

REGENERATING TEACHER EDUCATION FOR POVERTY ERADICATION, SELF RELIANCE AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Exploring the annals of history of education, empirical evidence abound that, the colonialist were initially not seriously committed to providing a product-oriented education for Nigeria. Consequent upon this ugly phenomenon, the propellers and implementers of the curriculum were not adequately bred to impact the right quality of education to the recipients. It is crystal clear that, the teacher is the hub of any education system and no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers. Unfortunately, Nigerian society has downplayed the importance of the teachers in the accomplishment of educational and national development goals and objectives. The end result has seen certain ill-digested policy implementation strategies that have dealt teacher education devastating blows dragging its elegance and essence to a lower ebb. This paper examines the state of teacher education in Nigerian and proffered possible ways of regenerating it for sustainable poverty eradication, self reliance and nation development.

The quest for the availability of progressive teacher education in Nigeria was invigorated by recommendations of the 1952 Cambridge Conference on African Education. This conference was set in motion to critically study the organization and implementation of educational policy and practice in Tropical African nation. According to Odasi (2008), prior to independence, Nigerian nationalists and stakeholders in education became lucidly aware of the growing need to produce competent,

well-motivated, skilful and dedicated crop of teachers to steer the post-independence course of education in the country. The need to produce the afore-mentioned set of curriculum implementers was borne out to the realization that, a teacher is an inevitable factor in the execution of the curriculum. It was also recognized that, a teacher is expected to have a broad-based educational background and obtain appreciable professional competence to be capable of identifying and appropriately responding to the needs to the learners and the challenges of the teaching and learning

process. This realization saw the renewed vigour in teacher education as discussed later in this paper.

What is Teacher Education?

There is a common consensus in education and generally that, no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers. A teacher according to Lassa in Isyaku, Akale, Maiyanga and Oloku (1998) is the initiator of the learning process, the facilitator of learning skills, the coordinator of the learning sequence, the assessor of the learning efficiency and the pivotal element in the entire educational development of the learners and the nation at large. To be able to effectively perform all these essential roles in the educational system and facilitate national development in all its ramifications, teachers must possess and be assisted to possess capabilities of transforming formulated educational policies and postulated educational theories into practice and programmes into feasible actions. The training and or assistance given to teachers to enable them possess the right quality and quantity of desired attitudes, aptitudes, knowledge and skills for effective discharge of their duties as curriculum implementers defines 'teacher education' (Ade, 2008).

Teacher education according to Ajayi (2012) refers to policies and programmes designed to equip teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, aptitudes and skills they need to effectively perform their tasks in the school or wider community. Ideally, it should be conceived

as an organized or a seamless continuum separated into three stages namely initial teacher training education or pre-service course before entry into the profession as a fully trained teacher; induction (the process of providing training and re-training and support services during the first few years of teaching and teacher development or Continued Professional Development (CPD) (an in-service process for practicing teachers to undergo refresher courses through conferences, workshops and seminars.

At the moment heated debates about nomenclature have arisen to describe the above-listed activities. The term 'teachers training' implies related activities which involve training staff to undertake relatively routine tasks in the education system seem to be losing ground. Linguistics has thereby opted to refer to those activities as 'teacher education' which connotes preparing staff for a professional role.

In many countries, teacher education takes place largely or exclusively in institution of higher education. It may be organized into two basic models: (1) In the Consecutive Model, a teacher first obtains a qualification in one or more subjects and then studies for a further period to obtain an added qualification. (2) In the Alternative Model, a student simultaneously studies both one or more academic subjects with the principles of teaching that or those academic subjects as the case of NCE programme in Nigeria.

The role of the teacher is one of the most formidable and paramount parameters determining the quality and success of the educational system of any nation. It is also unarguable that education imbues individuals with the needed characteristics and attributes necessary for poverty eradication, self reliance and national development. According to Maduewesi, Ezeani and Maduewesi (1999) and Harvighurst in Isyaku, Akale, Maiyanga and Oloku (1998), teachers perform the following roles in education:

1. Teachers motivate students in order to imitate, maintain, revive and heighten the learning process.
2. Teachers inform students in a variety of ways.
3. Teachers evaluate both the students' learning and the elements involved in that learning.
4. Teachers consult with others. Some of the teachers' work he can do, or must do, by himself.
5. Teachers coordinate their instructional functions.
6. Teachers are mediators of the teaching-learning process.
7. Teachers are disciplinarians or controllers of students' behaviours.
8. Teachers are the parent substitute to the students.
9. Teachers are the confidants to students.
10. Teachers are judges of achievement (assess the teaching-learning process).

11. Teachers organize the curriculum implementation process.
12. Teachers are scholars and research specialists.

From the ongoing discussion, it is evident that, teacher education should be constantly maintained, sustained and if need be, regenerated to be able to place education in a position where it can promote poverty eradication, self reliance and national development. This prompted the development of Teacher Education in Nigeria.

Historical Development of Teacher Education in Nigeria

With the growing awareness on the need of furnishing the educational system with dedicated, conscientious, effective and efficient teachers, policy formulators moved to improve teacher education in Nigeria. According to Iyo (2001), the pioneers of teacher education were the Christian Missionaries. Ade (2008) noted that, the Christian Missionary Society established a pioneer teacher training institution in 1853 at Abeokuta but was later moved the Lagos in 1896 when the missionaries were expelled from Abeokuta. It was later still moved to Oyo to become the St. Andrew's College of Oyo.

Between 1888 and 1890, there were increases in grants-in-aid to teacher training institution. These institutions produced the following categories of teachers: Grade II, III, IV and I. Unfortunately, there was no organized pre-employment special training for becoming

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prospective candidates for teacher qualifying examination. This phenomenon produced and furnished the education system with an intellectually and educationally diverse personalities that had severe difficulties in dispensing educational functions. Worthy of mention here is that, prior to the establishment of these teacher training institutes, teachers at all levels of education had hitherto not undergone any form of specialized training in the pedagogical processes. With a phenomenal rise in school enrolment and attendance rates, there emerged a need to redirect the teaching profession in terms of qualification for entry and other professional requirements.

History has traced the development of teacher education in Nigeria to the giant steps of Christian Missionaries and the reluctance for the colonial administration. The recommendations of the Phelps-Stokes Commission (1925) and Ashby Commission of (1960) position the implementation of development in teacher education in the nation. The various missionaries such as the Wesleyan Methodist, The Baptist, and The Christian Missionary Society among others commenced the provision of teacher education in the Southern part of Nigeria.

They placed much premium on virtually the development of elementary programme of teacher education in Nigeria. This according to Ajayi (2012) was programmed based on the little stipend the missionary depended upon from the

headquarters. They trained teachers through the pupil-teacher system. In this approach, the missionary-teacher kept the school in his premises and his pupils lived with him as part of the family. The students who have passed the standard I examination were then recruited as teachers to receive one hour daily instruction from the head teacher on how to teach. After two years, such candidates qualified for pupil-teacher examination. As the process went on there was increasing demand for teachers in the western part of Nigeria, the missionaries also provided informal training for teachers through the apprenticeship system. Fanfunwa (1974) noted that, under this approach, homeless boys and children of converted village heads lived with the missions and were taught to become pupil-teachers and catechists.

In 1891, there was a call for professionalism in teaching. Consequently, teachers' Certificate examinations were to be conducted as requirements for qualification as a teacher. The Certificate examinations covered academic subject, teaching methods and classroom management. With progressive renewal and revision of the entire education sector, the qualifications recognized for teacher registration were Standard Six Certificate, Vernacular Teachers' Certificate and the earlier mentioned ones. Mention must be made of the dismal fact that, up to this moment, teachers' preparation was not extended to cater for secondary education.

This generated high level imbalances and led to the establishment of the Higher College, Yaba. In December 1932, the colonial government signed the contract for the erection of the first phase of Yaba Higher College buildings. Although the college was scheduled to be opened in 1934, students were admitted in 1932 and housed temporarily at Kings College, Lagos. On 29th January, 1934, the Yaba Higher College was officially opened by the Governor, Sir Donald Cameron.

The college introduced the Diploma of Education course to cater for secondary school leavers who passed both the Senior Cambridge School Certificate Examination and the Yaba College Entrance Examination. With the emergence of the University College, Ibadan in 1948, the Yaba Higher College phased out the first set of students of Diploma of Education. University graduates took a one-year course in two teaching subjects at the University College as a qualification for a Diploma of Education. Between 1960 and 1970, Grade I teachers and graduate teachers were made to teach in secondary schools.

The Phelps-Stokes Commission criticized the method of training teachers by the missions. It regarded teacher education provided by the mission as unsatisfactory, to pupil-teachers overworked but underpaid; the curriculum poorly conceived; and the supervisory system grossly inefficient and insufficient. To ameliorate this anomaly Shima (2007) noted that, the commission's

recommendations were meant to address the situation. Tamo (2007) noted that, there were two types of teacher training institutions at the time for teachers' certification. These were the Elementary Training Centre (ETC) and the Higher Elementary Training Colleges (HETC). Courses in ETC lasted for two years with a primary six or seven education as entry qualification. Products were awarded Grade III Teachers Certificate. The H.E.T.C courses lasted for two years with a two year teaching experience after Primary Education and the products were awarded the Grade II Teachers Certificate.

The training of teachers in the northern part of Nigeria started with the establishment of the Nassarawa School by the British Government in 1904. By 1920-1929, the major types of teacher education institutions were the Elementary Training Colleges (ETC) which produced teachers to man the lower primary school and the Higher Elementary Training Colleges (HETC) which produced manpower to man the higher primary school and other levels in education. Entry qualification for ETC was a Primary Six or Seven education and the programme lasted for two years. For the HECT, entry qualification was a Grade III course and two years of teaching experience. This reorganization was followed by the Ashby's Commission Report. Before this commission, there was nothing like B Ed or BA Ed. or B Sc Ed in Nigeria. According to Jekeyinfa (2011), the few graduates were graduates in Arts or Science with B A or B Sc some of

whom possessed Post Graduate Diploma in Education of the University of London.

With the implementation of Ashby's commission report, major changes took place in teacher education. First and foremost, there was the opening of more universities. Again, Bachelor's Degree in Education was introduced (B Ed or BA Ed. or B Sc Ed). Similarly, there was the training of teachers for the secondary schools in the nation. Based on the commission's recommendations, Teachers Grade I Colleges were modified to give a new certificate—the NCE—a programme meant for training teachers to teach at the lower secondary schools. The schools, called Advanced Teacher's College were established in Lagos (1962), Ibadan (1962) (but was later transferred to Ondo and rechristened Adeyemi College Of Education,) Owerri (1963), Kano (1964), and Abraka (1968). Admission was open to holder of Teachers Grade II or WASC holders with credit in at least two subjects or the GCE O'Level with credit in 5 subjects including English Language. BA Ed was mounted by University of Jos in 1961 with 50 students; University of Ibadan in 1963, Amadu Bello University and University of Lagos 1965 and University of Ife in 1967. 1950-1967 saw a phenomenal rise in the establishment and expansion of teacher education. In 1969, the National Curriculum Conference provided the basis for the National Policy on Education. With the introduction of the 6-3-3-4 system of education in Nigeria as spelt out in the National Policy on Education, there was a great demand for a

new bred of teachers with a new orientation toward secondary school education. This demand was borne out of the curriculum change and the skills to teach the new curriculum introduced in the National Policy on Education.

The Advanced Teachers Colleges were affiliated to universities that regulated or moderated their curricula and operations. This generated differences in the programmes and minimum standards set by the universities to which the colleges were affiliated. To address these discrepancies, the Federal Government established the National Commission for Colleges of Education in 1989 with the following responsibilities:

1. Laying down minimum standards for all programmes of teacher education at the NCE level including quality of staff;
2. Accrediting new and old courses, certificates and other academic awards of the Colleges of Education,
3. Disbursement of running and capital grants to Federal Government-owned Colleges of Education and special funds to the state and Private Colleges of Education,
4. Teacher professionalism.
5. Need for Teachers' Registration Council.
6. Provision of internship period before the registration and licensing of teachers.
7. Conditions of service or all professional teachers.

8. Maintenance of reasonable balance in the general, professional and academic preparation of the typical Nigerian teacher.

Teacher Education in the National Policy on Education

In the National Policy on Education, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1981, 1989, 1998 and 2004) made the following pronouncements about teacher education in Nigeria.

Since no education system may rise above the quality of its teachers, teacher education shall continue to be given major emphasis in all educational planning and development.

The minimum qualification for entry into the teaching profession shall be the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE).

The document went on to enumerate the following as the goals of teacher education.

- i. To produce highly motivate, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system;
- ii. To encourage further the spirit for enquiry and creativity in teachers;
- iii. To help teachers to fit into social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals;
- iv. To provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their

- assignment and make them adaptable to changing situations;
- v. To enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession. To facilitate the attainment of these goals,
 - i. All teachers in educational institutions shall be professionally trained.
 - ii. At the NCE and degree levels, education programmes shall continue to be expanded to also cater for the requirements of technical, business and special education.
 - iii. Teacher education shall continue to take cognizance of changes in methodology and in the curriculum.
 - iv. Teaching services shall be planned that teachers can transfer from state to state without loss of status,
 - v. Effort towards the improvement of the quality of education at the primary and secondary levels shall include (a) appointment of academically and professionally qualified persons as teachers and head teachers (b) regulate in-service training programmes for teachers and head teachers.

Teacher Education and Poverty Eradication, Self Reliance and National Development

The realization of national objectives such as poverty eradication, self reliance and national development can only be effectively achieved through the instrumentality of education. Education itself depended on the quality of teachers supplied to it through teacher education

programmes. According to Olu (2009:19), teacher education has the following roles to play in national development:

1. It produces the needed manpower requirement of a nation's economic life.
2. It produces a crop of highly motivated and dedicated professional that work assiduously towards the advancement of humanity.
3. It transforms an economy from a fundamentally consumer nation to a producer or industrialized nation which promotes poverty eradication, self reliance and national development.
4. It raises the standard of living of both the teachers and learners by predisposing them to vital attitudinal and behavioural patterns pertinent for poverty eradication, self reliance and national development.
5. It eradicates illiteracy and ignorance which are great impediments to national and individual development.
6. It produce highly educated people who will not rely on examination malpractice or certificate forgery but can work tirelessly to attain enviable and esteemed heights in life through socially acceptable means.
7. It curbs crime rates and instill sanity, law and order in the life of a nation thereby facilitating poverty eradication, self reliance and national development.

Successes of Teacher Education in Nigeria Since Independence

Though saddled with many obstacles and conflicting policies, teacher education in Nigeria has achieved a lot as can be seen below:

1. **Standardization of Teaching Qualification.** According to Akanbi in Ishyaku et al (1998) teacher education has standardized the teaching qualification. Teaching qualification has passed through stages such as the Grades I, II, III, and IV to the present NCE status. To a large extent, developments have set NCE as the minimum teaching qualification. This has to an appreciable limit promoted effective teaching and learning in the educational system.
2. **Development of Special Institutions Responsible for Providing Teacher Education** According to Shima (2007), initially, standards were not set on which form of institution shall provide which class of teacher to handle higher levels in the educational system. With the introduction of the NCE programmes, teachers are produced in particular disciplines to handle students in the primary and junior levels of education while graduates with bias in education are also been produced to teach at the senior secondary school level. This has theoretically brought specialization and efficiency in the educational system.

3. **Accreditation of Courses:** According to Musa (2009), nowadays, there is a special body vested with the responsibility of accrediting courses in Colleges of Education. The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) regulates the curricula and operations in teacher education institutions to ensure uniformity and quality of standards.

4 **Production of More Teachers** The NCE programme has succeeded in producing more teachers for the education sector. Every year, thousands of prospective teachers are graduated from Colleges of Education across the nation. This has to an extent supplied the labour market with abundant teaching personnel.

Obstacles of Teacher Education in Nigeria.

Although teacher education is the base on which developmental approaches and desires are built, in Nigeria, this level of education has been relegated to the background. Some of these factors as outlined by Oguiche (2006) and Iyo (2011) include:

1. **Teacher Education Has Not Been Able to Effectively Train the Products to Cope With the Knowledge Explosion of Contemporary Time.** Most teachers are unable to manipulate instructional materials of modern time owing to the dismal fact that they were not exposed to such gadgets during their period of training.

2. **Inability to Meet the Challenges of the Computer Age by Some Teachers:** The world has gradually arrived at the Computer age where most human operations are constantly changing and becoming computerized. Unfortunately, teacher education in Nigeria did not forecast and train its products to meet this challenge. In some Colleges of Education, it is unfortunate to note that, even graduates of Computer Education are unable to operate computers. This is because most teacher education institutions are not adequately stocked with relevant instructional materials. This has exposed the products from these institutions to ridicule and laughter and the constant cry for falling standards of performance in education.

4. **Proliferation of Teacher Education Institutions:** Unfortunately, there is the proliferation of Colleges of Education in our country. Some of these institutions are mere glorified secondary schools. The flip side of this phenomenon is that, the products of such schools are either under-baked or poorly trained and sent into the labour market and the Nigerian society. This has contributed to the dwindling standards of performance in education.

5. **Inability to Tackle the Problem of Unemployment:** Teacher education institutions have not been able to produce graduates that are self-reliant. As a result, the labour market is flooded with NCE graduates

roaming the streets and offices and search of non-existent jobs. This has exerted a negative toll on our fragile economy.

6. **Inappropriate Quality of Personnel in Some Teacher Education Institutions:** Most of the leaders and lecturers in many Colleges of Education are non-graduates of education. Their effectiveness to a large extent is threatened as they were not adequately bred to understand the dictates of education as a course and as a process.
7. **Inability to Promote Research:** Most teacher education institutions are unable to encourage their staff to undertake research. This has seriously raised alarm on the quality of publications emanating from these 'book houses'. Most teachers in teacher education institutions embark on 'copying, cutting and pasting or dubbing' previous materials to produce learning materials for their students. This absence of research in teacher education institutions is not promoting effectiveness in the production of highly motivated and dedicated teachers.

Conclusion

Nigeria as a developing nation should not place much premium on crude oil as it is the case at moment for an all-round development of the individuals and the nation at large. Empirical evidence has underpinned the assertion that 'the problem with Nigeria is not natural but

human resources'. Human resources should be adequately trained and maintained through the instrumentality of education which depends to a large extent on the quality of teachers. At present, the position of the teacher and teacher education in the nation is hanging in the limbo. The labour force is filled to overflowing with complaints about half-baked and inefficient graduates. This negates poverty eradication, self reliance and national development. Consequent upon this ugly picture painted above, there is an urgent demand to regenerate the vision and mission of teacher education, examine their level of accomplishment of its policy statement for poverty eradication, self reliance and national development.

Recommendations

To produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers who will harmonize the realization of the national objectives and philosophy of Nigerian education such as education for poverty eradication, self reliance and national development, the following procedures should be adopted urgently.

1. **Adequate Funding of Teacher Education:** According to Lassa in Isyaku et al (1998), teacher education should be properly funded to enable teacher education institutions conformance with set minimum standards of running their courses; recruit and retain highly qualified academic and non-academic staff; erect and maintain of

- lectures halls and other infrastructure; provision of functional equipment and supplies for laboratories, provision of adequate supporting goods and services; servicing and refurbishing existing machinery; provision of instructional materials; renovation of dilapidated offices and quarters; increase and update library stock; organize professional training and supporting staff development programmes; sponsoring research in teaching-learning process; promoting sports and games; organization and supervision
2. The NCCE and Teachers' Registration Council should regulate the standard of becoming a teacher. Quacks should be flushed out of the system at all levels and professionally trained and qualified teachers employed, re-trained and retained for maximum performance of tasks to facilitate poverty eradication, self reliance and national development.
 3. NCCE should scrutinize the publications from Colleges of Education. Poor quality papers should be eliminated from such publications to make standard and qualitative as a medium for developing teacher education.
 4. There is an urgent need to enrich the NCE curriculum to reflect contemporary demands and changes and produce professionally trained teachers who can bring out scholastic success among the students so as to facilitate poverty eradication, self reliance and national development..
 5. Owing to the dismal fact that the NCE graduate are constantly faced with crunching unemployment, the NCE programmes to an extent should promote self-reliance of its trainees.

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