ADVOCACY FOR ONLINE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM TOWARDS ENHANCING ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The Nigerian higher education has been plugged into a huge gap between the demand for higher education and the shortage in supply as a result of its inability to absorb the increasing number of students who sat for UTME. This situation has been exasperated by the persistent industrial action by the university lecturers, insecurity, associated effects of post Covid 19 pandemic, among others, thereby hindering access to the teeming population of admission seeking individuals_to higher education. Overcoming these challenges and consequently increasing access to Nigerian higher education system, will require the adoption of innovative measures and internet-based solutions, hence the advocacy for online university education. While other countries are capitalizing and reaping the financial benefits of online university education, the Nigerian higher educational system, is still far from leveraging on online education system due to its enormous resultant problems. This opinion paper therefore advocates for the establishment of online university education either independently or via already existing traditional higher institutions to enhance access to higher education in the country. Also, it examines the possible challenges towards establishing online university education in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Access to higher education, technoducation, Covid- 19, online university education, educational development, inaccessibility, equal access, industrial action.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Online education has come to stay in the more developed nations of the world. However, the clamour to embrace same in Nigeria was heightened following the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic all over the globe. In fact, it has assumed a major phenomenal concept around the world. It offers ease and convenience to the learners everywhere especially in balancing work, family and other obligations. Online education has been embraced by many countries more than others. While many have led the way in terms of number, variety of programmes with improved innovations, others are yet to consider it as a necessity.

In the US, online colleges are available and enrolment rate has continued to increase more than the traditional higher education with effective online delivery system. India has experienced tremendous growth in online learning and as such, provided great opportunities to its teeming populace. Even, china is home to almost 70 different online colleges and has continued to grow inorder to meet the high demand for online learning opportunities. Others nations including South Korea, Malaysia has the biggest e-universities in Asia which have provided opportunities or many under-served areas, offering quality education to other Asia nations. United Kingdom isn't left out. It is a big player in online education. In the continent of Africa, South Africa is a frontliner in online education. It has capitalized on the benefits of digital education to meet the humongous demand for tertiary education. Online higher education in South Africa has steadily grown and has continued to be a rallying point for sister nations, desirous of providing equitable access to education for their teeming populace.

Apart from enhancing access to majority of people seeking quality tertiary learning, online education has the capacity to create value as well as generate huge financial resources for these respective nations. Yet Nigeria is far from leveraging on online education for improved education developmental outcomes. The country has neither wholeheartedly opted for online education nor provided the legal framework and enabling environment for it to thrive especially in the era of uncertainty (Covid pandemic, strikes, insecurity etc.) in educational development. This is even more so, considering the need to bridge the gap between increasing demand for higher education and the obvious shortage in supply. This view was highlighted by Austin (2010) who pointed out that the widening gap in the distribution of students in tertiary institutions and the teeming population of admission seeking individuals needs to be

bridged. Also, these myriads of problem have heightened demand for schools to provide learning solutions to students using online platforms as stopgap approach which far outweighs the possible demerits or challenges (Marjiri 2021), hence the authors advocate for online university education in Nigeria to further enhance access to higher education.

The mode of operating tertiary institutions in the post Covid 19 era, in addition to other issues that include enrolment explosion, incessant strike by the university unions, insecurity among others has unsettled the status quo in the Nigerian educational space. Following a radical increase in population and student enrolment that were not matched with corresponding facilities and funding, the existing facilities became overstretched and poorly maintained and could no longer support the effective running of various programmes of the universities. Reports have shown that in spite of the growing enrolment of students, there is apparently no strong political will to correspondingly increase the commensurate facilities needed in the tertiary institutions (Amaonye, Anyaeji, Thompson & Babalola, 2022; FME, 2003; Ogbodo, 2011; Ebuara, Edet, & Okpa, 2020).

2. INACCESSIBILITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

In recent times, this situation has worsened as a result of increased number of students opting for university education who have been denied access. This was corroborated by Ebuara cited in Amaonye *et al* (2022), who stated that millions of Nigerian students apply for spaces in Nigerian universities. These spaces are overly limited and that over one million candidates scramble for just over 200,000 spaces available annually for admission into the universities. Further, the authors stated that the number of individuals seeking admissions in the institutions for public and private universities in 2019 was about 1.99 million while the available spaces for admission were 750,000. Of this number about 1.240 million were denied admission, not on the basis of qualification but due to lack of space and facilities. It was reported that a total of 1,017,977 candidates applied for admission in 2019/2020, but only 612,557 candidates were admitted, which represented an admission rate of 44. %, leaving 545,420 candidates unadmitted (Ebuara *et. al,* 2020). This trend has continued to exist as students repeat the circle over and over hoping to, apparently gain admitted into higher institutions which may often be unrealizable thus leading to inaccessibility of higher education to candidates who sat for the Unified Tertiary Matriculations Examination (UTME) into tertiary.

Table 1: Number of Universities indicating Applicants and Carrying Capacity from 2010-2021.

Year	No. of University (Cumulative)	No of Applicant	No of Candidates Admitted	No of Candidates not Admitted	Carrying Capacity	% of Capacity Applicant	% of Candidates Admitted
2010/11	112	1,493,611	423,531	1,070,080	450,000	30.13	28.4
2011/12	117	1,503,933	417,341	1,086,592	500,000	33.25	27.7
2012/13	128	1,735,729	447,176	1,288,553	520,000	29.96	25.8
2013/14	128	1,644,110	463,395	1,180,715	520,000	31.63	28.2
2014/15	139	1,785,608	437,704	1,347,904	415,500	23.27	24.5
2015/16	151	1,428,379	485, 338	943,041	389,631	27.28	34.0
2016/17	152	1,579,627	506,837	1,072,190	500,000	31.6	32.1
2017/18	164	1,736,571	566,716	1,169,852	506,837	29.18	32.6
2018/19	169	1,662,762	586,498	1,076,264	586,962	35.30	35.3
2019/20	171	1,157, 977	612,557	545,420	510,957	44.12	52.9
2020/21	171	1,949,983	551,553	1,398,430	956,809	49.07	28.3
Total	-	**17,678,290**	**5,498,646**	**12,179,041**	**5,856,696**	**33.2**	**31.8**

Source: Amaonye *et. al* (2022).

The table shows that in the past 11 years, the total of 17,678,290 candidates applied for admission in the Nigerian university. Out of the number, only 5, 498,646 candidates were admitted, which is over a double of the number of candidates not admitted. Also, number of candidates admitted was less than the carrying capacity of 5, 856,696 with overall percentages of 33.2 and 31.8 for capacity of applicant and admitted candidates respectively for a period of 11 years. (Note: the percentages of capacity applicant and candidates admitted were obtained by adding the scores of each column and dividing by 11 years).

Also, the table above chronicled the evidence of poor or low accessibility of higher education in Nigeria with a despicably low percentage of admission even in this modern dispensation. It has proven that the Nigerian higher education system has consistently deprived a huge number of candidates from accessing higher education over a decade. This trend poses a great danger for the future of Nigerian educational system as well as the economy if not tactfully checked (Amaonye *et. al*, 2022).

3. IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON NIGERIAN HIGER EDUCATION

The incidence of Covid 19 has adversely impressed on the education system of countries including Nigeria. However, while other countries moved on educationally via online learning system after a temporary shutdown, the Nigerian education system remained in comatose even aftermath of the incidence. This is because the pandemic exposed the inherent weakness in teaching and learning in Nigerian schools because the typical teaching paradigm failed (Anyaogu & Onuoha, 2021). In agreement, UNESCO (2020) posited that the Covid 19 pandemic was a typical example of times when traditional teaching methods could not work in schools and the measure of social distancing did not allow the teachers and students to interact physically while the students and pupils remained redundant at home without any form of education, based

on this incidence, the personnel/lecturers in the institutions of learning suffered academic atrophy, as well as exposed the unfortunate level of deterioration in the system (Amaonye, 2021). This situation has been exasperated by the uneventful shutdown of the university education occasioned by the rift and apathy between the university staff and the Federal Government of Nigeria.

4. IMPACT OF STRIKE/INDUSTRIAL ACTION ON NIGERIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

It has been observed that the strike action by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has become a reoccuring narrative in the higher education in Nigeria which unarguably continues to disrupt the academic pursuits of young Nigerians with a high percentage of them remaining in schools longer than usual and even graduating later than stipulated graduation duration. The university system has unfortunately, witnessed persistent industrial/strike action which has assumed a historic pedigree in the past 18 years as outlined in the table below.

Table 2: List of years of industrial actions in Nigerian university

S/N	Year	Duration
1	1999	5 months
2	2001	3 month
3	2002	2 weeks
4	2003	6 months (ended in 2004)
5	2005	3 days
6	2006	1 week
7	2007	3 months
8	2008	2 weeks warning strike
9	2009	4 months
10	2010	5 months, 1 week
11	2011	3 months (ended in 2012)
12	2013	5 months, 13 days
13	2016	1 week warning strike
14	2017	1 month, 6 days
15	2018	1 day
16	2020	9 months
17	2022	8 months

(Amaonye, Anyaeji, Ezeonwumelu, Thompson & Onwuegbuchunam Compiled List, 2022).

From the above table, it can be mist unfortunately predicted that the industrial action will inadvertently continue to occur in the future if the problems associated with its occurence over the years are not addressed and/or completely resolved. These problems pose enormous challenges to access to higher education in Nigeria.

5. IMPORTANCE OF EQUAL ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Accessing higher education entails unhindered right and opportunity to enroll, attend and complete post-secondary school education so as to obtain work-oriented knowledge, skills and abilities needed for individual and societal development (Okeke, 2009; Aluede, Idogho, & Imonikhe, 2012), which implies that at any stage an individual is unable to enroll in an educational institution, not being able to attend classes as expected, unable to complete the duration of study, unable to transit to the next educational level or lack the opportunity to attain his/her desired goals in education, then such a person can be said to lack access to education (Amaonye et. al, 2022).

The importance of providing equal access to education cannot be overstated. Accessible education ensures that the educational needs of the majority is met irrespective of their socio-demographic characteristics or other peculiarities. Nwogu (2015) emphatically surmised that for education to be considered equitably accessible, there is need for individuals from all socio-economic strata to have access to formal education. Online university education makes equitable access to tertiary education possible globally and Nigeria in particular. This is because it ensures that several barriers that hinder quality access delivery are mostly overcome. Besides the established challenges, adequate funding, other factors like infrastructural deficit and difficulties in integrating learning for individuals with disabilities have become pronounced and a debilitating clog in the wheels of progress as per equitable delivery of education (Nwogu, 2015; Aluede *et al*, 2012). In addition to these, a decrease in the supply of teachers, health / pandemic concerns, as well as heightened security challenges across Nigeria has necessitated and brought the discussion on adoption of online education aggressively at the tertiary level of education in Nigeria to the fore.

6. MEANING OF ONLINE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION AND IMPORTANCE

Although various scholars have attempted the definition of online education/learning based on their perceptions, within this context, online education is the education that is supported by or conducted through the internet. In other words, it is an internet-based teaching and learning process which occurs in a digital environment. Therefore, online university learning or education is a form of instruction/learning delivered through electronic medium such as internet, software programs and other technological gadgets to facilitate the transmission of knowledge. It fosters teaching and learning process in digital university environment; Online university could be independently established or housed within the existing traditional university. In Nigeria, the latter could be preferred given its myriad of problems.

Studies have proven the benefits of online education which included broad access to resources and experiences, provision of active learning, provision of individualized

and differentiated learning or instruction, flexibility, relatively cheap, versatility/limitless, convenience, life-long learning, time maximization, comfortability, no physical contact, reduction of manpower, no strike to disrupt academic calendar, technological advancement, less travelling. among others.

6.1 FOR DISABILITY: People with disabilities, PWDs, are some of the most disadvantaged demographic in the conventional school system. As a result of their impairment, they face several challenges that make learning more difficult. For example, it would be extremely difficult for a learner with physical impairment to function optimally in a normal classroom setting. However, online learning takes away significant seedistress because learning is done in an environment that is suited to their needs, thereby granting them unrestricted access to education. Students with orthopedic impairment do not necessarily suffer from intellectual disability, however, the peculiar exigencies of this condition calls for an environment specially modified to cater for their needs (Ozoji, Unachukwu & Kojo, 2016). When an enabling environment, as typified in an online learning setting is not guaranteed, academic performance is impaired while the physically impaired students' with other psychogenic needs are hardly met (Miyahara, Rigoli, & Piek, 2015).

6.2 LOCATION DICTONOMY: The need to enhance access to tertiary education in Nigeria becomes more pronounced when the dysfunctional spread of our populace between rural and urban communities are put into consideration. Olaleye and Ayeni (2019) highlighted the complexities associated with school location and how it affects both actual and intending learners. The scholars claimed that to break the limitations posed by geographical factors, online distance learning makes it easy for learners to access higher education without necessarily moving from one geographical location to another. When one considers the socio-economic and socio-demographic realities of Nigeria, one cannot help but agree that the population explosion in the urban communities, has in no small way increased the cost of living in the urban areas. Consequently, to meet the educational needs of the teeming rural populace who cannot afford to live in the communities where these universities are sited, online university learning has to be embraced.

6.3 COVID PANDEMIC: Recent events point to the need for online university learning to be adopted at the tertiary level. When the global COVID outbreak was announced in 2020 and schools were shut down in compliance with safety protocols, remote learning became a predominant practice. This helped to expose the gaping deficiencies in the system. Difficulties were experienced as regards technical know-how and availability of digital resources for successful implementation of distance learning. Ezeonwumelu and Okoro (2021) noted that despite difficulties encountered abinitio, the COVID shutdown of Nigerian schools served as an eye opener on the need to embrace more creative pedagogical strategies that can cater for special

dispensations where traditional face-to-face teaching is practically impossible. Anyaeji (2021) reported the use of information communication technology in school administration, and asserted that the use of ICT facilities provided a better alternative for admission and planning in schools during Covid 19; and other situations. Also, online university learning can help in creating an alternative way of teaching at the tertiary level, especially in these uncertain times in Nigeria with the increased rate of killings, kidnapping of students and banditry across the nation. Online university learning may not necessarily end insecurity in the country, however it will at least reduce the risks faced by university students on a daily basis. Students can learn at home or from the comfort of remote locations, without necessarily endangering their lives.

6.4 FOR THE EMPLOYED: In an era where entrepreneurial intentions are encouraged among university students, it is only appropriate for the educational system to consider students' who are gainfully employed in scheduling academic activities. Austin (2010) asserted that online university learning makes it possible for learners who have occupational engagements to cope with their education and their jobs. Thus, online university education helps the student balance the extremely tough demands of combining curricular and job demands. Also, online university learning would be of immense benefits to women who may ordinarily have been denied higher education as a result their dedication to family or domestic chores. Summarily, it could be said to be a leveler in terms of providing access to university education to the teeming population of intending undergraduates and even postgraduates.

7. POSSIBLE CHALLENGES TO ONLINE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

It is obvious that online learning is vital for the development of tertiary education in Nigeria and providing access to a generality of intending scholars hitherto constrained by numerous factors in their pursuit of higher education. However, there are challenges that militate against the robust implementation of online university education. These factors stem from a wide spectrum of considerations that are both peculiar to our system or a global phenomenon. Some of these challenges are:

7.1 Regulation: Degree awarding institutions thrive on reliability. For a degree, diploma or certificate to be considered valid the institution that awards the document must be proven to abide by international best practices models. Even in the context of the traditional face to face schools, there are several criteria that must be met before Nigeria's prominent tertiary institution regulatory bodies can issue accreditation. Oyebade (2013) decried the preponderance of policy inconsistencies and political interference in the regulation of tertiary education in Nigeria. Admittedly, the National Universities Commission, NUC and sister bodies have done well in promoting standards but much is still needed. To establish a water tight online university learning

system in Nigeria, there is need for the regulatory bodies to establish specialized organs tasked with ensuring that stringent conditions are met before online learning centers are established. This entails a humongous financial commitment, however, there is no alternative to be explored if quality assurance is to be considered a priority.

7.2 Funding: Contrary to numerous assumptions, online university learning is not exactly cheap. Christensen and Horn (2008) posited that the idea that online learning can reduce costs has intuitive appeal. They stated that some cost studies have found online learning to be less expensive, and it is noteworthy that this collection of studies consistently found cost savings associated with online learning. More so, it reduces facilities costs compared with traditional brick-and-mortar education, online learning can reduce the need for physical space (e.g., when students take courses at home). Physical space costs are an important cost driver of traditional schooling. By substituting classroom instruction with online instruction, the need for physical space can be reduced.

However, Legg-Jack (2021) claimed that the current funding arrangement of public universities in Nigeria cannot sustain digitalization of education. Poor remuneration, relatively non-existent subventions and government's tendency to renege on financial agreements with tertiary institutions' unions are some of the hallmarks of an educational system that is almost totally funded by government. Okwuosa and Moddibo (2021) explained that the over reliance on oil revenue in light of fluctuating prices in the global market has in no small way hindered funding of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This trend has to change if online university learning can be implemented in the nation's tertiary education system. Further, Obododike and Okekeokosisi (2020) implied that in planning for online university education, there is need for a long term financial sustainability plan. Unfortunately, there is nothing on ground to suggest readiness on the part of government to fund these ventures. Olufemi (2020) opined that Buhari's 2021 budget share for education is 5.6% which is the Nigerian's lowest in 10 years much below the recommended benchmark despite the challenges faced by the Nigerian education sector. The Nigerian education sector has been poorly funded in the past years falling below the UNESCO requirements. Nigeria is a signatory to the United Nations Education, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) conventions that request member nations to commit a minimum of 26 percent of their resources to education. Education vote in Nigeria has for over a decade ranged between 5-13 percent, whereas her counterparts in Africa have met and gone beyond this target. The private universities, which are mostly profit oriented, may find investing in online universities risky. With no guarantee of returns on investment, they will likely stick to the traditional face to face system.

7.3 Learners' Psychogenic Problems: At the heart of any academic endeavour lies the students. Psychogenic problems refer to distressing situations that emanate from a learner's mind or emotions. Unlike in traditional school settings where there are

various external factors that could trigger a learner's motivation and interest, an online learning platform could be lacking these factors. Obododike and Okekeokosis (2020) opined that e-learning platforms are not exactly ideal for extrinsic motivation. This implies that learners who lack the internal drive to strive for excellence could suffer fluctuating achievement motivation which has been found to be a predictor of poor academic achievement.

Özhan and Kocadere (2020) also implied that motivation in an online education setting is somewhat complicated, to improve this they, suggested that there is need for flexibility in designing content. Gamification was proffered as a creative solution that could be of immense benefit in improving students' motivation in an online university setting. On the other hand, there has been several arguments that students' interests and attitude to learning fluctuates in remote learning settings. Online classes, unlike traditional face to face classes, have been found to engender less satisfaction, and as a result negatively impacts students' readiness and interest. (Macon, 2011; Van Wart et al., 2020). Also, Kyewski and Krämer, (2018) confirmed a seemingly negative attitude towards online learning. They observed that the relatively high attrition behaviour noted can only be mitigated with a careful and creative structuring of online courses to meet the interest of learners. Also, in making a case for offering more online courses and programmes especially at the tertiary level, Butnaru et al (2021), suggested that social pedagogy should be embraced in designing online courses. This would in no small way enhance interactive learning amongst students.

7.4 Limited Application: There are several areas where application of online learning is almost impossible. Courses that require laboratory experiments, field trips, and demonstration are often difficult to access by learners. The inherent challenge, therefore, is on how to apply online learning in the fields of science, technology and engineering. STEM is the bedrock of national development (Ajani & Ojetunde, 2021; Oyelade & Abolade, 2017). The importance of STEM to national development explains why the National Policy of Education stipulates that 60% of university admission be reserved for students intending to study STEM courses in Nigerian universities (FRN, 2013). The implication of this obstacle is that embracing online education makes it difficult for millions of STEM- based learners to have access to university education. The task of mitigating this challenge is not insurmountable, blended models have been suggested to enable the seamless teaching of STEM courses in online universities. The use of virtual labs, remote control labs, video based demonstration and other forms of technology have been suggested as possible ways of integrating STEM courses into an online university curriculum (Odeh et al, 2015; Kelum et al, 2020). With these multimedia aides, laboratory experience can be replicated in a virtual learning setting, allowing the learner to master the demonstration and procedures involved in STEM- based courses.

7.5 Internet Infrastructure Challenges/Poverty: Online university learning requires stable internet connection. Unfortunately, there are several constraints that hinder students' access to the internet. These factors include poor service delivery on the part of the service providers, poor government policies, and financial constraints. In Nigeria, a significant proportion of the populace still lack access to stable internet access. Datareportal (2022) reported that Nigeria's internet penetration stood at 51% of the 214 million inhabitants. This implies that around 104 million Nigerians do not have access to internet technology. On paper, this could be seen as viable for a nation with designs on establishing online universities, in reality, more needs to be done. In 2019, for example, around 95% of Americans between 3-18 years had home access to the internet (US Department of Education, 2021). The stark contrast between the two nations explains why it is easier to float more online universities in the USA than in Nigeria. Additionally, there are government policies that limits users' access to the internet. Ofuyatan et al (2014) saw these challenges as those that stem from government agencies that could hinder supply of technology, dissemination of information or even imposition of sanctions on service providers. Also, the high cost of internet facilities makes it very difficult for learners who are mostly from middle and low income homes to afford consistent internet connection. Online universities require internet based resources, that when these problems abound, the efficient running of online universities is hampered as potential learners are not assured of internet connection which is essential for access to online learning.

7.6 Unstable Electricity Supply: In addition to a stable internet connection, online universities are heavily reliant on electricity. Digital devices used to access learning materials, as well as participate in other curricular activities require stable electricity. Unfortunately, this is a big problem in Nigeria. Despite the humongous sums spent by successive governments on electricity, the country continues to be rocked by epileptic power supply. Igbokwe et al. (2020) reported that unsteady electricity presented a very huge challenge in installing online learning programmes during the COVID induced shutdown and closure of traditional face to face schools. This made it extremely difficult for learners to engage in academic tasks. This is also a viable cause for worry in the quest to embrace online university education. The chances of denying millions of students access to learning resources is very high. They potentially miss out on lectures, tests, examinations, and other online learning exercises. Oyediran and Dick (2018) claimed that just like businesses are hindered by unstable electricity supply, the concept of online university education will always struggle in Nigeria because of lack of guarantees on quality service delivery to the learners. To cope, a majority of these students resort to alternative sources of power generation that are expensive, stressful to maintain and ecologically unsustainable. Therefore, there is need to address this challenges for good if the dream of integrating online learning as a core part of our tertiary education system.

8. WAY FORWARD

8.1 Legalizing Online Education: The Nigerian government through the Federal Ministry of Education (FMoE) need to legalize the establishment of online university and empower higher institutions to float online university in the existing framework of traditional higher education in order to expand and enhance access to university education to the populace.

8.2 Increasing Budget allocation: To resolve the myriads of problems that bedridden the problems of education in Nigeria particularly shifting from traditional mode to digital paradigm, it is required that the government will increase fiscal allocation to education to facilitate the transformation of the Nigerian education system to enhance access. Adamu cited in Aondofa (2022) stated that the current faceoff between ASUU and the federal Government has lingered due to the 'I don't care attitude' of the government to higher education. It is abysmal that Nigeria spends less than I percent of its gross national income 0.85% to be precise, while her counterpart in African continent spend multiples of that: Ghana 2.85%, Egypt 3.9%, Zimbabwe 5, 4% and South Africa 7%. As at 2021, the percentage of budgetary allocation to education stood at 5.6% while other African countries spent- South Africa 20%, Morocco 26.4%, Botswana 25.6% and French speaking Guinea and Cote d'lvore spend 25% and 21.5% respectively as at 2013. If Nigerian government could rise up to their responsibilities, the online university education will serve as an alternative to physical face to face university education to increase access to university education.

8.3 Private Public Partnership (PPP): Since the host online university learning may be capital-intensive in terms of provision of online resources, technological facilities as well as the expertise needed for its smooth operation, the higher institutions can partner with key technological giants in the industry to reduce cost. Also, instead of establishing a new independent online university, it was embedded in the existing traditional university.

8.4 Reducing the cost of governance: Nigerian government spend a lot of money on governance which should be channeled into education to make it worthwhile and inclusive to achieve education for all. A Total of ₦134 billion was budgeted for the national assembly for the year 2021 (Iroanusi, 2021). There has been a public outcry over the huge salaries and allowances of members of the national Assembly over the years. The pay packages of law makers and other public holders have been an issue of serious concern among Nigerians. The paper also reported that senators received ₦13.5 million monthly outside their ₦700,000 monthly consolidated salary and allowances. Because of the pay package of the law makers, many Nigerians have been clamming for cut down on the governance and making law maker part time job in Nigeria to make the job less attractive and all those monies should be pumped into education system for the achievement of goals of education.

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Federal Government can partner with private organizations to provide infrastructure, facilities and adequately fund university education in order to acquire professional skill and knowledge for online educational development.
2. The federal government can subsidize the cost of ICT materials to the reach all the populace in the country especially students that need them, and reduce the cost of data subscription by providing enabling policy in liaison with telecommunication service providers in the country to make data affordable and available to the populace in order to enhance access to online university learning resources.
3. Promulgation of law enabling the establishment of new independent online university or hosting of online university in already existing traditional institutions in Nigeria.
4. Online university degrees and certificates can be made recognizable for employment, certification and for any purpose it may serve.

CONCLUSION

It is obvious that the world had advanced even more technologically in terms of education due to the pandemic which has changed the paradigm of education from traditional mode to online mode in the globe. Even so, that online education has proved to be a source of venture which accrues huge financial benefits to the educational sector of the economy, it is important for Nigeria as a nation to totally and holistically embrace online university to, not only enhance access to higher education but also overcome other challenges confronting the education sector as well as leverage on the financial injection which the online education provides to the economy.

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Vanguard Newspaper, November 10th 2020