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# TEACHER EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL TRANSFORMATION: A FOCUS ON TERTIARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA.

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By

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## **Abstract.**

*Teacher education at all levels of the educational industry and the tertiary education in particular remains an agent of transformation for national growth and development. Education generally affords man an all-round development and it enables him to better his lot and that of the society. This study examines the issue of the transformation of higher education system towards enhanced quality education in Nigeria. This more or less entails a shift to a more pragmatic approach that encourages the involvement of all educational stakeholders in the drive towards ensuring transformation and qualitative education in Nigeria. The paper therefore, examined the concept of teacher education and its attendant challenges, concept of higher education in Nigeria, its state and quality, impact, institutional components of quality assurance in education and challenges of quality assurance in higher education in Nigeria. The role of educators in transformative learning as well as transformative learning and quality education are indeed discussed. It concludes with some useful recommendations.*

Teacher education, without any gainsaying, remains the only agent of transformation for national growth and development. This however, provides the essence of education at the various levels. Okemakinde, Alabi and Adewuyi (2013) noted that every society requires human and material resources to improve its social organization, preserve the culture, enhance economic development and reform the political structures. They added that education is often seen as a prerequisite for quality man power development and creation of wealth, a sure path to success in life and service to humanity. As such, teachers have important roles to play to adequately prepare the young for their role in the society in order to achieve the set national objectives. Indeed, teachers influence is always felt in every aspect of the society. All other professionals and workers within the society have one time or the other passed through the tutelage of a teacher and thus whatever they now become, is a direct outcome of what teachers have passed on to them. The adage that no nation ever rises above the quality of its teachers illustrate the pivotal position which teachers occupy in the society. Thus, schools should always provide a solid training in basic skills with educational arrangements that are friendly, democratic and communal. This requires a supportive teacher education program that can render requisite training to the prospective teachers.

### **Concept of Teachers Education**

Teacher's education at all levels of the educational industry and the tertiary education in particular remains an agent of transformation for national growth and development. Teachers education affords teacher-to-be an all-round development and it enables him to better his lot and society.

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. They said that this is informed by the fact that teaching is an all-purpose profession which stimulates the development of mental, physical and emotional powers of students. Notwithstanding, such educated citizens will be sensitive and equipped with peaceful co-existence, environmental management and democratic processes.

It must be noted that the heartbeat of manpower development and training for prudent use and sustenance of resources in nation building is teacher education. Teacher education, being inextricably linked with general education and social goals, is constantly caught up in the series of dilemmas derivable from educational expansion and social change. The prevailing crises in Nigerian education and society as typified by unemployment, poverty, corruption, crime, indiscipline and non-utilization of capacities in all facets of human life and national development could be ascribed to the neglect of teacher's education and the pitiable plight of the teachers. All these conflictual relationships precipitated poverty -induced hardship across all segments of the Nigerian community. What structurally becomes important in achieving the nation's quest for self-reliance society, imbued with vibrant economy and productive citizenry, is to put in

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place a comprehensive teacher education program (Aderwuyi 2012) in (Okemakinde, Alabi and Adewuyi 2013).

The importance of education as a weapon against ignorance, diseases and poverty demands coherent information processing systems anchored on manipulative skills which helps to coordinate and transform conceptual ideas, emotions and feelings into life supporting operations beyond the school setting.

Oyekan (2006) in Okemakinde, Alabi and Adewuyi (2013) noted that the purpose of teachers education is to produce well-qualified professional teachers that can adjust to the changing needs of the student and developmental prospect of the modern society. In specific terms, the goals of teacher's education as enshrined in the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) in the National Policy on Education are to:

- Produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all level of our education system.
- Encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers.
- Help teachers to fit into the social life of the community and society at large and to enhance their commitment to national goals.
- Provide teachers with the 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, and
- Enhance teacher's commitment to the teaching profession.

### **Challenges of Teachers Education in Nigeria**

The teacher education is however bedeviled with some challenges. Adewuyi (2012) in Okemakinde, Alabi and Adewuyi (2013) opined that the educational system can be viewed as a system comprising various sub-systems (the primary level, the secondary level and the tertiary level). There is a functional relationship among the sub-systems, such that a defect in one sub-system would automatically affect the other sub-system. Recent observations in Nigeria educational system clearly attest to this, as there has been so much concern in recent times about the standard of education in Nigeria. Concerns have also been expressed about the quality of the graduates produced by the tertiary institutions in the country. It has been noted that there has been a decline in the quality of candidates admitted into the tertiary institutions as a result of the combination of poor quality output from the secondary level (also believed to be inherited from the primary level). The problem of examination malpractice which makes it possible for undeserving candidates to score high marks and secure admission into tertiary institutions is another problem leading to poor quality output from the tertiary institutions. Many of the undeserving candidates are not adequately prepared for higher education and are not quite amenable to learning.

Ibidapo, 20007 in Okemakinde et al (2013) in addition to the above remarked that the inference from this is that effective operation of the educational system requires that quality teachers be available in sufficient quantity at all levels of the educational system in order to meet the needs of the nation. The availability of quality teachers at

lower levels will help to enhance the quality of inputs into the higher levels and consequently impact positively on the outputs of the higher levels.

According to Olaniyan and Okemakinde (2008) in Okemakinde et al (2013), teacher education in Nigeria is confronted with myriad of problems which could be categorized into access to teacher education, quality of training and instruction and cost of education.

### **Concept and History of Higher Education in Nigeria**

Okemakinde (2014) highlighted that higher education encompasses all organized learning activities at the tertiary level. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) as stipulated in the National Policy on Education defines tertiary education to include the universities, polytechnics, monotechnics and colleges of education. The goals of tertiary education, as captured in the National Policy on Education (2004), are:

- to contribute to national development through high-level relevant manpower training ;
- To develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of society
- To develop the intellectual capability to understand and appreciate their local and external environments;
- To acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society;
- To promote and encourage scholarship and community services;
- To forge and cement national unity; and
- To promote national and international understanding and institutions.

According to Okemakinde (2010), the first institution for higher education in Nigeria was Yaba Higher College, established in 1934. This became the nucleus of the first university college, established in Ibadan in 1948. The attainment of political independence in 1960 was accompanied by expansion in the education sector in general, and in higher education in particular. There was an improved geo-political spread of universities: University of Nsukka (1960) Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria , University of Lagos and the University of Ife, all in 1962, and much later, the University of Benin (1970). These institutions are now collectively known as first generation universities. In 1975, with the advent of the oil boom and the geo-political restructuring of Nigeria into twelve states, there were strident agitation from Nigerians for more universities in the newly created states. The Federal government acceded to this demand by establishing seven additional universities at Jos, Maiduguri , Sokoto, Ilorin, Calabar, and Port Harcourt, which became the second –generation universities.

Polytechnics and monotechnics were established in Nigeria during the colonial era, long before the emergence of university for higher level technical man power in a variety of technical and professional disciplines. Thus, Yaba Higher College, School of Surveying, Veterinary Medicine, Forestry and Agriculture in various parts of the country were established for this purpose. The early 1950s saw the establishment of the Nigeria College of Arts; Science and Technology, which were later absorbed by three of the first generation universities: Ife, Zaria and Nsukka. The early years of independence

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witnessed the creation of College of Technology in Lagos and in the three regions that existed at that time: Ibadan (Western region), Enugu (Eastern region) and Kaduna (Northern region). As more regions and states were created, new polytechnics (owned by state governments) also emerged.

The Federal Government, in its effort to ensure a judicious geographical distribution of facilities for technological education also established federal polytechnics in various parts of the country. These institutions contributed immensely to meeting the social demands for higher education up till the middle of the 1990. Today, questions are being raised as to their appropriateness and relevance in the contemporary scheme of things, as there has been disenchantment among young people with the nature of polytechnic education in Nigeria.

The first Advanced Teacher's Colleges (for producing highly qualified non-graduate teachers; mainly for Secondary Schools) were established in the wake of independence in the early 1960s-Zaria (Northern region), Owerri (Eastern region), Ibadan (Western region) and Abraka (Mid-west region). The creation of more states in the federation and the increasing demand for teachers, (due to educational expansion in the country), led to the establishment of more institutions, now re-named colleges of education, in every part of the country. Most of the institutions are either federally owned or state government-owned, but there has been a rapid increase in private colleges of education in recent years. Like polytechnics, the popularity of colleges of education is steadily waning, as they are no longer anybody's first choice. For this reason, government just has to take a close look at their original 'raison detre' and work out a re-orientation process for them. Presently, in Nigeria, all states have either a state higher institution or a federal one located there (Okemakinde, 2010) (in Okemakinde, 2014).

### **State and Quality of Higher Education in Nigeria.**

Okemakinde (2014) highlighted that educational quality can be defined in terms of the inputs, process and outputs. If a society is committed to providing high quality educational experiences and consequences for every person, the resources (human and financial) need to be mobilized in this direction. Leaning support to Ijaiya (2001) in Okemakinde (2014), the worth of any educational system as an investment lies in its capability to continuously serve its stakeholders better and remain relevant. The quality is dependent upon vision of the leaders for education at the community, the state and the nation at large. That vision must see education as a movement which encompasses honest and transparent administration, adequate resources delivered to the majority at the local level, teacher training which recognizes and supports the professional development of teachers in pre-service and for lifelong learning, thereafter ensuring a space with adequate materials and new technologies.

Responsiveness in terms of tertiary education teaching and learning has two dimension: curricula and pedagogy, that is, content and method. Clark (2001) in Okemakinde (2014) suggested that tertiary institutions need to change their curricula every two or three years in order to ensure that the content of their teaching reflects the rapidly advancing frontiers of knowledge. From the above standpoint of pedagogy,

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expanded access and higher participation rate mean that student population will become increasingly diverse in capacities, motivation and interest. At a global level, these changes are fueling a shift in pedagogical emphasis from staff teaching to student learning (Salmi, 2001) in Okemakinde (2014).

NUC (2002) in Okemakinde (2014) disclosed that in Nigeria, three pieces of evidence suggest the need for greater attention to innovation in both curricula and pedagogy. First, student success seems limited and dropout rates appear to be high. Although institutional statistics are notoriously unreliable and tertiary institutions do not seem to monitor their dropout rates within the federal university system. Its preliminary findings revealed that dropout rates were as high as 30%.

Dabalén, Oni and Adekola (2000) in Okemakinde (2014) went further to disclose that private and public employers of tertiary institution graduates, as well as the government itself, consider the quality of such graduates to be inadequate. A study of the labour market for graduates found that employers believe that tertiary institutions graduates are poorly trained and unproductive on the job, and shortcomings are particularly severe in oral and written communication, and in applied technical skills. Furtherance to the above, it was disclosed that tertiary institutions curricula lack quality (NUC, 2002) in (Okemakinde, 2014).

The factors responsible for the poor quality of tertiary institutions programmes (and graduates) appear to be both internal and external to the institutions. Internal factors include strikes, lack of employees' motivation and weak accountability for educational performance. External factors comprised teachers' inadequacy, corruption and inconsistent funding efforts by government and admissions based on a quota system rather than on merit (Oni, 2000) in (Okemakinde, 2014).

### **Impact of Functional Teacher Education on National Development.**

It is pertinent as a matter of necessity to flesh this work by looking at the impact of teacher education on national development. Emeh and Ogaboh (2010) cited in Okemakinde et al (2013) authoritatively declared that education remains the gateway to national development. Educational system does not succeed without a teacher, and thus the teacher is paramount in national development. National development involves the total transformation of society making humanity the focus of the development drive and seeking to develop man's potential in a total sense. It includes reduction of poverty, wealth creation, equitable distribution of wealth, ensuring nutrition and health, housing and ancillary services, social security and welfare.

The national development goals of Nigeria formed the foundations upon which the national policy on education is built. It was formed with the belief that education would serve as instrument for national transformation. Education in this regard is to foster the development of management to man the various sectors or institution of society. Education is meant to formulate ideas for national development and promote progression and a united Nigeria (Adewuyi, 2012) in (Okemakinde et al, 2013).

National development in the words of Egwu (2007) in Adeyera (2011) as cited in Okemakinde et al (2014), is the establishment of a viable and buoyant national

economy, the establishment of a just and egalitarian society; the enthronement of quality and social justice and the ending of a unified and integrated society where the different ethnics, religious and geo-political identities develop a collective sense of a nation in terms of unity, education, economic wellbeing and mass participation.

### **Institutional Components of Quality Assurance in Education.**

The institutionalization of quality assurance is firmly rooted on the agenda of higher education in many developed and developing countries around the world. The demand for greater accountability and efficiency in respect of public financing trends towards mass participation in the face of shrinking resources and greater stakeholder scrutiny of education and training processes and outcomes have led to the increasing implementation of formal quality assurance arrangements within the educational institutions and systems. A quality assurance system is intended to ensure that higher education is relevant and responsive to the needs of learners and other stakeholders within the context of the social, intellectual and economic requirements of societal development, (Okemakinde, 2014). The institutional framework could be guided according to Mulkeen (2006) in Okemakinde (2014), with the criteria specified below:

- Cultivate and maintain a culture of continuous performance improvement.
- Develop and validate well-evaluation reports.
- Develop reliable quality assurance performance indicators.
- Provide information for the stakeholders about the strengths and weaknesses of the institution.

### **Challenges of Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Nigeria.**

Okemakinde (2014) apparently noted that at different levels of the education system in Nigeria, poor quality is being experienced and this is exhibited in many ways. At the lower and middle levels of education, according to Adedeji and Bamidele (2003) in Okemakinde (2014), there are reported cases of increases in the rate of absenteeism and ineffective teaching in schools as well as inability of students (school outputs) to read and write, and to be capable of critical thinking and problem solving. It has also been documented that graduates of tertiary institutions are often not suitably qualified to fill available vacancies or to contribute effectively to national development (Okemakinde, 2014).

Olaniyan and okemakinde (2010) as cited in Okemakinde (2014) argued that it was wrong to attribute the low levels of literacy and school achievement to school related factors alone. This is because other factors such as the home, the society, the government and personal characteristics are also important in education development. For the education industry to carry out its functions of developing quality human capital, there is need for checks and balances by regular and effective educational supervision and control. Unfortunately, the inspectorate services both at the state and federal levels have not lived up to expectation. This is because the inspectorate service is plagued by a number of issues and challenges (Okugbe, 2010) in Okemakinde, 2014). Thus, increased budgetary allocations have been muted by the effect of rising enrollments.

Besides, insufficient funding has been compounded by inefficient management and an absence of strategic vision (NUC, 2002) in (Okemakinde, 2014).

### **Role of Teachers in Quality Assurance in Higher Education**

Teachers are the most important refined human species that care skillfully identify, develop and nurture the potentials of productive citizenry for meaningful creation of wealth, pleasure and services which will sustain quality life. Relevance of teachers to individual and national development is wholly dependent on their role in providing functional education and training to learners within the school setting. Efficient educated professionals and other enlightened artisans are the refined products of teachers from the education industry. Hence, teachers are the potent agents of human engineering and survival (ogunwuyi, 2010) in (Okemakinde, 2014).

Ogunwuyi (2010) in Okemakinde (2014) believes that the whole conduct, manner, attitude, action and personality of practicing teachers should gloriously radiate exemplary academic excellence and loving-kindness with sympathetic understanding of learners needs. Government should involve the practicing teachers in education policy formulation and in the implementation of development objectives.

### **Transformative Learning and Quality Education**

Transformative learning is the expansion of consciousness through the transformation of basic workwide and specific capacities of the self. It is facilitated through consciously directed processes such as appreciatively accessing and receiving the symbolic contents of the unconscious and critically analyzing the underlying premises, (Cranton, 2006) in (Okemakinde, 2014). Mezirow (1997) in Okemakinde (2014) opines that transformative learning is learning to purposively question one's own assumptions, beliefs, feelings and perspectives in order to grow or mature personally and intellectually.

Transformative learning does not happen by itself, it takes place when learners face a radically different and incongruent situation or transformation that cannot be assimilated into their meaning perspective.

### **Role of Educators in Transformative Learning**

In the words of Cranton & King (2003), as cited in Okemakinde (2014), in order to foster transformative learning, the educator's role is to assist learners in becoming aware and critical of assumptions. This includes their own assumptions that lead to their interpretations, beliefs, habits of mind or points of view as well as the assumptions of others.

Educators need to provide learners with opportunities to effectively participate in the discourse. Furthermore, the role of educators, in the words of O'Sullivan (2003) in Okemakinde (2014), is to set objectives that include autonomous thinking. He added that it is the role of the educator to promote discovery learning through the implementation of classroom methods such as learning contracts, group projects, role play, case studies and simulations.



Schank (2008) in Okemakinde has argued that intrinsic motivation is the simple and most important contributor to student learning. Therefore, teacher's job should increasingly be to enhance and leverage the learner's motivation by manipulating the environment, by placing desirable and achievable goals just out of reach, create the ideal conditions for learning, provide appropriate and timely scaffolding during the learning process.

### **Conclusion**

Teacher education as earlier stated remained the gateway to both personal and national growth and development. The pivotal role of a teacher in all level of educational system cannot be over-emphasized. It is through education that vibrant ideas are formulated for national development is well as promoting progression and unity.

### **Recommendations**

- 1 Empowerment of a professional body or association to regulate entry into the teaching occupation as well as observance of ethical conduct of the members.
- 2 There is need for checks and balances by regular and effective education supervision and control.
- 3 Government should actively involve practicing teachers in the policy formulation as well as implementation.
- 4 There should be assessment of teacher performance with a view to identifying teachers' needs for additional training and development.

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