

A Study on the Exclusion of Graduates of Church Oriented Theological Institutions from NYSC in Nigeria: A Case Study of Selected Theological Institutions of Higher Education

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Abstract. The continuous exclusion of Church oriented theological institutions' (COTI) graduates from the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in Nigeria calls for concern in theological education as an aspect of higher education. The important role NYSC plays in the life of a graduate in Nigeria is a veritable prove that COTI graduates need the NYSC for their future endeavours. The main objective of the study is to determine whether there is the exclusion of COTI graduates from the NYSC. Therefore, using the retrospective approach as a method, two theological institutions, one each representing Northern and Southern Nigeria were selected as case study for a retrospective analysis within the period of 9 years (2008-2017). The result showed that for the past nine years, out of the 1917 graduates from both Theological College for Northern Nigeria and Baptist Theological Seminary, Eku, none (99.9%) was mobilized for NYSC or exemption. A survey conducted subsequently revealed that one of the major reasons for such exclusion was due to non-accreditation by Government institution of higher education. The paper recommends that the present existing accreditation structure be collapsed for an all embracing accreditation structure that will have the capacity of accrediting all qualified tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Keywords: Exclusion, Higher education, graduates, Church Oriented Theological Institution, Accreditation

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INTRODUCTION

Study on exclusion especially as it relates to social exclusion has been in European academic domain since the 1960s (Jehoel-Gijsbers & Vrooman, 2007:7,11). Study on exclusion has been indulged upon by the European Union to help in policy agenda. In the sphere of higher education in Nigeria, such research endeavour especially as touching the exclusion of Church oriented theological institutions (COTI) graduates from NYSC is rare. As the name suggests, Church oriented theological institutions refers to theological institutions established and funded by Churches to train manpower or clergies for the Church and other related religious spheres of the society such as chaplaincy, counselling, teaching, etc. In Nigeria, NYSC simply means National Youth Service Corps. This was instituted in Nigeria on May 22, 1973 to integrate Nigerian graduates who are under the ages of 30 years upon graduation because they are expected to mix with people of other tribes, social and family backgrounds, to learn the culture of the indigenes in the place they are posted to. This action is aimed at bringing about unity in the country and to help youths appreciate other ethnic groups (Marenin, 1979:629). For those who are more than 30 years of age upon graduation, they are officially given exception certificate. The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) was set up by the Nigerian government to involve the country's graduates in the development of the country. Since its establishment in 1973, graduates of universities and later polytechnics have been required to take part in the National Youth Service Corps program for one year (Marenin, 1990:397; Marenin, 2008:365). Both the NYSC discharge and exemption certificates are very important in employment and even further studies in Nigeria. The importance of the NYSC has made those Nigerians who graduated from accredited schools abroad to return to do the one year compulsory NYSC. However, those who graduate from Church oriented theological institutions (COTI) with first degrees are not given the opportunity to participate in the service or exemption from the service because the government's higher education accrediting institutions are not all embracing enough to include COTIs.

Theological education in Nigeria has always been assumed even by the proprietors as mainly for the provision of manpower for the Church. They seemed to forget that the Church is also situated in the state. The pastors or graduates of COTIs are being limited to the four walls of the Church as if the Church can absorb all the manpower it produces every year. To some in the university, COTI is like Sunday school and as such it has no academic standards like the university. This group of people are having this assumption because they seemed not to be aware of what is being done in some of these theological institutions. For those COTIs that are maintaining international standards, the standard is the same with that of the university. The curriculum of the seminary for example is not different from that of the department of Religious Studies in the University. The only difference is that the university is accredited by state institutions of higher education and that of COTIs by Church oriented accrediting institutions. While other nations are growing their higher

education and embracing all the academic disciplines in multidisciplinary dimension, the absolute emphasis on science and technology is almost destroying other academic disciplines such as humanities in Nigerian universities. While a nation like Nigeria cannot ignore or reduce the emphasis on science and technology, the need to balance all the academic disciplines for national development should be at the front burner in the sphere of higher education. There is the need also to consider COTIs in Nigeria's higher education space.

This paper therefore, examines the exclusion of Church oriented theological institutions' graduates from the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in Nigeria. Using selected Theological Institutions from the Southern and Northern parts of Nigeria as a case study from 2008 to 2017, the paper argues that there is possible exclusion of graduates of Church oriented theological institutions from NYSC and if such exclusion exists, it amounts to oppression and injustice to Nigerian youths in this sector of the society. It intends to find out if COTI graduates have been called-up for NYSC since graduation (2008-2017). As a way of survey, two theological institutions are chosen as case study. These theological institutions include Baptist Theological Seminary, Eku (Delta State) in Southern Nigeria and Theological College of Northern Nigeria, Bukuru, Jos (Plateau State) in Northern Nigeria. These theological institutions are degree awarding institutions of which some of the adjunct lecturers are from the University.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. to show the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and graduates;
2. to determine whether Church oriented Theological institutions' graduates in Nigeria have been excluded from the one year compulsory National Youth Service Corps (NYSC);
3. to enquire why COTI graduates could have been excluded from NYSC in Nigeria; and

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Related literature abounds in the study of theological education and exclusion. Here literature relating to theological education and exclusion will be explored. Concerning theological education, theological educators and scholars have carried out researches directly or indirectly in this regard. Dada (2013) submits that mission is the pivot of theological education. For him there is the need to reposition the Bible for an effective mission-oriented theological education in Nigeria. Dada's allusion to the first group of those educated in the schools established by the missionaries becoming freedom fighters that liberated Africa from the shackles of colonialism, is a clear show that Dada understands the original inclusiveness of evangelism and education for the good of human society. Also, Dearborn (1995:8) posits that quality theological education is important for character and intellectual development of the pastor for successful ministry. From a Kerala, Indian experience, Thomas (2008:191) pointed out the need to properly focus theological education for

evangelism and development. The feedback from theological educators, church leaders and theological students which he sampled, reveals that such educational system should be useful for the development of the Church as well as the society. In this same line of thought, Enyinnaya (2016) also adds that the primary focus of theological education is to build the pastor spiritually to lead the Church and also able to reach out to the society with good works. Ott (2001:333) has also stressed that the pursuit of Church growth at the expense of Church depth is rather imbalanced. For Ott, there is the need to improve theological education, especially for Church leaders in order to produce national leaders who will not dominate but serve effectively. Just as Ott has observed above, Kagama (2008:283) also showed that in Africa, Christianity is a kilometre wide but a centimetre deep. Hendriks (2010:1) also introduces his work by reiterating the need for reliable leadership in Africa Christianity. The achievement of such type of leadership may not be unconnected with quality assurance theological education in Africa. Also from the perspective of theological education in Africa, Wahl (2011:ix) argues that the concepts and principles of discipleship and mediated learning experience can effectively contribute to construct a framework that is appropriate for theological education in an African context. Consequently, Wahl identifies six models for theological education to include classical model, vocational, dialectical, neo-traditional, missional, and ecumenical-diversified models. A Further evaluation by Wahl shows that the exploration of these six models in African theological education will result in leadership stature, practical effectiveness, relational capacity, and spiritual accuracy. While the concept of quality theological education is being addressed by the above scholars, they seemed to picture theological education from a narrower point of view because the Church is the only focal point. What about the wilder society where political, educational, social, economic and cultural issues exist? For instance, in Nigeria, a graduate of COTI may not be able to contest for an elective position if one of the criteria for candidacy is a first degree. The likely problem here is that, a graduate in Nigeria is expected to have his or her NYSC certificate to be eligible for employment.

Furthermore, Debate on integration of theological education has also come to the fore in scholarship. Kelsey (1993) draws from the debate on the purpose and nature of theological education in North America and argues that the central differences between various voices in theological education emerge most clearly when viewed in light of Athens and Berlin. For Kelsey, Athens and Berlin represent two very different and ultimately irreconcilable models of excellent education. Moreover, Kelsey is of the opinion that modern North American theological education, for historical reasons, is committed to both Athens and Berlin models. While the Athens model focuses on the Greek *paideia* (culturing and character formation), the Berlin model is based on the German *Wissenschaft* (orderly, disciplined critical research and professionalism). Between theological education and

biblical interpretation, in another argument, Farley (1988) points out that there is a complication in the structure of theological education curricula.

Following Farley's submission, Paver (2013:25) has in recent time concurred that the hermeneutical mode of *theologia* can no longer be restricted to the interpretation of texts. For Paver, there should be a genuine integration between theory and practice, theology and experience. Also, from a Southern Africa perspective, Mwangi and De Klerk (2011) establish that there is a relationship between theological training and practice of ministry and that practical ministry can only be improved through enhancing theological training. For them, theological education in Africa should follow the Integrated Competency-Based Training Model that will seek to address many of the inadequacies in the training of church ministers with the aim of making theological training translate into the practice of ministry. In the same line of opinion, Chow (1995) opines that there is the need for theological education to integrate many important elements such as the theology, Bible, pastoralism, Church life, spirituality, ministry field work, worship and mission.

Hill (2016:322) also reveals that ministry education in the majority world usually does all it can to see graduates develop in the ABCs (Affective and Behavioural and Cognitive domain). From the perspective of theological education in England, Davison (2013:311) raises the issue of ambiguity of the phrase 'theological education', which applies both to the ongoing education of the church and to a more mission-related task of explaining the faith to the wider society. For Davison, both are important in the sense that the theological education of the church involves laity as well as clergy. Moreover, Williams (2013:275), has also brought to the fore the introduction of university validated programmes for the ministerial education of the clergy in England. Williams also identifies a number of tensions in the church's relationship with higher education and explores how critical academic study might be better understood as a resource for ministerial formation. For Williams both church and academy alike could benefit from a reappraisal of their aims and values as public institutions in the light of their shared involvement in theological education for the church's public ministers. In another dimension of integration of theological education in Asia, Wijaya (2017:110) suggests that the integration of business ethics in contextual theological education in Asia especially from the backdrop of Protestant traditions is of paramount importance. Also, from Southern Africa experience, Naidoo (2011) argues that theological education in South Africa tends to balance spirituality and intellectual capacity developments.

Moreover, scholars have also carried out researches on exclusion. Scott and Thau (2013) offer a theoretical model outlining the antecedents and consequences of work group exclusion. They theorize that individuals who threaten the work group's stability or existence are most likely to become the target of exclusion. Scott and Thau theory is focused more on vindictive tendencies within a group. This does not capture the larger picture of social exclusion which actually is not a product of vindictiveness but discrimination. Such discrimination could be caused by

government or organizational policies which did not look at the larger picture at the first instant. The concept of exclusion in the domain of research has not been directly focused on education exclusively. It is being seeing from a larger range of thought in research and as such, it is being referred to as social exclusion. This larger range of thought has made it difficult to conceptualize exclusion in one simple definition. The term exclusion was "originally proposed in France to describe the exclusion of people with disabilities from full citizenship, the idea of exclusion puts alongside risk and protective factors, various kinds of policy-driven obstacles to development that children (and adults) have to surmount" (Bynner, n.d:3).

Reminiscently, "in the 1960s social exclusion became the subject of debate in France, but only after the economic crisis of the 1980s and the introduction of the *Revenu Minimum d'Insertion* (the national assistance law) the concept was widely used...." (Jehoel-Gijsbers & Vrooman, 2007: 11). Social exclusion became a front burner issue in the European Union's policy agenda in the second half of the 1990s. Consequently, attention began to focus on defining and specifying the concept more closely (Jehoel-Gijsbers & Vrooman, 2007:11). Moreover, Jehoel-Gijsbers & Vrooman (2007:12) citing Saraceno (2001:3) reveal that "the extent of social exclusion calls on the responsibility of society to ensure equal opportunities for all. This includes equal access to the labour market, to education, to health care, to the judicial system, to rights and to decision-making and participation." Although, the European perspective of social exclusion includes the issue of social security, risk factors and other social indicators this is relevant to this present study in Nigeria in the sense that this study is focusing on the possible exclusion of COTI graduates from NYSC. A study on exclusion will be helpful in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular in an all inclusive higher educational policy formulation and development. Peters and Besley (2014) discussion on exclusion in relations to inclusive education can be a model for the discussion of exclusion in higher education in Nigeria because their work among other things, "provides a philosophical discussion of inclusive education" (Peters and Besley, 2014:99).

One linking theory connecting social exclusion and educational exclusion in the context of this study is Kricke and Neubert (2017:2,13) presentation of education as a social function and as growth for all, the role of communities in inclusive education as deduced from the second and fourth chapters of Dewey's *Democracy and Education*. For Dewey, education is a necessity of life and it should be democratized to enable inclusion. The criterion of the value of school education according to John Dewey is the extent in which it creates a desire for continued growth and supplies means for making the desire effective in fact (Kricke and Neubert, 2017:13). This is core of the argument of this research owing to the fact that COTI graduates need NYSC for future endeavour in Nigeria despite the fact that they were trained primarily to man the Church and other relevant religious institutions of the Church.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SETTING

Baptist Theological Seminary, Eku (BTSE) is a tertiary theological institution located in the Southern (South-South) part of Nigerian. It is located along Abraka-Agbor Road in Eku, Delta State. This school was born out the vision to establish a theological school to train pastors. This vision was conceived by Dr.&Mrs. W.H. Carson in 1937 while in Eku as missionaries (Anie, 2006:21-22). In 1945, the Carsons moved to Port Harcourt and actualized the vision that same year. Upon the demise of Dr. W.H. Carson in May 20, 1954, the school was moved to Eku in 1956. But since the availability of missionaries determined the location of the school at that time, the school was later moved to Benin City where Rev. O.C. Robinson was resident. Rev. O.C. Robinson, thus became the head of the institution in Benin City from 1956-1958 (Anie, 2006:27).

On February 1, 1958 the School moved back to Eku, and was located in the Baptist Hospital, Eku, under the headship of Rev. Dr. J.B. Gauntley, when O.C. Robinson went on furlough. On his return in 1959, Rev. O.C. Robinson resumed his principalship of the Bible School in Benin City. In 1960, the Bible School returned to Eku, but when the Gauntleys went on furlough in 1960, the Bible School moved to Warri under the headship of Rev. G.E. Robinson and when the Robinsons were to retire in 1965, the school was moved again to Eku and since then, the Bible College as the Institution was then known, has remained permanently in Eku (Anie, 2006: 27-33). By 1968 it was called Baptist Pastors' School, Eku and then later to Baptist Bible College. The name Baptist Bible College, Eku metamorphosed into Baptist College of Theology in 1999 and then to Baptist Theological Seminary, Eku in May 27, 2006. At its cradle it started with Certificate programme and later in 1994 was accredited to award Diploma in Theology. Consequently, BTSE was accredited to offer degree programmes ranging from Bachelor of Theology, Bachelor of Theology in Religious Education to Masters of Divinity in Theology and Masters of Divinity in Religious Education in 2001 and 2012 respective (Aghawenu, 2018).

The BTSE is presently nursing the vision of staring the M.Th and doctor of philosophy (Ph.D) degree in theological studies and its cognate fields in the nearest future. Meanwhile, the requirement for entry and graduation at BTSE is equivalent to that of Nigerian Universities. Apart from Baptist members, it also receives students from other Church denominations in Nigeria. The Nigerian Baptist Convention is the proprietor. The TCNN, Bukuru, Jos is a tertiary theological institution situated in the Northern part of Nigeria, specifically, Plateau State. It is one of the providers of higher education in Nigeria. It was constituted on November 26, 1958 and came into being in February 1959 when classes started at Gindiri. It later moved to its permanent site at Bukuru and was dedicated in 1961 (Wikipedia, 2018). It started with Certificate in Theology and Diploma of Theology (now Diploma in Christian Ministry).

The academic programme of TCNN ranges from diploma to graduate studies. In 1980 the college started a Bachelor of Divinity programme and in September 1991

the college began to offer master's degrees in theology and its cognate fields. The Postgraduate programmes of TCNN include: Postgraduate Diploma in Theology (PGD); Postgraduate Diploma in Bible Translation and Language Development; MA in Bible translation studies or MA in Applied Linguistics; Master of Divinity; Master of Arts in Bible Translation Studies; Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics; and Master of Theology (TCNN, 2018a). In recent years, the doctor of philosophy (Ph.D) degree in theological studies and its cognate fields had also been added to the catalogue of academic programmes being offered by the institution (TCNN, 2018b). It also receives students from different Church denominations in Nigeria and neighbouring African countries like Ghana, Cameroun, Liberia, and others. The entry and graduation requirements at all the levels of programmes are equivalent to that of universities in Nigeria.

TCNN is maintaining an affiliate status with the University of Jos. The college is overseen by Tarayar Ekklesiyoyin Kristi in Nigeria (TEKAN, The Fellowship of the Churches of Christ in Nigeria). TEKAN is made up of eleven denominations (Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa in Nigeria; Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria; Mambila Baptist Convention; Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria; Nigeria Reformed Church; Church of Christ in Nations; Evangelical Reformed Church of Christ; Nongo U Kristu ken Sudan hen Tiv; United Methodist Church in Nigeria; Haddiyar Ekklesiyar Kristi in Nigeria, Kaduna; and Evangelical Church of Christ in Nigeria) found mostly in the northern part of Nigeria. It is these denominations, which are the proprietors of the college, along with the Anglican Dioceses of Nigeria and the Presbyterian Church, which are associate members of that proprietorship (Wikipedia, 2018). Particularly, TEKAN was founded by the National Daughter Churches of the Sudan United Mission and the Church of the Brethren Mission.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Using the retrospective descriptive approach as methodology, it analysed data of graduation from the theological schools in perspective. Therefore, this study is a retrospective analysis of all the gradations carried out at the Baptist Theological Seminary, Eku, Delta State and Theological College of Northern Nigeria, Bukuru, Jos, Plateau State from 2008 to 2017. The graduation records from exams and records, the students' affairs office and the registrar's office were reviewed to identify the graduation of students and their possible call-up for NYSC.

In the aforementioned theological institutions, individual student's records were explored to find out if they graduated and whether they were called-up for NYSC upon graduation. Thus, the records of gradation during the years in retrospect were obtained from the students' file in exams and records. Data were generated from the above records specifically prepared for the study and those data thereafter were analyzed with the aid of the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) computer software version 21.0 for windows. Data were collated and entered into the SPSS 21.0 computer software and analyzed. The results were analysed using descriptive statistical methods.

Moreover, a short survey was conducted in order to find out why Church oriented theological institutions (COTI) graduates were excluded from serving in NYSC for the period in retrospect if at all they were excluded. The survey was carried out among COTI students, pastors in the field and theological educators.

RESULT AND FINDING

The Statistical package SPSS 21.0 was used for data analysis. The results are represented in simple percentage format.

A. Socio-demographic Characteristics

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20 – 40	28	47%
40 – 60	23	38%
60 – 80	9	15%
Total	60	100%
Status of Respondents		
Theological Educator	17	28%
COTI Administrators	25	42%
Pastors in the field	6	10%
COTI Student	12	20%
Total	60	100%
Gender		
Males	49	82%
Females	11	18%
Total	60	100%

Table 1 above shows that, 28 (47%) of the respondents are between the ages of 20 – 40 years, 23 (38%) of the respondents are between the ages of 40-60 years, 9 (15%) of the respondents are between the ages of 60 – 80 years. Moreover, 17 (28%) of the respondents are theological educators, 25 (42%) of the respondents are COTI's administrators, while 6 (10%) of the respondents are pastors serving in Churches (that is, COTI's graduates), 12 (20%) of the respondents are COTI's students. Furthermore, 49 (82%) of the respondents are males and 11 (18%) of the respondents are females.

Table 2. Socio-demographic characteristics of Graduates for the period under review

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20 – 30	725	37.8%
31 – 40	828	43.2%
41 – 50	306	16.0%
51 – 60	54	2.8%
61 – 70	4	0.2%
Total	1917	100%
Calibration		
Generics	1,210	63%
Direct Entries	707	37%
Total	1917	100%
Duration of Study (Years)		
4	1,210	63%
3	502	26%
2	205	11%
Total	1917	100%
Gender		
Males	1559	81%
Females	359	19%
Total	1917	100%

Table 2 above shows that, 725 (37.8%) of the graduates are between the ages of 20 – 30 years, 828 (43.2%) of the graduates are between the ages of 31-40 years, 306(16.0%) of the graduates are between the ages of 41 – 50 years. While 54 (2.8%) of the graduates are between the ages of 51 – 60 years, 4 (0.2%) of the graduates are between the ages of 61 – 70 years. 1,210 (63%) of the graduates were generics (that is, those who have not had any theological training before order than Ordinary Level), while 707 (37%) of the graduates were admitted through direct entry (that is, those who had certificate or a diploma in theological studies or related fields previously). Moreover, 1,210 (63%) of the graduates spent four years in the theological schools because they entered with O/L, 502 (26%) spent three years in their theological schools because they gained admission through direct entry having gotten certificate in theology previously, 205 (11%) of the graduates spent two years to complete their courses of studies because they had previously done three years diploma previously with upper credits. Also, while 1559 (81%) of the graduates are males, 359 (19%) are females.

B. Church Oriented Theological Institutions' Graduates and Exclusion from NYSC

Table 3. Frequency distribution showing number of Graduates and NYSC Mobilization per year in TCNN

Year	No. of Grad	No. Mob for NYSC	%
2008	189	0	0.0
2009	162	0	0.0
2010	170	0	0.0
2011	142	0	0.0
2012	153	0	0.0
2013	131	0	0.0
2014	176	0	0.0
2015	168	0	0.0
2016	182	0	0.0
2017	190	0	0.0
Σ	1,663	0	00

Table 3 above shows that in TCNN: out of 189 graduates in 2008 none representing (0.0%) was mobilized for NYSC, out of 162 graduates in 2009, none representing (0.0%) was mobilized for NYSC. Similarly, out of 170 graduates in 2010, none representing (0.0%) was mobilized for NYSC, also out of 142 graduates in 2011 none representing (0.0%) was mobilized for NYSC. Out of 153 graduates in 2012, none representing (0.0%) was mobilized for NYSC. In 2013, out of 131 graduates none representing (0.0%) was mobilized for NYSC, of the 176 graduates in 2014, none representing (0.0%) was mobilized for NYSC. More also, out of the 168 graduates in 2015 none representing (0.0%) was mobilized for NYSC, out of 182 graduates in 2016, none representing (0.0%) was mobilized for NYSC, and out of 190 graduates in 2017, none representing (0.0%) was mobilized for NYSC.

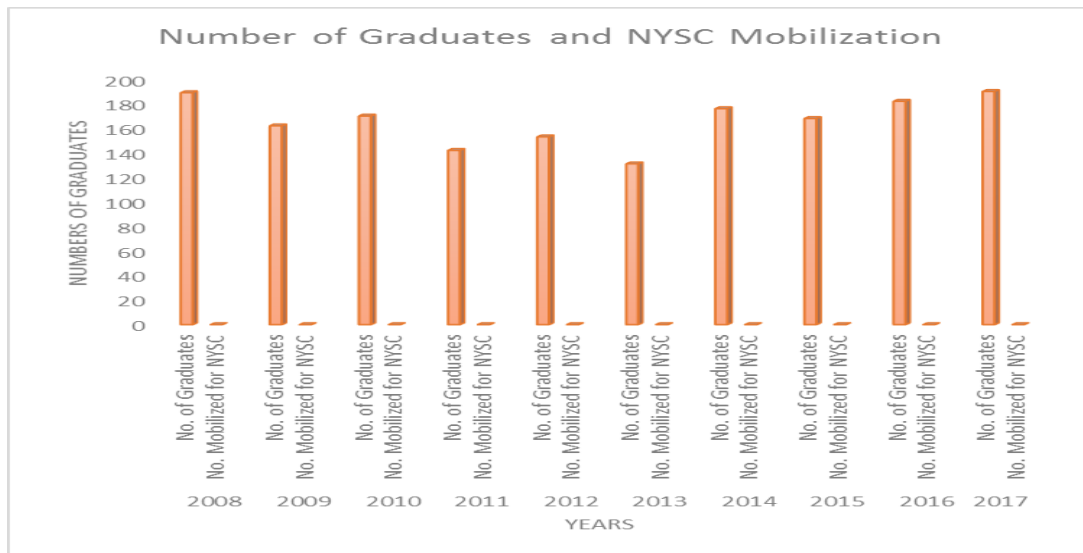


Fig.1. Bar Chart showing number of Graduates and NYSC Mobilization in TCNN

Table 4. Frequency distribution showing number of Graduates and NYSC Mobilization per year in BTSE

Years	No. of Grad	No. Mob for NYSC	%
2008	28	0	0.0
2009	18	0	0.0
2010	21	0	0.0
2011	24	0	0.0
2012	22	0	0.0
2013	34	0	0.0
2014	37	0	0.0
2015	35	0	0.0
2016	13	0	0.0
2017	22	0	0.0
Σ	254	0	0.0

Table 4 above shows that in BTSE: out of 28 graduates in 2008 none representing (0.0%) was mobilized for NYSC, out of 18 graduates in 2009, none representing (0.0%) was mobilized for NYSC. Similarly, out of 21 graduates in 2010, none representing (0.0%) was mobilized for NYSC, also out of 24 graduates in 2011 none representing (0.0%) was mobilized for NYSC. Out of 22 graduates in 2012, none representing (0.0%) was mobilized for NYSC. In 2013, out of 34 graduates none representing (0.0%) was mobilized for NYSC, of the 37 graduates in 2014, none representing (0.0%) was mobilized for NYSC. More also, out of the 35 graduates in 2015 none representing (0.0%) was mobilized for NYSC, out of 13 graduates in 2016,

none representing (0.0%) was mobilized for NYSC, and out of 22 graduates in 2017, none representing (0.0%) was mobilized for NYSC.

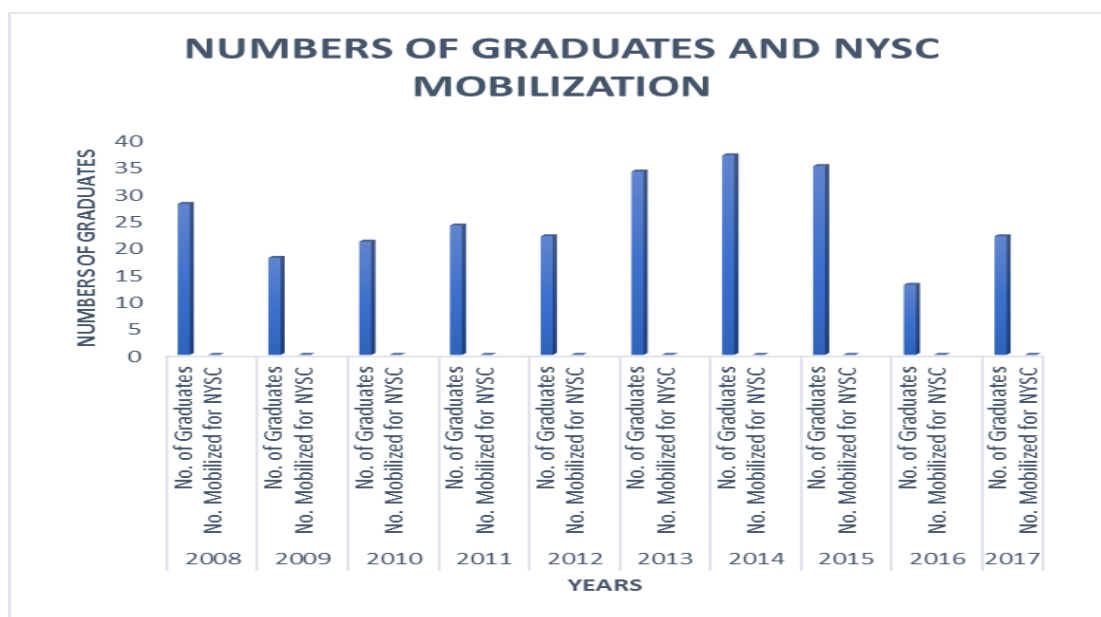


Fig.2. Bar Chart showing number of Graduates and NYSC Mobilization in BTSE

Table 5. Frequency distribution showing number of Graduates and NYSC Mobilization per year in BTSE and TCNN

Years	BTSE (A)	TCNN (B)	Σ (A&B)	NO MOBILIZED FOR NYSC	%
2008	28	189	217	0	0.0 (11)
2009	18	162	180	0	0.0 (9)
2010	21	170	191	0	0.0 (10)
2011	24	142	166	0	0.0 (9)
2012	22	153	175	0	0.0 (9)
2013	34	131	165	0	0.0 (9)
2014	37	176	213	0	0.0 (11)
2015	35	168	203	0	0.0 (11)
2016	13	182	195	0	0.0 (10)
2017	22	190	212	0	0.0 (11)
Σ	254	1,663	1917	0	0.0 (100)

Table 5 above shows that in both BTSE and TCNN put together in nine years in Nigeria; 217 graduates representing 11% were not mobilized for NYSC in 2008, 180 graduates representing 9 % were not mobilized for NYSC in 2009, 191 graduates

representing 10% were not mobilized for NYSC in 2010, 166 graduates representing 9% were not mobilized for NYSC in 2011, 175 graduates representing 9% were not mobilized for NYSC in 2012, 34 graduates representing 9% were not mobilized for NYSC in 2013, 213 graduates representing 11% were not mobilized for NYSC in 2014, 203 graduates representing 11% were not mobilized for NYSC in 2015, 195 graduates representing 10% were not mobilized for NYSC in 2016, and 212 graduates representing 11% were not mobilized for NYSC in 2017.

C. Reasons for Exclusion of COTI's Graduates from NYSC in Nigeria

Table 6. Frequency Distribution of Responses to Reasons for Exclusion of COTI's Graduates from NYSC

Reasons	Yes	%	No	%
Non-Accreditation by Government Institution	48	80.0	12	20.0
COTI Proprietors not interested	2	3.3	58	96.7
Non-Standard Education	0	0.0	60	100.0
Did not receive admission through JAMB	60	100.0	0	0.0

Table 6 above shows that, 48 (80%) of the respondents agree that non-accreditation of COTIs by government accreditation institution is a major reason why COTI's graduates are not mobilized for NYSC, while 12(20.0%) did not agree. 58(96.7%) of the respondents did not agree that COTI's proprietors are not interested in requesting for accreditation of their schools, while 2(3.3%) agreed. Moreover, 60 (100%) of the respondents agree that that one of the reasons why COTI's graduate are not mobilized for or exempted from NYSC is because their students did not receive admission through the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB). However, none of the respondents agrees that non-standard of education was the reason for not mobilizing COTI graduates for NYSC.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The exclusion of Church Oriented Theological Institutions' graduate from the compulsory National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in Nigeria is a reality because this study has shown that there is indeed the exclusion of COTI graduates from NYSC. Although, both TCNN and BTSE offer other higher degrees such as M.Div, M.Th, Ph.D in theology, religious education, *etcetera*, of which most of the M.Div intakes are already graduates from recognized universities, who have already done NYSC or obtain exception, the emphasis of the accreditation by Government Institutions of accreditation such as National Universities Commission (NUC) in Nigeria is missing. The situation of TCNN and BTSE may not differ in other COTIs in Nigeria. Finally, the results have shown that none of the students who graduated with first degree (B.Th, B.Th.Rel Ed) within the period in review was mobilized for NYSC. One of the reasons

as shown in table 6 above for this, is the issue of non-accreditation of COTIs by government accreditation institution. Another reason was the fact that intakes of COTIs do not pass through JAMB for admission. It is also, most likely that, on the part of the proprietors of COTIs, there is lack of interest in accrediting their schools to secular institution like the NUC which will eventually regulate them.

Having seen the reality of the issue, it is the graduates of such institutions that suffer at the labour market since they are expected to remain at the four walls of the Church for the rest of their lives upon graduation. Let us also assume that the Church is willing to accredit its theological schools as a purely theological institution, which government ministry or accrediting body would the Church meet? The reality as of today in Nigeria is that there is no such accrediting body made available for this category of higher education because NUC is exclusively for university as the name implies. The only way out for COTI as it were, is for such institution to affiliate to an existing department of religious studies in an NUC accredited university for the B.A religious study's programme. This is also a problem to COTIs in the sense that NUC had already put a restriction on affiliations of theological institution to universities in Nigeria. While we emphasize education in Nigeria, a particular sector in the society such as COTI cannot be left out. Living them out is tantamount to oppression and marginalization. Instead of living this sector out, the Nigerian government should run an all inclusive higher educational system. Already, COTIs runs a university curriculum. Some even adopts international standard in running COTI due to the missionary affiliation they have abroad. Most seminaries were established by the Main Line Church's missionaries from the USA and Europe (Ilogu, 1975; Aguwa, 1997:343). Some of the COTIs have more standard educational system than that of the government owned universities due to their affiliations with world ranking theological institutions in USA and Europe. It is therefore very difficult to justify the exclusion of accreditation for COTIs' by government in Nigeria.

Having seen that there is no accrediting body for COTIs in Nigeria, we recommend that Nigeria NUC and other structures of accreditation be collapsed into one accreditation body with an all inclusive name that can accommodate all tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria just like South Africa that practice such system. As such, we recommend a body that can be called "National Higher Education Council (NHCC) or National Higher Education Commission (NHEC), etc" (Ottuh, 2017:451). When this is done, standards should be set for different categories of higher institutions of learning for accreditation. Or on the alternative, the NUC should make it possible for deserving COTIs to have affiliation status with existing university that is contiguous to them or Church owned accredited universities in Nigeria. Doing this will further strengthen academic standards of COTIs in Nigeria. If the government can do this, it will allow COTIs graduates to be mobilized for NYSC upon completion of prescribed courses at the undergraduate level.

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