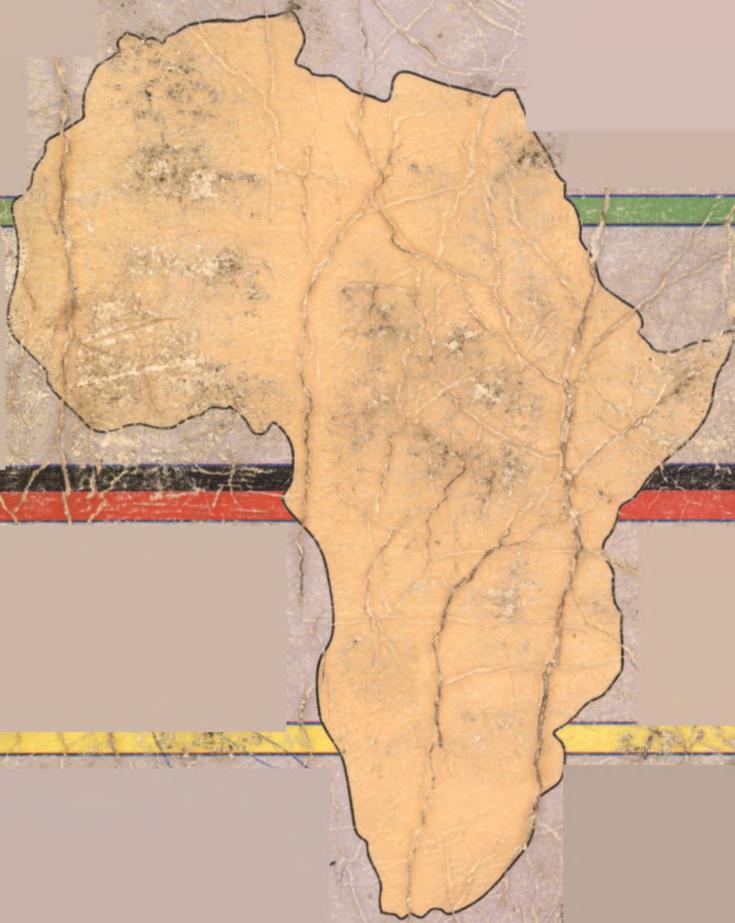


# **The Human Factor Approach to Development in Africa**



**Edited by**

**Paul G. Chivaura**

**and**

**Claude G. Mararike**

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# The Human Factor: Approach to Development in Africa

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Vimbai G. Chivaura and Claude G. Mararike



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Publications

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# The Human Factor and Tertiary Education

John O. Imahe

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## Introduction

The most obvious way in Human Factor (HF) development, among others, is formal education. Osuji (1985) says that developing countries have always been blessed with *human beings but not necessarily human capital*, and that the place of formal education in manpower development is well understood. According to Holsinger and Regel (1993), an increase in the education level of a country's population has come to be linked with economic growth and reduction in poverty. He cited as proof the experience of Japan and other East Asian countries which are adjudged to have achieved impressive rates of growth through human factor policies. Hardison (1973) and Fafunwa (1974) said that Nigeria as an emerging state was faced with the task of not only maintaining its economic growth, but also accelerating it. According to Hardison, modern dams and power stations can be constructed within a few years but it takes between 10 to 15 years to develop the managers, administrators and engineers to man them. Also, school and college buildings can be created in a matter of months but it requires decades to develop high-level teachers and professors.

Izuwah (1983) in his assessment of the education objectives of Nigeria, posed the following questions:

- (i) To what extent do the national education objectives and policies... focus on the critical issue of human resources development as identified and re-emphasised especially in the *Fourth National Development Plan (1981–1985)*?
- (ii) To what extent is the education system geared toward the full development of human resources of Nigeria?
- (iii) To what extent is the education system geared toward the attainment of national development?

Izuwah, in his response, agreed that national education aims and objectives focus on the critical issues of human resources to some extent. The statement of intention appears to focus attention on the production of individuals equipped with some appropriate skills. However, he concluded that the objectives of the Universal Primary Education as instrument of change was over-ambitious and that the policy on education did not specifically define the composition of the 'education system' in the country.

The Federal Ministry of Education, (1996) agreed that the policy has become entangled with the problem of massive and unplanned expansion which out-stripped the dwindling resources. The foregoing statement, coupled with Izuwah's work, pointed out that there existed problems in the Nigerian policy of education.

## Growth in tertiary education and enrolment imbalances

In 1975, increased income from the oil sector, coupled with pressure from large numbers of persons seeking university education, demand for high level manpower in the public and private sectors, and the need for a wider geographical spread of institutions of higher education, led to the take-over by the Federal Government of the ABU-Zaria, Nsukka, Ife and Uniben (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1991). This was the beginning of the Federal Government sole proprietorship of tertiary education in the country.

According to Idris (1995), the Third National Development Plan made provision for the establishment of seven more universities to be located in states where there were no universities at the time - thus giving birth to the so called 'Seven Sisters' or second generation universities in 1975. These universities were located in Calabar (1973); Jos (1971); Maiduguri (1975); Sokoto (1975); Ilorin (1975); Port Harcourt (1975); and Kano (1975). Furthermore, the Fourth National Development Plan advocated the creation of more universities for even geographical distribution as a means of ensuring national cohesion and unity. Seven universities of technology located in Bauchi, Makurdi, Yola, Akure, Owerri, Abeokuta and Minna were given birth to by 1 October, 1979 as a result.

These expansions did not go uncriticised. Idris (1995), in his response to critics who argued that under the circumstances we do not need 30 universities in the country, said that this was true if we viewed the development of universities from purely the economic standpoint of it. However, he added that even then, it is cheaper to start a university today than 25 years from now, and that the value and purpose of universities in this country transcend economic considerations. Besides, the action of the State Government citing universities respectively, was said to be supported by the National Policy on Education which provided for State Voluntary Organisations to establish universities provided they complied with minimum academic standards. In short, the 1980s marked the era of State, and subsequently, private and military universities in Nigeria. On the whole, 24 Federal, 13 State and one Military university in the country have been built.

Ukeje (1979), noted that among the first generation universities, it was certain that by the end of the 1972/73 academic year, their student population had more than doubled the Ashby Commission's projection for 1980. This situation, he said, greatly reduced one of the problems of Nigerian education which is the lack of sufficient opportunities for university education for qualified people. Available education statistics indicate high demand for university education as well as rising enrolment figures. Despite the above evidence of growth, certain ailments deserve attention.

The growth of polytechnics was even more phenomenal than universities; and within two decades, 31 polytechnics and several monotechinics were established (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1991). Towe (1987) explained the reason for the expansion in polytechnical institutions and their student enrolment in Nigeria. At the beginning of the Third Plan, according to Towe, Federal Government accepted recommendations of the review team which monitored the Second Nation Development Plan, that one of the constraints of the plan was the dearth of middle level manpower. In addition, it was envisaged that polytechnic enrolment of middle-level manpower

should be about 105 000 by 1980, against 15 000 students enrolled by the eight polytechnics existing at that time.

It was also observed that none of the polytechnics offered programmes that provide the variety of manpower required by the economy at the time and the future. The Federal Government, therefore, adopted some policies among which are:

- (i) short term measures to send 6 000 students to friendly overseas countries to train as technical manpower for the economy; and
- (ii) to increase the number of Colleges of Technology (now polytechnics) by encouraging State Governments that have no polytechnics to establish some.

According to the second policy, matching grants for recurrent and capital expenditure were made to establish state polytechnics. The policies were seen to have improved the situation. More colleges of technology were established. At the end of the Third Plan in 1980, each state had at least one polytechnic. Despite phenomenal expansion of polytechnical education, government could not meet up the increasing demand for education.

The policy directive under which universities and polytechnics had to slow down student intake and development, while secondary schools expanded led to the situation where increasing numbers of graduates from secondary schools could not find places in the universities in 1987. The 1986 budget denied polytechnics funds for expansion.

A wide gap, therefore, existed between secondary school intake and chances for tertiary education.

### **Students' enrolment imbalances**

Imbalances in student enrolment are an area of concern in the demand for, and supply of, tertiary education in Nigeria. According to Adesina (1980), despite the evident growth, commitment to education and gradual Federal Government control, largely in financial terms, certain ailments of the education system deserve mention. The first one was the astronomical imbalance in the distribution of students at different educational levels — an imbalance that reflected the emphasis on growth without development and lack of co-ordination and control of education systems. This was said to be applicable to the inability of tertiary education to meet the Science – Art ratio. The second ailment was the low level of enrolment ratio for sciences compared to professional courses.

Angulu (1988) stated that there has been a national policy on enrolment that stipulates the 60:40 Science-Arts ratio. Angulu noted that it has not been possible to achieve this ratio over the years; however, the actual enrolment ratio which stood at 51:49 for three consecutive years, improved slightly to 52:48 in the 1985/86 academic session. Aminu (1988) considered the 60:40 Science to Arts admission injunction as a declaration of good intention. Aminu added that these good intentions be reinforced for the polytechnics to 70:30, and for the university of technology to 80:20. While it is appreciated that the Science to arts imbalance problem goes down to the secondary and primary school level, universities can help by being resolute in taking more students in the science-based disciplines than in the arts-based disciplines, he suggested.

Aminu added that preponderant student choice was for the professions and that over the years, the Science-based professions excluding education, came up to almost 40 percent of our graduates. The art-based disciplines such as law, mass communication, social sciences and humanities, came up to about 30 per cent, while education alone came up to 15 per cent of the graduates.

Pure sciences have less than 15 per cent. Aminu opined that on the whole, our universities were highly profession-oriented, with 80 per cent of the graduates in one profession or another, while the pure humanities (history, languages and linguistics, philosophy, etc) were not excessive. He was worried about natural sciences. Students' preference for them was low. He remarked that at the end of every admission exercise, it appeared that candidates who opted for pure sciences were those who could not gain admission into science-based disciplines. The situation was worse in Mathematics.

### **Gender enrolment imbalances**

High female and male school enrolment have been associated with lower levels of fertility. Females with higher education tended to earn a larger share of household income and to prefer fewer children. Summers (1992), suggested that investment in female education had higher returns in the developing world than in male education.

According to The Federal Republic of Nigeria's main Report on Higher Education in the Nineties, (1991), sex disparities at tertiary level could not be viewed in isolation from imbalances in primary and secondary education. Other reasons given for poor female access to tertiary education were socio-economic constraints, cultural taboos, restrictions imposed on women, and gender stereotyping. Summers (1992), asserted that under-development in girls was not an automatic consequence of poverty, religion or cultural traditions. It was an economic problem resulting from the vicious cycle of distorted incentives. The expectation that girls are only good enough to serve their husbands, reduces parents' incentives to invest in their daughters' human capital.

### **Academic staff imbalances**

The problem of funding is basic in tertiary education. Adequacy of staff and other human resources at all levels of formal education in Nigeria depend on funding, attraction of wages from other sectors and conditions of service. Oni, (1991) acknowledged the brain drain as a major obstacle of staffing in tertiary education. He identified three types of movements which are:

- (i) from Nigeria to other countries,
- (ii) from the public to the private sector, and
- (iii) from Nigeria to study in other countries and decide to stay away after graduation.

The Presidential Committee on Brain Drain Report, (1989), and Gwandu, (1991), defined brain drain as:

the departure of highly trained professionals, intellectuals, talents and specialists in any field of endeavour, from a specific social context — be it as a result of frustration from poor or inadequate remuneration, or from not having opportunities to fulfil professional aspirations in the given social context.

It is worth noting that within the first half of the 1980s, the older universities lost essential lecturers across disciplines and the courses they taught. Statistics show that some academics joined the commercial sector and foreign companies for better opportunities (Imahe, 1991).

Esurouso (1990), remarked that academics all over the world usually spend a lot of time reading and researching. Thirst for knowledge propels them to search and research. Esurouso, however, noted the emergence of a new type of Nigerian academic whose interest is acquisition of wealth to back up the prestige which society accords the intellectual. The direct implication, here, is that less time is allocated to research and more to business activities.

According to Idris (1995), conditions of service for staff have recently attracted a lot of controversy at the universities. Things had been relatively tranquil through 'The Udoji Award' of 1983, a Federal Government/Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) agreement. The implementation of the 1992 Agreement between the ASUU and the Federal Government, gave birth to the controversial issue of salary parity which engendered an endemic cold war between academic and non-academic staff. Due to the continuous high inflationary trend in Nigeria, the so-called measures have yielded only moderate, short-lived relief on university staff economic expectations. Though Adesina (1980) acknowledged the shortage of academics he, however, noted that there was the concomitant question of the quality of those in tertiary institutions service. The prevailing circumstances in the institutions have made it difficult to conserve resourceful and qualified staff. The aberrant teacher-student ratio confirms the poor supply and retention of academic staff in the institutions. The student-teacher proportion in Nigerian state universities, says Imahe (1991), was about 20:1 in the 1980s. The ratio has not improved appreciably since then. The National Universities Commission (NUC) recommended ratio was 12:1, while that of the United Nations Educational, and Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was 10:1. None of these ratios was achieved in the 1980s and 1990s. Imahe claimed that the rising student-teacher ratio hampered efficiency in the process of human capital formation in the university education and other levels in Nigeria.

## **Conclusion**

The Nigerian Government's intention and initial commitment to tertiary education in the 1970s, and the re-articulation of education in the 1981-85, Fourth Development Plan as a priority area, stimulated demand and growth in this sector. Nigerian commitment to education was aimed at the creation, in the country, of an educational system capable of ensuring that every citizen was given full opportunity to develop his intellectual and working capabilities for both his own benefit and the community's. However, Government policy objectives left out the mechanism of control of the demand for, and supply of, education, at the tertiary level. The policy became entangled with the problem of massive and unplanned expansion which culminated in the aforementioned imbalances. In relative terms, growth in tertiary education and the attendant imbalances have persisted in the country and no effort to redress them has been made.

To tackle lop-sidedness in tertiary education growth, there should be a definite policy objective in force. Such policy would help:

- (i) de-emphasise areas of study that are fast losing demand in the labour market, and encourage enrolment in areas of required human factor development in the economy;
- (ii) encourage higher female enrolment in tertiary institutions, and specific disciplines such as science;
- (iii) review the financial benefits and conditions of service of academic staff based on trends in the economy and incomes of developing countries and Africa. This would help maintain fair student/lecturer ratio and reduce the temptation to seek outside jobs.

Reduction of imbalances in tertiary education would help reallocate efficiently the HF required in the economy and effect appropriate equilibrium in the Nigerian labour market. The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board and tertiary institutions should play a pivotal role in the effective implementation and execution of policy guidelines to help achieve the required balances in tertiary education.

## Appendix

### I: Enrolments into tertiary institutions 1984-90

Year	Universities		Polytechnics		Colleges of Education	
	No	Enrolment	No	Enrolment	No	Enrolment
1984/5	28	126,285	29	60,583	40	55,983
1985/6	28	135,783	27	61,136	40	56,850
1986/7	28	151,967	27	56,770	42	57,516
1987/8	28	160,767	27	61,646	44	45,978
1988/9	28	169,174	27	67,541	48	66,619
1989/90	31	180,871	27	72,681	49	85,121
1990	31	200,774	27	-	54	70,138

Source: NUC NBTE and NCCE

### II: Academic staff mix-Universities and polytechnics 1985-1990

NUC Target of Staff	Actual in Universities	NBTE Target of Staff	Actual in Policy
Prof/Reader 20%	12,7-15%	Chief Principal Lecturer (15%)	5,3-8,0%
Snr. Lect. 30%	21-23,3%	Snr Lect (30%)	12,9-15,7%
Lecturers (50%)	54,1-55,3%	Lecturer (55%)	61,5-55,6%

- Sources:
1. Yoye Report 1991
  2. NUC — National Universities Commission
  3. NBTE — National Board of Technical Education

### III: Academic staff mix in colleges of education

Year Chief/Prin.	1985/7	1986/7	1987/8	1988/9	1989/90	NCCE Target
Lect.	4,8	8,7	9,3	8,2	9,2	N.A
Snr. Lect.	11,4	12,7	12,1	11,7	11,7	N.A
Lecturers	80,3	75,0	74,3	74,8	72,0	N.A
Instructors	3,5	3,7	4,2	5,3	7,1	N.A

Source: Yoloye Report 1991

### IV: Staff/Student ratio for polytechnics and colleges of education 1985-1990

Year	1985/6	1986.7	1987/8	1988/9	1989/90
Polytechnics	1:14,6	1:10,0	1:10,5	1:10,3	1:9,3
Colleges	1:23,4	1:19,0	1:19,5	1:17,7	1:20,7

### V: Graduate output from Nigeria universities by gender 1980-81 — 1989-90

Year	Total	Female	% Female
1980/81	13,880	2,526	18,2
1981/82	15,715	3,278	20,9
1982/83	21,447	4,390	20,5
1983/84	28,822	5,595	21,7
1984/85	27,550	6,109	22,2
1986/87	30,489	7,488	24,6
1987/88	37,286	10,110	27,1
1988/89	38,782	—	—
1989/90	40,528	—	—

Source: 1 Statistical profile of Nigeria Women 1985 (F.O.S.)  
2 Statistics of Education in Nigeria: 1992 Edition

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