

Amidst job crisis: 23 varsities churn out 90,000 graduates in 8 months

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The Mamman Kontagora Square, main campus of Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), located at Samaru Zaria was electric with activities on Saturday, April 27, 2019 when it had had its 41st convocation ceremony during which it awarded 15,787 graduands with degrees and diplomas certificates.

It was indeed celebration time as 81 students graduated with First Class degrees while 10,803 bagged bachelor's degrees. The occasion also witnessed the conferment of honorary doctorate degrees on notable Nigerians, including Alhaji Aliko Dangote and a former President of the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), Comrade Hassan Adebayo Sunmonu.

President Muhammadu Buhari who spoke at the event reportedly described knowledge as the key determinant of growth and development of nations in the 21st century.

Buhari who spoke through the Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission (NUC), Professor Abubakar Rashid said one of the cardinal objectives of universities is to make meaningful contributions to nation building.

Earlier on March 22, the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) churned out 20,799 students for the 2018/2019 with 103 of them bagging First Class degrees in various academic disciplines.

Speaking at the event, NOUN's Vice Chancellor, Prof. Abdalla Uba Adamu, disclosed that the university had the highest single graduation of students in a single year in Nigeria and urged them to be good ambassadors in the society.

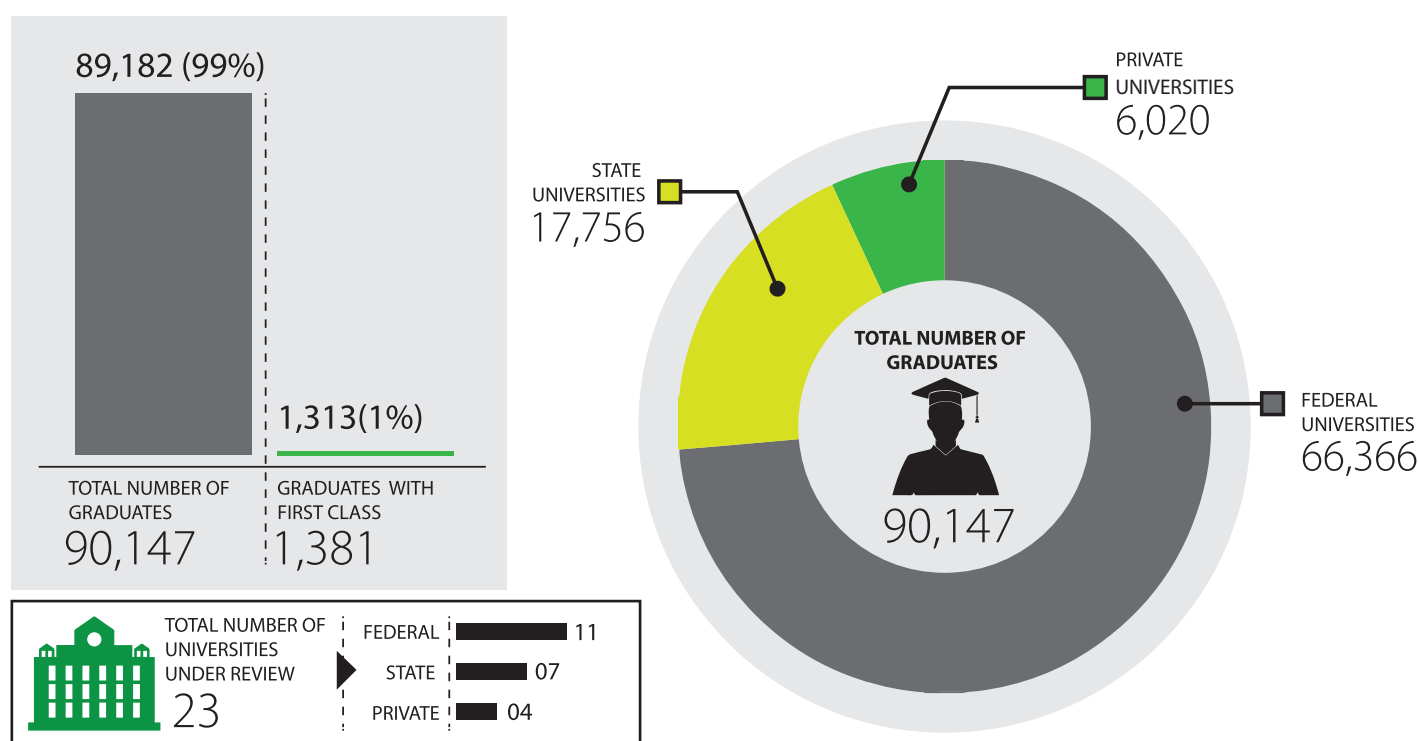
"The massive increase in the number of graduates this year is a clear indication of increasing confidence reposed by Nigerians. The university in the last three years has continued to grow in leaps and bounds, maintaining a central credo in order to solve its problem.

Elsewhere at Sango-Ota, Ogun State, a total of 1,580 students of the Covenant University Ogun, were convoked at its 14th convocation ceremony which held in July this year. Out of this number, 215 students bagged First Class degrees, 668 Second Class Upper honours, 415 Second Class Lower, 9 Third Class and 239 post-graduates.

The Chancellor of the institution, Dr. David Oyedepo, reportedly said that the only way that Nigeria and other African countries could have equal rights like other great nations and not be seen as second class citizens was through investment in education.

At the Lagos State University (LASU) a total of 14,369 students, comprising 57 First Class degree awardees were churned out during its 23rd convocation ceremony which commenced on May 10, 2019.

Total number of graduands in 22 universities across the nation



Infographics Ali A. Geidam

Compiled Haruna Ibrahim

The number of First Class graduates during the convocation was said to represent the highest figure produced by the institution in its 36 years of existence.

The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Olanrewaju Fagbohun, said 1,233 graduated with Second Class Upper, 8,471 with Second Class Lower, 467 Third Class while 24 were in the pass grade. In addition about 1,532 graduated in the post-graduate diploma courses, 520 in academic masters, 1,994 professional masters and 17 in Doctor of Philosophy.

The convocation ceremonies cited above are among several others reviewed by Daily Trust on Sunday between January and August this year during which no fewer than 90,147 (ninety thousand, one hundred and forty seven) graduates were produced by Nigerian universities.

The graduates who passed out from 23 Nigerian universities comprising 11 federal, eight private and four state-owned would be dissolved into the Nigerian labour market after carrying out the one year mandatory national youth service scheme.

Our findings show that 66,366 out of the graduates were produced by federal universities, 17,766 from state-owned universities while 6,020 graduated from private universities.

Among the graduates were 1,381 who obtained First Class degrees out of which 271 graduated from the University of Lagos. This was followed by the privately owned Convent University at Ota, in Ogun State which produced a total of 215 First Class degrees during the period in review.

Other Universities that turned

out First Class Students are: (Usman Danfodiyo University (113), University of Port Harcourt (106), National Open University of Nigeria (103), Ahmadu Bello University (81), Delta State University (68), Babcock University (62), Lagos State University (57), Federal University of Technology, Owerri (42), Rivers State University (36), Salem University, Lokoja (37), Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Efurun (35), University of Abuja (24), Federal University, Dutsinma (24), Kwara State University (23) Veritas University Bwari, Abuja (10) and Obong University, Obong Ntak (3).

third quarter of 2018 from 22.70 percent in the second quarter of 2018. It got to an average of 12.31 percent from 2006 until 2018, reaching an all-time high of 23.10 percent in the third quarter of 2018 and a record low of 5.10 percent in the fourth quarter of 2010.

In the last five years, employment programmes and opportunities by government through MDAs have always attracted more applications than the advertised vacancies.

For instance when the Federal Government sought to employ 500,000 graduates through its N-Power Programme, over 3million applications were

A similar situation was witnessed when the Nigeria Customs Service advertised recruitment for over 3200 new officers into its three major cadre positions.

'Varsity degrees no longer assurance for jobs'

During the 13th convocation ceremony of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria held on March 10 this year, President Buhari reportedly told Nigerian graduates that earning a university degree was no longer an assurance for employment, but something that would help them to face the challenges of life.

Buhari who was represented by the then Minister of State for Education, Professor Anthony Anwuka Buhari, however, vowed that the current government would continue to address youth unemployment and underemployment in the country.

Calling on the youths to embrace the opportunities the Federal Government has put in place to mitigate the situation, Buhari reportedly said: "You are cautioned that university degrees do not usher you into an El Dorado. It rather equips you with the competence to grapple with the ever-changing challenges of life of which youth unemployment is a vexatious part.

"The Federal Government will remain undaunted in tackling the challenges of youth unemployment and underemployment through a matrix of initiatives. Such initiatives include N-Power, the Bank of Industry Youth Entrepreneurship Support Programme and the Central Bank of Nigeria and Bank of Agriculture support schemes."

Findings show that there has been corresponding rise in unemployment rate in Nigeria over the years

A saturated labour market

Cheering as it may sound for the graduating students, the prospect of obtaining government employment after the mandatory one year national service, appears a tall dream for the increasing number of university graduates as there are more applicants chasing after fewer vacancies in the country. Findings show that there has been corresponding rise in unemployment rate in Nigeria over the years.

Records from the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (NBS) indicate that unemployment rate in Nigeria increased to 23.10 percent in the

recorded online from Nigerian graduates.

Earlier in January this year only 80,724 candidates were shortlisted from a total of 210,150 applicants who had applied for the 10,000 police slots advertised by the Nigeria Police for recruitment.

President Muhammadu Buhari had mandated the Police Service Commission (PSC) Commission to recruit 10,000 Nigerians into the Nigeria Police Force.

A total of 315,032 online applications were reportedly received at the close of the commission's recruitment portal on January 11, 2019.