

MANAGEMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: ISSUES, PROBLEMS AND REMEDIES

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ABSTRACT

The importance of teachers and the roles they play in the educative process are central to basic education, particularly in third world countries, there may be close substitutes for teacher-roles in the form of teaching machines with programmed instruction (Balogun 1988) but in third world countries such as Nigeria, teachers undoubtedly remain the managers of knowledge. Therefore, teacher education in Nigeria is, and should be, the foundation of quality and relevance of education at all levels.

Teachers are crucial inputs of an educational system. The real growth points with teaching profession are well trained and experienced teachers. If we believe in the capacity of education system to promote rapid and directed social and economic change, we should be concerned with who teaches in our schools. Since no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers, an educator must first be educated and trained. It is not surprise, therefore, that there is widespread interest in developing a functional and more workable fit between teacher-training programme and the complexities and demands of teaching.

Base on the above premises therefore, this study sought to examine some salient issues in education and x-ray the problem areas in the management of teacher education in Nigeria. Over years, the issue of teacher education vis-à-vis the concept of educational management has been seriously neglected. It is imperatives to note that educational management is a scientific organization of human (teachers) and material resources available for education and using them systematically to achieving educational goals. Therefore, for any teacher education to be successful some management issues as it affects teacher education must be thoroughly diagnosed. Some of these issues are: quality in teacher production, selection of entrance, teacher preparation programme, staffing, facilities, administrative leadership and discipline, funding, pedagogy among others.

While the problems confronted by teacher education include: aversion for the teaching profession, teacher retention and turnover, inadequate funding, quantity and quality of teacher. It is in the light of the above that the study is set to proffer solution to these problems that rearing their ugly heads with a view to improving the country's quality of education via teacher education.

The study will be of immense importance to both educational planners and administrators. It is therefore suggested that teachers should be allowed to undergo on-the-job training; conferences, workshop and seminars.

Introduction

An emerging area of concern in national curriculum development efforts concerns the inculcation of teaching skills and values education. The focus on teacher education derives from the realisation that the child needs certain experiences and competencies to survive in society. These include analysis and evaluation of information, their application towards solving identified problems and demonstration of a correct attitude towards individuals, ideals and materials from the foregoing, teaching education is thus germane to the growth or development of any child. As a result, teacher education needed to be accorded maximum support to make it occupy its deserves position in the economy. However, it is to be noted that, the problem in the teacher education have been the perennial concerns of organised education throughout the ages and all the world over. In Nigeria, the political, economic, social and cultural syndromes of underdevelopment is not just an economic phenomenon characterized by low per capita income, or instability of government, it also encompasses vital socio-cultural issues of attitudes values-such as lack of resources, dysfunctional provisions, ethnic problems, and high birth rate. With the above problems rearing its ugly heads, education remains the formidable weapon to curb or minimize these through socialization, acculturation and even enculturation. Thus, the problems and issues in teacher education become more involved, diffused and complex.

Aims and Objectives of Teacher Education

The summit of the Nine High-Population Developing Countries held at New Delhi, India in December 1993, re-iterated the relevance of qualitative teacher education to the quest for improved basic education for all. According to the Federal Ministry of Education report (FME & YD, 1994)

'Nearly all issues, whether related to goals, learning achievement, organization of programmes or performance of the education system, involve an analysis of the role of teachers: their behaviour, performance, remuneration, incentives, skills and how they are used by the system. The educational system vide teacher education is therefore seen as performing a conserving, integrating and modifying function in the society. Even if the school is not always to be the prime mover in the inevitable changing of society, it is critically important as a consolidating agent. Teacher is seen as the prime factor in this dynamic role of the school. Therefore, teacher education should be based on a sound philosophy and on such rationale that should guarantee the acquisition of necessary knowledge components and professional skills, which will enable pre-service teachers to both

schools 'educate' the pupils (Harris, 1992). The expectation is very critical, not only on the quality education, but equally to the very survival of the various disciplines in the curriculum of education. Therefore, the aims and objectives of Teacher education in Nigeria is anchored on five value objectives to teacher education as enshrined in the National Policy on Education.

These are:

- a. to produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational 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 community and society at large and to enhance their commitment to national objectives
- d. to provide teachers with intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to 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 (op.cit 1981)

However, it is evident from the above that the aims and objectives of teacher education in Nigeria should not just be the production of teachers in large quantity; rather they must fulfil the three major thrusts of

- a. Possession of certain positive qualities
- b. Possession of professional skills and techniques
- c. Possession of a body of knowledge and understanding

The above three attributes are interrelated and the one is more often than not enhanced by the possession of the others.

Teacher Qualifications System in Nigeria

At the time the Nigeria policy on education was introduced, five types of teachers, distinguished by their qualifications, were expected to operate the Nigerian educational system. According to the Nigeria educational Research and Council (NERC), 1980), these were:

- a) Grade II teachers at pre-primary level with NCE teachers as head;
- b) NCE teachers at primary level with graduate teachers as head;
- c) NCE and university graduate teachers at junior secondary level;

- d) University graduates with professional qualifications in their disciplines at the secondary level;
- e) University graduates and post-graduates at Universities and with professional qualifications at Colleges of Education, or practical qualifications and industrial exposure and experience at the technical colleges and polytechnics level.

Until the last decade, primary teacher production in Nigeria was the responsibility of Teachers Grade Two colleges. However, Nigeria's national Policy on Education in Section 9, sub-section 61, makes an outstanding reference to standards in teacher education as an ultimate expectation, viz;

It will be the ultimate policy only candidates whose minimum qualification is WASC or its equivalent will be admitted into our teacher training colleges... this will mean that the NCE will ultimately become the minimum basic qualification for entry into the teaching profession.

The Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) is a sub-degree but highly qualitative professional diploma in teacher education obtained after a three-year full-time programme in a College of Education. It is therefore a higher quality and specialised teacher's certificate than the Teachers' Grade Two Certificate which it is expected to replace.

The establishment of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) in 1989 as a supervisory body for teacher education in Nigeria saw the beginning of consistent and deliberate thrusts towards actualising the policy on the NCE qualification becoming the minimum acceptable certificate for entry into the teaching profession in Nigeria. Consequently, as the number of Grade Two Teachers' Colleges fell from 285 in 1986 to 13 in 1989 and less than 120 in 1991, the number of Colleges of Education increased from 44 in 1983 to 61 in 1993. Similarly, the enrolment in Colleges of Education rose from 34,710 in 1980/81 to 86,830 in 1990/91.

In addition to the expansion of full-time programmes for the production of primary and junior secondary teachers who will be holders of the NCE, several part-time programmes have been started either in College of Education as sandwich courses, or by Distance Education organised by the national Teachers Institute aimed at transforming serving grade Two teachers into NCE holders. Indeed, between 1990 and 1996, the National Teachers' Institute has been able to up-grade 24,817 serving Grade II teachers to the NCE level.

The National primary Education commission personnel audit in 1996 shows that only about 39% of all teachers in the primary schools in Nigeria possess the NCE and above. However, with about 31,563 Grade II teachers enrolled in 1997 in the Distance Learning NCE programme and another, it is expected that by the year 1998, the proportion of qualified teachers holding the NCE and above, who are serving in our primary school sector, would be somewhere around 78% of the total teachers in service.

In spite of this promising enhancement of teacher quality in Nigeria, there are indications that suggest a faulty implementation of the policy thrust towards the replacement of the Teachers Grade II Certificate with the NCE as the minimum basic qualification for entry into the teaching profession in Nigeria. First, the phasing out of the Teachers Grade II Colleges had apparently taken place rather prematurely. For one thing, the Teachers Grade II Colleges he served as a veritable source of candidates for the Colleges of Education. Therefore, the loss of this feeder sources seems to have exacerbated the paucity of candidates seeking entry into the Colleges of Education ad may have, to a certain extent, compounded the shortfall in the nation's supply of primary school teachers.

The National Policy on Education, in the Section on Teacher Education, provides that all teachers in educational institutions from pre-primary to tertiary shall be professionally trained as teachers. In practice, however, teaching has remained an all-comers trade and real professionalisation is yet to be trained. The situation is more distressing at the tertiary educational level where the practitioners prefer not to be classified as teachers but as lecturers. A preponderance of the lecturers in the universities and polytechnics are therefore not professionally trained to functions as teachers. In the Colleges of Education, professional qualification in education is an imperative criterion for the recruitment of teacher-educators.

Salient Issues in Teacher Education

Selection of Entrants

By international conventions, one of the major factors that determine standards and professionalism in teacher education is the selection of entrants into teacher education. The teaching profession has continued to attract the dregs as students mainly due to poor remuneration and lack of clearly defined career growth pattern, are reluctant to enrol as teacher trainees. In Nigeria, the minimum standards for the training of

NCE teachers (NCCE 1990) requires a secondary school certificate or the Teacher Grade Two Certificate or their equivalents, with 5 passes at a sitting including a minimum of 3 credits obtained in the proposed major subjects of study, plus success in the examination set by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB). However, one serious problem confronting teacher education as regards the selection of entrants is the absence of any strategy for assessing the personality traits of the candidates as well as their interest in the teaching profession. It is a mere waste of resources to recruit and train as teachers people who have no interest in teaching as a career. These issues of recruitment and retention had been posing great threat to the educational sector. In fact, it is sad to note that teaching profession is nothing to many but a mere “stepping stone” or a “parking lot” for other professions. In the words of Ukeje (1991), he posited that the recruitment and retention of competent people in the teaching profession is a perennial problem all over the world. But the case of Nigeria is particularly serious and fast becoming the last hope of the hopeless that is the profession for those who have nothing else better to do. Teaching phenomenon has to change in order to usher in a new social order in Nigeria (op cit). In spite of the low quality of entrant’s requirement, enrolment still remains abysmally low.

Table 3 showing the students’ enrolment in Colleges of Education

YEAR	MF	F	%F	GRADUATES
1990	20,363	9,386	46.0	19,752
1991	27,397	12,393	45.2	26,575
1992	26,478	12,118	45.8	25,684
1993	24,441	11,586	47.4	23,708
1994	24,229	11,241	46.4	23,502
1995	27,030	12,654	46.8	26,219
1996	28,563	15,503	54.3	27,706
1997	26,079	13,908	53.3	25,297
1998	28,535	16,572	58.1	27,679
1999	29,253	16,131	55.1	37,520

KEY MF = Total male and female enrolment
 F = Total Female enrolment
 %F = percentage female enrolment
 * = Based on Graduation rate of 97%

Source: NCCE Statistical Digest on Colleges of Education in Nigeria, Vols.16.

Though the minimum standard for the NCE programme is five passes in the WASCE with least three at credit level, enrolment still remain abysmally low.

Pre-service Programme for Teachers

Braineld (1965) cited by Nkeye (1986) suggested that the teaching profession should establish the same standards of preparation that would at least be equal to those of the medical profession. This is so because, in his own words; both serve the public welfare in the modest and deepest sense of the term, both are concerned with the fullest development of the human being so that he may carry on his life unhampered by the deficiencies of ignorance and illness. If anything the teacher serves as a still higher function; he is properly concerned not only to prevent or correct deficiencies but, even more to stimulate and nourish positive qualities of each person in his score.

Teacher education programmes must stress both theoretical and practical disciplines of education. The statutory responsibilities for teacher education are vested in colleges of education (COE), Institutes of Education, Polytechnics and Nigeria teachers Institute (NIT) (by distance learning). Teachers are also trained in the University Faculties of Education for B.Ed, B.A. Ed and M.Ed programmes. Teacher education programmes in all these institutions should centre on foundation courses. The foundation approach to education draws its substance from established disciplinary fields and attempts to stimulate broad, comprehensive and synthetic thinking. Durosaro (2003), Lassa (2000) and Akinsolu (2007) identify four major requirements for a teacher preparation programme. These are general studies, educational studies, studies related to the students intended field of teaching and teaching practice.

In Aaron (2003) cited by Akinsolu (2007) revealed that recent report from classroom research indicates that teacher still needed training in language, skills in teaching initial literacy, number and basic science concepts in the children's mother tongue, more ability to manage children's learning needs during the transition to English as the medium of instruction and more awareness of the importance of language across the curriculum.

Curriculum Delivery

Conventional teaching procedures are the major mode of curriculum delivery of teacher education in Nigeria. Effort in providing appropriate solution as regards this requires adequate proper planning on equipping institutions, their academic staff and non-tutorial personnel for effective use of ICT for continuous improvement of teacher education. The NCE curriculum is reviewed in five year cycle. The review should be a continuous process. It should be possible to begin with first principles of what do we know about learning at all levels of education and teachers

need to know and be able to do to meet the demands of teaching and learning. This could lead to building a framework for developing a modular approach to initial teacher preparation and certification. All primary school teachers should be trained as multi grade teachers, able to teach the core subjects across the curriculum. However, this is not sufficed to say that there would be no area to specialisation in their subject areas.

Funding

The issue of funding of education generally in Nigeria has been generating a lot of controversies for years. The problem of under funding of higher education has nearly marred teacher education in Nigeria. It poses a great threat to the quality of teachers produced for the society. The effect of the under funding varies from one institution to another. This however depends on the person at the helm of the affairs of the institution. Of recent, institutions were now devising method of fund raising in other for them to be able to cope financially with the situation on their campuses. But this can not but has effect on the total quality of the products of the institution. The global economic recession is not helping matter. As reported by Lassa (2000); "the gloomy economic conditions in Nigeria, particularly the galloping inflation that steadily reduces the purchase power of the naira, have strong enough influences to stultify many attempts at setting minimum standards for institutional budgets". It is therefore incumbent on the teacher education institutions to look outward for any alternative avenues where fund can be generated to meet the demand of its institution. Many of our teacher education institutions are nothing but a mere commercial venture where the dictates of selling handouts, textbooks, stationeries and other Jewries is the order of the day.

Facilities

The expectation of any teacher education institution is to have physical structures that are conducive enough for training teachers. It is expected of such institution to have adequate and well ventilated classrooms/lecture halls, laboratories for carrying out scientific experiments, a well flourished and well stocked with latest textbooks, journals, magazines and the likes to help producing quality teachers. However, the above is far from what is attainable today in our various Teacher training institutions. What we have on ground are a battered like buildings, unavailability of good libraries and non-existence of laboratories. It is pathetic to note that student teachers have to bring from home or improvise if he or she could some of the chemicals for their experiment. With this situation on ground, it is highly difficult to

produce a well sound teacher. This is to say that the availability of the school facilities in right quantity and quality cannot but aid the good academic output of the teachers in training. Availability of school building and their plant facilities contribute to good academic performance as they enhance effective teaching/learning activities As succinctly being put by Abdul Kadir (1991) "the issue of quality of education does not stop on setting minimum academic standards and setting up high entry admission requirement and high cut off points... but also on improvising the condition under which the student both in and outside the classroom, are made to learn.

Staffing

The academic staff of teacher education institution plays a vital role in term of quality and quantity of teachers produced. It is expected that he who will teach or lecture at the teacher education institution must be professionally qualified and of high moral integrity. This is because teachers are seen as role models. On no account must teacher educator be not professionally qualified since no nation can rise above the quality of her teachers. Teacher educators must have sense of belonging, loyal and dedicated and of course must have a mission for the institution. The issue of social and economic gain/benefit must be secondary to them. Although it is perceived that teachers were seen as the most cheated group (Akinwumi, 2000). That must not be basis for losing their mission and objectives. Once they deviated from their missions, it will definitely affect the academic performance of teachers in training and therefore have a negative effect in their overall output. This however, is not good enough for teacher education.

Professionalisation

The issue of profesionalisation has remained very fundamental to the quality and peoples perception of any profession. It is expected that whosoever will practice any profession must have been well grounded, trained and of course licensed to be able to function well in that profession. This however, is conspicuously missing in the teacher education sector. Teacher education in Nigeria is an all comer profession. It has been regarded as a dumping ground or lay about profession. As being rightly put by Shokan (2007) "the teaching profession has suffered a lot of bastardisation. Teaching is regarded as a parking lot for other professions, an all-comers trade with teachers of multifarious backgrounds, training and qualifications."

Strategies/innovations at improving teacher education

Having considered the issue affecting teacher education in Nigeria, it is expedient to look at various ways in which government is trying to ameliorate the earlier discussed issues or problems. It will be unfair to say that government outrightly close their minds and eyes to these teething problems confronting teacher education.

Some of the steps taken to improve teacher education in Nigeria include:

Entrants' strategy

Perhaps the most fundamental problem confronting teaching profession is the lack of interest on the part of the secondary school leavers "willingly" apply for teaching profession in any of the teacher education institution. They have being compelled to do so by "Virtue" of their inadequacies in satisfying the profession of their choice. As a result, the national council of colleges of education (NCCE) who is in charge of national certificate of education (NCE) worked out the cost to educate and train an NCE graduate from the first year to graduation. This was done in order to determine the kind of assistance that can be given to such candidate. Some of these incentives includes: bursary, scholarship, and free feeding and work and study system). Also, the NCCE in their desperate attempt to entice teaching profession came up with shared funding strategy that will enable all the education stakeholders to share the funding of the teacher institution.

Table 4 below provides more insight to the funding sharing formular

1. Government (State, FG. 2. The Institution. 3. Beneficiary/Parents	A) Share Percentages of total cost.	B) shared area of Expenditure	C) shared percentage of selected areas of expenditure
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Source: Isyaku, 2002

Quality Assurance

The establishment of NCCE in 1989 introduced some noticeable changes in the management and planning of teacher education. For instance, there is the ambivalent measure of removing authority for determining standard for the ministry of education and resting it partly on NCCE and partly on the individual teacher education. This has ultimately brought the issue of red tapism confronted in the implementation of good policies to its low ebb.

Training and re-training of teacher educators

Unlike the moribund system of teacher training system which lack sending teacher educators for training after their qualifying exams and placement. The country has witnessed radical departure from this with the introduction of Universal Basic Education (UBE) it has become mandatory on teacher educators to attend training vide seminars, conferences or workshops at least once a year. Here, teacher educators were now made to learn current trends in education. For instance, the introduction of multi-grade system, handing of sophisticated teaching/learning instructional materials, such as slides, projectors among others. This is now paving a new way for education in the country.

Awards for teachers

Of recent, various state governments and even local government have started awarding dedicated and hard working teachers. Some of the awards include car gift, building, machines, foodstuffs, cash gift and host of others. This is to motivate more people to the teaching profession.

Establishment of pedagogical centres

Presently, teacher education quality in universities is being enhanced by the establishment of pedagogical centres in different geo-political zones in the country. This is to enable lecturers who were not trained as professional teachers to acquire teaching skills that will enable them to be more efficient in the delivery of the course contents. The selected centres will serve as short time training ground for these set of "unqualified teachers". Aside, opportunities of enrolling in one year post graduate diploma in education is now open for the affected lecturers.

Pivotal Teacher Training Programme (PTTP)

The shocking discovery of the teachers' short fall of about 279,411 in 1999 at the inception of UBE made the commission to introduce pivotal training programme. The national teacher institute NTI one of the teacher education institutions is directly in charge of this programme. The mode of teaching is a combine system of face to face contact, weekends and holiday and self instruction course method.

Teacher registration council (TRC) Due to the clarion call by professional teachers to sanitise the teaching profession by disallowing it from being "a packing lot", and to enhance more dignity, the TRC was introduced. This is in a bid to professionalise teaching profession.

Recommendations

The introduction of Information communication technology) has No doubt brought the entire world into our hand. Therefore, for Nigeria educational system to respond to this global challenge, teacher education must embrace best practices and innovations in the field. It is recommended that teacher education curriculum must be reviewed through the lens of what teacher should know and be able to do if they are to be effective teachers and students are to learn well. Again, the teacher registration council should doggedly pursue the issue of professionalisation of teaching at all levels like what we have in other professions like law, medicine, engineering etc.

Also, emphasis must be placed on quality assurance. Non-qualified teachers should not be allowed to come into the teaching profession and those already in the system should be flushed out from the system. The issue of supervision and inspection must be handled with all sincerity of purpose.

Conclusion

There is no gain saying the fact that the problems confronting teacher education in Nigeria are enormous and daunting. However, teacher education preparation is not the worst in the world but there still exist room for improvement. It is my belief that with adequate and proper plan, Nigerian educational system can achieve a greater height.

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