
Teacher Education towards the Attainment of Full Professionalization of Teaching – Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Nigeria

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Abstract

Teacher Education as an autonomous area of study dates back to over 2000 years which is basically related to every phase of development in Nigeria. Education is the key to sustainable human growth development and productivity globally. Teachers are needed in all levels of education with its many facets needed to act as a speedy vehicle in conveying or achieving and carrying out the responsibilities bestowed upon them. Education is not determined by what politicians promise and what policy makers develop. It is not determined by what educational philosophers speculate about on what educational theorists propound. It is largely dependent on what the teacher does, and largely on what learners are able to take from teaching-learning situation, and more importantly, the extent to which what they take away is able to make a positive influence on their lives. This paper therefore looked at the concepts of teacher education, the historical development of teacher education, goals of teacher education in the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It later proceeded to assess some peculiar hindrances to MDGs implementation, the concept of professional teacher, hindrances to full professionalization (Teacher Education) of teaching in Nigeria, and finally looked at some proposals for reforms or recommendations were made towards enhancing the capacity of teachers as an important agent for national growth, development, and productivity.

Teacher education as an autonomous area of study dates back to over 2000 years when Herbert (1776-1841) trained teachers at university seminars. It was within this period that autonomous teacher education institutions came into being from Europe and spread to developing countries like Nigeria (Tedjere, 2007).

History of educational reforms has shown that for any educational innovation to succeed, they require the close collaboration of the teachers involved. Researchers have equally revealed that innovations have failed when teachers input are not incorporated, not actively involved or seen to be not too relevant in such innovations (Adeyemo, 2008 and Oghiagbephan, 2010).

Teacher's education is basically related to every phase of development in Nigeria. One is faced with the ever-recurring problem of trained manpower needs wherever one turns to, whether social, political or economic sphere of activities. Teachers are needed for the nursery schools, primary (basic) and secondary schools, technical and vocational education, teachers colleges, university education and adult education with its many facets-literacy campaign, continuing education, in-service and pre-service training, training on the job, training within industry as well as general education personal satisfaction. Teacher education is therefore needed to act as a speedy vehicle in conveying or achieving and carrying out the responsibilities of the teacher (Tedjere, 2007). Unqualified teachers were employed because of shortage of qualified teachers. These unqualified teachers known as auxiliary teachers or cheaters remained in our school system for a long time before government saw the need for teachers to be trained. This led to the establishment of more colleges of education in various parts of the country in 1999.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted by all the government of the countries of the world as a blue-print for building a better global order in the 21st century. An eight (8) point agenda of United Nation Organisation (UNO) was stipulated for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as:

- a. Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger
- b. Achievement of universal primary education
- c. Improvement in material health
- d. Promotion of gender equality and women empowerment.
- e. Reduction in child mortality
- f. Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- g. Ensuring environmental sustainability
- h. Developing a global partnership for development. (Okposio, 2009:16)

Therefore, for successful achievement of MDGs in teacher education, it is essential that the organized body of teachers participate in the decision making process

as well as in the design, implementation and evaluation of programmes relating to this innovations. The relationship between education and overall national development is best considered as symbiotic. Quality education engenders national development while in turn development brings about quality education (Lawal, 2005). This explains why the education systems in the developed nations tend to be more functional, virile and efficient than those in the developing world. This now also explains the various circle of under development and poverty in the third world countries (Lawal, 2005).

The Federal Government of Nigeria (2004) has considered education to be an instrument per excellence for effective national development. It is also resolved (National Policy of Education 2004, Article 70) that teacher education shall continue to be given major follows attention in all educational planning and development, since no education system may rise above the quality of its teachers.

Development and education, including teacher education, are products of certain social system especially the economic and political systems. Teachers' education can only contribute to global development, when appropriate economic, political, scientific, technology and management structures are put in place.

The Concept of Teacher Education

Teacher education in the words of UNESCO (1992), is the education of those persons who are directly responsible for the education of pupils or students. Teacher education is the acquisition of practical and applied skills in the teaching profession, which will enable the teacher to discharge his teaching in the school system.

Fafunwa (1969) as quoted by Tedjere (2007) defined teacher education as trained teachers to form habits that will not only make them capable teachers in the classroom but also help them to shoulder responsibilities, show initiative, assist those in need and live lives which offer good examples to others. It is also referred to as institutionalized educational procedure that is aimed at the purposeful organized preparation of further education of teachers who are engaged directly or indirectly in education activity as their life work. Teacher education is essentially the training and or production of who would be teachers which encompass production of pre-primary, primary and post primary school teachers (Nuran as quoted by Gbadamosi, 2005).

Okunjagu (1987), cited in Tedjere (2007) defined teacher education as a social scientific research applied to educational problems i.e. the research activities that are focused on to solution of educational problems such as in the area of instructing and planning curriculum and administrative lapses. This also applied that when all these lapses are fully identified, research helps to suggest solution. It could also be regarded as a systematic inquiry into the process of training and inducting teachers to acquire the

competencies, skills on how to learn and teach for the improvement in teacher quality as well as that of the quality of instruction and the outcome of such instruction in the subsequent research as action research which concerns behaviour of individuals in a school.

Oriafor (1999) cited in Tedjere (2007) .noted that teacher education is a formal inquiring involving diligent and often protracted investigation carried out in a series of logical steps, which may lead from simple observations and testing to general laws and theories. In a more elaborate manner, Okafor (1988) Okoli and Uneze (1996) all cited in Tedjere (2007) define teacher education as that form of education which is properly planned and systematically tailored and applied for the cultivation and preparation of those who teach or will teach particularly, but not exclusively in primary and post-primary levels of schooling.

Be that as it may, it could be seen as the process of training teachers for the improvement in teacher quality for best and enrichment of the education of teachers who will teach our children to become knowledgeable about themselves, their communities, their roles in the communities and how they can better play their roles in a more productive way.

Teacher education is a discipline and a branch of human knowledge, which deals with the problem of preparing the individual in the society to become useful member by discharging his teaching in the classroom. He must come at the top of every list of priorities concerned with education and training because the services of the teacher are indispensable to any nation. The teaching profession influences the lives of the nation's youth and the nation's future more than any other profession in the world (Tedjere, 2007).

In appreciation of the role of teachers in the education process, the National Policy on Education (2004) acknowledges that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers. Teacher education as a matter of urgency has been adequately planned as an integral part of national development; hence his planning must be based on manpower assessment. He must seek to assist the individual teacher to grow and develop as a person, provide him with necessary skills and professional abilities that will help him become an effective teacher and a community leader.

Historical Development of Teacher Education in Nigeria

The missionaries were the first to introduce Western Education to Nigeria. They were also the group that embarked upon the first formal teacher education programme in the country. The first teacher training college, then called the Training Institution was established in Abeokuta in 1859 in the western part of the country by the Church

Missionary Society (CMS). Two other early teacher training institutions founded in the West were the Baptist Training College at Ogbomoso, established by the Baptist Mission in 1897 and the school for the training of catechists and teachers founded in Ibadan in 1905 by the Wesley Methodist Missionary Society. In 1892, the Presbyterian church of Scotland established the hope Waddel Training Institute at Calabar, and this was the first of its kind in the eastern part of the country. This training institute played a dual role of training young primary school leavers in the various trades and training teachers and preachers. The Nassarawa School established by the government in 1909 was the first teacher training college in the northern part of Nigeria. The curriculum of these early training institutes combined theology with teaching methods (Fafunwa, 1974 and Agholor, 2004 (Ed.) Whawo and Joe, 2004).

However, Adesina (2005) in Durosaro (2006) as cited by Adeyemo and Adesope (2008) pointed out that the history of teacher education in Nigeria dates back to the late 18th century during the Christian missionary era. At the period, the teacher was in fact the church catechists chosen and train by the priest. He might even be a pastor or ordained priest. Teacher education of the formal type was said to have started about 1896 with the establishment of St. Andrews College Oyo. It was specially established to trained teachers for the service of Church Missionary Society. The then colonial government showed lackadaisical attitude towards the education of the natives including teachers. Later, after realizing the importance of literacy to facilitate smooth communication activities, the colonial government later merely intervened in teacher education by regulating conditions of services for teachers' in-service and organizing evening classes and vocational courses for teachers. The early form of teacher education focused mainly on production of teacher who operated at primary level of education. Before independence, there were very few secondary schools in the country. The bulk of the secondary school teachers were expatriates and missionaries most of whom had no teacher education.

Shortly, after independence, there was a massive increase in enrolment due to greater competition in school establishment among missions. 'Demand for teachers also increase resulting in a mad rush'. At the primary school level, there were about ten (10) qualifications with which one could be employed to teach. These included: standard six, modem three school certificate, Grade III teachers certificate, Grade II teachers certificate, Grade II failed testimonial, Associateship Certificate in Education (ACE), Grade I teachers certificate, honorary Grade I teachers certificate and Nigeria certificate in Education (NCE).

While at the secondary and post- secondary levels, there were about eight (8) different qualifications that could earn one a teaching job. These include OND, NCE, HND, Bachelors Degree (without teacher Education PGDE, B.Ed), M.Ed. and Doctorate

Degree. During that era, teaching was not professionalized. Those who were employed then without education background were termed auxiliary teachers. It was an all comer's affair. The teacher education curriculum was geared toward primary school teacher education only. That was the practice in existence 1896 and 1970.

During the second republic (1979-1990) more Colleges of Education were founded, and today, there are well over forty-five (45) of such educational institutions in Nigeria. Of these, some have been converted into degree granting institutions and affiliated to universities within their area of location for the purpose of awarding degrees in education while at the same time they continue to award the Nigeria Certificate in Education e.g. College of Education Warn, is in affiliation with University of Port Harcourt, Delta State University, Abraka Winneba University of Education, Accra-Ghana all in College of Education, Warn.

The production of professional graduates' teachers for secondary schools in Nigeria takes one of two channels: the four-years B.Ed or B.A degree in education which draws the bulk of its intakes from among secondary schools graduates or the one-year PGDE programme for holders of non-education degree who wish to professionalise in the fields of education. One programme that is now in vogue in Nigerian universities is the long vacation programme, popularly called the Sandwich Programme while the PGDE is for two long vacation periods of eight weeks each, plus a period of three weeks of teaching practice in between the two long vacation periods; post NCE for a period of four vacation periods leading to the award of the B.Ed; or B.A or B.Sc. and M.Ed. degree in Education.

Another programme that is in vogue is the part-time or outreach programme being organized by some of the Nigerian universities in their satellite campus leading to the award of Bachelors and Masters Degrees in education (Agholor, 2004 (ed.) Whawo and Joe: 32-34).

However, the current reality is that, teacher education has much improved than it was before. The types of teachers needed in Nigeria have become clearly defined in the National Policy on Education (NPE) implementation committee blue print. It was prescribed that the types and qualifications of teacher required should be as follows:

1. Pre-primary Education-NCE qualifications.
2. Primary Education-NCE teachers and graduates teachers as heads in the nearest future.
3. Junior Secondary Schools-NCE and the Universities graduate.
4. Senior Secondary Schools: Universities graduates with professional qualification.

5. Technical Colleges Polytechnic and Colleges of Education- Universities graduates with postgraduate qualifications in their various disciplines together with professional qualifications, practical *and industrial exposure and* experience.
6. Universities-Universities - graduates with postgraduates' qualification together with professional qualification.

Goals of Teacher Education

As stated in the National Policy on Education (FGN, 2004), the goals of teacher educations are:

1. To provide the teacher with intellectual and professional background adequate for his assignment and adaptable to any changing situation in the life of his country.
2. To produce a highly motivated, conscientious and successful classroom teacher for all levels of our educational system.
3. It helps to produce knowledgeable, progressive and effective teachers who can inspire children to learn.
4. To help the prospective teacher to fit into the social life of his home, his immediate and non-immediate communities/environment.
5. It provides the teacher with skills and professional abilities to motivate children to learn and help him in acquiring the right type of understanding, concepts, values and attitude.
6. To encourage further the spirit of inquiring, creativity, nationalism and a sense of belonging.
7. It seeks to help the individual teacher to grow and develop as a person.
8. It aims at giving the teacher an equal opportunity to learn, and provide within his intellectual horizon selected functional experiences that will enhance his job as a teacher.

The goals of teacher education as stipulated in the National Policy on Education were indeed ambitious and brought high expectations for teachers and educational institutions. These hopes were dashed because the Federal Government was not able to implement these proposals. The conditions of service for teachers were very poor and they were relegated to the background for a very long time; to the extent that some undesirable landlords in Warri and its metropolis wrote "House(s) For Rent But Not For Teachers". Can you imagine such a relegation? Teachers became introverts because of the ugly situations in which they found themselves.

It is however, instructive to mention at this juncture that teachers lived under deplorable conditions for many years until late 1999 and early 2000 when the conditions of service for teachers started to improve; and recently teachers can now drive good cars, dress

well, afford good accommodations that befit their status and building houses of their own. (Oghiagbephan, 2010).

Peculiar Hindrances to MDGs Implementation

The potentials of teacher education and indeed of the whole educational system to radically bring about development relative to the MDGs have not been fully actualized in Nigeria. This has been due largely to lopsided, mono cultural oil-based economy that has produced an unhealthy political system. The peculiar of the challenge or hindrance have been characterized by ethnicity, cut throat rivalry for oil derived wealth leading to incessant coups, general political instability and capital flight, corruption, inconsistencies in policies formulations and implementation, and a host of others.

The poor example of the political leadership has led to the general collapse of institutional management as evident in such counter-productive behaviour as sharp practices, red tapism and other forms of corporate barrier and administrative Lukewarmness.

Moreover, there has been general erosion of the good old ethics of service and sacrifice and this has in turn produced widespread infrastructural decay. Other manifestations of institutional inefficiency include disruption and dislocation in the healthcare and power supply systems, perversion of law and justice, and bastardization of cultural valued, among others (Fitzroy, 2003 in Adeyemo and Adesope 2008).

Be this as it may, the writer examined the MDGs whatever their face value is and not in relation to their temporal frame or in terms of their economic or political ideological underpinnings. In so doing, the writer conveniently and concisely sum up as an attempt by both the developed and the developing nations to achieve an appreciable measure of maternal, intellectual and moral/spiritual well being for the diverse peoples of the world. Above all, an educated citizenry helps to ensure the sustainability of development in all sectors, including education itself.

Hindrances to Full Professionalization of Teaching in Nigeria

Teacher education in Nigeria today is be set by a number of hindrances or limitations for which it has been criticized. The fact that teacher education programmes exist in so many institutions of higher education does not necessarily represent a commitment to preparing excellent teachers for secondary schools on the part of the participating institutions. A close look at some of these institutions reveals that most of their teacher education programmes are a woeful tale of marginality representing mediocrity in training programmes, and they lack qualified staff and adequate facilities.

However, certain factors act as hindrances for full professionalization of teaching. These are:

1. **Federal Government Policy:** The Federal Government as a matter of policy accepted teaching as a profession but this has not been legally and publicly declared in Nigeria because of the public mentality that teaching does not require any special preparation.
2. Control of the teaching profession by teachers in Nigeria is another hindrance to full professionalization of teaching. Teachers have no say as to who should be employed into the teaching profession and who should be dismissed. Teachers are not responsible for certification of her members, discipline and training.
3. **Low Status:** Teaching failed to gain public recognition because of the low status of teachers. The low status of teachers is as a result of historical circumstances attributed to too many teachers that are generally younger than their professional counterpart. Low-calibre products of the secondary school level have always been selected for the colleges of education and universities without ensuring the necessary attitudinal and intellectual screening and sieving requiring of a noble and nurturing profession (Lawal, 2005).
4. Teaching became a dumping ground and specialists and non- specialists move in and out of it freely with little or no control.
5. There is no period of internship for newly trained teachers during which period they can benefit from the mentoring of more knowledge and experience colleagues. Consequent upon this, the period for training a graduate teacher in the university is relatively short when compared to those of other such professions such as doctors, pharmacists, lawyers and engineers.
6. Many people use the teaching profession as stepping-stone to other professions. People come to teaching to earn a living till a more rewarding occupation is found. This has made it very difficult for people to be committed to the profession. (Tedjere, 2007).
7. **Poor Working Condition:** The poor financial reward or salary of teachers is another hindrance to full professionalization of teaching. The working condition of teachers is poor and they are generally poorly paid when compared to their counterparts in other professions.
8. **Preponderance of Women:** The teaching profession is dominated by women who are committed to their husbands and children. They are not committed to the teaching profession because of poor earning. Many men move out of the teaching profession because they are the breadwinners of their families. They move to other jobs, which they find more lucrative (Tedjere, 2007:91-95).

Other problems hindering professional teachers in Nigeria include:

- i. Corrupt practices of the recruitment officials
- ii. Attitude of professional teachers

- iii. Poor motivation
- iv. Poverty
- v. Infrastructural problems
- vi. Societal mixed feelings

Proposals for Reforms/Recommendations

To improve upon the prestige, status and quality of teaching and to give it a professional outlook, certain basic structural reforms are advocated in the Nigerian teacher training programmes.

Teachers should be adequately motivated, remunerated, well equipped. Salaries and allowances should be paid regularly and development activities such as in-service training, workshops, seminars and professional conferences should be promoted. In view of the above, the first major step is to use education in particular teacher education to break the monopoly of oil and diversify the economy especially in the areas of agriculture and agro-allied industries, low and intermedial technology and the cultivation of post school survival skills in learners. As something that is the direct result of something else, the curriculum of teacher education at appropriate levels of the schools system have to be correspondingly enriched especially with regards to the MDGs.

Contrary to the current brain-drain phenomenon in which many Nigerian professionals are subjected to make someone or something seem less important or good conditions abroad, a systematic programme should be put in place so as to be able to gainfully export surplus expertise to less endowed countries where this would be appropriately appreciated and remunerated. In this regard, the Technical Aids Corps (TAC) programme is a step in the right direction and should be expanded to cover several more professions and many other needy countries. (Oghiabephan, 2010).

Emphasis should be placed on cognitive development as well as the possession of basic attitudinal traits and the acquisition of noble values so that teacher are found worthy in character and learning before we can expect the learners to attain this lofty height. A teacher who is physically energetic and intellectually sound but morally bankrupt can only be a social misfit and a professional disgrace as he or she cannot be any worthy model for learners.

The time has come for institutions that teach or train teachers to begin to restructure the teacher education programme to address the issue of quality breath and depth-in both the professional and teaching subject matter in education. In short it is high time to begin a pre-service teacher education programme that is selective and committed to preparing effective beginning teachers for the new millennium in this time

of a pool of unemployed graduates and worsening economic situation which has resulted in lack of teaching positions for now. There is the need to establish standards and management structures. At long last, things have started changing for good, e.g. the Teacher Registration Council (TCR) has been established. The TCR would have to be equipped with appropriate human and material resources that would enable it to collaborate closely with teacher-training institutions and teachers professional associations so as to contribute to the much desired professionalization of teaching.

Today, greater knowledge of subject matter is expected than in the past, and those who enter teaching are expected to have even more sophisticated professional skills. This is because there is the growing realization that the knowledge base associated with teaching and learning has expanded and become more complex.

In addition to the above reforms or recommendations discussed above is to ensure that all concerned to restore the dignity of teachers and enhance the social perception and social standing of teaching.

As Clark (1984) pointed, whatever the more general sources of the status of secondary school teaching in a society, higher education is centrally involved in upholding or diminishing that status. The modest proposals in this paper are not sufficient. However, they are necessary to provide a starting point for the reform of teacher education programmes in Nigerian tertiary institutions. There is the need to point out that the problem of attracting retaining and training good teachers in schools system in Nigeria will never be resolved until teaching is professionally and economically viable with the improvement of the conditions of service for teachers. Government should melt out appropriate punishment to personnel's who involve themselves in any form of corrupt practices during teacher recruitment exercise. Government should sponsor news talk, newspaper publication radio broadcast and television announcement on the need and relevance of primary, secondary school teachers in the nation (Nigeria). This will re-orientate the mind and opinion of members of the society towards school (primary and secondary) teachers (Maduawesi and Ihebereme, 2010).

The Federal Ministry of Education (FME) proposed reforms in teacher education in April 2007 which specifies standards for admission, curriculum, teaching practice, basic infrastructure and facilities, qualifications for academic and none academic staff, and so on for pre and in-service teacher education as well as condition for registration, licensing and motivation of teachers which has been approved since 2009. All these will ensure that a proper foundation is laid for teacher education.

The teacher education process must make adequate provision for computer training for students of teacher education institutions. For teachers at all levels of

education to start using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and other instructional technologies in their teaching, they need to appreciate how helpful the technologies are to themselves as well as to their students. The Federal Government of Nigeria should assist in the provision of adequate funding, motivation of staff, necessary infrastructural support, massive training and development of ICT skilled manpower into teacher education institutions. It is very important that teacher education institutions develop programmes that ensure coordination between government, non profit and private institutions towards policy reforms for rapid replication of best practices in teacher education. The Federal, State and Local government in Nigeria should make sure that unqualified teachers who are already in the teaching fields be sponsored to obtain higher qualifications for proper functioning of the teaching-learning process. There is also a need for high standard of teacher education through placement of high values on the criteria and the process guiding the admission of candidates into our teacher institution in Nigeria.

Furthermore, staff of teacher education must avoid corruption and examination malpractice at all times. Lecturers should also maintain their dignity in the system by not aiding and abetting examination malpractice or examination mis-conduct as the case may be at all, times, so that sanity would be restored in our teacher education institutions.

Conclusion

There can never be quality education without quality teacher education. One should not expect any magic as to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals of government if one neglects the attended education components. Thus, teacher education needs to be given its pride of place and attention. Teacher educators themselves must recognize the need to reform teacher education, otherwise, external forces will surely compel them to do so (Agholor, 2004 in Whawo and Joe (Ed):34).

Teachers are seriously needed to ensure that education for development really takes place. To ensure the availability of such teachers, all hands should be on deck to embrace development oriented teachers education. The restructuring of Nigerian educational system, to ensure that school curriculum are tailored to skill acquisition needs of the citizens within the context of the globalised world, can only be realised through the services of an instructional expert. On this premises, it behoves the government to formulate a policy emphasizing the recruitment of only professional teachers in the teaching profession.

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