

# TEACHER EDUCATION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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## **Abstract**

Teacher Education in Nigeria is over one hundred and fifty years old and it is conditioned by historical and social factors. Like in most countries of the World, the provision of adequate facilities and finance for teacher education has lagged behind, the provision in other fields of education of similar inputs with the result that teacher education problems are usually relegated to the background. However, as the pivot of the education system, it has assumed large and complex properties. Consequently, the challenge for the future is conterminous with the challenge of Nigeria's development with particular reference to the socio-economic, political and cultural imperatives. This paper focuses on teacher education at tertiary level and its impact on National Development since 1960. First, the concepts are examined against the historical overview of trends in teacher education. Then, the achievements and problems are highlighted, while recommendations are proffered.

## **Introduction**

The government recognizes the fact that education is an instrument of national development and social remonstrations. It recognizes the central importance of teachers in the educative process, yet words are not matched with action and financial backing. Examples abound in the literature e.g. In the Second National Development Plan (1970-75) and again in the "National Policy on Education (NPE, 1981), government lamented the acute shortage of trained and qualified teachers for the education system. In the third National Development Plan (1975-80), the Federal Government asserted that the quality of the teaching staff is probably the most important determinant of educational standards at all levels. In the National Policy on Education (1981), government declared Teacher Education will continue to be given a major emphasis in all our educational planning because no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers. Also, under Nigeria's Fourth National Development Plan (1981-85), out of a total investment of about 100 billion naira, 100 million was earmarked for teacher education to expand existing facilities and provide adequate equipment and materials to enhance the quality of trained teachers. In inaugurating the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) the Minister of Education said:

We will only insist on the best... The Federal Government will no longer compromise on accountability and poor quality of teacher education...Poor quality of teachers will be a national disaster which must be avoided (Observer, April 25, 1989).

Yet, in spite of these platitudes, funding for teacher education has been grossly inadequate like in most countries of the world, the provision of adequate facilities and finance for teacher education has lagged behind the provision for other fields of education, with the result that teacher education programmes are usually relegated to the background.

This paper focuses on teacher education at tertiary level and its impact on National Development since 1960. First, the concepts are examined against the historical overview of trends in teacher education. Then, the achievements, landmarks and problems are highlighted, while recommendations are proffered.

## **Concepts**

For the purpose of this paper, these concepts are explained.

## **Teacher Education**

Is the component of any 'educational system charged with the education and training of teachers to acquire the competencies and skills of teaching for the improvement in the quality of teachers for the school system (Afe, 1993).

## **National Development**

The term development is capable of many interpretations as politicians regard it as freedom from colonial rule, while economists ascribe to it economic growth, a rapid and sustained rise in real output per head and the attendant shifts in technological, economic and demographic characteristics particularly of developing countries (Rich, 1974). National Development encompasses all the aspects of national life including the social, political, religious and ideological needs and aspirations of individual citizens, local, state, national and international bodies, agencies and governments.

Having examined the basic concepts, let us now-examine the history of teacher education since 1960.

## **Teacher Education Since 1960**

In this section, the emergence of-Colleges of Education, the production of national development plans, the provisions of the National Policy on Education; the controversies whether teaching is a profession would be discussed, while the salient features are highlighted.

## **Colleges of Education**

The Grade 1 teacher was the highest level of professional qualified teachers in Nigeria before the Ashby Report of 1960. The idea of Advanced Teachers' Colleges emerged from the recommendation for a two-year Grade 1 Teachers' Colleges, which should be associated with institutes of Education of University. This two-year proposal was modified by government to three years, which gave rise to a new programme and a new certificate, Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). With this modification came a change in concept and the main purpose was to train for the expanding school system, well qualified non-graduate professional teachers for work in secondary, teacher training and technical institutions (Aghenta, 1983; Afe, 1989c; 1992). Initially five of these Advanced Teacher Training Colleges were established at Lagos (1962), Ibadan (1962), later transferred in 1964 to Ondo; at Owerri (1963) now Alvan Ikoku College of Education; at Kano (1964) and at Abraka (1968). These early colleges were largely funded and staffed by the UNESCO, by the 1970s, the establishment of Colleges of Education took a new turn (Udoh, 1983) by the decision of the Federal Government to establish Advanced Teachers Colleges in States that did not have any. Today, there are 56 Colleges of Education in Nigeria that award the Nigeria Certificate in Education and some prepare students for the award of the University degree in education (B.Ed.). These early ATCS and Colleges of Education attracted experienced Grade II teachers who saw the programme as an avenue to higher education, but in the 1970s, there was a mass entry of young secondary school products into Colleges of Education (Afe, 1989).

## **National Development Plans**

One future of the post-independence era was the production of national development plans which sought to highlight the interaction and interdependence of the development of the education system and the socio-economic conditions of the country. The import of these plans for national development is discussed and the salient features identified in the section that follows.

### **The First National Development Plan (1962-68)**

Education under this plan ranked fifth with 10.3 percent of the gross public sector investment of about £41. 354 billion. As a result of the Civil War the implementation of the plan was disrupted and the plan period was extended to 1969-70.

### **The Second National Development Plan (1970-74)**

It paid greater attention to education and was particularly concerned with the issue of educational gap, expansion of middle-level education and increasing enrolment in universities for courses in science, engineering and technology. Also, the plan concentrated efforts on the rehabilitation of war-ravaged schools in the Eastern States and the provision of better and more teaching and learning facilities for the schools.

### **The Third National Development Plan (1975-80)**

This plan represents the boldest since planning began. Education ranked fifth with a share of 7.5 percent of overall plan allocation. The Federal Government was committed to universal education. Thus, education received a boost in fund allocation as it rose to £42.464 billion out of an estimated total investment of £430 billion. Of the three National Development Plans that Nigeria has launched since Independence, only the Third Development Plan contains a fairly comprehensive manpower budget analysis for both immediate and high level manpower.

### **The Fourth National Development Plan (1981-85)**

This marked the beginning of the third decade of Nigeria's existence as an Independent State and was also the first plan to be formulated by a civilian administration under a new condition based on the Presidential System of Government. Besides, it was the largest in size since planning began with a projected capital expenditure of about £482 billion. The major task of the fourth plan was improvement of standards through increased production of teachers and improvement of learning and teaching conditions.

### **The Fifth National Development Plan (1986-90)**

This plan was austere, realistic and less grandiose than the Fourth ^Plan. It was one of consolidation and development as opposed to further growth.

### **National Policy on Education**

This first move to initiate the national policy on-education came in 1969 when a national curriculum conference was organized by the Nigerian Education Research Council (NERC). In the National Policy on Education (1977,1981) the Federal Government stated its commitment to adopt education as an instrument par excellence for effecting national development If education must play this role, it must transform the social, political and economic life of the country. Thus, the government endorsed the overall philosophy and objectives of the NPE, when it stated that Nigeria would strive for the building of:

1. A free and democratic society;
2. A just and egalitarian society;
3. A united, strong and self-reliance nation;
4. A great and dynamic economy;
5. A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

Going by the provisions in the National Policy on Education, teacher education programmes are expected to produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all the levels of education. In addition, it should enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession. The question may be asked; Have our teacher education programmes been related to every phase of our socio-economic, political and cultural development? To what extent has the provisions on teacher education achieved these objectives? The answer is No! because wherever we turn, be it in the school, economic and political sphere of activities one is always faced with the problem of manpower. Afe (2002) is applying the concept of dysfunction in teacher education against the background of the objectives of teacher education found that these programmes have been deficient in providing teachers with intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment in the society. This is because teaching in Nigeria has not been fully professionalized. In using traits of professionalism as criteria in determining the teaching profession in Nigeria, we found that teaching has not met all the characteristics of a profession, because teaching is yet to achieve autonomy and to require a license or certificate to practice. Though a 'decree setting up a Teachers' Registration Council has been promulgated since 1993, it is yet to be operational. The foregoing discussion provides highlights of some historical and social factors that have influenced teacher education and these have implications for the selection, recruitment, training, retention, working conditions, morale, motivation, productivity and job satisfaction of teachers. What follows is a discussion of some of the problems militating against professionalization of teaching.

## Problems of Teacher Education

First, is the issue of Social Status of Entrants to the' Profession. The standing of a profession is to some extent, affected by the social class background of its recruits. The higher the social strata from which recruits generally come, the higher the status of the profession. The higher therefore the status of a profession, the more it will attract recruits from the higher strata (Lieberman, 1956). According to Cahander (1962) and George (1963) recruiting candidates of high potential into our Colleges of Education and Universities will make possible the production of effective and adaptive teachers.

Second, the inability to control or legalize entry into the profession is another problem. Any profession should have control over entry into the practice of its profession. This is true of the Nigeria Medical Council (NMC), but is not true of the teaching profession, as the National Union of Teachers (NUT) has little or no influence in matters of policies for auditing and registering professionally qualified persons into the profession. While members of the Union fervently believe that it is not just anybody that can be permitted to become a member of the profession, the union's unable to act, as it lacks the control and the legal backing to enforce the standards set by it.

Third, is lack of standards. The setting of standards is closely tied to the equally important job of raising the status of the teaching profession, while improving the quality of education. Standards in education have connotation for quality, efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and pragmatism in education and management at classroom, school and the entire education system (Coombs, 1985).

Fourth, is teacher morale and job satisfaction. In Nigeria, teachers are found to be poorly paid and inadequately motivated. These are translated to teacher absenteeism, lukewarm classroom practices, frustration, decline in professional standards, militancy and early departure from the profession. Nwagwu (1981) and Abangma (1981) in their studies found that their respondents rated salaries as the most crucial single factor in attracting candidates into and retaining those already in the teaching profession. They also complained about salary differentials between government teachers and voluntary agencies teachers. Thus, late payment of salaries account for the low morale in the schools. As noted by Itotoh (1983), the struggles for improved conditions of service had often in the past led to strike actions and closure of institutions. Consequently, there is a growing sense of frustration of teachers arising from both internal and external factors, which are the motivators and hygiene factors respectively.

Having identified the problems of teacher education at the tertiary level, we now in this final section proffer recommendations for teacher education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Recommendations

First, is the implementation of the Teachers' Registration Council in both spirit and letter, so that only those who are qualified professionally can teach in tertiary institutions. According to Okoro (1998), when the Teachers Registration Council is established, it may consider, the measures of adopting periodic licensure examination to qualify both private and public school teachers as professionals and adopting a training and certificate system for managers of the educational system and administrators to qualify them as professional educational administrators/managers.

Second, an aggressive policy of in-service education of teachers. We recommend the establishment of Professional Renewal Centres (PRC) of multidimensional nature, to serve as nerve centres for academic investigation and information dissemination in matters relating to teaching at tertiary levels. Besides, the centres should provide learning opportunities on a continuous basis, that should meet both the academic, professional and social needs of teachers in their quest for professional renewal and excellence. These would provide collegial collaborating for all agencies concerned with planning, designing, executing and evaluating In-Service Programmes.

Third, we recommended the establishment of a virile professional association for teachers to ensure that standards are adhered to religiously. The Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) is more of a trade union, compared to the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) and the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) which have professional bodies known as the Nigerian Medical Council and the Legal Council of Nigeria (LCN) respectively.

Fourth, the curriculum .of teacher education at the NCE and university levels should be

revamped and move away from the general professional preparation to a variety of specializations in population, migrant, nomadic and environmental education among other areas.

Fifth, there is need to sustain the teachers' morale and consequently, guarantee their job satisfaction. This can be achieved through a separate Teachers Salary Scale (TSS), as a teacher's salary is a crucial factor in the process of attracting and maintaining good and virile teaching workforce (Afe, 2002).

Sixth, Adequate funding is a sine qua non to improve the physical and instructional facilities in our Colleges of Education and Universities. We therefore recommend that the Federal Government should devote annually 30% of the annual budget and at least, 50% of our Gross National Product (GNP) to education.

Seventh, there is the need for carefully developed, rigorous criteria for admission into teacher institutions, so that such institutions will secure a fair share of the best students. When well-qualified people are recruited into teaching, high standards are ensured.

### **Conclusion**

This paper in discussing the impact of teacher education programmes at tertiary levels on national development proffered suggestions for the future. A strong case was made that the challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is that the education and training of Nigerian teachers must top the list of priorities of government. It was noted that in spite of the platitudes by government in various documents on the central importance of teachers in the educative process and the need to give teacher education a major emphasis in our educational planning, funding for teacher education has been grossly inadequate. Since national development encompasses all aspects of national life, including the social, political, religious, ideological needs and aspirations of individual citizens, local, state, national and international bodies, agencies and governments, from the historical overview of the trends of teacher education at the tertiary level, the impact has been minimal because of the various constraints and problems arising from the defective implementation of teacher education policies. The challenge of teacher education is therefore the production of teachers of great depth of knowledge, increased skills in teaching, right attitudes and improving human relationships.

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