

## TRANSFORMATION OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

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### **Abstract**

Teacher education is design to equip prospective teachers with relevant and desirable knowledge, skills and attitudes required to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness in the classrooms and schools for optimal level of productivity for the attainment of educational goals and objectives. Regrettably, teacher education over the years has been too conservative in nature with obsolete curriculum incapable of meeting the yearnings and aspirations of society, which ought to have contributed meaningfully towards economic growth and national development. The government lackluster approach in these seeming maladies hindering the success of teacher education as her non-challant attitude towards the programme is not encouraging or motivating thereby rendering the profession unattractive to prospective and existing teachers. This paper therefore, focuses on the ways by which teacher education can be revolutionize, and transformed by replacing the conservative values with more refined values that would enhanced better teacher performance for increase productivity at all levels of the education system. Therefore, it is recommended that government should improve its support to teacher education programmes with increased funding to the education system. Government should enforce the motivation of teachers through increase incentives and regular in-service training for enhanced productivity. The curriculum for teachers' education should be totally reviewed in it content with the aim of addressing issues affecting it in this contemporary Nigeria. Institutions running teacher education should enforce strict monitoring and supervision of the programme to ensure compliance to it objectives. Qualifications into the programmes should be stringent in nature as to increase its value and respect among other professions. These recommendations if implemented would go a long way in the transformation of teacher education in contemporary Nigeria.

**Key Words: Transformation, Teacher, Education, Teacher Education**

### **Introduction**

Education is the catalyst for individual, economic and national growth and development. It is also the prerequisite for the provision of quality workforce development, creation of wealth, pathway to success in life and service to humanity. In affirming the role of education in human development, Pulley (2010) in Okoli, Ogbondah and Ekpefa-Abdullahi (2015) states that, “education should transform the child into functional adult”. To be functional according to him is that:

*the individual should be given the opportunity to develop his latent potentials to the fullest capabilities to enable him perform those functions (for his benefits and that of his society) for which he is naturally endowed*

*and fitted in times of peace and war. In essence, education should enable the individual to perform to the best of his capabilities in the competitive world of survival of the fittest (p. 129).*

These noble expectations of education can only be guaranteed with the availability of quality and dedicated teachers committed to the teaching profession. The role of a teacher in the contemporary society is enormous and unquantifiable. The teacher must be adequately prepared in order to achieve the set national educational objectives. To this end, Giami, Oluwuo and Anyamele (2018) posited that for the attainment of school goals and educational objectives, the teacher must be intellectually promising, morally sound, psychologically or emotionally stable, qualified and passionately attached to the teaching profession. Teachers no doubt, are central to the success of the educational system. Therefore, it is imperative to affirm the saying that; “no nation can rise above the quality of its teachers”. Asiabaka and Emenalo (2011), described the teacher as:

*The human catalyst who intentionally influences the interactions among the teacher, the learner and the environment of the learner by restructuring the environment of the learner in such a way that the learner will acquire desired knowledge, skills and attitudes and meaningfully contribute to the development of humanity at an appropriate time (p. 76).*

The upshot of the above statement, depicts the fact that teachers are responsible for translating and actualizing educational policies and programmes into actions. In this wise, Nnachi (2008) asserted that the teacher is the brainbox of educational activities and his position and activities is inevitable in championing the attainment of educational goals and objectives. Sad enough, educational goals and objectives are hardly met due to the seeming shortcomings on the part of teachers these have prompted many to become morally bankrupt, debased and fraudulent as they commit and legalize crimes in the education system. This corroborates the facts that many teachers in the Nigeria education system hide under the guise of the profession to perpetrate ignoble acts such as lack of commitment to the profession, sexually harassing female students, demanding and collecting sorting from students, encouraging examination malpractices among others, which in turn breed half-baked graduates. This colludes with the fact that teachers not well and adequately trained, committed, inspired and motivated rendered the education system unattractive and meaningless. This emphatically gives credence to the call for quality teacher continuous education, as the absence of it, would rendered the education system ineffective and unable to train and harness the limited human and material resources for the growth and development of education in the contemporary Nigeria.

### **Concept of Teacher Education**

Teacher education at all levels of the educational system remains an agent of transformation for national growth and development. Teacher education is viewed as a process that provides sound and specialized education to persons who are willing to take up teaching as a profession and the management of educational institutions for the purpose of human development and producing workforce for the nation’s economy. Adewunyi and Ogunwuyi (2002) as cited in Okemakinde, Alabi and Adewuyi (2013), opined that teachers education is the provision of professional education and

specialized training within a specified period for the preparation of individuals who intends to develop and nurture the young ones into responsible and productive citizens. According to them, this informed the fact that teaching is an all-purpose profession that stimulates the development of mental, physical and emotional powers of students. Teacher education had been describes as the livewire of effective service delivery for any one that has gone through teacher education programmes and as such, it demands a continuous pre-service and in-service training. In other words, pre-service and in-service training programmes in teacher's education is a spring board for boosting the general economy of a state because investment in teacher education produces direct results in the form of required human capital and manpower development (Nwakougha, 2014).

Going further, Nakpodia and Urien (2011) in Okoli, Ogbondah and Ekpefa-Abdullahi (2015), viewed teacher education as the process that nurture prospective teachers and update their knowledge and skills in a more consistent, frequent and continuous professional development. These programmes intended to impart new knowledge and skills to would make the teachers remain relevant in the changing society, environment and technological era. Regrettably, the prevailing crises in Nigerian education system and society as typified by unemployment, poverty, corruption, crime, indiscipline and non-utilization of capacities in all facets of human life and national development is linked to the abysmal neglect of teacher education and the pitiable state of teachers' condition of service in the country. All these conflictual relationships precipitated poverty - induced hardship across all segments of the Nigerian community. What structurally should become more important at this critical moment of our decaying educational system in achieving the nation's quest for self-reliance society, imbued with vibrant economy and productive citizenry, is to put in place a viable and comprehensive teacher education program (Okemakinde, Alabi and Adewuyi 2013 cited in Akpereke, Obi, Ofem and Alilo, 2016).

This trend no doubt is non-negotiable, since it is under the tutelage of a quality teacher that every other profession namely; doctors, lawyers, nurses, engineers, architects, just to mention a few, are trained to fill the manpower requirement for a growing and sustainable economy for the nation's sustainable development.

The importance of teacher education as the only process through which a teacher having undergone such programme can become proficient and efficient in imparting desirable skills, knowledge and attitude in the students or learners for the achievement of set educational goals and objectives cannot over-emphasized. For this reason, teacher education should top government agenda to enable her to address and minimize societal vices and reduce the level of unemployment that had become the norms in contemporary Nigeria. Unfortunately, the programme over the years has failed in achieving its objectives due to lack of government desire to address the perceived challenges that ought to be handle through qualitative teacher education.

### **The Goals of Teacher Education Programmes**

In the bid to improve on the quality of the nation's education system, the Federal government of Nigeria (2008) outlines the goals and objectives of teacher education as follows:

- 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 social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals.
- d). To provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to changing situations, and
- e). To enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession (p. 39).

Not minding the good intentions of government concerning teacher education, Paulley (2005) cited in Ekpefa – Abdullahi (2011) stated emphatically that:

*the success or otherwise of any educational programme (or system) in any country towards the attainment of the above goal to a large extent lies in the effective planning and commitment on the part of the political leadership towards such programme (or educational system). As it is this that will determine the degree of success or otherwise of the programme at the implementation stage. It is for the above reason therefore, that there is no gainsaying in the fact that the level of commitment and innovation by the political leadership of a country is very crucial in the actualization of national set objectives for both the citizenry and the nation at large (p. 2).*

Ololube (2012) cited in Okoli, Ogbondah and Ekpefa-Abdullahi (2015), observed that not all teacher education and training programmes are current in nature and of high quality standard. In other words, some teacher's education programmes are not meeting the yearnings and aspirations of contemporary Nigeria. In congruence, Nwakougha and Unwana-Obong (2011) postulated that:

*Teacher education is excessively conservative and tied to the apron of yesterday's skills and practices, which are not capable of launching the present learners into the orbit where they can respond to the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and make meaningful contributions to national development (p. 30).*

Experiences have shown that the activities of teachers in our classrooms negate these noble objectives of teacher education. Several factors may be responsible for this unpleasant situation, where teachers are not motivated, exhibits poor commitment to the profession, low creativity, inefficiency and lack of proficiency in instructional delivery among others. These seeming attitudes being display by teachers are affecting their level of productivity and performance of students in their academic.

### **The Needs for Quality Teacher Education in Contemporary Nigeria**

The socio-economic, technological, political and sundry changes in society have complicated the roles of teachers in the learning environment and the society, as well as those of teacher educators (Cochram- Smith, 2004). The recent explosion in students enrolment in the educational institutions have resulted to large class size with the minimum of 60-80 students per class in many of our

primary, secondary and tertiary institutions of learning had made it near impossible to achieve effective teaching and learning. The uncondusive learning environment, poor teacher communication skills, lack of in-depth of knowledge of subject taught, not too cordial and friendly relationship existing between the teachers and students, poor knowledge of information communication technology (ICT), amongst others, have given rise for the urgent call and clamour from stakeholders on the need to improve the quality teachers in the country. It is in response to this; that the following types of knowledge, skills, dispositions and values are to be possess and mastered by effective teachers:

1. **General Pedagogical Knowledge:** Pedagogy has to do with method of teaching. This knowledge should include knowledge of the learning environments, instructional methodologies and strategies, classroom management and knowledge of learners.
2. **Subject Matter Knowledge:** Teachers in Nigeria particularly at the primary level teach all subject in the curriculum, as such learners never benefit maximally from the subjects where the teachers are weak. The teacher should be a master of the subjects he/she teaches.
3. **Knowledge of the Learners:** Teacher should know the learner's context and a disposition to find out more about the learners, their families and backgrounds.
4. **Knowledge of how to bridge theory and practice:** Teachers should maintain the balance between theory and practice.
5. **External evaluation of learning:** Teachers should be able to prepare the learners for external examination, guaranteeing success and discouraging examination malpractice due to ill-preparation.
6. **Multicultural perspective:** Teachers should have knowledge, skills and disposition to work with children from diverse backgrounds.
7. **Technology application:** Teachers should have knowledge and skills on how to employ technology in the classroom learning activities. There is the need to change with the fast changing world. In developed countries, technology is advancing by the day. Information and communication technology (ICT) now drive every facets of human endeavour. For Nigeria to key in to the world fast lane of development, then teacher education must change to produce the quality of teachers who would in turn produce the right calibre of workforce for the nation's scientific and technological advancements (Abraham, 2010).

### **Factors Militating Against Teacher Education in Contemporary Nigeria.**

Literatures are abound to the many factors inhibiting teacher education in contemporary Nigeria which include problem of quality assurance, insufficient funding, and lack of personnel, poor facilities, lack of commitment by government, poor supervision, faulty selection process and poor teacher education curriculum.

#### **1. Problem of Quality Assurance:**

Quality is one problem militating against teacher education in Nigeria today. The situation become more precarious in Nigeria where the quality assurance of teacher education are being supervise by multiplicity of agencies. For instance, the institutes and faculties of education of Universities are supervise by the National Universities Commission (NUC), the colleges of

education are supervised by National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) while the school of education in polytechnics is regulated by National Board for Technical Education (NBTE). The issue of discrepancies in teacher's professional development is glaring.

2. **Insufficient Funding:** Insufficient funding is another major problem of running teacher education programmes. There is Lack of money to provide sufficient infrastructure, teaching materials pay salaries, for maintenance, etc.
3. **Lack of Personnel:** At all levels of education in Nigeria, there are no competent teachers in sufficient number. This is a major setback to teacher education in Nigeria.
4. **Poor Facilities:** There is dearth of infrastructure in teacher education in Nigeria. Facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, furniture and equipment, conveniences, teaching and learning materials are not sufficient.
5. **Lack of Commitment by Government:** This is another major issue affecting teacher professional development in Nigeria despite the provision in the National Policy on Education (2008) wherein the government pledged to lay more emphasis on teacher education and development as priority agenda in Nigeria.
6. **Poor supervision:** This is a crucial area within the school system where both the content method and mode of delivery and the personality of both the students and the teachers are being examine to ensure their adequacy. This is moribund in Nigeria. The supervisors stay tight in their offices and seldom visit schools. The checks and balances expected from supervisions are not achieve.
7. **Faulty selection process:** It is a common knowledge that in Nigerian universities, most applicants choose to study education as a last resort when they cannot meet up with the requirement for their courses of first and second choices. Admission seekers prefer courses such as medicine, law, engineering, nursing and even single honours in the sciences, arts or social sciences to education. This practice has made education "a dumping ground" where candidates who lack both the aptitude and attitude to become teachers (molders of lives) are dumped. This practice spells doom for the future of the country-socially, economically and politically.
8. **Poor teacher education curriculum:** One of the critical issues in teacher education is the curriculum for initial teacher's education programmes. In fact, the report of the Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN) (2010) gave a rundown of the issues as follows:
  - a. The teachers' training curriculum in the country does not fully acknowledge the new age environment in school and classrooms in terms of constructivist learning, learner-centred instruction and integrating technology into the processes of teaching and learning.
  - b. There is gap between the curriculum taught to teacher trainees and the reality that exists in schools. Such realities include dilapidated school buildings, lack of instructional materials, including textbooks and writing materials for the pupils, and sometime overcrowded classes.
  - c. The emphasis on content delivery, examination and certification over real learning are also a serious threat to quality. The current system of teaching and evaluation does not allow creativity, innovation and research, obtaining educational qualifications to any level relies heavily and primarily on corrupt practices,(which include examination malpractices, sexual



- harassment by some lecturers on students and by students on lecturers while some rely on monetary inducement to make their way through their programmes)
- d. Only 10% of enrolment in the colleges of education offers primary education studies, while the remaining 90% offers single or double major courses. This leaves a dearth of qualified teachers at the primary school level.
  - e. There is also the quantity and quality of input for teacher training programmes. Most youths in Nigeria are not motivated to teach, and often time see teaching as a last resort. That is after failing to secure admission into lucrative courses such as law, medicine, engineering and banking since the admission cutoff marks for these courses are generally high and that for teacher education low, there is the perception that individuals who opt for teaching are not academically sound.
  - f. Poor preparation and poor recruitment of lecturers, results in a lack of professional development opportunities for lecturers. In addition, in-service training for basic education teachers consists primarily of programmes to provide upgrading or certification through distant “sandwich” courses.
  - g. The teaching force in Nigeria is heterogeneous.

All these have contributed to the fallen standard of education in the country in no small ways. There is therefore the need to make sure that only teachers with the minimum of the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) qualification are employ to teach at whatever level of education in Nigeria. The teaching profession has to borrow leaf from what is obtainable in other professions like law, engineering, accountancy and medicine where no one “jumps” into these professions without acquiring the minimum basic professional requirements stipulated by the professions (p. 132).

### **Transforming Teacher Education in Contemporary Nigeria**

The seeming unproductiveness of teachers in recent times, calls for a more radical approach in the transforming of teacher education. This should be in a manner where teachers are given special attention and developed more professionally, constant quality in-service training, information and communication technology (ICT), training, conferences, seminars and workshops to place them on same page with the changes going on globally. Transformation in teacher education should be able to guarantee a more refine values that would enhance better performance and increased productivity for the attainment set educational goals and objectives for national development.

Teachers’ effectiveness in service delivery is a product of transformation made possible when efforts are channel toward repackaging and restructuring the content of teacher education programmes. Motivation of teachers with improved incentives, provision of adequate facilities and infrastructure, review of curriculum, conducive environment among others, meeting the existing societal challenges, rapid technological advancement and other contemporaries issues of the twenty-one century and beyond (Oyido, 2014).

To ameliorate the various issues militating against teacher education, Okoli, Ogbonda and Ekpefa-Abdullahi (2015), recommend the following steps:

- (1) There is need for an upward review of the budgetary allocation to teacher education.

- (2) There is need for adequate teachers at all levels, both in quality and quantity.
- (3) The various institutions saddled with the development of a virile teacher education programmes should search and select the best brains not dropouts.
- (4) The post-graduate diploma in education (PGDE) and the Nigeria Certificate in education (NCE) run by the National Teachers institute should be overhauled A commission or agency specifically for teachers should be established.
- (5) The governments at all levels should provide adequate facilities and infrastructure for teacher education to meet the requirements of global best practices.
- (6) The departments of supervision in both federal and states ministries of education should rise up to their responsibilities to enhance quality assurance.
- (7) Government should refocus and redouble her commitment towards the revitalization of teacher education programmes in Nigeria.
- (8) Development of strategy for ICT in the training of teachers should be in place and review regularly. The effective participation of all and sundry in the education sector is highly recommended. Because, education is right of all and should therefore be the responsibility of all.

On their part, Akpereka, Obi, Ofem and Alilo (2016) suggest other measures that would transform teacher education in the contemporary time as:

1. Empowerment of a professional body or association to regulate the entry into the teaching occupation as well as observance of ethical conduct of the members.
2. Therefore should be proper check and balances of regular and effective education supervision and control.
3. Practicing teachers should be actively involved in policy formulation and as well as implementation, and
4. There should be regular assessment of teacher performance with a view to identifying teacher's needs and shortcomings for additional training and development.

### **Conclusion**

Teacher education as earlier stated is a programme intended to make prospective and existing teachers performed more efficiently and effectively in the classroom during instruction for students' optimal academic outcome. Teacher education over the years have failed to achieve its stated goals and objectives as enshrined in the National Policy on Education (2008), thereby making the profession unattractive for existing and prospective teachers. Transformation of teacher education calls for a holistic review and strengthening of the programmes, increase incentive of teachers and regular in-service training in manner that it would be capable of addressing issues affecting teacher education in contemporary Nigeria.

### **Suggestions**

Therefore, to achieve transformation of teacher education in contemporary Nigeria, the following recommendations made are:



- 1). Government should improve its support to teacher education programmes with increase funding to the education industry.
- 2). Government should enforce the motivation of teachers through increase incentives and regular in-service training for enhance productivity.
- 3) The curriculum for teacher education should be revisited and reviewed in every five (5) years with the aim of addressing issues affecting its success.
- 4). Institutions running teacher education programmes should enforce strict monitoring and supervision to ensure compliance to its objectives.
- 5). Qualifications into the programmes should be stringent in nature. So as to increase its value and respect among other professions.

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