

**DWINDLING STUDENTS' ENROLLMENT IN TEACHER
EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN NIGERIA: THE MULTI-VARIATE ISSUES
AND THE WAY FORWARD**

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Introduction

It is simply appropriate to provide some basic information on the nature of Teacher Education (TE). Teacher Education at any level, whether primary, secondary or at the tertiary level involves the training of persons who plan to become teachers. Such training is generally provided in specialized institutions like Teacher Training Colleges, Colleges of Education, National Teachers' Institute (in Kaduna), Faculties and Institutes of Education in the various Universities. Such professional training is generally provided by academics who are themselves professionals, trained in the various areas of education including the psychology of pedagogy. The contents of such professional teacher education training include basic information and knowledge in the various academic disciplines, skills acquisition techniques in all the fields of human endeavour, lessons in approved moral and ethical development.

Essentially, the purpose of all Teacher Education Programmes is to equip teacher trainees with all that they require to be able to effectively teach, that is, to impart knowledge to their pupils or students. Teacher Education is the professional training programme of teachers towards the attainment of the appropriate attitude, values, morals, ethics, skills and relevant academic knowledge which is considered worthwhile and desirable for an efficient and successful teaching career. Teacher Education also involves the professional development, self-competence, acceptable classroom management and behavioural skills. This is why an effective teacher education programme is the bedrock of the educational system of any nation because, as it is commonly said, the quality and standard of the education of any nation is a function of the quality of its teachers.

The National Universities Commission (NUC) Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) have outlined the following objectives for professional graduate teachers:

- To produce prospective teachers who have sound mastery of their subject areas and the ability to impart such knowledge to their students;
- To equip prospective teachers with a mastery of problem solving skills;
- To produce highly motivated conscientious and efficient classroom teachers;
- To produce prospective teachers with proper leadership qualities;
- To produce prospective teachers with the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will enable them contribute to the growth and development of their communities in particular and their nation in general.

- To encourage the spirit of equity and creativity in teachers; and
- To enhance commitment to the teaching profession NUC, (2006).

In order to maintain minimum standards, the training programmes of the various institutions are regulated by the National Commission for Colleges of Education at both the Federal and State levels while the National Universities Commission (NUC) regulates and ensures the maintenance of the minimum standards in the Faculties and Institutes of Education in Nigerian Universities, at both the Federal, State and even in the private Universities, and only recently, the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN). The overall goals of Teacher Education are also clearly spelt out in the National Policy on Education (2004) blueprint.

The Historiography of Teacher Education in Nigeria

For the purpose of this symposium, this paper will not go into the trail blazing epochal efforts of the Christian Missionary efforts in Abeokuta in 1859 or the IS96 milestones of St. Andrews College in Oyo. Rather, it will just provide some highlights of the pioneering efforts in the training of graduate teachers in Nigeria.

According to Okebukola (2012), the training of graduate teachers in the Nigerian University system has had a fairly long history, dating back to the early 60's at the University of Ibadan, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, University of Ife (now OAU), University of Lagos and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. In addition to the Faculties of Education, there are now established Universities of Education at Ijagun- Ijebu Ode, University of Education at Rumuolumeni in Rivers State and several education degree awarding Colleges of Education like the one we are in here at Mosogar, Delta State.

Durosaro (2006) had pointed out that before independence; there were only a few secondary schools in Nigeria with the teaching staff dominated by expatriates and missionaries with little or no teacher education background because of the healthy competition among the various missions to establish schools. A major event in the development of teacher education in Nigeria was the publication and subsequent implementation of the Eric Ashby Report which he appropriately christened 'Investments in Education'. The Ashby Commission reported that there was an inadequate supply of trained teachers in all the secondary schools in Nigeria, as shown in Table 1.

S/N	STATES	SECONDARY SCHOOL					PERCENTAGE SHARE				
		1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
1.	ABIA	4,251	3,306	-	3,370	3,743	3.4	2.5	-	2.0	2.1
2.	ADAMAWA	625	587	699	*81	2952	*0.5	0.4	0.5	-	1.7
3.	AKWA-IBOM	2488	4757	34658	5884	6610	2.0	3.6	2.5	3.5	3.7
4.	ANAMBRA	5516	5442	533	5933	3606	4.4	4.1	3.8	3.5	2.0
5.	BAUCHI	1740	1489	1762	-1,888	2018	1.4	1.1	1.3	1.1	1.1
6.	BAYELSA	1021	1226	1574	919*	2040	0.8	0.9	1.1	-	1.2
7.	BENUE	1855	1443	1519	4475	5511	1.5	1.1	1.1	2.7	3.1
8.	BORNO	1294	1290	1335	1943*	2786	1.0	1.0	0.9	1.2	1.6
9.	CROSS RIVER	2818	2881	3178	4060	3703	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.1
10.	DELTA	7814	8692	10736	11007	12566	6.3	6.5	7.6	-	71
11.	EBONYI	274	212	469	348	2311	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.2	1.3
12.	EDO	5115	5056	6034	5892	9768	4.1	3.8	4.3	-	1.3
13.	EKITI	1399	1480	1608	1965	5414	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	3.1
14.	ENUGU	4573	4603	5078	5469	5725	3.7	3.5	3.6	3.2	3.2
15.	GOMBE	2235	2088	3119	2623	2503	1.8	1.6	2.2	1.6	1.4
16.	IMO	3048	2635	2852	4230	7012	2.5	2.0	2.0	2.5	4.0
17.	JIGAWA	654	680	800	757*	1671	0.5	0.5	0.6	-	0.9
18.	KADUNA	3321	2563	2850	5410	6320	2.7	1.9	2.0	3.2	3.6
19.	KANO	4299	4332	4730	4689	5173	3.5	3.3	3.4	2.8	2.9
20.	KATSINA	1898	1969	2146	2400	2856	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.6
21.	KEBBI	3358	2183	2537	2437*	1596*	1.6	1.6	1.8	-	-
22.	KOGI	3358	3310	3456	3394	4059	2.7	2.5	2.5	2.0	2.3
23.	KWARA	216	2987	2832	3805	3108	2.6	2.2	2.0	2.4	2.8
24.	LAGOS	14605	14951	15815	18344	17500	11.8	11.3	11.2	10.9	0.9
25.	NASARAWA	2018	2512	3421	3519	3785	1.6	1.9	2.4	2.1	2.1
26.	NIGER	3937	4084	4307	4711	41070	3.3	3.1	3.1	2.8	2.3
27.	OGUN	6890	7272	7289	7276	7131	5.6	5.5	5.2	4.3	4.0
28.	ONDO	4626	5555	8949	7118	7152	5.9	4.2	4.9	4.2	4.0
29.	OSUN	6969	6840	5565	6067	5398	5.6	5.1	4.0	3.6	3.0
30.	OYO	9257	10376	12130	12538	12878	7.8	7.8	8.6	7.5	7.3
31.	PLATEAU	4765	4779	4805	4852	5277	3.8	3.6	3.4	2.9	3.0
32.	RIVERS	4408	4370	4275	5667	4456	3.6	3.3	3.0	3.4	2.5
33.	SOKOTO	1618	1567	1808	1985	1741	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.0
34.	TARABA	709	718	790	967	1192	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.8
35.	YOBE	1203	1205	1657	2749	2235	1.0	0.9	1.2	1.6	1.3
36.	ZAMFARA	685	839	837	1060	1130	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
37.	FCT ABUJA	2350	2625	2873	3133	3223	2.0	2.0	2.0	-	1.8
38.	TOTAL	124,136	132,884	140,631	167,649	177,278					

SOURCE: FRN (2009) in Collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO)

The data on Table 1 shows the position of the number of graduate teachers in Secondary schools nationwide between 1999 and 2003, almost fifty years after Sir Eric Ashby made his recommendations on the need for graduate teachers in Nigeria. The report, therefore, recommended the training of more teachers for the secondary schools, the establishment of more universities and the mounting of the Bachelor's degree programmes in education. In response to the recommendations, the B.A. B.Sc (Education) degrees with about fifty students were first introduced in 1961 by the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. This was immediately followed by the University of Ibadan in 1963, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 1964, the University of Lagos in 1965 and the University of Ife (OAU), Ile-Ife in 1967. To demonstrate its seriousness in teacher education, a scholarship programme- (The crash programme scholarship for the training of graduate teachers) was established for the benefit of all students who enrolled in any degree-programme in education. And for the avoidance of doubt, yours truly was a beneficiary of that largesse in 1970 when I enrolled for the B.A. Education programme through the preliminary route to study English and Literature at the University of Ife in Ile-Ife. But for that facility, some of us may never have seen the four walls of a University. Infact at University of Ife, one had the singular privilege of passing through some of Nigeria's best educationist - Prof. A. Babs Fafunwa, Adeniji Adaralegbe and H.L.B Moody for English Studies.

The Current Status of Teacher Education in Nigeria

According to Oyekan (2000) the heartbeat of manpower development and training for prudent use and sustenance of resource in nation building is teacher education. Hence it is a process of imparting relevant knowledge, skills and value orientations that would promote the production of efficient and effective teachers. Teachers are the most important refined human species that skillfully identify, develop and nurture the potentials of productive citizenry or meaningful creation of wealth, pleasure and services which will sustain quality life. Today, the effective teacher is responsible for providing functional education and training to the learners within and outside the school settings. The production of efficient professionals such as doctors, pharmacists, nurses, engineers, technicians, agricultural officers, managers of business and public enterprises, all categories of civil servants, officers of the armed forces, politicians, lawyers, and other enlightened artisans or citizens is undoubtedly the responsibility of teachers and teacher education.

One of the most recent initiatives of government on the current status of Teacher Education is the establishment by the National Council on Education (NCE) of the National Teacher Education Policy (NTEP) which is a very positive elaboration of the National Policy on Education (NPE) regarding Teacher Education and Practice. The NTEP contains the latest articulation of the vision, goals and objectives of Teacher Education in Nigeria. Very much like the National Universities Commission Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS). Section 7.3 of the NTEP Goals for Teacher Education include:

- i. To create adequate incentives to attract competent people into the teaching profession. (This is indeed very critical)

- ii. To ensure rigorous admission and graduation requirements and apply them consistently. (Only those who don't qualify for courses of their choice are pushed to education.)
- iii. To ensure that Teacher Education institutions are well equipped both in human and material resources. (A national malaise)
- iv. To ensure that teachers have sufficient mastery of content and varied methods of teaching that are subject to specific including teachers for Special Need Learners.
- v. To ensure structured, effective, and supportive 'supervision of teaching practice and induction as well as certification and licensing - (the TRCN has been very effective in this regard).
- vi. To produce sufficiently trained teacher educators who are capable of imparting and modelling desired knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- vii. To promote teachers and provide opportunities for their continuing professional development, retention, advancement and improvement in their chosen career.
- viii. To ensure that teachers constantly upgrade their skills in order to remain competent and relevant.

Pai Obanya (2010) pointed out that the NTEP is an innovative idea for ensuring that teacher and teaching occupy their rightful positions in the Nation's Education System. The NTEP contains very critical and radical provisions some of which are taken for granted while others will continue to generate discussions. Parts of the provisions include:

- (a.) To make Education degree in the Universities a FIVE-YEAR programme.
- (b.) To make one of the five years for the bachelor's degree in Education to be devoted entirely to TEACHING PRACTICE: in other words, teaching practice will last for TWO ACADEMIC TERMS OR SEMESTERS, with one semester at the 300 Level and the Second semester at 400 Level. (Infact this was what it was before the Nigerian factor came into it.)
- (c.) To have one year INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME for first degree and NCE graduates.
- (d.) To make the TRCN register and license degree and NCE graduates after their one year supervised internship.
- (e.) To take care of the regulation, supervision, and assessment of the internship programme by the TRCN in collaboration with the National Teachers Institute and other stakeholders.
- (f.) To make Education graduates to be placed on a public salary level one grade above the 'ordinary graduates' to compensate for the five years of programme as in other professional programmes that are now five or more years.
- (g.) To consider raising admission and graduation requirement for both NCE and degree programmes.
- (h.) To make NCE graduates to spend three years instead of two to obtain a degree in Education.
- (i.) To provide incentives for student teachers on teaching practice.

- (j.) To enforce employment of only teacher educators or lecturers who possess the minimum requirements of master's degree with teaching qualification.

The Challenges of Teacher Education and the Way Forward

Teacher education in Nigeria has been subjected to severe challenges with the result that the very laudable goals of education have been very difficult to attain. Some of the major constraints include inadequate funding by the various proprietors and authorities. The funding of Teacher Education in Nigeria has been very irregular and has never been adequate for the procurement and maintenance of equipment for teaching and learning. The crisis created by the gross under funding of Teacher Education include under achievement by the products of the system; widespread corruption, indiscipline and under- utilization of capacities in all facets of our national life and development. The end result is that standards are openly being compromised. Total neglect of the infrastructural facilities has led to some loss of confidence in the entire education system by the general public. Most seriously, the products of the system exhibit a lack of confidence even in themselves with the result that no teacher could proudly display a car sticker marked-"Teacher". In fact nobody wants to be identified as a Teacher, so why will enrolment not dwindle?

Specifically, the NTEP provided a summary of the concerns which must be addressed if we are to make any headway.

- Low admission requirements for- students who enroll in Teacher Education Programme and the poor status of teaching as a profession have reduced the quality and quantity of applicants into Teacher Education Programmes.
- Inadequate coverage and mastery of content knowledge and learner - centred pedagogy in the pre- service training leaves teachers unprepared to facilitate learners' learning and development. Pre-service course content falls below the requirement of today's knowledge economy as it fails to incorporate competency-based education and the use of ICT.
- Lack of linkages and partnerships between State Universal Basic Education Boards (the employers of graduate teachers) and Teachers Educational Institution. This has led to the production of teachers who are not relevant to the needs of basic education- a very serious mismatch.
- Lack of infrastructure and poor teaching - learning environment in school, coupled with large class sizes demotivate teachers and make effective teaching and learning unrealistic.

As a way forward, Okebukola (2012) has suggested that we need to reformat our Teacher Education Programme in a way that it will attract more clients to arrest the dwindling enrolment figures. He proposed some immediate reforms as follows:

- ❖ Reduction in the load of education courses.
- ❖ Increase in the load of teaching subjects
- ❖ More time for teaching practice
- ❖ Avoidance of early specialization at the undergraduate level such as Education Management / Education Administration and Planning, Guidance and Counselling, e.t.c.

- ❖ Avoid admitting students without five SSCE credits.
- ❖ Limiting the number of sandwich/part time students.
- ❖ Periodic training in other modern methods of teaching.
- ❖ Minimum qualification for teaching (NUC) minimum standard of Ph.D. for teaching in the Nigerian University system from the lecturer Grade II position and above should continue to be enforced.
- ❖ Training in pedagogical skills
- ❖ Training in Research skills
- ❖ Mentoring
- ❖ Teacher Quantity- Introduce a battery of incentives like automatic bursary awards for all education students and enhanced post- graduation salary package for teachers.
- ❖ Teachers licensing and Revalidation of license periodically by the TRCN.

Ukeje (1991) had always argued that if education is the gateway and a window into modernization, it is the teacher that holds the key. The teacher, according to him, is the pivot of the education process, what he knows and does can make a great difference and what he does not know do or fail to do can mean an irreparable loss to the learner. In the same view, Nwokeocha, (2013) pointed out that regardless of this self-evident importance of the educational system, particularly the teacher, Nigeria seems to rather, helplessly watch both the system and the teaching profession collapse and so enrolment figures in teacher education programmes have continued to dwindle from year to year. This is because many people, including the various authorities concerned simply pay lip service to the problems of the teacher and teacher education. Very unfortunately, officials of government whose responsibility it is to take necessary action to implement the policies don't bother because they can afford to send their children and wards abroad for quality education where teacher education is taken very serious. There are even those, among the stakeholders who are blunt enough to assert that the problems of the teacher defy all known solutions, and that the teacher simply has to live with that curse. For example Nnadozie (1995) insists that the teacher can by no stretch of imagination ever expect to be wealthy a man though he would not be a very poor man. He can never be affluent. This is the prize of his profession". This is a very depressing declaration for the teaching profession for which reason there is no way any Present-day Nigerian youth who has read this depressing declaration would enroll for any teacher education programme because from Mosogar to Sapele to Warri, to Port Harcourt, to Lagos to Abuja and Benin, our youths decidedly "want to hammer "within the shortest time possible and so they romance with the www as "yahoo boys".

On the part of the government, it will most often plead that it is incapable of adequately addressing the problems of the teacher. Even a former minister of Education in 1995 had had cause to declare that even Nigeria's total revenue might not be able to accommodate the expenditure of the teacher education even at the primary level. This was long before the present democratic dispensation.

The world is already in the 21st century which is expected to usher in the height of the civilization which has never been known to humanity in history- as expressed in vision 20- 2020. If there is no argument about the fact that the teacher holds the key to these dreams, can Nigeria still afford to merely keep paying lip service to the dilemma of teacher education?

With the continuously mounting pressure from both the Universal Primary Education (UPE) and the Universal Basic Education (UBE) enrolments, the endemic issues of quantity and quality have become intractable.

The pressure of both the UPE and UBE readily turned into the tertiary educational level to produce more teachers to adequately cater. For the students at the primary and secondary levels and even at the tertiary level. For example, the UPE of the 1970's was expected to use 50,000 teachers but with the sudden rise in enrolment, emergency teachers had to be produced. In 2000 therefore when the, new version of the UPE now rechristened Universal Basic Education (UBE) was launched in Sokoto by Obasanjo, the enrolment explosion continued across the country in all levels of the education system.

Nigeria had embraced the Education for All (EFA) initiative which its target is very far from being met either in terms of the number of teachers required or even school enrolment. The EFA and the vision 20-2020 targets are just a few months away and it is obvious that with the dwindling enrolment figures of our Teacher Education, the entire vision is simply a mirage.

Conclusion

The professionalization of teaching has been an intractable problem in Nigeria. Even in the USA, some 'authorities have also revealed that the professionalization of teaching has equally been problematic such that similar suggestions have been proffered in terms of pay increase, up-scaling of certification requirements, more accountability, increase in career ladders, rigorous peer review and the encouragement of teachers themselves to set standards for the entrance into the profession. The low rating of the teaching profession is most evident in the dwindling application for admission into Faculties and Colleges of Education. According to Okebukola (2011), in 2011, of the over 1,300,000 applicants for University admission, less than five per cent applied for courses in Education- which shows a gross lack of interest of candidates for a career in the teaching profession. The pervasive notion is that only the "academic dregs" make up the bulk of teachers- both in service and practicing. In concluding this paper, I presented to you a dialogue which I have titled: NOBODY WANTS TO BECOME A TEACHER BY CHOICE.

A School Principal at a Graduation Ceremony said:

The Doctor wants his child to become a doctor ..., The Engineer wants his child to become an engineer, the business man wants his child to become a CEO. But a teacher also wants his child to become one of them. So nobody wants to be a teacher but that is the truth, so at the dinner party following the graduation, they were discussing LIFE. One man, a CEO decided to explain the problem of education and he argued "What's a kid going to learn from someone whose best option in life was to become only a teacher?" To anchor his

point bluntly, he said to another guest. "You are a teacher, Mr Mudiaga, please be honest. What do you make?"

After pausing for a while, Mr Mudiaga began. "Well, I make kids work harder than they ever thought they could. I make an A student feel like a "National Merit Award" winner. I make kids sit through 40minutes of class time without a TV programme movie on cue. You want to know what I make? He paused again and looked at each and everyone on the dinner table. I make kids wonder, I make them ask questions, I make them apologise and I mean it. I make them have respect and take responsibility for their actions. I teach them how to write and then, I make them write. Keyboarding isn't everything, I make them read, read and read. I make them show all their work in Maths. They use their God-given brain, not the man-made calculator. I make my students from other countries learn everything they need to know about Nigeria while preserving their unique `cultural identities. I make my classroom a place where my entire students feel safe.

Finally I make them understand that if they use the gifts they were given, work hard and follow their heart, they can succeed in life, Mr. Mudiaga paused one last time and then continued: then when people try to judge me by WHAT I MAKE, with me knowing that money isn't everything, I can hold my head high up and pay no attention because they are ignorant and uneducated literates. You still want to know what I make. I make a difference in all your lives, educating kids and preparing them to become CEO's, Doctors, Engineers and Lawyers. What do you make Mr. CEO? Only money. As a Teacher, I am the only professional who collaborates with the Almighty God in RE-MAKING man. The CEO was dumbfounded and so if Nigeria must develop, Teacher Education Enrolment must not be allowed to dwindle.

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