HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHING IN NIGERIA: PROBLEMS AND THE WAY FORWARD

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Abstract
With education being an instrument for the development of man and the society in general, this paper examined teaching as an act through which man acquires all requirements for development pointing specially to higher education teaching. The paper highlighted the meaning of teaching, higher education and the purpose of higher education. It x-rayed some of the problems militating against effective and efficient teaching in higher education in Nigeria as these include: poor resources, manpower need, curriculum, facilities, teaching and learning style, poor library, programme explosion, teacher-students' ratio, cultism, professional misconduct, poor record keeping, strike action by academic staff to mention a few. The paper also suggested some way forward to reform and bring new life into higher education teaching for better productivity, effectiveness and efficiency.

Introduction
Education is said to be the greatest hope and light of any nation and is quite indispensable in the growth and development of a nation. Education is an instrument for sustaining and developing the life of people, an instrument of stability, change and cultural values in a child to grow to the full status of a man sound in mind and body; to acquire the knowledge and skill that will enable him to live a useful life; to have high standard of conduct and be an honourable man trusted by his fellows as well as to be a man of peace, courage and sound judgment. For the accomplishment of the above which directly brings about national development, growth and technological advancement, the child needs to be taught and trained by a teacher who in turn must be trained, certificated and thus qualify for the job of teaching.

Teacher education therefore should be over hauled regularly and be emphasized with all importance and attention as it is basically related to every phase of human development worldwide. In all spheres of life one is faced with the ever recurring problem of trained and competent man power need and since competent teachers are needed to carry out this job or act of teaching at various levels,
the leaching in higher education through which manpower for national growth are produced needs some serious reforms in areas that seem to jeopardise its effectiveness and efficiency.

Concept of Teaching

The concept of teaching is polymorphous in nature as it has varied and numerous meanings and views by different people. According to Clark and Peterson (1987), *Teaching is an attempt to help someone to acquire knowledge, skill and appreciation.* It is a conscious and deliberate effort by mature and experienced persons to impart knowledge and skill to immature or less experienced persons with the intention that they will learn. Kpangban (2005: Ph.D lecture note) started that *teaching is an institutionalized effort made by person to help another to learn.* It is a helping relationship which involves the teacher helping the learner to acquire knowledge, skill and values, thus helping the learners to learn, to do and to be, character formation and refinement inclusive. That is the development of 3 Hs - Head, Heart and Hand.

Teaching is also said to be a triadic partnership relationship between the teacher and the learner over subject matter in such a way that the learner comes to learn, understands and acquires whatever subject matter that is involved. It may also be seen as a process of guiding, motivating, stimulating and evaluating the learner in an organised educational institution through a well planned and selected education programme of instruction towards the achievement of a desire goal including the all-round development of the learner.

Concept of the Higher Education

According to Decree No. 16 of 1985, higher education is defined as *education which is given at the tertiary stage which covers the post secondary section of the national education system and which is given at institutions such as university, polytechnics, colleges of technology, college of education, advance teachers colleges, professional institutions and such other institutions as may be allied ....* Higher education which is the main focus of this study is that programme of study training for research at the post secondary level provided by universities or other educational establishments that are approved as institutions of higher education by competent state authority and or through recognised accreditation system. (UNESCO 2005).

Higher education teaching therefore is any kind of teaching activity that goes on in higher institutions directly or indirectly, scientifically or otherwise that brings about the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values and appreciation towards an all-round development of the learner. Teaching in higher education is the most obvious university's or college's functions around which the other elements of school organisation and work revolves. It is the means of organising a communication of knowledge and through which the highest skills of a nation are imparted to upcoming generation. Those skills that permit contemporary technology to function, progress and to beget those
Higher education teaching takes different forms or methods viz - lecture (pure or formal lecture e.g. inaugural lecture), Adulterated lecture (a mixture of lecture and other methods of teaching); this to a large extent is what is evident and most prevalent today in higher education. Other alternative methods of teaching in higher education include: the lesson and the teaching method to use with the lecture such as Buzz Groups, Problem Centred Group, Tutorial, Seminar, Integrated Panel to mention a few.

Purpose of Higher Education
The goals of tertiary education as stated in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) are as follows:
(a) Teaching;
(b) Research and development;
(c) Staff development programmes;
(d) Generation and dissemination of knowledge;
(e) A variety of modes of programmes including full-time, part-time, block-release, day-release, sandwich etc;
(f) Access to training funds such as those provided by Industrial Training Funds (ITF);
(g) Students’ Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES);
(h) Maintenance of minimum educational standards through appropriate agencies, e.g. NCCE, NBTE, NUC.
(i) Inter-institution co-operation
(j) Development services to the community through extra-moral and extension services.

Higher education contributes to human resource development in many ways. It has the main responsibility for training a country's professional personnel, including the managers, scientists, engineers and technicians who participate in the development, adaptation and diffusion of innovations in the economy. Thus they create new knowledge through research and advance training and serve as a conduit for its transfer, adaptation and dissemination.

Problems Facing Higher Education Teaching
In spite of the above laudable goals and importance, higher education teaching programme is facing some problems hence Olujuwon (2005) asserted that - The Nigerian education system (of which the tertiary level is a pan) is in a state of confusion and disarray as a result of inconsistencies, non-implementation of educational policies, corruption and corrupt practices perpetrated by the stakeholders. There has been a clarion call by all and sundry to re-examine and appraise the Nigerian education system in line with current trends. However, this study presents the following as the problem facing Higher Education Teaching in Nigeria:
(1) **Resources:-** In Nigeria, Higher Education is heavily dependent on government funding, and the unit costs are high relative to other segments of the educational system. With this expansion, the quality of teaching and research has declined in public higher institutions. Lack of fund has actually led to institutions' inability to acquire current and modern equipment and facilities for effective teaching and even the payment of staff salaries which most often results to poor productivity. Drastic reduction in public funding are jeopardising the quality and sustainability of existing programmes and even the survival of institutions. Compounding the problem of declining and insufficient resources is the inefficient use of these resources, misappropriation of fund i.e. diversion of the little available fund to irrelevance. Instead of focusing on building of more classroom blocks for effective teaching and more office accommodation as well as equipping faculty and departmental libraries with relevant and current books and materials to enhance research and academic growth, attentions are being redirected to else where, leaving the main focus of existence hence, teaching today is becoming ineffective in higher institutions.

(2) **Manpower:-** In the area of formal education, competent and adequate teachers are needed for all the levels from nursery to the university and even adult education with its many facets. Since no education system may rise above the quality of its teachers, the National Policy on Education (FRN 2004) states that all teachers in educational institutions should be trained professionally and their programme be structured to "equip them for the effective performance of their duties,, but this is not the case in tertiary institutions as most lecturers are not trained professionally nor registered. Experience teachers are few and because of retirement and brain drain, many institutions are filled with new and inexperienced lecturers (Agbongiasede 2008). However adequate the objectives and contents of any educational curriculum may be, its implementation is very crucial to its success, hence the pedagogy, quality and quantity of teachers are very vital.

(3) **Curriculum:-** Dike (1995) defines curriculum as that which endows learners with appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes which will enable them to harness resources (natural and human) in order to improve the quality of life and environment. The planning
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and development of relevant educational curriculum in Nigeria has quite a great deal to contend with. It is quite and enormous that for curriculum planners to reflect on the general national educational philosophy and objectives, the societal needs, goals, values/value system, belief, aspirations and expectation for smooth and conducive human existence as to produce a working curriculum. To select content and learning experiences that are learner friendly, select content considering its authenticity in line with the new trend, noting the dynamic nature of knowledge, consider the teacher who is the chief implementer or facilitator of a meaningful curriculum, his training, ability, and capability, authors and subject specialist, professional bodies, economy or finance are quite involving. The conglomeration of these factors pose a serious problem of planning, developing and implementing a relevant curriculum that is comprehensive, dynamic, current and oriented towards national development and technological advancement. There is no doubt that this is a herculean task, a big problem in deed.

Teacher-students Ratio:- Based on the Nigerian population figure, which is incessantly on the increase and the grass-root awareness of the importance of education and in spite of many schools being established, the population of students in tertiary institutions are steadily on the increase, due to the ever-growing population of primary and secondary school leavers clamouring for admission into higher institutions. In the tertiary institutions, we have very large and over crowded classrooms which breed serious problems of management, distribution, effective and meaningful teaching, thus resulting to low academic output, problem of examination malpractices and poor evaluation system as it becomes imperatively impossible for lecturers to administer periodic test, mark assignments as to effect necessary correction and there is no room for individual attention. Situations where a lecturer is faced with over 3,000 scripts to mark, the probability for a clean and thorough job is dicy. Erinosho (2004) painted an ugly picture as follows lecturers are forced to mark hundreds and thousands of scripts and no wonder quite a number do not just bother to mark them but merely supply marks to the departmental examination officers. There are stories that money changed hands for marks in the process. Some they say dubiously engage external persons to mark for them just to meet the
deadline given for the submission of scripts and scores. Until a Nigerian government is able to produce and maintain adequate number of teachers commensurate with the overwhelming students' population, the alarming issue of teacher-students' ratio which is about 1:1000, will continue to exist with its attending negative consequences. Supporting the above, Sule (2005) stated that the entire university system in Nigeria can only accommodate about 15% (5) of those seeking admission and the situation will likely worsen when graduates of the Universal Basic Education Scheme (UBE) come on stream.

(4) Facilities: Inadequate facilities in terms of space and equipments have been acknowledged by many as a big problem plaguing most higher institutions in Nigeria. This undoubtedly hampers effective and efficient teaching-learning process thus resulting to low productivity. Most institutions in deed do not have sufficient and up to date laboratories and current equipments to teach and conduct researches hence most lectures end up theoretical with little or no empirical or experimental teaching. The few equipment present may not necessarily meet the taste of time as the materials are obsolete and not modern. There are not enough classrooms and seats for students as some even stand by the windows and doors outside with the lecturer teaching at the top of his voice under an oxygen choked teaching-learning atmosphere. A situation where lecturers even academic doctors stay 3:1 in a cubical all in the name of an office and even with the over crowding students population to attend to, is nothing to write home about.

(5) Teaching and Learning Styles: It should be noted that the traditional lecture-based teaching approach does not cover all the learning style categories but only five - (intuitive, verbal, deductive, reflective and sequential) and yet not all lecturers are able to use them or present the teaching of their courses or creating room for such learning styles as to make learning easy for students. Instead they present their teaching in abstraction in such a manner that subject matter become so abstract and difficult for good conceptualisation and understanding by the students. According to Dike (2007), it is unfortunate that after 47 years of independence and with well over 80 faculties and colleges of education, the predominant teaching method is still talk-chalk or lecture method interspersed with questions, demonstrations, field-trip e.t.c. Our teaching
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method is devoid of innovative teaching approach for it has been under the influence of behaviourism or objectivism that is broken down complex task into sub-unit for learning to take place. This is anti-creativity and it is mechanistic in nature as it does not emphasize what transpires inside (lie human brain. It is not brain tasking thus renders our creative ingenuity and potentiality dormant.

(6) **Ill-equipped Libraries:** Most higher institutions of learning lack adequate and well furnished libraries which directly or indirectly make teaching-learning process as well as researches difficult and uninteresting. Knowledge is dynamic and not static. An institution wild obsolete books and outdated information services as it is prevalent in most schools is not at breast with current knowledge and doing her staff and students no good as it brings low capacity building in research and development thus dragging technology backward.

(7) **Lack of Fund for Research Development:** As one of the goals of tertiary education, universities and other tertiary institutions are in the forefront in research and development, but according to Agbongaisede (2008), government has never treated them as worthy partners in this regard. Institutions are not given discretionary funding for research and development to help the society as it is done in developed countries. The consequence is that tertiary institutions are turned basically teaching out post thus making them non creative and productive.

(8) **Programme Explosion:** In bid to make money, many tertiary institutions since the mid of twentieth century till date have embarked on extra different academic programme especially NCE, Degree and other professional certificate programmes to attract students who pay exorbitantly. This brings serious problem of teaching and management. Other problems plaguing higher education teaching in Nigeria include, cultism which breeds students’ unruly behaviour and non-readiness to learn, professional misconduct of some lecturers who do not even go to class to teach and even bully on students in the class instead of teaching and, also the problem of frequent strike action by academic staff. All these do not make for effective teaching and learning as the curriculum is often not fully implemented thus producing half baked products. The issue of ineffective management and record keeping is yet a problem to contend with.
The Way Forward

(1) Government should allocate adequate fund towards educational development; to employ and promote teachers and making teachers' condition of service an enviable one, encourage an intensive in-service training for teachers with special grant for researches, workshop, conferences and seminars.

(2) To improve the manpower need, quality training should be given due attention to produce teachers of excellence. Since quality entrants determine quality outcome, admission of entrants into teacher education programme should be based on merit. The faculties of education in the universities should give their students adequate formal training in pedagogy.

(3) On the job training of young teachers by more experienced one, in-service and long vacation course should be encouraged and teachers with only B.A or B.Sc. Degree should obtain their Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) to enhance their teaching effectiveness.

(4) To keep teachers current or at breast with the new trend of knowledge and skills, curriculum innovation provision and research reports should be made available. Workshops and seminars must be organised and encouraged periodically for teachers to acquire new teaching skills to vary their teaching methods.

(5) The prestige of teaching profession should be enhanced through the improvement of teachers salary and the entire conditions of service as to attract more competent teachers.

(6) For the curriculum issue however, all hands must be on desk. The government agencies, professional bodies, curriculum experts, subject specialists, teachers, ministry officials, publishers, research institutes down to the learners must not leave any stone unturned in working towards planning and developing a relevant curriculum, implementing it and improving it on a continuous basis.

(7) Taking the students' overpopulation and recognising education as a life wire of the nations, more stringent measures should be adopted on students' admission thus screen students for both academic and moral excellence to avoid making institutions dumping ground for loafers and cultists.

(8) School authority should stop diverting the little fund available but utilise it appropriately to build enough classrooms as to create enabling and conducive teaching-learning environment thus making life comfortable for both staff and students.

(9) Well-equipped libraries, laboratories, computers centres with internet services as well as good office
accommodation facilities should be paramount in disbursement of any government fund and ensure that they are effectively used to enhance researches and academic standard. Individuals, philanthropists and the alumni bodies should as well assist in the provision of good and viable facilities.

(10) For learning and leaching styles which however is the core of the matter, teachers should endeavour to motivate the presentation of theoretical materials with prior presentation of phenomena that the theory will help to explain and the problems that the theory will be used to solve. They should make extensive use of sketches, plot diagrams and physical demonstrations in addition to oral and written explanation and derivations. They should strive to illustrate abstract concepts and provide suitable learning experiences to enhance problem solving, give some experimental observations before presenting the general principles. They should provide time for students to think about the subject matter presented as well as encourage creativity and cooperation among learners thus making for active students participation in the classroom activities.

(11) The government and stakeholders should take seriously the challenges of funding, tertiary institutions because it is capital intensives demonstrating the needed political and economic will to bring education to global excellence and thus, properly address the issues of different salary structures at all levels as raised by various unions to make teachers happy as to teach effectively and efficiently. More incentives should be given to honest and hardworking lecturers and even special awards to distinguished lecturers as to serve as deterrent to those who exhibit professional misconduct. For accurate and effective record keeping, examination and school officers should be given a better training either right on the job through proper monitoring and directives by a superior officer or be sent to in-service training for record keeping. This to a large extent will savage the issue of poor record keeping thus make easy the tracing of students’ scores and retrieval of students’ and school’s information.

Conclusion:
For better reform and innovation in higher education teaching, serious attention should be given to all issues raised in this paper and properly addressed at appropriate quarters in order not for Nigeria to continue to toil with the education and effective leaching of its citizenry. The government at all levels should stop paying lip-service to education and institutions should guide against mismanagement, corruption, unnecessarily
academic programmes, encourage researches and strive to make a better standard. If all the suggestions are implemented in all institutions, higher education will be turned to heaven on earth.

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