

OVERVIEW OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATION FOR THE FUTURE.

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Abstract

This paper views teacher education in Nigeria and its implication for the future. Teacher education has both positive and negative implications on the future of any nation. This implies that either it will produce optimally or not is a function of its inputs. Teacher education is a pivot on which the growth of the nation rotates. Therefore, those who manage it should bear in mind the futuristic payoff by ensuring that both human and material resources are judiciously handled to achieve societal predetermined result. Teacher education in this 21st century deserves a comprehensive attention from all tiers of government, nongovernmental organization, and philanthropists. The quality of teacher education is a reflection of our general education system and our level of concern should be demonstrated in our commitment and provision of needed resources. As a matter of fact, this paper looks at the concept of teacher education in Nigeria, the origin of teacher education, the development of teacher education, the curriculum of teacher education, contemporary issues and challenges of teacher education, managing teacher education for optimum productivity, and the way forward.

Introduction

One of the factors that depict the development of a nation is the quality of educational achievement of her citizenry. An education that is objective based should be able to train those who achieve it to understand themselves and contribute positively to the development of the society. “..... I will leave my country not less, but greater that I found it... so help me God”, (Ogbondah, 2002:31). This statement was part of Spartan's Pledge that can be borrowed into our education system. Our education system needs to be improved upon better than we met.

Teacher education has its origin from the Greek Word “Sophos' meaning wise. The literally meaning of the term 'sophist' is a wise man. As time goes on, it was referred to as a group of foreign teachers who settled in state and progressed to give young Athenians an education. Ogbondah (2002) believes that the sophists greatly influenced the taught pattern of the Athenian Youths and laid the foundation of Higher Education in Athens.

Agabi & Uche (2000), assert that teachers whose main duty is to impart the knowledge and skills need proper training and

progressive development to enable them render educational services in the most appropriate manner. Thus the quality of teachers and their activities should be of paramount concern for optimum productivity. In the teaching profession, performance skills gained through training and long practice is one of the basic assets needed for higher performance among the teachers. The productivity of teacher education depends on proficient educational managers/administrators.

Concept of Teacher Education

Teacher Education in this context emphasizes the education given to teachers so as to enable them transfer relevant knowledge to the students. It is an education that 'trains the trainee' Adelola and Anyoma (2006) explains that:

Teacher education is the pre-planned articulated event and activities which are intended to help the would-be teachers or teacher trainee acquire appropriate knowledge skills, the right kind of attitude, habits and competencies needed to enable them enter the teaching profession and become resourceful, effective and efficient.
P. 16.

This type of education demands that formal training be given to a group of persons (teachers) who will later help the learners (students) to acquire necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes through a variety of ways in accordance with the societal needs. Achuonye (2008) propose that teacher education is the specialized training given to the would-be teachers in a formal school system; so as to nurture them for the great tasks ahead.

Educational Tasks is numerous as it services the social demand of the society. In addition, Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2004) said no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers. By this insinuation, the productivity of teachers depends largely on the quality and quantity of training acquired.

Teacher educations in our contemporary society require prompt attention due to the dynamic nature of our society. It behooves on the training given to them to be able to cope with current needs and equally prepare their trainees likewise. At this juncture, potential teachers need to exhibit certain qualities for them to achieve set goals. Therefore, Achuonye (2004:105) suggests that “student-teachers during their training should be given time and opportunities to reflect on the teachers' tasks such as dedication, tolerance, humane, considerate, pains-taking, honesty, diligence and sound morals”.

The Origin of Teacher Education

The 16th century witnessed the pedagogy movement the art and science of teaching as an accepted discipline initiated by John Locke (1632 - 1704), an English empiricist philosopher who was concerned with issues of social philosophy and the problem of knowledge. Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712 - 1778), a French philosopher born in Geneva. He never had any formal education but was taught by a tutor. These people and others helped to develop education models that were learner based.

In 1684, Saint John-Baptiste de la Salle, founded the institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. This was the first teacher education school in Reims, France (Dunkin, 2002). This development extends to Europe by 1700s. August Herman Francke opened a

teacher class at Halle known as Franckesche Stiftungen. As time goes on, Johann Julius Hacker opens the first teacher training school in Berlin in 1748. The 19th Century witnessed the spread of formal training of teachers to almost all the countries of the world.

Teacher education before independence in Nigeria could be traced to the activities of clergy men who then had no formal training on teaching as well as its methodologies. Since education then was predominantly handled by the missionaries, teaching were based on indoctrination, drilling, and recitation according to those who initiated it. Achuonye (2010) confirmed this adding that:

The trend in Nigeria is not different as teachers in the missionary era receive informal instruction in the homes of reverend fathers and pastors in charge of the various Christian Denominations. Candidates were chosen for their leadership qualities, intelligence, and zeal for religion. Thus primary school products were recruited to ease off acute shortage of teachers. P, 52.

Development of Teacher Education and Colleges of Education in Nigeria

Teacher education in Nigeria came as an offshoot of the common observation that some teachers were more effective and efficient in performance than others. No wonder Ebong (2006, p.12) submits that “efficient human capital is definitely the product of education because the acquisition of education provides the opportunities for individuals to invest in themselves”. Effective teaching methods and other distinguishing qualities led to the believe that training potential teachers to acquire such qualities was the best way to create more productive educators.

In a bid to give quality and professional education to educators for optimum productivity, the Christian Missionary Society (CMS) in the year 1895 established the Hope Waddle Training Institute in Calabar by the Church of Scotland mission. In line with the vision of teacher education, the Katsina Training College was founded by the government in 1921.

This college was designed to enhance teacher capacity building, pedagogical skills for effective teaching and learning. Its curriculum include: Oral English, Mathematics, and Written English. As strategy to further develop teacher education.

Igwe (2014) quoting the 1925 Memorandum on Education in British Colonial Territories No. 7 and 8 thus:

- ? The establishment of a sound system of education is dependent on a satisfactory cadre of teachers and the teacher training institutions should be guided by the principles of education laid down in the memorandum.
- ? A system of visiting teachers should be established to ensure inspiration and encouragement for the teacher serving in the village schools.

Achuonye (2010) said, with the opening of Yaba Higher College in 1932, teacher education in Nigeria moved to a higher education level. Two major problems were associated with education at this stage: low output and poor quality of teachers at independence. This abnormalities were augmented by the upgrading of grade 3 colleges to grade 2 and the establishment of new ones. Subsequently, those grade 2 colleges were upgraded to grade 1 which gave birth to Nigerian certificate of Education (NCE), a three-year teacher

training program. These institutions offering NCE were termed Advanced Teacher Colleges and were established in Lagos, Ibadan, Zaria, and Owerri between 1962 and 1963.

The establishment of University of Nigeria Nsuka took the lead in starting teacher education in 1960. Degree Programs such as B.A (ED), and B.Sc (B.ED) were awarded and courses leading to the award of these degrees lasted for four consecutive years.

Achuonye (2010) observed that the following teacher education programs are offered by each of the institutions:

- ? NCE – Duration of program is a minimum of 3 years
- ? B.ED –4 years program
- ? PGDE –1 – 2 years program
- ? M.ED - 1 – 2 years program
- ? Ph.D – Minimum of 3 years

The educational institutions offering these programs are:

- ? Colleges of Education
- ? Faculties of Education in Universities
- ? Institute of Education
- ? National Teacher Institute
- ? Schools of Education in Polytechnics
- ? National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN)
- ? National Mathematical Association (NMA)

These programs allow teachers to choose their areas of interest hence specialization. Currently, technical education courses are offered in colleges of education (Technical) Polytechnics and University of Technology.

Curriculum of Teacher Education

From the onset, grade II teacher's certificate, Associateship certificate in Education, and Diploma Certificate in Education were

obtained particularly from teacher training colleges and such degrees were tenable and employable at primary school levels. The introduction of 6-3-3-4 system makes these certificates are the minimum qualification for teaching in primary school. However, the operational curriculum of Teacher Education program particularly at the NCE and B.ED levels are consistently structured on the following areas:

- ? Educational Foundations Principles and practices of educational-Methodology and practice
- ? Teaching subjects
- ? General studies
- ? Teaching practice
- ? Research projects.

Purpose of Teacher Education

The purpose of teacher education as enshrined in the National Policy on Education (FRN; 2004:39) includes:

- a) To produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of education system;
- b) To encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
- c) To help teachers to fit into the social life of the country and society at large and to enhance their commitment to national objectives;
- d) To provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to any changing situation not only in the life of their country, but in the wider world;
- e) To enhance teachers commitment to the teaching profession.

Contemporary Issues and Challenges of Teacher Education

Teacher Education likes any other education system in Nigeria in particular, and the world in general is recording high level of the activities and lifestyle considered inimical such as cultism, plagiarism / kleptomania, examination malpractice, etc. Achuonye (2010) identified two challenges of teacher education as the introduction of special education and advances in technology.

? **Special Education:** These are educational provisions for students who have special need, or exceptional cases. Mangal (2012) posits that exceptionality may either be significant behavior that is above or below average in the various aspects of human endeavor. The complexity of this system of education posed serious challenges on teachers. Special education teachers are therefore required to study additional aspects of psychology and sociology in order to identify these needs and proffer remedial solution as soon as possible.

? **Advances in technology:** It is demanding that the 21st century teachers should be acquainted with modern trends in the technological world. Up till now, a good number of teachers are yet to adapt to current technological facilities as applicable to instruction.

? **Poor quality of student intake.** Based on a survey conducted by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE, 2004) on prospective candidates for admission into tertiary institutions found that:

(a) Teacher education was fast losing

its attraction, especially at the NCE level.

(b) Only candidates who could not make it into the University or Polytechnic were opting for Colleges of Education.

? **Personnel:** Most a times, there is always shortage of personnel to carry out teaching and administrative function of teacher education. Some of those employed are unqualified and lack the pedagogical techniques in teaching. In many cases, those who are employed are inadequately motivated leading to dearth of experts.

? **Examination malpractice:**

Examination malpractices are any act or behavior which is exhibited contrary to examination rules. These examination misconducts are perpetrated by students, parents, and teachers.

It has intimidated Nigeria to submission and to a state of hopelessness (Oyechere, 1993) in (Ogar, Okorosaye-orubite, Ezekiel-Hart and Egbezor, 2005). People now made examination malpractice a means of survival. This is in agreement with the theory of Merton in (Egbezor, 2002) who submit that those members of the society who are unable to succeed by conventional means, attempts to innovate to achieve desired goals.

Achuonye (2004) identifies debt burden, population rate, general instability, Low-skilled manpower, and keeping pace with the global trend as challenges of education generally.

Managing Teacher Education in Nigeria for Optimum Productivity

Education remains at the core of national stability, security, economic and national development for optimum productivity and as a matter of national concern should not be left in the hands of amateur or mediocre, greedy and selfish individuals who will pursue personal interest at the expense of the general goals of education. Teachers' education are major players in any education setting. No education can raise above the quality of its teachers hence the need to accord teachers and teacher education the needed audience in order to raise quality teachers to facilitate the attainment of educational goal.

Management in this context aligns with what Franklin in Ugwoke, Okenjom, Oyoyo and Ijeoma (2015) said that it is a distinct process consisting of activities of planning, organizing, and controlling performance to determine and accomplish stated objectives with the use of human and materials. Management occupies a vintage position either or not optimum productivity is anticipated. Trained and knowledgeable individuals in the field of management should be appointed to coordinate the human and material resources in order to achieve the goals stipulated in the national policy on education. Educational activities that are subjected to effective and competent management control, planning, organizing, and directing will produce quality and qualified teachers hence boosting teacher education in Nigeria. In a bid to achieve optimum productivity, Arikewuyo (2004) listed some steps which educational managers should follow. These include:

1. Measurement and standardization of academic achievement.
2. Evaluation of quality work during supervision.
impact on the two of the ranking variables-research impact and proportion of international students. Learning aids are necessary for academic achievement of trainee

3. Use of competent teachers and administrative/supervisory personnel.
4. Dissemination of information to teachers and students.
5. Use of educational technologies with a view to increasing the efficiency of teaching.
6. New research and development to invigorate all educational activities.
7. Guidance and counseling.
8. Placing students in suitable employment
9. Efficient management of all education system.

Way Forward

Challenges of teacher education can be abated or controlled to a bearable minimum if professional education management is put in place. The following remedies may have future implication on the identified teacher education problems:

1. Lectures, seminars, and enlightenment campaign in colleges of education. The management of teacher education should organize timely sensitization program on examination malpractice, cultism, and the likes. These practices will expose the danger associated with the social vices and their impact on future generation. More so, the importance of teacher education needs to be communicated to the general public as to attract their patronage and involvement in terms of planning.
2. Improvement of facilities for teaching and research. Okafor and Udu (2006) puts forward that improvement of facilities for teaching and research will engender quality teaching and research and teachers. A trainee teacher who is not exposed to relevant teaching and learning material may malfunction as he/she gets to the field

3. Termination of cultism: This will enhance the attraction of international staff and students. The activities of the Boko-Haram, Niger Delta Avengers etc pose a threat on the would-be staff and students as they find Nigerian university environment insecure and precarious.
4. Appointment of teaching staff based on merit, competence, and interest. This will help to secure commitment, passion and quality delivery hence optimum productivity. The current practice of appointing teachers just base on political affiliations is not helping the system as it only gives birth to mediocrity and maladministration. Train educational administrators/managers.
5. Teacher education should be made attractive by the introduction of courses offered in the university and due accreditation carried out to show its authenticity. This implies that those facilities that give quality to universities should also be made available to universities, colleges, polytechnics, and faculties of educations.
6. Supply of accurate statistics of teachers: There should be accurate statistics of teacher produced from

our colleges of education and university faculty of education. The actual percentage of teacher that really goes into teaching profession should be known to encourage accountability as well as adequate allocation of educational resources.

Conclusion

Teacher education in Nigeria has over the years been subjected to several changes according to time. The earliest forms of education system were non formal. They were mostly carried out in an unorganized form. Teaching and learning were conducted under trees, church premises, palace of kings etc. the teachers then were mostly untrained, and their curriculum not defined.

The pedagogical movement brought about the professionalism of the system. Teacher education is generally geared towards preparing teachers for effective classroom delivery in primary, secondary, and tertiary education. To boost the system for effective and optimum productivity, teachers need to be capially developed by attending conferences, seminars, and workshops. This informs us that if we want a quality teacher education system, the personnel must be duly equipped to produce the quality education we anticipate.

Several challenges have been identified to confront teacher education e.g. dearth of experts, lack of quality teacher certified personnel, cultism, examination malpractice. To this end, appropriate measures have been put in place to alleviate the identified challenges. The repositioning of teacher education in Nigeria demands collective and collaborative approach if optimum productivity is desired for the sustainability of the system.

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