HUMANUS DISCOURSE Vol. 6. NO 3. 2026
ISSN 2787-0308 (ONLINE)

Towards the Sustainability of Tertiary Education Institutions Established by Faith- Based Voluntary Organisations in Benue State, 1976-2020

Gabriel Orfega Ortserga[1]
Department of History and Strategic Studies
Rev. Fr. Moses OrshioAdashu University, Makurdi.

[2]Thaddeus Aov Kyegh[2]
Department of History and International Studies
Federal University of Lafia, Lafia

Joseph Ezekiel Obuje
Department of History and International Studies
Federal University of Lafia, Lafia

Abstract

The main thrust of this paper is to examine the efforts of faith-based voluntary organisations in sustaining the tertiary education in Benue State from 1976-2020. The paper examined the efforts of the Nongo u Kristu u i Ser sha Tar (NKST), the Roman Catholic Mission (RCM), and the Methodist Church in sustaining their tertiary education institutions in Benue State. The study employed a historical methodology in generating its data, where primary, secondary, and tertiary sources were used. The paper, therefore, has established that, despite the problems militating against the functionality of these institutions, efforts have been made to sustain them. Among other efforts, these include, diversifying the source of funding, staff training, quality assurance of their programmes, provision of adequate infrastructure and facilities. The study advocated that, to overcome challenges like poor funding, lack of support from government and private individuals, and poor infrastructure, among others, the proprietors of these institutions have to diversify their revenue generation. The paper concluded that, despite the faith-based voluntary agencies' contributions to the development of tertiary education in Benue State, much is left to be done. The tertiary institutions established by these faith-based voluntary agencies need to expand their scope to be able to increase their enrolment capacity to mitigate the problem of access to tertiary education in Benue State.

Keywords: Faith-based, voluntary organisations, funding, NKST, Roman Catholic, Methodist.

Introduction

[1] 07031190050 orfegaortserga@gmail.com
[2] kyeghaov@gmail.com 08134307030

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me

The responsibility of providing functional tertiary education is enormous and a very capital-intensive venture that ordinarily is supposed to be carried out by the government. The establishment and management of tertiary education institutions require the injection of huge funds in the venture. However, the inability of the government at various levels to adequately invest in education, has brought about the problem of government's inability to provide even and equal opportunities for the citizenry in accessing tertiary education in Benue State. This therefore has prompted the need for the education policy planners to grant establishment rights to private individuals and corporate organisations to venture into the provision of tertiary education in Nigeria.[3] As stated above, the task of funding education generally is the one that requires the investment of a substantial amount of the nation's budget. Globally, most nations commit about 26 percent of their annual budget for funding of education, this is a UNESCO requirement.[4] It is against this backdrop that this paper takes a cursory examination of the efforts taken by faith-based organisations in Benue State to sustain their tertiary education institutions.

Conceptual Perspectives

Tertiary Education

The National Policy on Education formulated in 1977 defines tertiary education as the education given in institution such as universities and inter-university centres like Nigeria French Language village, Arabic language village, Polytechnics and Mono-Technics.[5] That is, tertiary education is the type of education acquired from higher education institutions. The National Policy on Education clearly spells out the goals to be achieved by tertiary institutions to include; the pursuit of quality teaching; researching and development; high standards in the quality of facilities, services and resources, staff development programmes, provision of more practical based curriculum relevant to the needs of the labour market; generation of knowledge, skills and competencies that contribute to national and local economic goals which enables students to succeed in a knowledge based economy.[6] According to the World Bank, tertiary education also refers to the third level, third stage or post-secondary education; it is the educational level following the completion of secondary education.[7] Thus, tertiary education includes universities as well as institutions that teach specific capabilities of higher learning such as colleges, technical institutes, community colleges, nursing schools, research laboratories, centre of excellences, and distant learning centres.[8] The foregoing definition sees tertiary education as including universities as well as trade schools and colleges. Tertiary education generally leads to the award of certificates diplomas and academic degrees. For UNESCO, tertiary education focuses on learning endeavours in specialised fields.[9] The above position provides a vivid

[3] *World Bank on Education* (PDF) UNESCO-IBE, 2011, Retrieved 24th July, 2021.
[4] *World Bank on Education…*
[5] *National Policy on Education,* (Lagos: NERDC, 2013).
[6] *National Policy on Education..*
[7] *World Bank on Education…*
[8] *World Bank Report on Higher Education in Nigeria* (Paris: UNESCO, 2000).
[9] Tertiary Education Definition. STANDS$4LLC, 2D21.WEB. 16 OCT 2021
https://www.definitions.net.definitions/tertiary+education

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me

explanation of what is tertiary education which is the hallmark of this study. The tertiary institutions of learning established by faith-based voluntary organisations provide training and skills to people of Benue State which are capable of providing socio-development to Benue State.

For J.T.E. Babalola and M.J. Babalola, tertiary education is the western type of education that is patterned along college system and commonly offered as higher-education, post-secondary school education and further studies in universities, polytechnics, vocational school, training institutes. Thus, tertiary education enables candidates to acquire wide range of knowledge with high level of understanding through inter-disciplinary approaches in the area of specialty resulting to competence of the needed skill and expertise that add values to human life and the society.[10] It equally affords candidates the academic qualification or after certification after fulfilling the requirements of study and a display of good conducts.[11] The relevance of this definition to this study is that it has provided an understanding about the importance of tertiary education which is the hallmark of this study.

They further observed that, the process of teaching and learning in tertiary education often concentrates on formulated curriculum in accredited course to help and expand learner's scope of research and community service. This type and level of education is delivered through a range of teaching tools, methods and institutions, prerequisite for examination and testing often in a combination of requisite course work, submitted and scrutinised standardised test scores and a minimum grade point average.[12] This therefore leads to the awards of certificates like diploma, Nigerian Certificate of Education (NCE), Bachelor's Degrees, Master's Degrees, Doctorate Degrees and post Doctorate Fellowship in a field of study. Thus, the purpose of tertiary education is assumed to prepare students with adequate and relevant skills so that they can be active members of their communities and societies and also enable them to contribute their quota to the socio-economic development of their societies.

Meanwhile, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Diplomatic Academy, the term higher or tertiary education does not have a single definition; it is defined differently by different scholars. It sees higher education as the level of education and training programme irrespective of the institutions that provide these trainings.[13] The implication of the above is that, higher education simply means the training acquired immediately after secondary education. This knowledge acquired is developed on the previous knowledge from secondary school. According to this definition, what actually constitute the institutions or programmes of higher education differ according to countries. Arising from this therefore, it is clearer that tertiary education institutions of course vary from one country to another. But tertiary education is any training or knowledge acquired after secondary school education.

---

[10]J.T.E. Babalola and M.J. Babalola, Overview of Tertiary Education in Nigeria (1947-2020) Structural Analysis and Policy Framework". 34

[11] J.T.E. Babalola and M.J. Babalola, "Overview of Tertiary Education, 35

[12] J.T.E. Babalola and M.J. Babalola…

[13] "Higher Education Level: Foundation Level," Education Learning and Development Module, Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Diplomatic Academy, 2018, 4

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me

Faith-based Voluntary Organisations

The term "voluntarism" is derived from the Latin word 'Voluntas' which means will.[14] The will assumes various forms of impulses, passions, appetites and desires. It is the will that may produce some of the social evils, of which the unfortunate sections of the society are the victims. Inequality among individuals is a major source of motivation for voluntary action in every society. Social services are initiated to help eradicate the inequality and to uplift the under privileged. The term volunteer is normally used to mean someone who offers.

The voluntary sector is therefore, in the 21st century society is regarded as a complex and increasingly complicated sphere. It is made of diverse and heterogeneous self-governing associations of people who have a mutual interest in providing services, supports, education, advocacy, self-help, and, in some cases, activism and resistance. Sometimes, the sector is often referred to as the "third sector (in-between the state and market), non-profit sector (versus the for-profit sector), community sector (alongside government and business), non-governmental sector (alongside government and business internationally), or the social economy (in-between the private and public spheres of activity)".[15]Of course, some of these voluntary organisations, but not all within the voluntary sector are charities. Many have statutory sources of funding. Some rely primarily on voluntary fundraising and/or grant-in-aid funding, while others have detailed contracts/service agreements with state agencies.[16]

Because of the heterogeneous nature of voluntary organisations, they can be differentiated by their size and organisational structure, and range from small community groups to international development organisations. Meanwhile volunteers are those individuals who contribute their time freely that are essential to the voluntary sector. Most voluntary organisations involve volunteers formally in some fashion, in front-line and/or governance roles. Although not established for financial gain, many voluntary organisations also have paid employees and can be highly professionalised.[17]

There is, however, a growing recognition of the scope and importance of individuals who volunteer their time informally, without association to voluntary organisations. Taken together, the actions of the voluntary sector and volunteers, both formal and informal, are rooted in the broader philosophy of voluntarism – that is, non-coerced action usually for public benefit, outside the constraints of the state. In principle, this means that voluntary bodies do not

[14] M. Skinner, "Voluntary and the Voluntary Sector", in *The International Encyclopaedia of Geography: People, the Earth, Environment and Technology,* Edited by the Association of American Geographers, Wiley-Blackwell, 123
[15] M. Skinner, Voluntarism and the Voluntary Sector…124
[16]M. Skinner, Voluntarism and the Voluntary Sector…125
[17]M. Skinner, Voluntarism and the Voluntary Sector…126

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me

depend on statute or the market for their existence and purpose.[18] Yet, as it has become evident that recently, increasingly voluntarism and the attendant activities of the voluntary sector and volunteers are intertwined with the state and private interests as welfare societies have evolved. Given the importance and complexity of the sector, the study of voluntarism involves understanding the spatially uneven and place-specific nature of the voluntary sector and volunteering.[19]

Philanthropy appears to be an essential motivating factor in the voluntary action. When a sense of social responsibility is being inculcated in the individuals, they take up various steps to improve the condition of the people all around.[20]By and large, the term voluntary association is variously defined by different scholars, according to Aadit Altaf Lone, who defined it as "a group organised for the pursuit of one interest or of several interests in common."[21] While Wilderom and Milner defined voluntary organisation as, "a group of persons, organised on the basis of voluntary membership without state control, for the furtherance of some common interest of its members."[22] For Warner, a voluntary organisation is "one which, whether its workers are paid or unpaid, is initiated and governed by its own members without external control.[23]The foregoing positions emphasised that voluntary agencies are all about voluntarism and not compulsion.

There are four essential elements in any voluntary association:

i. method of formation, which is voluntary on the part of a group of people,
ii. method of government, with self-governing organisation to decide on its constitution, its servicing, its policy and its clients,
iii. method of financing, with at least some of its revenues drawn from voluntary sources, and
iv. Motives of profit excluded.[24]

That is, organisations that are having all these kinds of four elements are rare and perhaps are only the ideal forms.[25] The implication of the above is that voluntary organisation is different from governmental ministries and they

[18] M. Skinner, Voluntarism and the Voluntary Sector…126
[19] R. M. Kramer, *Voluntary Agencies in the Welfare State,* (London: University of California Press, 1989), 234
[20] M. Skinner, Voluntarism and the Voluntary Sector…
[21] A.A. Lone, "Social Development and Role of Voluntary Organizations in Making India Shine" *International Journal of Physical and Social Science vol.7 issue 6,* June 2017, http://www.ijmra.us.
[22] P.M. Wilderom and J.B. Milner, Defining Voluntary Groups and Agencies within Organization Science, in *Organization Science,* Nov. 1991, vol.2, no.4, https://www.jstor.org/stable2633170.
[23] K.M. "Major Conceptual Elements of Voluntary Associations" in D.H. Smith, R.D. Reddy and B.R. Baldwin (eds), *Voluntary Action Research,* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1972), 70.
[24]K.M. "Major Conceptual Elements of Voluntary…
[25] O.F. White, "Professionalism of Voluntary Organizations as a Problem in the Theory of Human Action" in J.D. Harman (ed), *Volunteering in the Eighties: Fundamental Issues in Voluntary Action,* (Washington, DC: University Press of America), 127.

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me

provided very essential services to the entire society without recourse to the constitution.

It is necessary to point out that; voluntary organisations and non-official organisations are not one and the same. There are several differences between the two, voluntary organisations are spontaneous in their origin and sometimes oriented towards a specific situation. They bring in high motivation, better management skills, and greater sensitivity to field problems. On the other hand, the non-official agencies may be state sponsored and last as long as they receive support, finances, and other supports from the state. This is initiated by the state. Therefore, all non-official organisations need not necessarily be included in the category of voluntary organisations. But in both these organisations, there is a scope for involvement of enlightened individuals who are involved to serve the cause.[26]

Meanwhile, the concept of faith-based organisation on the other is simply referred to as religious organisations and it is related to church-based organisations like synagogues, mosques, meeting houses, congregations, and prayer houses.[27] These faith-based organisations vary in their modus operandi and organisational structures. Of course, there are ongoing debates on the initiatives of these organisations to community development which revolves around on their contributions to the development of different communities. Castelli and McCarthy have posited that, there are different types of organisations that operate as faith-based voluntary organisations as they have categorised faith-based organisations as congregations, national networks, which include national denominations, their social service arms (e.g., Catholic Charities, Lutheran Social Services), and networks of related organisations, and freestanding religious organisations that are incorporated separately from congregations and national networks but have a religious colouration.[28] It is also worthy of note that, members of faith-based organisations are often more inclined in the provision of diverse community-service activities bothering on the provision of social services like education and medical services.[29] Meanwhile Peter Dobkin Hall has contended that "... even familiar terms like "parish," "member," "congregation," and "denomination" that non-specialists treat as having simple meanings actually mean very different things in different faiths."[30] Each of these categories includes organisations that are quite diverse. Congregations may be affiliated with more than 200 denominations, and vary in size, membership, and so forth. Denominational organisations include entities directly involved in church governance, such as a Roman Catholic archdiocese, and a variety of special purpose organisations like seminaries, religious orders, and pension funds for clergy. Their service agencies include both decentralised multi-service providers such as the Jewish Federations and specialised service institutions, for instance, a United Methodist Hospital, Notre Dame University.

[26] O.F. White, "Professionalism of Voluntary Organizations as a Problem in the Theory of Human Action"… 130
[27] E.J. Dionne, "Take it on Faith" *Washington Post, Sec Magazine*, June 20, 1999, 7
[28] J. Castelli and J. McCarthy," Religion Sponsored Social Service Providers: The Non-Independent Sector" Aspen Institute Non-Profit Sector Research Fund, Unpublished, 1997, 23
[29]J. Castelli and J. McCarthy…24
[30]P.D. Hall, Posting to ARNOV-L Listserve, June 28, 1999. Archived at www.amova.org

National networks include special-purpose groups formed to mobilise the energies of individuals and congregations around projects and specific goals like Habitat for Humanity and the Christian Coalition, increasingly referred to as parachurch organisations.[31] Freestanding organisations can be as simple as an independent non-profit organisation spun off by a congregation to pursue a particular ministry or as complex as an interfaith or ecumenical coalition of congregations or clergy.[32]

Efforts of Sustaining the Provision of Tertiary Education by Faith-Based Voluntary Organisations in Benue State, 1976-2020

This section of the paper examined the efforts made by faith-based organisations to sustain their tertiary institutions despite the challenges that have militated against their smooth operations. That is, these organisations in order to keep their institutions to remain functional and for the institutions to live up to the actualisation of their mandates, they have made concerted efforts of improving teaching and learning in these institutions. These include the following:

Diversification of Sources of Funding/ Internally Generated Revenue (IGR):

According to Prof. Emmanuel H. Agba, the former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Mkar, the problem of funding of tertiary education institutions established by faith-based organisations in Benue State is a very vexing one and has greatly affected the smooth running of the institutions. Inadequate funding has had a very negative impact on the sustainability of these institutions as it affects their effectiveness in so many ways. As such, it is therefore very important for the faith-based organisations who are owners of the tertiary institutions to diversify their sources of funding to be able to meet the global best practices in the provision tertiary education in Benue State.[33] He further reiterated that, tertiary education institutions established by faith-based voluntary organisations operate in a condition that puts them in what he termed as "financial pressure" because of the limited resources at their disposals, hence, diversifying their traditional sources of generating revenue becomes the surest way out of the quagmire.[34]

The diversification of sources of revenue generation of the institutions places them on a more sound and comfortable position against which frees them from these financial pressures. This also will ensure that these institutions are up to date in achieving their mission and vision and their operational and strategic goals, maintain infrastructure, and attract high quality of scholarship.[35] It is in realisation of this that the faith-based organisations have made concerted efforts in diversifying their sources of funding to boost their internal revenue generation to enhance their optimal performance and compete with their

[31]P.D. Hall, Posting to ARNOV-L Listserve….
[32]J. Castelli and J. McCarthy…24
[33] Oral Interview: Emmanuel H. Agba, Male, 64 Years, Lecturer, Makurdi, 18/08/2024
[34] Oral Interview: Emmanuel H. Agba, Male, 64 Years, Lecturer, Makurdi, 18/08/2024
[35] Oral Interview: Emmanuel H. Agba, Male, 64 Years, Lecturer, Makurdi, 18/08/2024

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me

counterparts in the public sector. The need for exploring alternative sources of revenue generation by the proprietors of the institutions requires a careful planning and strategic decision-making. The reason for this is because, in an effort to expand these institutions to meet their visions and missions, it requires the availability of sufficient funding.[36] To this end, Sani Ahmed describes the alternative funding sources as "Revenue Supplementation Strategy."[37] This revenue supplementation strategy is a strategy that allows for financial viability of tertiary institutions. The strategy allows for the higher institutions to diversify their revenue generation base by investing into viable ventures like renting of the institutions facilities like halls, guest houses, petrol stations among other revenue generating ventures that would generate income for them.[38] He observed further that the issue of diversification of universities sources of revenue from government funding is what the Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC) has even authorised for the public universities in Nigeria that 10% of their annual expenditures should be outside of the government funding. Thus, the universities would need to go out of the box by devising other strategies of improving their Internally Generated Revenue (IGR).[39] Be that as it may, the study has established that, diversification of the sources of revenue of these institutions is the surest way of improving the revenue bases of the institutions. The following are some of the efforts made by these faith-based organisations in Benue State to boost and improve their IGR so as to increase and improve their operations. The ways of improving the revenue generations of these institutions.

An interview with Dr. JoelTivde, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of University of Mkar, revealed that, following the establishment of the University of Mkar, Mkar in 2005, the NKST Synod, in its wisdom and attempt to boost the financial base and the IGR of the University, levied the sum of one thousand naira (#1,000) on each communicant member of the church worldwide as a strategy of improving the University's revenue. This strategy was NKST Synod's support to the University.[40] This singular effort by the NKST Synod was generating one hundred million (#100,000,000) naira for the University yearly. However, after two years of paying one thousand naira by every communicant member of the congregation, the amount was reviewed downward to five hundred naira which was paid up to 2010 when that levy was finally lifted by NKST Synod because of the numerous complaints received from some of their consistories that the policy was putting NKST communicant members to hardships.[41] Of course, this policy was seriously criticised by some members of the church as being a strategy of putting NKST members into an unnecessary hardships, and some members of the church could not pay the levy genuinely. So, after five years of the policy, it was lifted.

[36] Oral Interview: H. Agba, Male, 64 Years, Lecturer, Makurdi, 18/08/2024
[37] Sani Ahmed, "Public and Private Higher Education Finance in Nigeria" in *European Scientific Journal Vol 11 (7),* 2015, ISSN: 1857-7881 (Print) e-ISSN: 1857-733. Retrieved on 17/5/2024
[38] Sani Ahmed, "Public and Private Higher Education Finance in Nigeria…
[39] Sani Ahmed, "Public and Private Higher Education Finance in Nigeria…
[40] Oral Interview: JoelTivde, 50 Years, Male, public Servant, Mkar, 29/8/2025
[41] Oral Interview: JoelTivde, 50 Years, Male, Public servant, Mkar, 20/8/2025

It is also worthy of note that, the University of Mkar in its bid to diversify its source of revenue generation has established "The University of Mkar Demonstration Farm". The farm is located at KM 5, Mkar-Amaladu road. The farm is rearing goat, sheep, and chicken.[42] The University generates thousands of naira roughly like fifty thousand (#50,000) to eighty thousand (#80,000) monthly from sales of chickens, eggs, goats, and others.[43]Thus, the University of Mkar demonstration farm has served as an alternative source of revenue generation for the University to cushion the over-dependence on students' tuition fees as the only source of funding.

Similarly, in an attempt to improve the revenue base of the institutions established by the faith-based organisations in Benue State, the institutions have resorted in hiring and renting out halls and spaces on the campuses to individuals for occasions like wedding `million naira (#1,000,000) for renting out its multi-purpose hall and other spaces on the campus for wedding receptions and other occasions yearly. This as a matter of fact has significantly contributed to revenue generation of these institutions as people apply for the them on a regular basis.

Relatedly, in a bid to generate revenue, the University of Mkar like other Universities have awarded honorary doctorate degrees to well-deserving personalities in the society, establishment of continuing education programmes, post-graduate school, sales of admission forms, admission letters, among others, have significantly helped in improving the internally generated revenue of these institutions.[44] For instance, the University of Mkar has honoured eminent Nigerians with Honorary Doctorate degrees, who have in turn donated money to help the growth of these institutions. For instance, the University of Mkaron the 6th of November, 2009, did a convocation and the wife of the Former President of Nigeria, Dame Patience Jonathan was awarded an Honorary Doctorate degree and she donated a huge sum of money to the institutions during the convocation and endowment fund raising. Other distinguished personalities like the former governors of Benue State like, George Akume, Gabriel Suswam, and Samuel Ortom have made substantial financial support to the University of Mkar at different intervals.[45] Of course, apart from the former governors, personalities like, Senator B.I.A. Gemade, Gen. A. Kpera, and a host of prominent people in Tiv land have lend their financial supports to the institution.

In another development, Emmanuel H. Agba opined that, the reason for the commercialisation of the mini-Radio Station (101.0 MHz FM) that was established during his administration for the Department of Mass Communication at the University of Mkar, was to generate revenue for the University. He reiterated that the reason for commercialising the radio station was to help the university generate some funds for providing radio commercial services to university and its environs. The mini radio station made available

[42] Oral Interview: MikeAgbide, 52 Years, Male, Civil Servant, Mkar, 20/8/2025
[43] Oral Interview: JoelTivde, 50 Years, Male, Public Servant, Mkar, 20/8/2025
[44] Oral Interview: James T.Gwar, 47 Years, Male, Lecturer, Makurdi,20/8/2024
[45] Oral Interview: MikeAgbide, 52 Years, Male, Civil Servant, Mkar, 20/8/2025

radio commercial programmes that attracted people from outside the university community to listen to.[46]

According Theophilus Ayatse, as part of efforts to improve the revenue generation of the tertiary institutions of learning established by faith-based voluntary agencies, the alumni of these institutions have developed robust synergies with their Alma-Ata and give financial support and donations to the institutions.[47] That is, the alumni support are very viable alternative sources of revenue generation for tertiary educational institutions owned by faith-based voluntary agencies. The alumni are usually regarded as an unharnessed source of revenue for their tertiary intuitions. This kind of financial supports from the alumni associations usually harnesses by leveraging the alumni networks, where the institutions get financial supports from their old students whom are placed in strategic positions or offices in the society.[48]

Again, well-organised alumni associations can provide financial supports to the institutions like providing infrastructures (buildings e.g., lecture rooms, hostels, laboratories, libraries, etc) scholarships, honorary degrees, among others.[49] For instance, an interview with Rev Fr Uchechukwu A. Onah, who is a lecturer with St Thomas Aquinas Major Seminary (STAMS), Makurdi revealed that, there has been a robust synergy and engagements between the alumni of the Saint Thomas Aquinas Major Seminary. He maintained that, the alumni are comprised of members that are not in the priesthood and those who are priests, while some are within Nigeria and some are outside the shores of Nigeria like USA, Italy, and Germany. The alumni, gives both financial and material assistance to the institution.[50] He stressed further, the alumni of STAMS recently carried out the renovation of a hostel block in the school which amounted to the tune of millions of naira.[51] This is therefore a clear demonstration of the presence of the alumni association of the institution in uplifting the infrastructure of the school.

Quality Assurance

Available ample evidences have shown that faith-based voluntary organisations' tertiary education institutions in Benue State have become major players in the provision of access to tertiary education, and the need to meet the increasing demand for tertiary education as a result of the growing youth population in Benue State. Despite the problems militating against the functionality of these institutions like inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructure/facilities, inadequate qualified staff, among others, the need to improve their performance, relevance, and competitiveness becomes imperative as these institutions need to continually bring innovations in their academic courses and implement robust quality assurance mechanism.[52] As a strategy, these institutions have devised a way of overcoming some of the challenges militating against their maximum performance. According to Joel

[46] Oral Intervw: Emmanuel H. Agba, Male, 64 Years, Lecturer, Makurdi, 18/08/2024
[47] Oral Interview: TheophilusAyatse, 43 Years, Male, Civil Servant, Makurdi, 23/2/2024
[48] Oral Interview: Theophilus Ayatse, 43 Years, Male, Civil Servant, Makurdi, 23/2/2024
[49] Oral Interview: Shadrack T. Ukuma, 39 years, Male, Public Servant, Makurdi, 12/3/2024
[50] Oral Interview: UgwuchukwuA. Onah, 45 5 Years, Male, Clergy, Makurdi, 22/8/2024
[51] Oral Interview: UgwuchukwuA. Onah, 45 Years, Male, Clergy, Makurdi, 22/8/2024
[52] Oral Interview: Emmanuel H. Agba, Male, 64 Years, Lecturer, Makurdi, 18/08/2024

Tivde, on the issue of inadequate qualified staff, the managements of these institutions go out of the box to engage qualified staff on either contract or visiting bases, since these institutions are not financially buoyant enough to engage them on permanent bases. For instance, we mostly engage 40 to 50 % of our visiting lecturers from sister Universities in the state like Benue State University and Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi.[53] Corroborating this position, Jacob T. Ikomon, who is the Registrar of the NKST College of Nursing Sciences contended that, because of the inability of the College to engage its qualified academic staff on permanent bases, they have hired about 30 to 40 % of their academic staff on contract and visiting capacities whom are mostly staff of School of Nursing in Makurdi.[54] This strategy is employed by almost all the tertiary institutions established by faith-based organisations in Benue State to meet the needed quality assurance requirements of the programmes that are offered in these institutions. As a matter of requirements by the regulating bodies (NUC, NBTE, among others) of the programmes offered in the institutions, they do this to be able to meet the needed requirements for offering these programmes. This is done to enable the institutions' programmes to remain viable, competitive, and sustainable in the provision of quality education to the public. The institutions have also ensured that their programmes are regularly reviewed and modified their curricula to meet the dynamics of the changing nature of labour market and society.[55]

It is also worthy of note that, for the viability of the institutions established by faith-based voluntary organisations in Benue State in the academic world, they have maintained the culture of regular assessment of their programmes, students' performances, and institutional effectiveness as being variable for maintaining accreditation. Accreditation of courses offered in the institutions by the relevant bodies responsible for the accreditation have not only boosted their credibility, it has also gone a long to attract students. For instance, the provost of NKST College of Health Technology, Mkar maintained that, because of the quality of programmes offered in the College, they are all being accredited by their respective regulating bodies, the school can boost of outperforming its counterparts in the state. The college programmes attract students from the neighbouring states like Cross-River, Taraba, Nasarawa, among others to Benue State.[56]

Infrastructural and Facilities Development

The availability of quality infrastructure and facilities are very significant and key components of tertiary education institutions in any part of the world. These infrastructures include physical structures like lecture theatres, libraries, laboratories, hostels, while facilities include technological facilities like computers, internet services, books, laboratory equipment, among others. The availability of these infrastructure and facilities in tertiary institution of

[53] Oral Interview: Joel. Tivde, 50 Years, Public Servant, Mkar, 20/8/2025
[54] Oral Interview: Jacob T. Ikomon, 35 Years, Male, Civil Servant, Mkar, 27/2/2024
[55] Oral Interview: VictorIgbum, 56 Years, Male, Civil Servant, Makurdi, 20/8/20
[56] Oral Interview: JamesIhongo, 52 Years, Male, Civil Servant, Makurdi, 27/2/2024

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me

learning can help to improve the quality learning in that institution.[57] According to M. Ajiya and S.A. Abdullahi:

> Donations or charitable giving is a voluntary financial or material gift gear to uplift the cause of the poor or needy or some public institutions like orphanages, hospitals, religious bodies, etc, and is a good form through which substantial fund can be raised.[58]

The above assertion underscores how voluntary donations to these institutions from spirited individuals and organisations can improve the infrastructural facilities of these faith-based tertiary education institutions in Benue State. For instance, the University of Mkar, Mkar received a donation of a hostel block donated by Engr. B.I.A. Gemade. This hostel block donation by Engr. Gemade was meant to boost the infrastructural deficit of the university, as well as help in solving the students' accommodation challenge in the university.[59]

According to Emmanuel H. Agba, during his tenure as the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Mkar, in a bid to improve on the infrastructures and facilities of the institution, he sought and obtained licence to established a mini-Radio Station (101.0 MHZ FM Radio Waves) and E-TV stations as requirements for the accreditation of Mass Communication programme by the NUC.[60] This has greatly boosted the improvements of the infrastructural facilities of the University. Also, in an effort to improve teaching and research in the University, the University administration entered into partnership with the MTN to establish an E-Library which was equipped with over 200 laptops with MTN being the service provider that provides internet connection and the University portal for school fees and bursary.[61] Furthermore, in an effort to improve the infrastructures in the University, we up-graded staff offices especially the Heads of Departments and Deans, and also remodelled two hostels for male and female students. The University administration also renovated the Vice-Chancellor's Guest House and a hall named after Brig. Gen. Atom Kpera who was the then Chairman of Council of the University. In a similar vein, in order to improve security in the University, the University administration has built a perimeter fence around the University and installed CCT cameras at strategic places to secure the University community.

Staff Training and Development

The training of academic staff in tertiary education encompasses equipping lecturers, professors, academic researchers with pedagogical, research, administrative ethical competencies necessary to perform in teaching and research. Faith-based tertiary institutions in Benue State like the public institutions have the mandate to meet academic and educational standards.

---

[57] Oral Interview: Elijah T. Ikpanor, 40 Year, Male, Public Servant, Makurdi, 23/2/2024
[58] Musa Ajiya and S.A. Abdullahi, "Sources of Funding Higher Education in Nigeria: NGO Approach" http://www.researchgate.net/publications/3485476554. Retrieved on 17/5/2024
[59] Oral Interview: Emmanuel H. Agba, Male, 64 Years, Lecturer, Makurdi, 18/08/2024
[60] Oral Interview: Emmanuel H. Agba, Male, 64 Years, Lecturer, Makurdi, 18/08/2024
[61] Oral Interview: Hemen E. Agba, Male, 64 Years, Lecturer, Makurdi, 18/08/2024

ISSN 2787-0308 (ONLINE)

Thus, the academic staff development in the faith-based organisations tertiary institutions in Benue State are unique because their staff do not benefit from the kind of sponsorship enjoyed by academic staff in the public tertiary institution like the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND). The training of academic staff is strictly done by private efforts of the staff and the institutions. For instance, at the University of Mkar, in effort to improve the quality of teaching and research, and retention of academic staff on tenure basis, the University administration in 2015/2016 session instituted a staff study fellowship. The study scheme was targeted at encouraging academic staff development to improve the quality of academic staff. The staff study fellowship scheme sponsored over 20 academic staff for PhDs and Master degree programmes. The study fellowship paid from 60-150 thousand naira for PhDs, 100 thousand for Masters degrees in sciences, 80 thousand naira for Masters in Arts. This staff study fellowship scheme has helped significantly in retaining the academic to 75 tenure staff and 58 visiting lecturers.[62]

Conclusion

Extrapolating from the above, this paper has carefully examined the efforts to sustain the tertiary educational institutions established by faith-based organisations in Benue State. Theeducation institutions established by faith-based voluntary organisations are facedwith a plethora of problems which revolve around inadequate funding of these institutions. Thus, the problem of inadequate funding of these institutions has opened them to a number of challenges like dilapidated infrastructure and equipment, inadequate staffing, among others. The paper however has x-rayed some of the initiatives and efforts taken by the institutions established by faith-based voluntary organisations to sustain the institutions in terms of improving their performance. Thus, in spite of the challenges faced by these institutions, sustained efforts are made by these institutions so as to be able to meet their mission and vision objectives of providing quality education. The paper concludes by encouraging the proprietors of the tertiary institutions to diversify their source of funding, introduction of innovative programmes to attract students' enrolment and also to meet market demand, enter into partnership and collaborations with donor agencies and industries, improvement of infrastructure and facilities, among other things. The Benue State government can support these institutions in the payment of staff salaries to ameliorate their financial burden.

[62] Oral Interview: HemenE. Agba, Male, 64 Years, Lecturer, Makurdi, 18/08/2024

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me