

**Management Challenges as Drawbacks of Teacher  
Development: The Way Forward for the Nigerian  
Teacher in Basic Education**

By Dr Anselm Chidi Njoku.

Mobile:+2348034498452; E-mail:[anselmnjoku@yahoo.com](mailto:anselmnjoku@yahoo.com)

**National Institute for Educational Planning and  
Administration (NIEPA), PMB 562 ,  
Ondo, Ondo State, Nigeria.**

**Abstract**

Teaching as a profession is deep-rooted in historical antecedents. Granted that its journey from the status of voluntary service in the hands of Christian missionaries with no legal instrument and reliable conditions of service to the present one of its integration into the public service has been a giant stride, its management challenges have, in many instances, constituted drawbacks to the optimal development of the teacher. Some of the management challenges touch on the inconsistencies in teachers' admission requirements for training, discrepancies in their recruitment and deployment, irregular career progression, inadequate provision of teaching and learning materials, non-inclusive nature of curriculum review, reluctance of government to address teachers' genuine grievances, inadequate teacher incentive and others. As a remedy, the school should be recognized as a learning organization which, among other things, should find expression on the Nigerian teacher being equipped to cope with cutting-edge practices which make a new teacher.

## **Introduction**

To make a new teacher requires a paradigm shift from what constitutes the package of the old concept of the teacher, to what should constitute the package of the concept of the envisaged new teacher, given the plethora of knowledge explosion in the province of globalization. Teaching generally, both in Nigeria and elsewhere is regarded as a special profession characterized by deep-rooted historical antecedents. It has its peculiar challenges. The challenges notwithstanding one consolation is very remarkable: It has been operating on the incremental model of policy making. It graduated from a level of voluntary service without any legal instrument to the present level of a pensionable profession in the public service.

To discuss the topic therefore the following sub-headings will serve as a guide.

- **Conceptual clarification**
- **Antecedents of Basic Education and Teacher Development.**
- **Management Challenges of Teacher Development.**
- **Way forward for a New Teacher.**
- **Summary and Conclusion**

## **Conceptual Clarification**

To treat the audience of this paper to the required bias, contextual clarification of two salient concepts is considered necessary (Okafor, 1984). They are: Basic Education and Teacher Development.

**Basic Education:**

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) explains in section 3 of the National Policy on Education (NPE) that Basic Education shall be of nine year duration comprising six years of primary education and three years of junior secondary education. It shall be free and compulsory. It shall also include adult and non-formal education programmes at primary and junior secondary education levels for the adults and out-of-school youths.

The goals of basic education, among other things, include inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy, and ability to communicate effectively; laying a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking; giving citizenship education and opportunities for developing manipulative skills; character moulding and providing basic tools for further education.

**Teacher Development:**

This seeks to package the teacher to fit into what Obanya (2007:106) calls “the International Framework for Teacher Education”. For this he emphasizes two sides of the Pedagogy Incultation Principle (PIP) namely: “Mastering the teaching model” and “Modeling the Master teacher “. The former stresses excellent grasp of learning-promotion principles, techniques and technologies especially the capacity to inculcate these in learners. The latter stresses internalization of learning promotion principles, techniques and technologies especially radiating these in their classrooms, school, and work place interactions with students.

To achieve this would involve continuous updating of knowledge, making the teacher comfortable as well as giving him/her a sense of belonging.

## **Antecedents of Basic Education and Teacher Development.**

Because the level and nature of education suggest the level and nature of teacher development, the following levels and periods of educational development in Nigeria are hereby identified:

- **Period of Traditional Pre-colonial Education:**

During this period every normal adult was regarded as a teacher with parents playing major roles without any formal school learning. Every adult member of the extended family was a teacher emphasizing vocational skills, abilities, attitudes and acceptable behaviour patterns (Ukeje, 1992)

- **Period of Sole Voluntary Agency System and Control (1842-1887).**

This period witnessed the introduction of formal education in 1842 by the Wesleyan Methodist Mission and the opening of the first known Western form of school in Nigeria in 1843. (Fatunwa, 1974). Teaching was a voluntary job. Ukeje (1992:5) notes: The Church Missionary Society (CMS) “established, perhaps the first teacher training institution in the country...”. The teacher taught what the church wanted as government had no hand in education implying that there was no uniformity in the curriculum provided by the various churches.

- **Period of Dual Control(1887-1953)**

This period provided for four classes of teachers, namely: School masters, Assistant school masters, Pupil Teachers and Monitors. During this period the first purely Nigerian Education Ordinance was introduced and it provided for a Board of Education and the appointment of an Inspector. The different Missions established more schools including teacher training institutions now reaching three.

Margery Perham (1960) notes that there was strengthening of government control of education.

- **Period of Increased Government Control 1952-1970.**

This was the period of emerging Regional Universal Primary Education with Local Education Committees. Four inspectors of Education were appointed each in charge of Primary, Secondary, Teacher Training and Technical Education. The teacher was more or less policed.

Phenomenal growth in private proprietary secondary schools, use of common syllabuses by private and indigenous schools, and the same staff qualification and registration characterized the period. Unsatisfactory state of affairs in curriculum and its delivery led to the National Curriculum Conference of 1969(Fafunwa, 1974) (NCC)

- **Era of State Take Over and National Universal Primary Education (1970-1979)**

Enlightened Nigerians expressed dissatisfaction over the irrelevance of the curriculum in schools as emphasis was on arts neglecting science and technology. The teacher's knowledge was therefore very shallow and limited. Hence the National Curriculum Conference (NCC) of 1969 paved the way for the first National Policy on Education in 1977 (Fafunwa,1974).

- **Era of Knowledge Explosion and Globalization (1980-Present Day).**

Knowledge explosion and curriculum imposition on the teacher, infrastructural decay, teacher recruitment from low origins, the image of the teacher and comparison syndrome, to say the least, aggravate the era calling for a way forward.

## **Management Challenges of Teacher Development**

To prepare a “new teacher”, it is necessary to identify the management challenges facing the present teacher. Some of the challenges are presented herewith:

- **Disinclination for Teacher Education Programmes:**

There is the rising disinclination for teacher education programmes which is attributable to the declining social status of the teaching profession. Data sourced from the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) in the 1999/2000 and 2000/2001 Applications and Admissions into Tertiary Institutions show that while universities and polytechnics are still highly competitive with attrition rates of 81% and 72% respectively”, it seems that colleges of education have to go out literally begging for students”---a situation which has given rise to the upsurge of pre-NCE programmes, which often do not attract the most motivated students (Obanya, 2007:98).

- **Playing Bad Politics with Teacher Recruitment and Deployment of Teachers.**

The result is that most urban schools especially in the southern part of the country have a preponderance of female teachers in basic education. The situation therefore shows gender sensitivity (FME, 2007) as most of the schools do not have enough male teachers to cater for the peculiar needs of learners especially the males. The worrying situation negates the realization of the Dakar EFA goal of eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005.

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- **Unqualified Teachers still Teaching.**

The minimum teaching qualification approved by the Federal Government of Nigeria is the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). Regrettably, many states especially those of the Northern part of the country record as low percentages of qualified teachers. For instance, Basic and Secondary Education Statistics in Nigeria 2004 & 2005 of Federal Ministry of Education (2006) shows the following low percentages of qualified teachers for four states in Table 1.

Table 1. Percentage of Qualified Teachers in Four Northern States of Nigeria.

States	Percentage Qualified Teachers	
	Primary School	All schools
Zamfara	20.45	65.85
Yobe	20.70	57.64
Taraba	29.67	61.33
Sokoto	19.19	67.88

Source: F.M.E (2006). Basic and Senior Secondary Education Statistics in Nigeria 2004&2005

### **Irregular Career Progression.**

Once employed in nay reliable organization, the career progression path is made available to the new employee for him/her to study and follow for personal development. Then the organization provides the enabling environment for the career progression. The teaching profession at this level is lacking in this respect: Many teachers

sponsor themselves in career development programmes such as sandwich courses; evening study programmes and even workshops with their meager salaries. Given this unpleasant situation, teaching at the level is seen as a “dead end” or unattractive.

Moreover, for many years, many teachers retired in most of the states have not been paid their pension and gratuity. Many of the retirees have died!

- **Inadequate provision of Teaching –Learning Materials**

There is acute shortage of teaching-learning materials in schools. Granted that a resourceful teacher should be able to improvise teaching-learning materials it should be noted that there is a limit to improvisation by the teacher. The absence of such materials has adversely affected the level of teachers’ performance.

- **Non- inclusive Nature of Curriculum Review**

A principle of curriculum review is that all those who are affected by a given curriculum should be involved, at least on representative basis, in its review. Much of curriculum review and innovation does not carry the teacher along. Edozie (2005), while treating “constraints to curricular innovations in developing countries points out that most curriculum planners hardly involve teachers in curriculum innovations. Accordingly “new learning experiences are quietly included in existing curricula and thrust upon unprepared teachers to implement “, he adds.

### **Government Reluctance to Address Teachers Genuine Grievances:**

Over the years, “Lip service”, and similar unhealthy expressions have characterized attempts by government to resolve teachers’ genuine grievances. Yet what the teacher is asking for is to be provided minimum comfort which should reflect in his/her pay package in the face of ever increasing inflation. A typical instance of government reluctance in this regard is the recently approved Teachers Salary Structure (TSS). Implementation of the TSS is now the hitch after approval. The manner of implementation seems to vary with states which only seem to implement certain percentages.

### **Way Forward for a New Teacher**

The old and present teacher has not satisfied the yearnings of the public in respect of service delivery in education having been faced with the identified challenges. Therefore there is need for a teacher development programme for the new teacher. The following are considered way forward.

#### **❖ National Education Sector Development Planning.**

Planning is a process whereby a direction is set forth and then the way of following that direction is specified (UNESCO, 2006). Nigeria needs a National Education Sector Plan (SESP) and State Education Sector Operational Plans (SESOPs) for the states. Among other things, the task of carrying out a National Educational Sector Development Planning would require business- type process re-engineering that should start with establishing a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) profile (Obanya, 2007) with reference to reliable baseline data.

### ❖ **Treating Schools as Learning Organizations.**

A learning organization is one that works to facilitate the life-long learning and personal development of all of its employees while continually transferring itself to respond to changing demands and needs (Griffin, 1997). The teacher should be constantly exposed to learning portals---gate ways or avenues of knowledge. These would include the provision of internet services, computers, newsletters, journals, training workshops, research works, et cetera to keep abreast with globalization.

### ❖ **Government Readiness and Preparedness to Address Teachers Genuine Grievances.**

Government needs to provide a legal instrument of readiness and preparedness to address at all times teachers genuine grievances. This can be referred to and tendered as evidence in the law court.

A stitch in time saves nine assuming ten is the number. It saves man-hour; it is reassuring as it gives hope and sense of belonging.

### ❖ **Constitutional Amendment for Uniform Teachers' Salaries.**

That education is in the Concurrent Legislative List has given rise to varying salary structures for teachers and conditions of service in the various states. To rectify the anomaly, the constitutional provision in respect of this should be amended to provide for uniform teachers salaries across the states. This done, the comparison syndrome will no longer be a worrying situation for the teacher.

### ❖ **Involving Teachers in Curriculum Innovation**

Planning is involved in curriculum innovation. A popular principle of planning is that those who will be affected by any plan should be involved in it from inception to implementation. Curriculum innovation

can only be certified as serving the purpose when the teacher-technician who should understand the rudiments gets it well implemented and evaluated. This gives the teacher a sense of recognition in his profession which eventually earns him emotional stability.

#### ❖ **Revamping Facilities of Education**

For now the study of education compared to other disciplines such as the sciences and business areas is less attractive. There is therefore every need to conduct an elaborate empirical study with a view to restructuring, repositioning and revamping the faculties of education in universities, colleges of education, and other higher educational institutions where they exist. The empirical study envisaged should touch on the curriculum, sellable skill acquisition and job prospects, improved conditions of service, political will and the professional status of teaching on the whole among other variables.

#### ❖ **Adequate Provision of Teaching-Learning Materials.**

Let the teacher have materials to work with. Teaching –learning materials concretize learning and make it more enduring, facilitates skill and knowledge acquisition. Comparative Education Study and Adaptation Centre (CESAC) highlighted the production of actual curriculum materials as an indispensability---pupils texts, teachers guide, work books---emphasizing audio-visual aids to facilitate teaching and learning (Okeke, 1981).

#### **Summary and Conclusion**

The paper makes conceptual clarification of “basic education” and teacher development” to treat the audience to the required bias. A brief

historical antecedents of educational development which suggest the nature of teacher development is made: Education in Nigeria graduated from the level of traditional pre-colonial era when every adult was regarded as a teacher passing through voluntary agency control era when the teacher volunteered to work as guided by missionaries; then policing of the teacher started with the era of dual control of education when government started partnering with voluntaries agencies. A some what uniform standard in education was ushered in by the era of stake Take-over and national universal primary education up to the present era of globalization. To be able to address the way forward management challenges in the system were identified among other things as disinclination for teacher education; playing bad politics with teacher recruitment and deployment; unqualified teachers still teaching; irregular career progression, inadequate provision of teaching-learning materials, non inclusive nature of curriculum review and government reluctance to address teachers genuine issues. As way forward the following suggestions are recommended : National education sector development planning: treating schools as learning organizations: government readiness to address teachers grievances; constitutional amendment for uniform teachers salaries; involving teachers in curriculum innovation; revamping facilities of education and adequate provision of teaching – learning materials. It is therefore concluded, that if these recommendations are judiciously implemented a good road map would have been charted for a new teacher.

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