local to intersect in complex ways, reshaping conditions of contemporary social life with many unintended consequences: global warming, terrorism, ethnic and regional conflicts etc. It is a world not only in transition but also driven into new transformations.

Howbeit, there are features which are easily manifest; the

growth in economic inter-connectedness within and among regions of the world has spawned multi-faceted and uneven effects and consequences across different communities:

- ♦ inter-regional and global competition while challenging the old hierarchies of order has generated new inequalities of wealth, power, privilege and knowledge;
- ♦ transnational and trans-border problems have multiplied and in the process have called into question the traditional accountability functions of national governments;
- ♦ the expansion of international governance at regional and international levels calls into purview some features of the emerging world order and the question of whose interest it might serve.

These developments impose new patterns of thought on politics, economics and socio-cultural change. It demands new responses not only from politicians and policy makers but also from the universities who must provide the new paradigms for understanding and interpreting the changes in the nature and pattern of communication, the diffusion and acceleration in the velocity of technological change, the spread of capitalism, and the new and emergent forces of democratic governance. Indeed, the universities will need to provide a new framework of ethical and institutional principles that must guide our understanding of this new world, and the appropriate methodologies for the proper investigation and organisation of human affairs and relationships.

## The Nigerian Environment

There has been a persistent and emergent viewpoint that presumes that contemporary Nigeria is a society in which values have collapsed, and in which there is a high degree of social anomie and alienation. Adiele Afigbo has underlined five elements to this state of affairs, namely,

- ♦ *“ .....an unbalanced political structure with unfair and unbalanced distribution or allocation of political power;*
- ♦ *an unjust economic structure which makes it possible for the developed world to parasitise on Nigeria at the same time as the urban areas of Nigeria and the elite parasitise on the rural areas and on the masses;*
- ♦ *an unjust social system in which the educated and semi-educated, the bourgeoisie and petite-bourgeois fellow travelers equate and run the country in the belief that to satisfy their class interest is to satisfy all interests...*
- ♦ *the reign of a myopic cosmology which equates matter and materialism with all there is to reality, and thus the pursuit of material abundance with the pursuit of the good life, and its attainment with the attainment of the goal of life.... and (finally)*
- ♦ *an ethical blindness or disorientation which has created a situation in which the bad and the ugly, indiscipline and licentiousness, fraud and falsehood, bribery and corruption, brute force and violence walk our streets in broad-day light thus driving their opposite into the shade....”*

Two eminent Nigerian historians, Ayandele and Tamuno have also come to similar conclusions. This state of affairs have far reaching political consequences by institutionalising a predatory and Hobbesian type of politics that stultifies real development. As Claude Ake had observed

*"...Politically disenfranchised and set upon by state violence the people are no longer available for supporting the state or its development project. Some of them have retreated to ethnic or communal identity and local concerns. Political repression has forced highly educated and talented people to become political or economic refugees in other countries, their talents lost to the cause of national development...."*

Not surprisingly the unsatisfactory social and political status of Nigeria has been translated into less than acceptable economic performance. In the 2007-2008 Global Competiveness Report of the World Economic Forum, Nigeria is ranked 95<sup>th</sup> out of 131 countries despite our oil and gas. In the performance indicators in specific sectors we scored 103<sup>rd</sup> on the state of our institutions, 119<sup>th</sup> on the state of our infrastructure, 124<sup>th</sup> on education and basic health. On only two sectors do we appear barely competitive, namely, macroeconomic environment (28<sup>th</sup>) and sophistication of the financial market (56<sup>th</sup>). The turmoil in the global financial market would seem necessarily poised to deliver some measurable impact, howbeit, unpleasant. In any case, it is now

fairly established that development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are driven by values and human capabilities. This is underlined by the observation of Friedman that

*"... Hardwork, diligence, patience, discipline and a sense of obligation to fulfill our commitments clearly makes us more productive economically. Thriftiness fosters savings, which enhances our productivity by making capital investment possible. Education likewise increases our individual capabilities as well as our stock of public knowledge"...*

Given our present state of social anomie and normlessness, it is fair

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***Derivatively, the inability of the Nigerian economy and society to achieve its full potential is as much attributable to the moral crisis inherent in the management of the economy engendered by the high level of perceived sharp practices, for example, in the capital market, in addition to the assumed high levels of fraud and corruption in the polity generally.***

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to expect the current state of **economic growth without development** to persist unless there is a radical redirection of our value system. In other words, in our circumstances, as I have stated elsewhere, economic growth must acquire a moral impetus that will drive our pursuit of the desirable social values - thus fostering a synergy between our moral means and ends, the enhancement of our welfare and the society's wellbeing. This is emphasised by events in the international environment when it is remembered that at the bottom of the financial meltdown in the United States, Europe and Japan in the last few weeks has been the erosion of the ethical values of **trust** and **confidence** in the operators of the system and in the health of the international system. So the current global economic crisis is as much an ethical crisis as it is an economic crisis. Derivatively, the inability of the Nigerian economy and society to achieve its full potential is as much attributable to the moral crisis inherent in the management of the economy engendered by the high level of perceived sharp practices, for example, in the capital market, in addition to the assumed high levels of fraud and corruption in the polity generally. Hence, our economy and society will, *ipso facto*, flourish when we clean up our acts, the leadership and the led.

### **Education, Elites and Values**

Adiele Afigbo has suggested that the problems of Nigeria, indicated above, derive from the quality of the Nigerian peoples. He suggests that the quality of a people derives from the

quality of their education when he observes:

*“... the near-complete political, economic and moral collapse of the country is the collapse of the educational system. It is the total failure of that system to produce in a hundred years or so, men and women who are able to plan and run her economy and politics honestly and efficiently. Such social virtues as hard work, honesty and patriotism on which the well-being of any nation rests are the products of a sound education. They are not inherited. Even those virtues which are intrinsic in the soul can be awakened and made to ... blossom by means of a sound education...”*

According to Afigbo, each society and its values are the creation of its elite which he defines as the most highly educated and the best informed of their age and region. According to him:

*“...colonial Nigeria was, like the rest of the British Empire, the creation of the elite of the empire, of the cream of the empire’s educated class, who at the time held in their own hands the political and economic power of the empire and sought to use it to create a world in which their interest was dominant and secure... these crises (of Nigeria) have been fed and sustained since the dawn of independence by the indigenous Nigerian elite – that is to say, the pick of the bunch when we think of formal and*

*informal education whether in the theoretical fields or in practical life, whether in politics, economics or social life. For good or ill this elite is almost an exact copy of the imperial elite whom they chased out somewhat prematurely, that is before they had fully imbibed the theory and practice that made their British nation and empire. The one thing the local elite learnt very well was how to equate their class interest with national interest and how to pursue it with remorseless dedication and tireless energy...”*

Some may be tempted to consider Afigbo’s evaluation of the performance of the Nigerian elite as rather harsh but it is difficult not to accept that it contains more than the proverbial grain of salt, especially when we compare Nigeria’s performance in its socio-economic development with the performance of its peers at independence – Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea, all of whom by the relevant indices were behind Nigeria then. Indeed, the manner of an elite’s commitment to the development of its society is often reflected in its commitment and pursuit of education. For example, while in the early years of independence the three regional governments of Northern, Eastern and Western Nigeria devoted on a regular basis more than 30 per cent of their budget to education, the Federal government of Nigeria has devoted an average of a mere 9.1 per cent of its annual budget to education in the years 1990-2008 (Table 1 and

Figures 1 and 2). Indeed, as incredible as it may sound, the Federal Government’s allocation to education was a beggarly 4.1 per cent in 1991, 7 per cent in 2001, and in the year 2003 was a lowly 1.83 per cent, according to Ikharehon (see Table 2).

It is instructive to reflect that this is at a time that two major developments had taken place in the global environment particularly relevant to development. First, the conceptual framework of economic development has shifted from emphasis on the natural resources base of a nation to the knowledge and skills base of the nation, and specifically on its capacity for scientific, engineering and technology innovations as the driver of socio-economic development. Additionally, the economically advanced nations are those which are presently evolving into knowledge societies. This was underlined by Toffler when in 1992 he had observed that:

*“...To day, despite all the inequalities of income and wealth, the coming struggle for power (in the world) will increasingly turn into a struggle over the distribution of, and access to, knowledge. That is why, unless we understand how and to whom knowledge flows, we can neither protect ourselves against the abuse of power nor create the better (and) more democratic society that tomorrow’s technologies promise. The control of knowledge is the crux of tomorrow’s world wide struggle*

*for power in every human institution..."*

And the emergence of the ubiquitous internet in the first decade of the century confirms this. It is against this background that we must assess the recent commitment of our political leaders to the ambition to make Nigeria one of the 20 top economies of the world by the year 2020 A.D.

### **Universities, Knowledge and Leadership**

Universities, throughout human history, have been essential to the advancement of societies. This has been so because of the university's primacy in the pursuit of truth and excellence, which is why teaching and research are so important to the university's mission. In the process, they have served societies as the storehouse of knowledge, the conservator of values, the nursery of leadership, the purveyor of visions and the conscience of the society. Indeed, in each of the critical historical epochs in which the emergence of revolutionary and new innovations and technological advances lifted human society to the next level, such as the invention of writing or printing, it was the university or its equivalent in its accustomed historical mission that harnessed, consolidated, propagated and directed the new inventions and facilitated their diffusion into the wider society, while moderating and modulating their impact.

The normative aspect of the university's mission arises from the fundamental nature of the pursuit of

truth and excellence. A vital ingredient for this mission is the presence of a wholesome integrity which is the foundation of research and scholarship. Integrity, however, flourishes only when other values are also present in the society: freedom, justice and fairness, equity and equality of opportunities. While universities make their impact on their societies, the social environment leaves its imprint on the university. The dominant social and economic conditions in a given society can influence, by modifying human behaviour, the norms of a society, including the definition of duties and obligations of the educated sensibility. Such norms can become part of the ruling ethos and traditions that may guide human actions and interactions. The definition and perception of such other values as merit, honour and rights become imprinted in the psyche of the ruling elite. Rewards, privileges and incentives for proper behaviour are part of the social code that normally confers admission into membership of the elite in a given society.

In the normal course of events, power in a given society can be acquired through the appropriation of knowledge, wealth and coercive violence. This is why in most civilised societies the ruling elite consists of the intellectual elite, the business elite and the military elite. Since of all three sub-categories, the intellectual elite - philosophers, scientists, men of letters etc - are usually accorded greater respect and honour in the society, the university as the nursery and abode of such an elite becomes the primary and dominant institution that charts

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the course of the future development and character of the society. It is this residual respect for men of intellect that has made the roaring trade in honorary degrees such a profitable venture in our universities. But the garb does not make the monk.

It would appear, in recent times, as if the Nigerian university has lost confidence in its ability to offer leadership to the society and to accept its normative function. This is manifested in new trends in the management and life of these institutions, such as the widespread presence of plagiarism among the staff and students of our higher institutions, the general diminution in the quality of teaching and research, which invariably manifests in poor quality in the products or the quality of new ideas that emanate from our universities.

One consequence of these developments is the apparent loss of confidence of the leaders of the universities – the professoriate- in their ability to give leadership to the society not only as intellectuals but as managers of men and resources. Time there was when universities imposed, expected and demanded higher standards of thought and performance in the pursuit of the business of the universities and

could, therefore, stand on that higher moral pedestal to demand better performance from the leaders of the wider society, including the managers of the public service. The most telling sign of the universities' loss of confidence in themselves and their consequent abdication of their normative responsibilities is in the type and quality of the men and women that they choose to honour with the once prized honorary degrees. The almost consistent absence of pre-eminent Nigerian intellectuals and scholars amongst the long list of honorary graduands of the universities in recent times advertises most boldly the universities' abdication of the most fundamental of its mission – the affirmation of the primacy of the intellect in human affairs, and the promotion by example of the values worthy of pursuit and thus deserving of honour in the affairs of a civilised society. When the *nouvea riche* or *political apparitschiks*, with limited track record in selfless and excellent service to the society and even lesser record in socially responsible and acceptable behaviour, are honoured ever so often and with such obscene fanfare, the universities are proclaiming to the youth and the society, generally, the current ethical and mongrel values of a philistine society whose future, if history is our guide, is mired in conflicts, disaster and eventual extinction. The journey to the ignoble present is a long and painful tale whose early signs were always present in the lack of intellectual depth and vision amongst our political leaders, and the absence of a coherent vision of a desirable

future for the society by the elite. The universities, if truth must be told, have been more of the victims rather than the villains, but that is a story for another day. Yet, the question must be asked: where do we go from here – as institutions and as a society?

### Universities, Development and the Emergence of the Knowledge Societies

As indicated earlier, the content of development in the modern and contemporary world has undergone a fundamental and radical change, a paradigm shift, from dependence on natural resources to dependence on knowledge, skills and expertise in the given nation. As a result, there are now three phases in the trajectory of the evolution of societies in their development, namely, from the *factor driven economies*, through the *efficiency driven economies* to the *innovation driven economies*. The latter are the economies which are presently evolving into knowledge-based economies in which the innovative capacity of their citizens, honed by their knowledge base and sharpened by the science, engineering and technology content of their education, as reflected in their universities, is the driver of their development into knowledge societies built on innovation. We ourselves are currently at the level of the basic *factor driven* stage in our development. As Michael Porter and his collaborators have demonstrated there are twelve critical pillars on which the development of a given economy is anchored in the contemporary world: from the pillars vital in a factor driven

economy or in the efficiency driven economies to those that shape the innovation driven economies as the case may be (*Figure 3*). A close examination of the twelve critical pillars demonstrates quite clearly the vital and critical position of human capital in modern development and, hence, the place of the university in that endeavour. It is necessary to emphasise that the progression into knowledge societies is facilitated in a society where the institutions exist that can:

- ♦ develop and improve human capital (universities);
- ♦ accelerate technical progress through improvement of existing processes and material (industries);
- ♦ improve the business environment for efficient performance (government); and
- ♦ create opportunities for the development of R and D capacity, the infusion of imported knowledge and endogenous domestication (the universities, government and industries acting together.)

All these it can be said must be achieved within an organisational framework that facilitates wealth creation and the improvement in the quality of life of the citizens of the given nation. It should now be obvious that the challenge of developing our society to assure a better quality of life for our people in the contemporary world redounds on our ability to develop a culture that promotes the values of integrity and excellence, as it builds the institutions that sustain and drive a democratic and competitive environment, in which the human capacities to indigenise and

domesticate innovation flourishes in a prosperous, peaceful and ordered society. That is the primary challenge for Nigeria which can best be pursued through adequate provision and mobilisation of the universities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

But we need to know the measure of our problems and the challenge; or as Chinua Achebe would put it, we need to know where (and I would add when) the rain started to beat us, in the universities and in the nation. At the national level our progression to the apex of development as symbolised by the knowledge societies faltered when we abandoned investment in the people – in their education and in their health – the two pillars of human capital development. In the universities, the rot set in when we abandoned the rigours of research and scholarship and allowed political forces to invade the ivory tower to dictate the details of a university's leadership, structure and even management ethos.

In the process, we accepted lower standards of expectation and consequently of performance. When the late Mbakwe decided to establish the new university in a secondary school, with immediate effect, the intellectual elite acquiesced and in the process lowered the bar of what a university ought to be – a monument to vision and the highest standards of excellence as captured symbolically in the architecture, infrastructure and the general environment for academic pursuit. The best projects and programmes, universities not excepted, do not only need planning but also persistent and persisting application

to the ultimate goal: the construction of a monument to human intellectual achievement and the fulcrum of national development, embodying within its walls as an institution the imagination and creativity of the best in the society.

The lesson is clear: we must always match our ambitions with resources and as a corollary, we must plan always within a framework defined by our intellectual vision and imagination, remembering always that the university, any university is not a local creation but a national, and even an international institution judged in its performance and

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production on an international scale of values. That is why it is the responsibility of the statutory organs of the university – the Senate and the Council – to determine early the focus, the scope and the direction and content of a university's intellectual and normative compass. A university cannot be a jack of all trades and master of none but rather a centre of rationality, professionalism and knowledge anchored on the peculiar and specific needs of its socio-economic and socio-cultural environment, and pursuing to the highest standards of excellence and utility the training and development of leaders in specified areas of study, research, scholarship and human endeavour.

#### **The Universities and the Future of Nigerian Development**

One of the often remarked paradoxes of the Nigerian situation is that a nation as prodigally endowed in oil, gas and a varied profusion of at least 34 critical minerals including gold, coal and iron which are essential for industrialisation could have such a dismal level of poverty, decrepit infrastructure and unemployment as is presently the lot of Nigeria. It is clear then that there must be something we have not got right. As indicated earlier our international competitive index is very low. Perhaps, as a strategy to turn around the situation we have been inundated with new messages by the political leaders. First, it was the proclamation of a seven-point agenda that consists of the following:

- ♦ power and energy
- ♦ food security
- ♦ wealth creation

- human capital development
- Land reforms
- Mass transit
- Security

A close examination of this list shows a mix-up between primary and strategic elements (Human Capital, Security, Power and Energy), instrumental agents (Mass Transit, Land Reform, Food Security) and the desirable end-product (Wealth Creation)- all relevant in the process of development. As presently enumerated, it will remain a wish-list until the strategic and logical linkages and interactive dynamics between them can be disentangled and a coherent plan of action deriving from a clearly thought out process of prioritisation made evident (see Figure 4). A clutter of ideas cannot produce a logical and holistic programme of action until the main elements of the interactive matrix that derives from the dynamics of the main system can be discerned. For example, of the primary elements - human capital, security and power and energy, which of these is the most strategically positioned to drive the overall system both in the short and longer terms and, therefore, should be accorded the highest priority? Of the instrumental agents, (Food Security, Land Reform, Mass Transit) which are the most urgent and likely to impact on the greatest proportion of the population and thus will conduce to that desirable threshold of social stability which is needed to enhance the achievement of the goals indicated by the choice of primary and priority elements? And within what philosophical and social framework are we pursuing

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the end of wealth creation – for the few or for the many, and within what context – equity, justice or the survival of the fittest? And we must remember that wealth creation has in recent times translated in the context of unregulated capitalism into the survival of the greediest and least ethical, as recent events in the American banking industry have illustrated. And we must recall also that in modern times the socialist option no longer exists as a viable social engineering praxis. What all this suggests is the necessity for the universities to upgrade through their role as the centres of national intellectual discourse, the breadth and depth of the thinking process that goes into political thought and action in the emerging new and internationally competitive Nigeria.

It is in the light of this otherwise cluttered agenda that the proclamation has been made of our ambition to be among the top twenty economies by the year 2020AD. As desirable as this goal is, the quality of the thinking and the planning that must underpin its pursuit is ultimately

the basis for the mobilisation of the intellectual resources of the nation in the single-minded pursuit of the goal. It is the universities which must pursue this responsibility, although we must always bear in mind that the viability and feasibility of a vision of the future, such as represented by vision 20:20:20, must involve ultimately the mobilisation and active participation of the entire citizenry. So where do we go from here?

### **The Universities and the Building of a Knowledge Society**

It should now be obvious that the proclamation of a vision for the year 2020AD in which Nigeria is among the top 20 economies of the world is, in reality, a declaration of the ambition by Nigeria's political leaders to propel Nigeria's development into a knowledge society. As desirable as this vision might appear we must enquire as to the precedent conditions for its realisation and how prepared we are for the journey.

In the light of all that has been said so far it should be obvious that we need to pursue two concurrent revolutionary programmes of national redemption at the same time – to redeem our values and build on the normative ingredients that can sustain a democratic environment of freedom, equity and justice in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, even as we will also build and align our economy as (most) consistent with the development of a knowledge economy in this century. The successful pursuit of either programme, the ethical and the economic, depends on the philosophical and functional state of our universities. And we must



remember that a knowledge society is built on a solid ground of innovation founded on creativity and imagination. Do the conditions exist presently in the Nigerian universities to pursue these goals? Put bluntly are the universities and the nation geared intellectually, emotionally and spiritually for this onerous and epochal challenge? The fairest assessment is to say that presently the jury is out although pointers are suggestively in the opposite direction.

The state of the social sciences in the Nigerian universities does not presently afford us a reasonable basis for confidence that the universities are capable of charting the viable and sustainable route map demanded for a new ethical environment of the future so vital for the pursuit of our ambitions; the ground breaking research in philosophy, law, psychology, sociology or economics which are all essential and relevant in defining the ground rules for the emergence of a just, disciplined and ethically regenerated Nigeria are presently non-existent. The state of the infrastructure for science, engineering and technology and the quality of research in the areas essential for the building of the new knowledge base, do not provide a reasonable basis, either for hope or confidence under existing conditions. The current ranking of Nigerian universities in the international competitive environment does not provide any basis for reasonable expectations of instant miracles. Should we then consign our hope to the realms where the counsels of despair must rule? The answer should be no. But the odds are daunting.

It has been suggested that to achieve the goal of 20:20/20 the economy must grow at a rate of at least 13-15 per cent sustained for at least a decade and it is hoped that this will be sufficient to transport us to the category of middle-income economies. We must remember that as we endeavour to pull ourselves up, our competitors will not be at a standstill waiting for us. It is sheer unrealism to project this historically unique expectation of the desirable economic growth rate in a nation lacking in the most basic infrastructure and whose educational system is afflicted with serious deficiencies. These problems have made the informed and the knowledgeable to question whether the educational system was “*fit for purpose*” in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – in its structure, products, relevance, philosophy, imagination, creativity and vision! What is more, the planners of the economy and the directors of the educational system have not told us with which magic wand they hope to conjure us up to speed, against the background of the fact that of the 12 pillars of international competitiveness we have not made any progress at all on ten of these pillars. Additionally, of the four conditions for the evolution of robust factor driven and efficiency driven economies into knowledge economies, earlier identified, we have not made any start at all. Is the vision for 20:20 an illusion then or a forlorn hope?

### Going Forward

In the light of all we have said so far, any effort at constructing a route map towards driving Nigeria into a knowledge society in which

innovation is the main driver and in which an industrial economy is the half-way house must take three new factors into account. The nature, goals, methodology and even content of education have been transformed by the miracle of instant communication. We now have the phenomenon of virtual universities. So universities need no longer be identified by their location only. Secondly, the phenomenon of fast-paced technological obsolescence brought about by the accelerating pace of technological changes makes it mandatory for the universities, technical institutions and even industries to embark on regular and continuing education of students, staff and even of the general population. So we are evolving into the age of permanently continuing education. Finally, the emergence of digitalisation has transformed the content and methodology of education in new ways that enforce and enhance the pace of innovation. It is within this new environment facilitated by these new developments that the mission of the universities has to be redefined and pursued. The university can no longer be an ivory tower – it must now engage in the business of education fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century not merely as the training ground of the elite and the leadership, but also as a vehicle for educating the mass of the citizenry, in its role as the driver of the process of marketisation and democratisation of the business of education. It is this imperative that has now refocused modern university education as a market-driven enterprise in which off-shore campuses of the elite institutions

of the western world – American, British and even French - are proliferating in the Middle East and in the Far East. It is also the reason that we have a regular army of recruiters for British universities in Nigeria, more or less on a regular basis. What do these new developments portend for the universities and for our nation?

One consequence of these new developments is the explosive multiplication of information and the emergence of a new epistemology in which the boundaries of knowledge, which traditionally demarcated disciplines have become fuzzy. Thus is enforced new patterns of inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary interconnected-ness in the pursuit and characterisation of new knowledge. Hence Nigerian universities must equip themselves to become active participants in the emerging new bazaar of intellectual competitiveness. It is clear then that the days of compartmentalisation of knowledge are fast receding. Unless we are conscious of these possibilities and eventualities we would unwittingly slide into a new era of dependency whose socio-cultural and socio-political consequences can be far reaching. The rampaging expansion of the English language in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, deriving from the technological exportation of the language through the internet is already a major threat to many indigenous languages, including our own. As it has appropriately been said: culture is identity and technology through education can become a

threat to our cultural identity unless we take the appropriate steps to indigenise and domesticate through our educational system, and particularly through the universities, the context of technology in our environment as the Japanese have done successfully and as the Chinese are doing presently. In the final analysis, the only viable insurance policy for our autonomous economic and cultural development is our control of the processes that determine the values, institutions and capacities of the new age that technology and economics have unleashed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### Concluding Remarks

It is now obvious that our ability to achieve the goals we have set for ourselves in terms of our development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will depend on the robustness of our values and the institutions that drive the effort, as well as the capacities we have built into them and the capabilities inherent in our people. It will be our values and institutions that will drive the economy in the desired directions. It is in this context that we must note a most worrisome trend in the perception and projection of values by our political leaders. My grandfather is reputed to have advised his children to have no business dealings with a man who has no fear of God or with his sibling who has no sense of shame. In recent times, some of our political leaders have behaved as if they belonged to both categories. Some have been arraigned before the courts of law accused of various charges of malfeasance. What has been most worrying in the

circumstances have been the pictures of hordes of supporters who surround the accused in the premises of our courts of law, as if they were participants in a political rally, and the pictures of these accused beaming with smiles, as if they were heroes returning from a successful and victorious campaign. It is as if our leaders and their followers have lost all sense of what is right and what is proper in a functional human society. We seem to have lost the sense of the dividing line between that which is good and the bad, as well as the intolerable and unacceptable. We no longer have a sense of what the moral imperative in a society should be: the non-negotiable and absolute values that cannot be trifled with or ignored in a human society. Relativism seems to determine our ethical reality. This is the way of death for our institutions, including the universities, the society and the nation. In the final analysis unless we can confront and clear the ethical minefields that confront the youth given the unacceptable non-ethical roles of the political and professional leadership of the society, there can be no future for the youth and hence for the nation. When our leaders make appointments to various high offices, they should always consider the message they proclaim to the youth and the society when those accused of various offences, deservedly or not seem to wield undeserved influence, especially when they become protected by the so called cloak of immunity and thus poke a finger in our eyes, with defiance

and impunity. In all this, the universities have a vital role to play as the lodestar in our national firmament by the examples we set.

It is a daunting, indeed even a scary assignment, given the awesome magnitude of the challenge facing our society. May God grant the leaders

of our universities and the nation the moral resources and equipment to steer us in the direction of regeneration and restoration. **ei**

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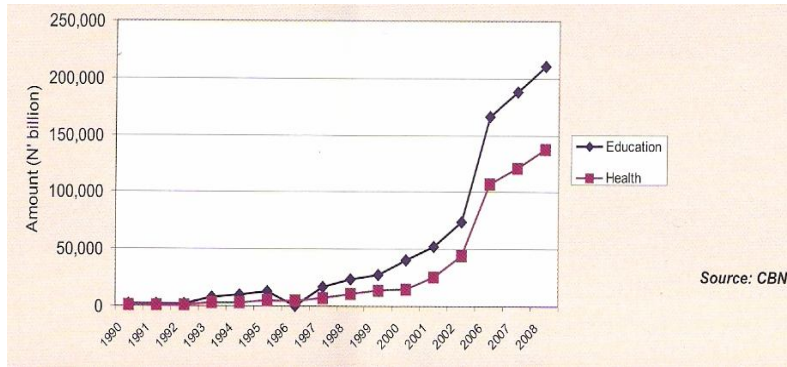
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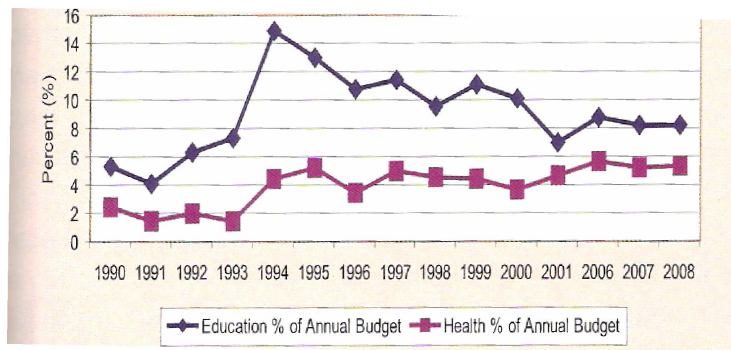
**Table 1:** Federal Government Allocation to Education & Health as a Percentage of Annual Budget

Year	Education % of Annual Budget	Health % of Annual Budget
1980	5.3	2.5
1981	4.1	1.4
1982	6.3	2
1983	7.3	1.5
1984	14.9	4.4
1985	13	5.2
1986	10.8	3.4
1987	11.5	5
1988	9.6	4.6
1999	11.1	4.5
2000	10.1	3.7
2001	7	4.7
2006	8.7	5.6
2007	8.2	5.3
2008	8.2	5.4
Average	9.1	3.9

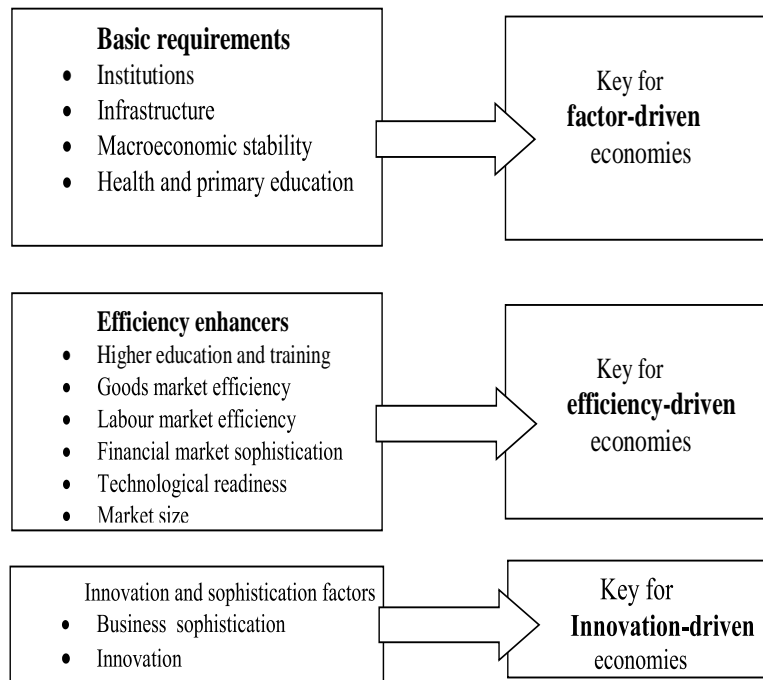
**Figure 1:** Amount Spent on Education & Health by the Federal Government (1990 -2008)



**Figure 2:** Federal Allocation to Education & Health as Percentage of Annual Budget



**Figure 3:** The 12 Pillars of Competitiveness



**Figure 4:** Hierarchy of Priorities and Inter-linkages implied in the 7-point Agenda for Nigerian Development proposed by Musa Yar'adua

