

# REPOSITIONING TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA FOR OPTIMUM PRODUCTIVITY ISSUES AND THE WAY FORWARD

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## **Abstract**

*Education is the major factor in achieving national growth and development in any country. The teacher is the main vehicle of transporting education to the citizens. He is the facilitator of all Educational Endeavors, the quality of the teacher determines the quality of education given to the nation, the saying goes that "A nation cannot rise above the quality of its teachers. If this is the case we need to look at the contemporary Teacher Education to determine if Teacher Education in Nigeria would enhance optimum productivity in National development". Therefore, this paper investigates Teacher Education, it made a brief historical view of Teacher Education in Nigeria as well as look into issues constituting problems to teacher education and proffered ways on how Teacher Education could be repositioned for optimum productivity and national development.*

## **Introduction**

The only legacy a nation can give to her citizens, is functional and qualitative education, which is the bed rock of national development. Education is a powerful instrument through which optimum productivity and national development can be achieved. However, without well trained and competent teachers, no desired change can take place nor Educational goals can be achieved. Educational reformers may change educational policies structures, content of curriculum and prescribe teaching methods and instructional materials but at the end, implementation of the curriculum, methods and instructional materials depends on the teacher who translates educational policies to practices and programs into action to achieve expected goals of education. The importance of the teacher in any educational endeavors therefore cannot be over emphasized (Fafunwa 1992).

The question is "who is a teacher?" Igwebike and Ekwejunor (1993), noted that the teacher is the nucleus of the teaching learning process, the major co-ordinator of the learning process, the organizer of the learning environment. The facilitator and director of the learning process in the classroom.(Itejere, 1999 and Akporchafo, 1999). Traditionally, pedagogy involves teaching and learning, the educational system is based on teaching the learner, the teacher teaches the learner to promote active learning in the learner. The teacher is supposed to be well trained, grounded in methods and skills of teaching as well as poses good knowledge in her discipline with positive attitude towards her profession, so that she can equip the learner with necessary opportunities for the desired positive change in behaviour. He is an intellectual guide, a problem solver in the learning process.

## **Teaching**

Numerous definitions of teaching have been given from different perspectives: Balogun, Okon, and Musaazi (1981), defined teaching as passing on ideas knowledge, skills attitude belief, feelings to someone with the aim of bringing about particular change in that person. Teaching is the process of imparting knowledge and skills from a teacher to learner.

## **Teacher Education**

Teacher Education is that component of any educational system charged with the responsibility of educating and training of teachers for the improvement of the quality of teachers for all levels of education. Denga (2001), defined teacher education as the process of developing individuals with the necessary knowledge in skills that will enable them effectively direct learning situations. It is the form of education which is designed to prepare and train those who will teach or provide professional teaching services at all levels of the educational system. Ofejebe (2006) defined Teacher Education as preparing people who will render services in different sectors of the economy for the development of the nation. These teachers are said to play great roles in equipping individual with skills, knowledge needed to transform national economy through scientific and technological improvement for the survival of the nation.

## **Historical Overview of Teacher Education in Nigeria.**

The Origin and development of teacher education in Nigeria could be traced back to the beginning of Western Education in the country. Ukeji (1966) reported that from 1856 to 1940's was the era of Christian missionaries in Nigeria, the missionaries under the guise of evangelism brought in Western Education among their convert who

they trained as teachers and interpreters. They were the first to venture into Teachers college known as Trinity institution was established at Abeokuta in 1856, by the church missionary society (CMS) which later moved to Lagos 1897 and was called St. Andrews College. In Northern Nigeria the first teachers college was in Nasarawa by the British government in 1909, the aim of the colonial masters was to train individuals as interpreters, store keepers, assistants and civil servants. This gave way to Teacher Education for intellectual and practical skills acquisitions of marking registers, filling class records and making teaching aids these were known as pupil teacher, a two years training programme was given to graduates from pupil teacher to grade III, another two years training was given to grade III teachers this made them grade II teachers. This set of teachers taught in primary schools.

According to the reporter in 1940 another innovation came into teacher education in which a one year training programme was offered to grade II teachers for competence to teach lower classes in secondary schools. From 1956 additional efforts were made to take Teacher Education to greater heights. The university offered two forms of professional training at the university college Ibadan. These include post graduate certificate in Education (PGCE) the P.G.C.E was a one year course for only graduate of Bachelor's degree holders and (2) Associate Diploma in Education (ADE). This was equivalent to Grade I teachers certificate course organized for grade II teachers with five years teaching experience. These developments in Teacher Education was due to sir Elliots commission in 1945. This commission recommended the establishment of an institute of Education to serve all West African colonies. This was to

run a one year Diploma course in Education. For degree holders to create competence for secondary school teachers.

This report further noted that from 1960 after independence major developments took place in Teacher Education due to Sir Ashbeys commission of 1961 which recommended two new types of Teacher Education programmes these are: (1) Two years training for grade I teachers with secondary school certificates. This was later changed to advanced teachers training for award of Nigerian certificate in Education (2) The Bachelors Degree programme (BEd) was established in faculties of Education in Nigerian University colleges of Education for the award of BA, (Ed) and BSC (Ed) degrees.

From 1997 teacher education in Nigeria received grant strides in development with the promulgation of National policy on Education in 1977 which was later revised in 1981, 1998 and later 2004. The 2004 policy of education paragraph 78 and 79 clearly recognized teaching as a profession in Nigeria by setting up the Teachers registration council to control and regulate the practices of the teaching profession. The policy also required those already in the teaching but not qualified a given period of time within which to qualify for registration or leave the profession also newly qualified teachers would serve a period of one year for degree holders and 2years for N.C.E holders. Paragraph 79 of the 2004 National Policy of Education emphatically stressed that efforts toward the improvement of quality education at the primary and the secondary level will include the following:

- a. Appointment of academically and professional qualified persons as head teachers.

- b. Regulate in-service training programmes for teacher and head teachers (NPE 2004).

The policy statements if well implemented would enhance the status of the Nigerian Teachers and Teacher education in General. Teacher Education in Nigeria has equally received some attention in terms of growth these include Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) Associate Diploma in Education (ADE). The P.G.C.E was a one year course for only graduates of Bachelor degree A.D.E was equivalent of Grade I teachers certificate course organized for Grade II Teachers with five years teaching experience these developments were due to Sir Elliots Commission in 1945, which recommended the establishment of an institute of Education to serve all West African colonies to open a one year course of Diploma in Education for Degree Holders to create secondary school teachers.

According to the report from 1960 major development took place in Teacher Education due to Sir Ashbeys commission of 1961 which recommended two new types of teacher education programme. These were (1) 2 years teacher training for Grade I with secondary school certificate. Later changed to Advance Teachers Training for 3years leading to the award of Nigerian Certificate in Education and B.Ed Degrees programme established in Faculty of Education in the Nigerian Universities and some degree awarding colleges of Education, for the award of B.A (Ed) and BSC (Ed) degree.

From 1977 teacher education in Nigeria received giant stride with the promulgation of the National Policy on Education in 1977

which was later revised in 1981, 1998 and later 2004 policy of Education edition, paragraph 78 and 79 clearly recognized teaching as a profession in Nigeria by setting up the Teachers Registration Council to control and regulate the practice. It required those already in the teaching but not qualified a given period of time within which to qualify for registration or leave the profession. Also newly qualified teacher would serve one year for degree holders and two years for N.C.E holders. Efforts towards the improvement of quality education at the primary and secondary level will include:

- a. Appointment of academically and professional qualified persons as head teachers.
- b. Regulate in-service training programmes for teacher and head teachers

The policy statement if well implemented would enhance the status of the Nigerian teachers and Teacher Education in general. Teacher Education in Nigeria has equally received some attention in terms of growth and development arising from the award of first degree in education and doctorate degree in Education.

**The Need for repositioning Teacher Education in Nigeria for optimum productivity.**

In the National Policy on Education (2004), it was specifically stated in paragraph 70 of page 52 that:

- a. Since no education system may rise above the quality of its teachers, teacher education shall continue to be given planning and development.
- b. The minimum qualification for entry into the teaching profession shall be the Nigerian Certificate in Education

(NCE). From the policy statement above teacher education programmes if well planned and implemented would promote national development due to the fact that optimum productivity in Teacher Education can only be realized from a functional qualitative teacher education programme. Teachers in Teacher Education programmes need to be properly trained on the job in order to meet the required standard of the teaching profession. With the minimum qualification set at the NCE level for minimum entry into the primary schools and junior secondary schools as teachers in Nigeria would help to improve the quality of teachers at these levels of education.

Since the 2004, policy stated that the goals of Teacher Education shall be to:

1. Produce highly motivated conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels in our educational system.
2. Encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers.
3. Help teachers fit into the social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals.
4. Provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to changing situations; and
5. Enhance teachers commitment to the teaching profession (N.P.E pg 39 2004).

The need for repositioning Teacher Education in Nigeria for optimum productivity became necessary when teaching became a recognized profession in Nigeria therefore those involved must be properly trained not only at the lower level of

education but must extend to the higher level of education as well as the university and other tertiary institutions in Nigeria. It is a fact that the standard of the university education has fallen over the years due to poor quality teaching, majority of our university lecturers lack teaching skills and cannot impart knowledge on students, having the knowledge of the subject matter is not enough, the most important thing is having the skills and technical know-how of imparting knowledge to students. Although this may not appeal to University teachers especially those at the peak of the profession e.g Associate professors and professors but when the policy become binding on all levels involved both at the lower level and university level they will see the need to be properly trained as teachers. When teacher education is made compulsory to all involved in the teaching profession then teaching would become a very serious profession in Nigeria.

### **Issues constituting problems to Teacher Education.**

Mkpa M. A (2008) listed the following as issues constituting problems to Teacher Education.

1. Lack of proper funding of Teacher Education.  
 Money is the basis of executing any project. The lack of funding or inadequate funds has led to the collapse of many great and beautiful plans. Nigeria is found, wanting as far as adequate funding to run school programmes is concerned. When ideas are hatched into plans there should be enough funds provided to back up its implantation but unfortunately the spirit of corruption has eaten deep into our bone marrows and rendered laudable goals not achievable. Inadequate funds has led to fallen standards of Teacher Education.

2. Poor implementation of Educational policies. Mkpa M. A (2008) noted that one of the killers of Teacher Education in Nigeria is lack of quality implementation of well planned projects due to the Nigerian factor, Nigerians are fond of making loud noise, talking big with no action or follow up where they talk is where it ends, such hazardous approaches to programmes of national importance include, greed embezzlement, corruption lack of political will. The government keep changing programme without having accomplished the purpose of the former, programmes are not adequately supervised and so they exist only in theory.
3. Mkpa M. A (2008), added that the Poor Service condition of Teachers has further compounded Teacher Education in Nigeria. The teacher is the builder of the nation, he produces the Doctors, the lawyers, engineers, the administrators, politicians and the people in the entire working force of the nation yet the teachers are not recognized as important people in the society they are rated last on the hierarchy of professions, salaries are poor and not paid as at when due no incentives, no motivation like car loans, housing loans etc. This has made teachers no longer dedicated to their jobs but seek leverage outside their jobs. Unfavourable societal attitude and poor mentality about teachers has made society develop poor mentality about teacher, their attitude towards teachers has made teachers develop poor self-esteem, this is not encouraging for those in the profession.

4. Lack of infrastructures and material recourses in institutes of Teacher Education. Most of the institutes of teacher education lack good and convenient classrooms, standard teaching aids and well equipped laboratories, this affects quality teaching.
5. Lack of human resources. Because the society looks down on people in the teaching profession many people no longer show interest, especially the youths do not go into the teaching profession. They just use it as a stepping stone to climb to other professions. This has caused shortage of human resources, the ratio of one teacher to thirty five students in a class is not possible anymore, a teacher is responsible for seventy to eighty students in a class. This does not make room for effective teaching, class control and supervision, thus teaching is not effective in schools.
6. Phasing out of Teachers Training programmes at the basic level has also contributed to the poor state of Teacher Education. Academic malnutrition, compromising standards . Poor remuneration poor condition of service, low self-esteem are very discouraging and made the teaching profession loose the respect of people in the Nigerian Society.
7. The quality of candidates admitted into Teacher Education programmes. Most of the candidates admitted into Teacher Education are those who could not aspire into other professions as a result of low entry qualification into the university, people see faculty of education as a dumping ground for

poor academic achievers especially women.

### **Recommendation: The way forward in Teacher Education**

This paper recommends that to reposition Teacher Education for maximum productivity and national development.

1. The Nigerian government and all stake holder must be involved in adequate funding of Teacher Education.
2. Adequate implementation of Teacher Education policies must be carried out as well as adequate supervision of programmes must be done from time to time to ensure quality.
3. All those involved in the teaching profession must be compelled to possess teaching qualifications as a prerequisite to remain in the teaching profession. Teacher education must be given the right place in the teaching profession.
4. The poor mentality of society about Teachers should be restructured by the government and society in general, teacher should be given their rightful position and respect in Nigerian Society, these teachers train people in other professions yet the teacher occupies the least position in the hierarchy of profession in Nigeria.
5. The poor salaries, remunerations and general working condition of the Nigerian Teachers should be improved, teachers should be motivated to put in their best by giving them incentives, like care loans, housing loans, scholarship for further studies etc

6. The effectiveness of teachers have declined, due to poor working conditions, low self-esteem, lack of commitment of teachers to their jobs as they do all sort of jobs to make ends meet therefore teachers should be encourage and motivated in order to be committed to the job. In service training, seminars, workshops should be organized for them. From time to time to maintain standards in Teacher Education.

### Conclusion

Education is the bedrock of any nation, there is need to provide all necessary machineries for the success of teacher education programmes by all stakeholders in the educational sector.

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