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## Economic Impact of Higher Education and Manpower Resource Development in Africa

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By

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### Abstract

*For decades, donor institutions have placed emphasis on primary and, more recently, secondary education in their development assistance. They have encouraged African governments' relative neglect of higher education as an added means to improve economic growth and mitigate poverty. This paper challenges beliefs in international community that tertiary education has little role in promoting economic growth. The paper maintains that higher education can produce both public and private benefits. Private benefits for individuals are well established and include better employment prospects, higher salaries, and a greater ability to save and invest. These benefits may result in better health and improve quality of life. Public benefit of higher education enhances economic development through technological catch-up. In a knowledge economy, higher education can help economies gain ground with more technologically advanced societies as graduates are likely to be more aware and better use new technologies. The paper concludes that higher education must be seen as a primary tool for Africa's development and put forward recommendations to help solve problems of poor funding, brain drain and poor infrastructural facilities.*

Human capital formation as a concept refers to a conscious and continuous process of acquiring and increasing the number of people with requisite education, knowledge, skills and experience that are necessary for both economic and political development of a country (Salleh, 1992). The importance of human capital in the overall national development and the well being of the people is not entirely new. Far back in 1776, Adam Smith had correctly noted that the basis for national wealth are skill, dexterity and competence of individual citizens. This conception by Adam Smith

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is further given prominence by the ancient proverb: “If you are planning for a year, sow rice, for ten years, plant trees, for a hundred years, educate people” (Salleh, 1992).

Schultz (1961) in Henry (2001:99) indicated that there are five ways of developing manpower resources. These are:

- (a) Health facilities and services should be broadly conceived to include all expenditures that affect life expectancy, strength and stamina, and the vigour and vitality of the people;
- (b) In-service or on-the-job training organized by firms to cater for the needs of new and old workers;
- (c) Formally organized education at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels;
- (d) Planned study programmes for adults that are not organized by firms such as extension programmes in agriculture or adult literacy programmes organized for people who missed formal education; and
- (e) Migration of peoples and families to adjust to changing job opportunities in urban areas.

Transfer of technology, expertise and consultants are other aspect of manpower resource development. Specifically, economic benefits of manpower resource development arise from making people more productive through improving their nutrition, health, education and other social indicators through adequate and proper investments (Odusola, 1998; Rao, 2007, December, 10). It is on the basis of the above perhaps that Harbison (1973) in Ibia (2011) correctly observed that:

*Human resources constitute the ultimate basis for the wealth of nations. Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production, human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital, exploits natural resources, build social, economic and political organizations, and carry toward national development. Clearly, a county which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people and to utilize them effectively in the national economy will be unable to develop anything else (p.172).*

The implication of the above is that any nation that neglects an effective human capital formation through tertiary educational system is doing so at its own peril. A tertiary educational system is a major institutional mechanism for developing and advancing people’s knowledge, skills and experiences necessary for national development.

Researches by Mankiw, Romer and Weil (1992), Grammy and Assana (1996), Rae (2007) and World Bank (2002) have all stressed the role of human capital in the development process pointing out that a highly literate labour force promotes faster economic growth. Rae (2007) in particular noted that manpower resource development

is fundamental to national socio-economic progress of African states. It seeks to improve the quality of life which is the ultimate goal of economic development. In deed, knowledgeable human beings are the essence of national development because they can produce better and also contribute to another round of human improvement in a kind of cumulative progress (Ojo, 1999; World Bank, 2002; Adedeji & Bamidele, 2003).

African leaders belief that expanding education, particularly at the tertiary level promotes economic growth and has been one of the principles of development. This explains perhaps why on attainment of political independence, the national budgetary expenditure on education in most African countries increases by 60% - 100% in some cases, as in Algeria after the European rightists coup of 1958 and the rebellion in 1962. Nigeria had just one premier university of Ibadan in 1960. By 1977, the number of universities in Nigeria had grown to thirteen with enrolment figure of 49,393 (Fafunwa, 1979; Ibia, 2011). The first Kenyan tertiary institution was the Royal Technical College of East Africa; opened in Nairobi in 1956. In 1961, the Royal Technical College was renamed the Royal College of Nairobi and turned into a university college. In 1963, Kenya attained its independence and the college became the university college of Nairobi. In 1970, the university college of Nairobi was renamed the university of Nairobi. With six public and thirteen private universities, Kenya has total student enrolment of 50,000. About 80 % are enrolled in public universities while 20% of the total university student population attends private universities (Bloom, Canning & Chan, 2006).

Modern tertiary education began in Ethiopia with the founding of the university college of Addis Ababa on March 20, 1950. The university college had less than 1,000 students and less than 50 teachers in the late 1950s. Presently, tertiary education in Ethiopia includes 8 established universities, 13 newly created universities and a number of private tertiary institutions with a total student enrollment of about 147,000 (Bloom *et al.*, 2006). Higher education in Ethiopia is financed mainly by government. Uganda increased tertiary education enrolment from 25,000 in 2000 to 50,000 in 2003 (Bloom *et al.*, 2006).

The few examples cited from some African countries above shows increase in students enrolment principally because of proliferation and expansion of tertiary institutions and population growth. The question now is, how has this experiment in massive educational expansion at tertiary education turned out to meet national objectives of African states for human resource and economic development? Is there any strong evidences of the growth-promoting externalities to education? How has the tertiary educational system contributed to national competitiveness in the post independent African states?

In resolving the fundamental issues raised above, one must begin with acknowledging the fact that economic impact of higher education on growth and development has not been the same across African countries and different regimes that have ruled African states since independence. For instance, Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Liberia have been ruled more by military regimes and it is likely that such military regimes may have tended to support their constituencies more than any other sectors. The result is that over the years, the military often received the lion share of national budgetary allocation at the expense of other sectors. It is however difficult to establish whether military rules have been the cause of educational problems of most African states considering the fact that most earlier civilian governments were also fraught with irregular financial allocation to the educational industry. Against this background, this paper attempt to look at the economic impact of higher education and manpower resource development in Africa.

### **Investment in Higher Education**

Investment into higher education is expected, as in the case of Nigeria, to make optimum contribution to national development by intensifying and diversifying its programme for development of high level manpower within the context of the needs of the nation and to make professional course contents to reflect national requirements. Viewed generally, higher education is aimed at producing men and women who possess both culture and expert knowledge in all dimentions.

The rationality behind investment in human resource development is rested on three main arguments; namely:

1. The new generation of people in any given state must be given the appropriate parts of knowledge hitherto accumulated by previous generations.
2. The new generation must be taught how the existing knowledge can be used to develop new products and to introduce new processes and production methods, improve the efficiency of organizations in business, government and social services.
3. Citizens in the country must be encouraged to develop entirely new ideas, products, processes and methods through creative approaches.

There is, therefore, no doubt that one major area that African countries have to look into in the circumstance is the behaviour of investment or the pattern and pace of human capital formation. Essential in this regard is the submission of the endogeneous economic growth theory which emphasises the importance of human resource as a major content of the overall capital formation process in the national economy. Consequently, the magnitude, pace, pattern, composition and utilization of manpower resource development should be thoroughly examined to see how far African countries have fared in investment in higher education.

It is generally acknowledged that education is an investment both for the individual receiving it and for the society that devotes its scarce resources to it (Udoh, 2010). As an investment, there should be returns. For the society, it is believed that this return would be in the form of enhanced contribution made by those who have benefitted from education and hence, the economic growth that it leads to.

The expectation of an individual undertaking higher education may however be different. The expectation may be in the area of increased earnings. It is expected that attainment of higher education would fetch better employment and income as well as improvement in the standard of living which will also assist the individual cater for his family members.

Economics tells us that before investment is made, it is important to determine whether it is worthwhile. This is often done by comparing the streams of expected benefits with the cost of embarking on the investment. Returns to the investment are usually measured by two related concepts of productivity and profitability. Consequently, one must always invest where there is possibility of profitability. The objective of any investment therefore is to make profit. Where this is not feasible, the investment would become unattractive. Profitability is defined by Bloom et al (2006) Edame (1999) and Babalola (2000) as the rate by which the expected benefits exceed the cost of investment.

In project appraisal of public goods, it would be totally wrong to identify just the direct benefits and cost above. The proper assessment should be made on the combination of both the direct (private) and the indirect (social) costs and benefits of the investment. Education possess many characteristics of public good and this makes it to generate considerable externalities. The decision of an individual to invest in higher education will therefore necessitate him incurring certain costs which are direct to him. But it also imposes costs on some of his family or community members either in terms of the money they would spend or in terms of what has to be foregone while staying in school. In the same vein, the benefits that accrue to the individual are private, but some other benefits also accrue to the whole economy in terms of addition to the human capital stock and also to other people who will be feeding from this future income.

Contemporary economic theories of investment have added the issue of uncertainty, irreversibility and flexibility as important factor to be considered before investment is undertaken or not. Uncertainty implies that investors may not invest where there is a high degree of uncertainty about future returns. Irreversibility on the other hand implies sunk cost, as the costs spent on investment cannot be recovered after the initial investment. Flexibility refers to the timing of investment in order to know the

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right time to invest because of the risk involved. These concepts reveal clearly that people may fail to invest even when the project appraisal criteria are met. Arising, perhaps, from the political nature of the decisions that determine whether or not to invest in higher education, these criteria are often ignored when determining investment in higher education in some African states. Typical example is Nigeria. Instead of the laid down criteria, ethnicity (entrenched in the concept of educational advantaged and disadvantaged areas), nepotism and opportunity for embezzlement of public funds are critical.

One very important issue in human resource planning is the relationship between manpower development and educational planning. This arises from the fact that education seems to be the most significant, formal and measurable aspect of human capital formation and economic development. Education serves dual functions of being both private consumption and investment process on one hand, and as a social investment process on the other.

The process of higher education gives the satisfaction of self realization and actualization to the individual as well as enhances the individual's socio-economic status in society, being generally a determinant of the income-earning capacity of the individual. Seen thus, education is a private goal. But education of individuals is a necessity for achievement of most goals for the society as a whole. This is because economic growth of any nation state is certainly a social goal. Manpower resource development of which education is a key factor is a pre-requisite for the achievement of that goal (Edeme, 1999; Adedeji & Bamidele, 2003; Etuk, 2004).

There are fundamental values associated with decisions about the scale and scope of the educational system of any nation state that transcend narrow considerations of economic development. As correctly noted by Adedeji and Bamidele (2003) education has an instrumental value, but its basic worth is its contribution to enlarging the horizons of individual and the nation in addition to its specific contributions to increasing national output of goods and services. The central issue therefore is that higher education cannot be viewed only in terms of manpower; although the manpower dimension is important. Thus, the manpower aspect of education considers only the social investment component of education to the neglect of its private consumption and investment utilities. If education is regarded as a good that should be consumed by citizens of a state because of its private and public benefits, then manpower considerations cannot determine the scope of educational system. The scale and scope of educational system should in general, according to Edema (2002) be determined by availability of funds and personnel

The rewards that is attached to different types of work both in terms of present wages and future prospects have a strong influence on the decision making process of both individual citizens and the state. Advocates of the investment in human capital approach consider this comparability paramount on the side of human welfare; conceived in its broadest material terms. Education becomes not only a matter of social welfare but a business proposition, but there is another angle to the matter. As soon as one talks about investments, one invites a consideration of any one investment with alternative possibilities and as soon as one speaks of returns on investment, the comparison among these runs in terms of relative rates is fundamental. Schultz (2000) has lend support to this next step. Although the author expresses some reservations because not all of the more important forms of capital have been identified, Schultz (2000) nevertheless believed that thinking in terms of the rate of returns is fundamental.

### **Theories of Education and Economic Development**

The human capital, modernization and dependency theories have dominated contemporary discussion on education and economic development:

#### **The Human Capital Theory**

Emphasis of human capital theory is on how education increases the productivity and efficiency of workers by increasing the level of cognitive skills possessed by the workforce. Proponents of this theory; Theodore Schultz, Garry Becker and Jacob Mincer belief that people invest in education to increase their stock of human capital. According to Babalola (2000); Adedeji and Bamidele (2003) proponent of the theory saw human capital as the stock of economically productive human capabilities which can be formed by combining innate abilities with investments in human beings. Such investments include expenditures on education, on-the-job training, health and nutrition. It increases expenditure in future productive capacity at the expense of current consumption. However, the stock of human capital increases in a period only when gross investment exceeds depreciation with passage of time with use or without use.

The provision of education is seen as a productive investment in human capital. Proponents of the human capital theory considers investment equally or even more equally worthwhile than that in physical capital. Indeed, contemporary body of knowledge in the United States of America considers investment in human resource/capital three times better than that of physical inputs.

Human capital theories have correctly noted that basic literacy enhances productivity of workers in low skill occupations. They stated further that an instruction that demands logical or analytical reasoning or provides technical and specialized knowledge increases the marginal productivity of workers in high-skill or professional

positions. Moreover, the greater the provision of schooling, the greater the stock of manpower resource development in the country and consequently, the greater the increases in national productivity and economic growth (Edoma, 2001; Bloom *et al.*, 2006). As indeed noted correctly by World Bank (1995), the time is ripe for partners in African development to find it appropriate for a major push in human development. Developing African countries suffer mainly from idea gap not object gap, and as correctly argued by Solodu (1998), Africa's growth tragedy is not so much the absence of physical investment, but perhaps, the inadequate investment in human capital accumulation of which education play a part.

Researches have shown strong linkage between education and economic growth. For instance, education has been seen to substantially increase farm productivity in Korea, Malaysia and Thailand (World Bank, 1990). World Bank (2003) report also showed that massive investment in secondary and higher education significantly explained the development miracle experienced in South East Asia.

### **The Modernization Theory**

The modernization theory focuses on how education transforms an individual's value, belief and behavior. According to the theory, exposure to modernizing institutions such as schools, factories and the mass media inculcate modern values and attitudes in the citizenry of the state. These attitudes include openness to new ideas, independence from traditional authorities, willingness to plan and calculate future exigencies and growing sense of personal and social efficacy. As noted by modernization theorists, these normative and attitudinal changes continue throughout individual's life cycle, permanently altering an individual's relation to the social and political structures. Therefore, the greater the number of people exposed to modernizing institutions, the greater the level of individual modernity attained by the state. Once a critical segment of the nation's population changes in this way, the pace of the nation's modernization and economic development and growth quickens. Thus, educational expansion, particularly at the tertiary level, through its effects on individual values and benefits, sets into motion the necessary building blocks for a more productive work force and sustained economic growth.

### **The Dependency Theory**

The dependency theory has its origin from Marxist conceptualizations based on the dynamics of the world system that structures conditions for economic transformation in both the core and periphery of the world economy. The proponents of this theory argue that the prevalence of foreign investment capital, the presence of multi-national corporations, concentration on exportation of primary products and the dependence on imported technologies and finished goods constrain long-term economic development. Certain features of the world polity such as state fiscal strength, degree



and regime centralisation and external political integration may contribute to economic growth in the Third World African states.

Critics of the dependency theory have pointed to evidence of widespread unemployment of employable citizens of the states of Africa and its negative impact on economic growth. They also argued correctly that educated elites with modern attitudes and values are behind brain drain in African countries with its deleterious impacts on the stock of trained personnel, potential entrepreneurs and consequently, on the rate of growth and development. Little wonder that some African leaders sometimes become more cautious and even skeptical about the presumed positive economic impact of education on national development.

### **Higher Education and Quality Issues**

Quality is one of the most widely used and spoken concepts in higher education circle. However, there is very little regard to its exact meaning (Becher, 1994, Toyo, 2004). Many stakeholders, particularly in Nigeria see this concept as ambiguous and elusive; making the understanding of its meaning difficult to arrive at. This is very true when higher education is compared to industry where clearly definable products with quantifiable qualities exist. Higher education “product” is intangible to identify. The difficulty of capturing definite quality in higher education sub-sector is aptly captured by Akin-Aina (1994) who opined that:

*Quality is a most elusive notion. Virtually everybody recognizes it when it is seen but scarcely anyone can specify its components or features with any degree of precision or confidence. But intuitively and at times empirically, scholars seem to know that they are talking about low standard of education (p.17).*

There is mounting concern about the state of schooling at all levels in Africa. For instance, when a student has entered a university, the quality of learning imparted will depend on a number of things. Some of these are the numerical adequacy, the precise specialization, and the experience of staff. The brain drain has wreaked havoc here. In Nigeria for example, the National Universities Commission (NUC), basing itself on universally acceptable norms, prescribed staff-student ratios. On this matter, there has been a drastic short-fall in staff by NUC guidelines. In 2002, federal Nigerian universities had a shortfall of 52 percent in academic staff. This, according to Toyo (2004) was actually an improvement in NUC reports prior to 2002 which showed a shortfall of about 66 percent. Okebukola (2000) attributed the shortfall to high student enrolment level; inability of universities to recruit additional academic staff because of funds implications they can hardly bear and non-availability of qualified academic staff to some disciplines.

The soundness of the higher education to which a student has access depends on the experience of the university academics. In this regard, the National Universities Commission in most Africa states such as Nigeria provide guidelines to guarantee quality. These guidelines have to do with categories of academics in terms of scholarly experience, maturity or attainment. But as correctly noted by Toyo (2004) and Bloom et al (2006), there is serious preponderance of less experienced academics in staff aggregate that are grossly inadequate to begin with. On the whole, only about three quarters of the professors/readers and less than two-thirds of the senior lecturers that should be in universities in Africa are there. The lower academic groups exceed their required proportion by a quarter or more of that proportion. The situation clearly owes a lot to the brain drain. A recent estimate by Cornish (2005, June, 13) suggests that up to 50000 African-trained Ph.D's are working outside Africa. The report noted that the problem is especially acute among medical professionals. Poor quality of higher education also shows up in output indicators. These include inability of products of higher institutions to read and write efficiently. Non-suitability of products of higher institution for available vacancies and their dissatisfactory relevance for Africa's developmental needs. Other indicators are the need for postgraduate education to attain relevance in the labour market, criminal neglect and pervasive decay in values and standards and the poor results of African students in internationally competitive tests.

Accusing fingers are generally pointed at governments and authorities of higher institutions for the low levels of literacy, academic achievement and social skills in institutions of higher learning in Africa. In fact, there is general concern about the level of material inputs allocated by African governments to various institutions of higher learning on a per-student-basis, and the level of efficiency with which fixed amounts of material inputs are organized and managed to raise student's cognitive achievement in the schools.

However, much as governments of African states may be aware of the need to provide more resources to improve the quality of higher education in their countries, there is a limit to the amount of resources that can be allocated annually. The principle of increased financial allocation to education has far-reaching financial implication for other competing social services and ordering of national priorities. Thus, questions arise such as: will a huge financial outlay on education deny road to development and the communication medial? Will it reduce the funds which would otherwise be available for public health services? What effect will huge financial outlay have on the creeping war which drought is waging on the productive capacity of African farmlands? These and other relevant points are serious questions to be carefully weighed when considering the provision of funds for education sub-sector and the issue of quality of higher education in Africa. Consequently, African governments have, more often than not, been exempted from the quality issue in tertiary institutions on the

ground of economic viability. While African governments are aware of the fact that technical evidence has consistently shown that academic quality can be improved by increasing expenditure per student, they however, argue that economic reality on ground cannot support immediate implementation of such funding. It has therefore been a difficult task to agree on what should be a good practice in African tertiary institutions. This problem is further compounded by the heterogenous nature of most African countries as multi-ethnic nations. What is considered as a minimum entry qualification into university or other tertiary institutions vary across African countries. This may be as a result of the prevailing conditions within ethnic nationalities making up each African state and the area in which the institutions are located.

Even when a consensus as to what a good education should entail, this standard is expected to be the minimum attainable. It will be foolish to suggest that schools should stop at the minimum since it is doubtful if African countries can ever attain perfection in tertiary education. It is therefore, left in the hand of individual African states and institutions of higher learning to define what is considered as qualitative education within the context of their minimum standards subject to its resources, social conditions and limitations. The implication here is that quality of education will keep on changing from country to country and from time to time as institutions continue to make efforts at satisfying the needs of stakeholders.

Manpower resource development is conceptualized as the process by which nation develops and increases its human resources capabilities through the inculcation of the relevant general and technical knowledge, skills and effectiveness to efficiently realize set goals (Adedeji & Bamidele, 2003; Etuk, 2004). Toyo (2004) referred to it as a process of increasing acquisition of capacities. In order to achieve human capacity building, training is essential. This accounts for why local and international institutions such as universities, polytechnics and management development institutions provide training and retraining for manpower resource development.

During the colonial era in Africa, manpower resource development was tailored towards maintenance of law and order and general administration. Presently, its scope has been broadened to capture the challenges in economic, social and political spheres of a country. Consequently, greater emphasis is placed on formal Western-type education and skills development to achieve rapid manpower development.

African countries have witnessed unprecedented growth in the number of higher institutions since the attainment of political independence. If the qualities of education offered by these intuitions is discountenanced, Africa can make bold to say that her level of dependence on foreign institutions for capacity building of its workforce has seriously declined. Indeed, the manpower problems of Africa has

presently taken a new dimension from capacity gap to management in area of good governance. Unfortunately however, the quality of education at all levels of education is on the decline and thus calls for serious attention because of its harmful effects on national development. This may have accounted for why the Task Force on Higher Education and Society (TFHE) (2000), by UNESCO/World Bank which brought together experts from thirteen countries to explore the future of tertiary education in developing African countries argued correctly that:

*Higher education is essential to developing countries if they are to prosper in a world economy where knowledge has become a vital area of advantage. The quality of knowledge generated within higher education institutions and its availability to the wider economy is becoming increasingly critical to national competitiveness (p.47).*

World Bank (2002) also stressed the role of tertiary schooling in building technical and professional capacity and bolstering primary and secondary education. Although the report maintained the bank's emphasis on primary and secondary schooling, it stated that higher education should receive not more than 20 percent of a country's total education budget. It also argued that the state should create enabling frameworks to encourage tertiary education institutions. African countries should not focus only on rate of return analysis, but also take account of the major "external benefits of higher education".

### **Problem Areas in Education and Economic Development**

One major area of agreement among human resource specialist is that investment in education should lead a country to higher heights. The major problem of education lies in the breakdown of institutions in a country. It is important to recognize that educational institutions exist within overall, institutional settings in a country (judiciary, government, security, health, finances are all collapsing and falling short of all expectations. It would therefore be a surprise to have education meeting out expectations. Incidentally, education should be the custodian and the process by which the values are being transmitted. But the quality of higher education is creating doubt on the worthwhileness of investing in this type of education. The obvious implication of this is that output from this investment process in higher education cannot actually achieve the goals that were set for it. The result is poor manpower resource development. A number of factors account for why the returns to higher education continually fall short of expectations. These factors are:

### **Underfunding of Higher Education**

It is a well known fact that the underfunding of tertiary education especially as from the 1980s, is a problem of enormous gravity. The downturn of the economy of African state in the eighties and subsequently policies of the World Bank and IMF,

which supported adjustment policies have adversely affected the amount of fund available for education. Experience has shown clearly that when revenue of government reduces, it is the investment expenditure that first gets the knocking.

Secondly, African countries have not been blessed with leaders who clearly understand the true value of higher education and the dynamics of the role of tertiary institutions in the process of national mobilization, development and emancipation. It is a known fact that education is often grasping for funds. Military regimes in Africa spend billions on defence. This explains why many infrastructures in tertiary institutions are dilapidated and obsolete.

### **Brain Drain**

Concerning the output of higher education, it looks obvious that African countries are not reaping the full benefits of the investment that has been made, the reason being that of the problem of brain drain or human capital flight. Brain drain is the migration of professional workforce from one country to another in search for higher paid salaries or better living conditions. For example, it is estimated that up to 50,000 African-trained professionals, particularly medical doctors are working outside Africa (Cornish, 2005, June 13). This situation is bad because one cannot appeal to the spirit of patriotism of people to stay at home hungry when one can find a better condition of living elsewhere (Adedeji & Bamidele, 2003). While the private return to the individual is higher in this case, returns to African nations are greatly reduced. This is gross waste of human resources and loss to the society considering the investment made in the higher education.

### **Lack of Equilibrium between Demand and Supply**

One major problem associated with the belief that education is good for economic development is that of maintaining an equilibrium position; that is, where there will be no incidence of either surplus or shortage supply of educational output. Babalola (2000), Adedeji and Bamidele (2003) have correctly noted that a shortage of educated people might limit development while, excess supply of it will certainly create unemployment and limit economic growth. Besides, screening device used by employers to make decision on hiring workers might develop into mere credentials. This is to say that, faced with large number of applications, an employer tends to narrow employment options by looking only at those with highest level of education. The result is that the educational qualification required for certain jobs tends to move upwards overtime with little or no change in basic productivity.

### **Political Factors**

Political instability in some African countries have had serious negative impact on academic activities at tertiary institutions across the continent. Experience has shown that political instability has resulted in inconclusive implementation of well-

designed educational policies and programmes due largely to frequent changes at various levels of educational administration. Other political events include civil wars and political impasse during presidential elections resulting in disruption of academic calendars of tertiary institutions of such countries.

### **Conclusion and the Way Forward**

Education has contributed less growth than expected due to poor funding, brain drain and lack of equilibrium between demand and supply. The international development community has encouraged African governments' relative neglect of higher education. But most African countries believe that education at least is a merit good and that its provision should not and need not be judged on economic output such as lowering of infant mortality, non-market returns and residence related benefits alone. The ability of Africa countries to successfully cope with and prosper in the world economy where knowledge has become a vital area of advantage is a swift reaction backed with proper tertiary education programmes. The following recommendations are therefore made:

1. African countries should evolve new development strategies with long term objectives with the aim of meeting the needs and aspiration of African people. Such development strategies should shift away from the inherited colonial structures which the World Banks/IMF SAP are "adjusting" and "restructuring" which have proved to be a colossal failure in transforming the African economy.
2. New development strategies in Africa should be locally engineered and sourced. Only in exceptional cases should external funding be sought. This calls for complete autonomy to be given to tertiary institutions in African continent.
3. Adequate funds should be made available to public higher institutions for purposes of rehabilitating hostels, classrooms, laboratories, studios, engineering workshops, water and electricity, research and teaching equipments, research grants etc.
4. Governments of African countries should provide stabilization fund to make up for shortfalls which often result from low budgetary allocation to higher institutions.
5. Academic staff should be properly paid as check against brain drain.

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