
THE ROLE OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE EMERGING NATIONAL ISSUES: PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: Teacher education is an important component of education it influences all aspects of education and beyond. Like other components of education, Teacher Education is influenced by social, political, economic and technological development in the society. This paper examines the emerging issues in this component of education in Nigeria brought about by the technological developments. Also discussed are conceptualizing teacher education, teacher education in historical perspectives, emerging issues in teacher education in Nigeria, the implications of these emerging issues to education and the psychological perspective. The paper concluded that the development and practice of teacher education in Nigeria is not unique. It is recommended among others that a professional body should be empowered to regulate entrance into the teaching occupation.

Keywords: *Teacher Education, Profession, National Development, Emerging Issues.*

INTRODUCTION

Teacher Education is an important component of education. Through it, School teachers who are considered mentors of any society are prepared and produced Oyekan, (2006). Normally, teacher education is Ostensibly designed, developed and administered to produce school teachers for the established system of education. Its importance in human life has been recognized for a longtime. For example, Lucas, 1968 in Patrick (2011) asserts that teacher education is the main pillar of any established system of education and the custodian of society's culture. Over the years, education has remained

an instrument of positive change and national development. Thus, it is a social process and the medium for the acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes for survival in the changing world. The Nigerian government echoed the same view in the National Policy on Education when it said that "There is urgent need to develop and promote teacher education programme if the administration of education in the country is to succeed and national development is to be accelerated" (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). Thus, these views summarize the importance and the role of teacher education in the survival of any society. In this respect, education is regarded as the driving force behind development in a society. Education is an inevitable tool for sustainable development and a vehicle for advancing the frontier of knowledge. Abdul - kareem, 2001 in Patrick (2011).

The fact that no educational system can rise above its teachers and no nation can experience remarkable development without quality teachers has been well documented. It is therefore not an overstatement that the professionalization of teaching and making the teacher the centre of educational reform in Nigeria, will enhance teachers productivity, reduce the systematic problems in the educational sector, ensure effective service delivery, engage other sectors of society as well as place education as instrument per excellence for national development. This paper examines the development of teacher education in Nigeria, conceptualizing Teacher Education, challenges of Teacher Education in Nigeria, professionalism in Nigeria Education system, the related emerging issues and implications of these emerging issues to education and other related development. This treatment may shed light on the developments in education, teacher education and teaching profession in Nigeria. This paper is divided in to sections namely, conceptualizing teacher education, teacher education in historical perspectives, emerging issues in teacher education in Nigeria, the implications of these emerging issues to education and the psychological perspective.

Conceptualizing Teacher Education

Adewuyi and Ogunwayi, 2002 in Okemakinde, Adewuyi and Alabi (2013) opine that teacher education is the provision of professional education and specialized training within a specified period for the preparation of individuals who intends to develop and nurture the young ones into responsible and productive citizens. It is informed by the fact that teaching is an all – purpose profession which stimulates the development of mental, physical and emotional powers of students. Such educated citizens could be sensitive and equipped with peaceful co-existence, environmental management and democratic process.

Ogunwuyi (2010) contends that education should be globally adopted as an agent of change and stability to promote probity, equity and equality of opportunities and a launching pad for suitable human development. The heartbeat of man –power development and training for prudent use and sustenance of resources in nation building is teacher education. Teacher education being inextricably linked with general education and social goals, is constantly caught up in the series of dilemmas derivable from educational expansion and social change. The prevailing crisis in Nigerian education and society as typified by unemployment, poverty, corruption, crime, indiscipline and underutilization of capacities in all facts of human life and national development could be ascribed to the neglect of teacher education and pitiable plight of the teachers. All these conflictual relationships precipitated poverty – induced hardships across all segments of the Nigerian community. Adeweyi 2012 in Okemakinde, Adewuyi and Alabi (2013) assert that what structurally becomes important in achieving the nations quest for self – reliant society, imbued with vibrant economy and productive citizenry is to put in place a comprehensive teacher education programme.

The importance of education as a weapon against ignorance, disease and poverty demands coherent information processing systems anchored on manipulative skills which help to coordinate and

transform conceptual ideas, emotions and feelings into life supporting operations beyond the school setting. A coherent teacher education programme should systematically embrace integrated curriculum innovations which reflect the social, economic and political environment of a modern society to solved societal problems (Okemakinde, 2013).

The National Policy on Education (NPE), Published in 1977 and revised in 1981, 1998 and 2004 clearly articulates the importance attached to teacher education and affirms that "no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers". The policy gives the goals of teacher education:

- i. Producing highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of education system.
- ii. Encouraging the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers.
- iii. Helping teachers to fit into the social and to enhance their commitment to national goals.
- iv. Providing teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adoptable to changing conditions.
- v. Enhancing teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

The policy makes it mandatory for all teachers in Nigeria to be trained and stipulates NCE as the Minimum qualification to the profession. The policy also provides that "teacher education shall continue to make cognizance of changes in methodology and in the curriculum" and that teachers shall be regularly exposed to innovations in their profession. It further recognizes the need for in – service training "as an integral part of continuing teacher education".

Teacher Education in Historical Perspectives

Teacher Education has always been an important component of education since time immemorial. This is because all societies in the world have always needed teachers to transmit their cultures (read education!) from one generation to another. Examination of education systems from ancient times to today reveals elaborate and

deliberate practices of teacher education. Therefore, when discussing the development of teacher education in Nigeria, one should not lose sight of the fact that before the coming of Europeans there existed an elaborate teacher education system in indigenous/traditional African education systems (Fafunwa 2004). Formal teacher education was introduced in Nigeria in the late Nineteen Century through the initiative of Missionary Societies, though it was characterized by three problems namely, limit scope, narrow curriculum and quality of staff. These problems make it ineffective because the major concern of the missionary societies was Evangelization. Though the Missionary Societies tried their best to ensure that teacher education programmes took off successfully, the problems raised above posed a major threat; accentuated by the general observation that 'teacher trained in some of those institutions with limited curriculum which included general science, infant method, nature study and botany among others 'lack good the requisite knowledge and skills for effective teaching' Kolawale (2015). Teacher education programme is structured into two important components in Nigeria. These are: Course content, which varies from discipline to discipline; and teaching practice – an exercise which takes place in classroom in a school setting and last to over a period of time. This is because the student – teachers are expected to learn and acquire knowledge and information in content areas and foundation courses as well as practically demonstrated what they have learnt when they go out for field experience; teaching practice. The society saw and felt that the future of Nigeria lay in this programme of education. The society expected the programme and its products (the school teachers) to develop and provide leadership in its development. But with time, this high esteem has steadily waned. The society no longer regards teacher education highly when compared to other sectors of education. This attitude is seen in the manner the government is managing this programme of education in comparison to primary school education and secondary school education sectors. There is no sufficiently clear policy provision for Technical Education and teacher Education in the 6 – 3 – 3 – 4

structure. Very little attention and emphasis paid to them. Instead greater emphasis was placed to University education at the expense of both technical and Teacher Education (Gwany, 2006). Thus, the programme has been marginalized. Great emphasis is being placed on the development of primary school education, secondary school education and university education sectors of education as the expense of teacher education. This treatment of teacher education has prompted the observed poor image of this programme, teaching profession and school teachers respectively in the society. This is why the emerging issues in teacher education are of great interest not only to teacher educationists in Nigeria but the Nigerian society.

Emerging Issues in Teacher Education in Nigeria

These are new development in teacher education in Nigeria that have been occasioned by socio – economic, political changes and technological developments locally and beyond. The impact of these developments on teacher education programme, education, teaching profession and national development is being test. While at independence, this programme of teacher education was viewed as the spur of national development, today it is being treated as just one of those "ordinary" education programmes Osokoya (2016). This status of the programme has generated great debate among the teacher educators and teacher educationists. The main emerging issues include the concepts of teacher education and teaching profession, administration of teacher education programme, status of facilities and resources used in this programme, the ethics of teaching, the teacher education curriculum, terms and conditions of services for teachers in Nigeria, the present image of teaching profession and teachers and the influence of globalization on teacher education programme. These are real issues in teacher education that cannot be wished away.

Training of quality teachers required clear policy provision for teacher education in the 6 – 3 – 3 – 4 structure since little attention and emphasis was paid to teacher education. This unclear definition of

teacher education has tended to affect the preferred modes (approaches) of training teachers today and the quality of teachers produced to serve an education system. Further, this tends to affect the "identity" of this programme of education and teaching profession leading to questioning these two things are necessary today! Perhaps the present policy of the government towards this programme is a reflection of this confusion. In fact there are more questions than answers concerning teaching profession. This worry is based on the existing practices in teacher education (Modes of training the teacher, administration of the programme etc.) and in teaching profession itself. These absurd practices and observations have tended to deposit this profession as lacking credibility, a dumping ground for failures in the academics and life and in other careers. This perception of the profession has kept away competent individuals who would have made the profession attractive and competitive (Patrick 2011, Gwany, 2006).

Management of teacher education is another issue. Since colonial time, teacher education has never been professionalized. According to Dacla and Fadokum 2010 in Okemakinde, Adewuyi and Alabi (2013) posits that profession entails an occupation that is study and training for the provision of skilled service to other members of the society, government and nongovernmental agencies for a definite fee or salary. Thus, a profession is a paid job requires prolonged training and liberal or formal educational qualification but nowadays, individuals with no training in education also serving as teacher trainers. It has tainted the image of teacher education and raised questions on the quality of the prepared and produced school teachers. Besides this fact is the issue of increased enrolment in teacher education without reciprocal increase in the development and supply of relevant facilities and resources. Those developments have made teacher education less attractive, competitive and comparable to the new and enterprising profession in the country. The issue of facilities and resources for preparing a school teacher is critical. The status of current materials for preparing school teacher is pathetic.

Basic facilities like water and electricity supply which are very vital for academic, health and social needs are grossly inadequate in many higher institutions in Nigeria (Gwany, 2006). Another issue in teacher education in Nigeria is that of ethics of teaching. These ethics of teaching are normally just casually, mentioned in passing as aspects of principles and practices of teaching and by those teacher – trainers who are care to do so (Wilkins, 1975). Consequently, the teachers who are produced do not understand the teaching profession itself and its demands.

All the above discussed issues are new and require proper management if teacher education programme is to redeem its lost glory. This necessitates collaborative and cooperative strategies in teacher education from the entire stake – holders.

Implications of the Emerging Issues in Teacher Education in Nigeria

From the presentation above, the following important implications emerge:

- i. *Design and formulating of policy framework.* This is a priority in administering teacher education programmes efficiently and effectively. Through this strategy the concepts of teacher education and teaching profession will be provided; guidelines for organizing and administering this programme shall be stated; the proper structures and procedures for administering the programme will be provided. This may reduce the existing politicization of an apparent confusion in the programme.
- ii. *Review of the Existing Structure of Teacher Education:* There is urgent need to review the policies, administrative structures, recruitment of staff and students, financing of teacher education programme and teacher education curriculum. This should be done to reflect the modern needs in teacher education locally and globally. But for this process to succeed, there must be adequate and variable sources of funding and good will from political establishment.

- iii. *Improvement of information and Communication Systems in Teacher – Education.* To change for better the face of teacher education programme, teaching profession and school teachers respectively, there is need to adapt to and adapt new educational communication and technology materials. This will improve the training and instruction of teachers and teacher trainees. These packages will educate, inform and expose these individuals to the needs and challenges of the modern Nigeria society that they are expected to serve. Though the initial costs may be high but the eventual benefits are rewarding.
- iv. *Investment in facilities and Resources for teacher Education.* There is concern that quality of teachers produced today is wanting. Thus students are not exposed to the appropriate experiential learning which they need with the lack of appropriate experimental and suitable modern science laboratories, studios and resource centres most of the students graduate without having practical in their various disciplines. The situation is such that science students graduate without undergoing practical, computer science students graduate without computer skills, teacher education students graduate without sufficient micro-teaching and teaching practice experiences (Gwany 2006) To reverse this trend in teacher education in particular the government must invest heavily in it and recognize this programme as an essential service to the society. Therefore, those recruited in it should be accorded the same treatment as those in other essential services. This will attract and retain the best brains and committed individuals in this programme and teaching profession respectively.
- v. *Identity of Teacher Education.* Today, there is confusion over what teacher education means and what it does. The confusion can be traced from colonial period when emphasis was on pedagogy rather training and development of school teachers and how the program was conducted. Therefore, there is need to broaden the teacher education curriculum to include areas that are being demanded by the modern technological oriented society. This will ensure teachers are equipped with relevant competencies to

manage emerging challenges in education and the society. There is also need to professionalize teacher education to make it an exclusive rather than inclusive enterprise (Patrick 2011). Thus, it will give a clear identity to this programme and teaching profession. If this is buttressed by strong and attractive packages of conditions of service for teachers, teaching profession will not be a problem at all.

Psychological Perspective

The way in which teachers are educated and supported to meet the challenges of 21st Century has become a contending issue. Various study groups have focused on economic issues equity and excellence, the need for more rigorous subject matter preparation and on the restructuring of incentives and the career ladder for teachers. Although considerable agreement exists about the need for improvement in teacher education and professional development, wide differences of opinion are apparent about where to concentrate limited resources. But whatever programs and designs emerge, each route will include substantial attention to learners, learning and human development. For, in the broadest sense, the role and purposes of teachers will continue to focus on the facilitation of learning and development by each student to the practical limits of teachers' abilities. Consider what one portrait of future teachers implies about their knowledge of learning and development. Such teacher could:

"possess broad and deep understanding of children, the subject they teach, the nature of learning and schooling and the world around them competent teachers are careful not to bore, confuse or demean students, pushing them instead to interact with important knowledge and skills. Such teachers interpret the understandings that students bring to and develop during lessons; they identify students misconceptions and question their surface responses that mask true learning". (Holmes Group 1986, pp 28 – 29).

The above quote portrays a teacher who has deep knowledge of the psychology of learning, development and instruction; who is able to apply and draw on his psychological knowledge in his/her own teaching; who is able to transform this knowledge when necessary to adapt to new learning situations and learner; and who is continuously adding to and developing psychological knowledge through informal inquiry as well as through formal education. Today educational psychologists have more to contribute to teaching – learning enterprise than they did a century ago. Most educational psychologists probably believe that an important role of educational psychology is to contribute to the education of pre – service teachers. This has certainly been the case throughout the history of our discipline (Dewey, 1998). It is very essential for a teacher to teach his students according to their mental abilities. Educational Psychology helps the teachers in doing so. It enables the teacher to teach where and how? A teacher must deal with a group of students in the classroom with caution, because the characteristics of each student are different. Educational psychology can help teachers and prospective teachers in understanding differences in the student characteristic climate conducive to learning must be created by the teacher so that the learning process can be run effectively. A teacher must know the correct principles in teaching and learning a different approach in teaching to the learning process better. Educational psychology plays a vital role in helping teachers to create socio – emotional climate that is conducive in the classroom so that the process of learning in classroom can be effective. Teaching methods are based on the characteristics of students' progress. Educational psychology can assist teachers in determining the strategy or method of learning and teaching styles and levels of development being experienced by the learner. Guidance is the kind of assistance to students to solve problems they encounter, knowledge of educational psychology allows teacher to provide educational and vocational guidance necessary for students at different ages.

The purpose of learning refers to changes in students' behaviour. Educational psychology helps the teacher in determining the shape of the desired behaviour changes as the learning objectives. Based on the description, on the overall Educational Psychology helps the teachers to plan, organize and evaluate teaching and learning activities in schools.

CONCLUSION

This paper highlighted on the present status of teacher education in Nigeria today. It has also addressed some of the issues that are impacting it. The influence of the later on teacher education has been noted and considered serious. However, the conclusion to be drawn from the discussion is that the development and practice of teacher education in Nigeria is not unique since there is no sufficiently clear policy provision for teacher education in the 6 – 3 – 3 – 4 structure. To this end, Nigeria needs to promote the quality and image of teacher education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made:

- i. A professional body should be empowered to regulate entrance into the teaching occupation and control ethical conducts of members.
- ii. Minimum qualification into teaching should be a Degree Programme.
- iii. Society and teachers should be re-oriented to see teaching as prestigious job with high social status.
- iv. In service training, collaboration workshops and ICT training should be encouraged by government for teachers. These would enable teachers to become professionals as well as upgrade the knowledge of existing professional teachers.

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Reference to this paper should be made as follows: Abubakar Hussaini Yoffo (2018)
*The Role of Teacher Education in the Emerging National Issues: Psychological
Perspective. J. of Education and Policy Review*, Vol. 10, No. 1, Pp. 16-29
