

Promoting Functional Teacher Education in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects

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Abstract- It is an undisputable fact that no education style can rise above the quality of its teachers. Teacher education advancement will determine the position of the country in the comity of nations. Hence, the nation's development can only be enhanced by the quality of education given to her citizens. This paper therefore, discusses the meaning of teacher education, historical development of teacher education in Nigeria, present position of teacher education, relevance of teacher education, aims of teacher education, problems militating against teacher education in the country and various strategies taken by the government to promote the growth and development of teacher education in Nigeria examined.

Index Terms- Functional, Teacher, education and teacher education

I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers are expected to be pillars of educational development in all countries all over the world. In fact no nation can boast of a strong and effective educational system without continuous development of its teachers.

Teacher education refers to professional education of teachers towards attainment of attitudes, skills and knowledge considered desirable so as to make them efficient and effective in their work in accordance with the need of a society at any point in time.

The [10] asserts that no nation can achieve economic, social and technological progress and self sufficiency without a good system of education sustain its achievement. Hence, [10] stressed that government will continue to give major emphasis in all educational planning and development. Therefore, teachers have important part to play in making the government to achieve this objective. It is the teacher who is mainly responsible for implementation of the process at any stage. Thus it is imperative to invest in the preparation of teachers so that the future of a nation is secured.

Teaching demands a continuous development of knowledge and ability. This is because primarily education is rapidly changing and this requires constant efforts on the teachers to keep the pace. A dedicated teacher has little or no time to rest on his oars, if he does, he will go down stream. A good teacher, considers how he will broaden his knowledge and widen his experience after graduation. [7] is of the opinion that nothing in a school has more impact on students in terms of skill development, self competence, or classroom behaviour, than then personal and professional growth of the teachers. It is therefore;

very imperative that for any success to be recorded in educational system in Nigeria, the issue of teacher education must not be handled with levity. This paper therefore, discusses among others the following:

- i. Meaning of Teacher Education
- ii. Historical Development of Teacher Education in Nigeria
- iii. Present position of Teacher Education in Nigeria
- iv. Relevance of Teacher Education
- v. Aims of Teacher Education
- vi. Constraints of Teacher Education
- vii. Strategies for Enhancing functional Teacher Education

II. MEANING OF TEACHER EDUCATION

[16] defines teacher education as the training given or provided in an institution to teachers to enable them acquire, inculcate and impart knowledge to their pupils or students. Here teachers are regarded as the moulders of behaviour and the trainers of the unrefined mind to become a refined mind after acquiring adequate training in the teacher training institution. Hence, many of these teachers are found in the formal education setting otherwise known as western education which is a form in a formal setting and which has a generally accepted and regular set of rules and organization. Here education is formalized, systematized, organized and hierarchically structured that is, education that takes place within the four walls of the classrooms, lecture halls, science laboratories, libraries, school farms, workshops etc. examples of formal education are the western school system from pre-primary through primary, secondary and tertiary institutions and even koranic schools and institutions as they exist in Nigeria. Tertiary learning contents are graded to suit the age, ability, level of readiness and regulated at all levels. Therefore in the schools, colleges, polytechnics, and universities qualified men and women are needed to be trained to man these schools and colleges

The following schools or institution train teachers professionally to constantly meet required minimum standard

1. Faculties of Education in our various universities
2. Institutes of Education
3. College of Education
4. National Teachers Institution
5. National Institute for Nigerian languages (NNLAN)
6. School of Education in Polytechnic
7. National Mathematical Centre etc.

All the above mentioned schools played a major role in the training of professional teachers in Nigeria. To maintain minimum standard, some of the above teacher training institutions are being regulated by the National Commissions for Colleges of Education (NCE) being run by various Colleges of Education in Nigeria at both Federal and State levels and even private ones. While the National Universities Commission (UNC) maintain minimum standard in the faculties of Education and Institute of Education in Nigerian Universities at both the Federal, State and even privately owned Universities.

After, training in these teacher training institutions qualified teachers are required to serve a period of internship for one year for degree holders and two years for NCE holders in various educational institutions in Nigeria. It is observed that government has not been implementing this internship training for qualified teachers.

Every citizen of the country should be able to read and write and solve problems involving counting and calculating for good governance, hence teachers are those professionals who are going to train the citizens of this country to achieve this, there is need for government to plan for the future to give teacher education a good solid bedrock in Nigeria.

III. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

[4] pointed out that the idea of teacher training took its root form the need to train people to lead the missionary crusade of propagating the gospel during the early Christian missionary era.

The first teacher training College was founded by the Christian Missionary Society in Abeokuta in 1859. it was known as the "Training Institution". There were some hostilities in Abeokuta in 1867 that led to the expulsion of the missionaries from the town and that made the training institution to be moved to Lagos to become an arm of a Grammar school. However, the establishment of St. Andrew's College, Oyo in 1896 signaled a very landmark in the training of teachers in the country.

The pioneering effort of the C.M.S was strengthened later by other missionary societies. For example, the Baptist Mission founded the Baptist Training College at Ogbomoso in 1897. 'The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society opened an institution to train catechists and teachers in Ibadan in 1905 with four pupils [4]. Obviously, the business of teacher education started mainly as an exclusive missionary business.

[8] posited that before independence, there were few secondary schools in the country with the bulk of their teacher expatriates and missionaries, most of whom, had no teacher education. However, shortly after independence, there was a sporadic increase in enrolment in teacher training colleges owing to greater competitions in schools establishment among missions. The establishment of more schools then, made the demand for teachers increase drastically. By and large, the teacher education curriculum then was geared towards the primary school teacher education only. A major event in the development of teacher education in Nigeria was the publication and subsequent implementation of the Ashby Commission report.

The Ashby commission reported that there was an inadequate supply of trained teachers in the nation's secondary schools even while there was an increase in the demand for more

secondary schools. The Ashby commission, among other things, recommended the training of more teachers for the nation's secondary schools, the establishment of more universities and establishment of the institution of a Bachelor's degree in Education, where qualified teachers could be produced.

B.A, B.Sc. (Education) degrees with fifty students were first introduced by the University of Nigeria Nsukka, in 1961. university of Ibadan followed suit in 1963; Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria 1964; University of Lagos in 1965 and Obafemi Awolowo University Ile Ife in 1967. Today almost all the Universities in the country have faculties of Education where qualified teachers are produced.

There is no doubt that teacher-education is a veritable tool towards education development when it stated that 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. The policy emphasized that all teachers in the nation's educational institutions from pre-primary to university, would be professionally trained. The policy also stated that the purpose of teacher education should be:

- a. To produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our education system
- b. To encourage further, the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
- c. To help teachers to fit into the social life of the community and society at large and to enhance their commitment to national objectives;
- d. To provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to any changing situation, not only in the life of their country, but in the wider world; and
- e. To enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession [10].

IV. PRESENT POSITION OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

[8] remarked that the teacher education in Nigeria today, is much improved than it was before 1970. The author claimed that the type of teachers needed in Nigeria have become clearly defined in the National Policy on education implementation committee blueprint. It was prescribed that the types and qualifications of teachers required should be as follows:

- a. Pre-primary education: Grade II teachers with NCE teachers and head.
- b. Primary education: NCE teachers with graduates as heads
- c. Junior secondary schools: NCE and University graduates
- d. Senior secondary schools: NCE and University graduates with professional qualifications
- e. Technical Colleges, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education: university graduates with post-graduate qualifications in their disciplines together with professional qualifications, practical industrial exposure and experience .

- f. University: University graduates with post-graduate qualifications together with professional qualifications and experience. See table 1,2, and 3 for the geographical distributions of teachers in primary schools, secondary schools and teachers by qualification across the states of the federation.

Table 1: Geographic Distribution of Primary School Teachers

S/N	STATES	Primary School					Percentage Shares				
		1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
1.	ABIA	10,966	11,331	12,423	12,152	12,431	2.5	2.5	3.4	2.5	2.1
2.	ADAMAWA	10,745	11,129	12,005	*15	18,259	2.9	2.5	3.2	—	3.1
3.	AKWA-IBOM	11,662	11,842	13,106	18,097	18,661	2.7	2.7	3.5	3.7	3.2
4.	ANAMBRA	13,795	13,824	13,967	12,355	13,076	3.2	3.1	3.8	2.5	2.2
5.	BAUCHI	9,647	9,754	13,466	12,463	15,497	2.2	2.2	3.6	2.5	2.6
6.	BAYELSA	3,595	3,950	4,586	4,846	6,314	0.8	0.9	1.2	1.0	1.1
7.	BENUE	13,176	13,534	13,848	16,345	23,433	3.0	3.0	3.7	3.3	4.0
8.	BORNO	10,179	10,390	11,081	12,753	13,637	2.4	2.3	3.0	2.6	2.3
9.	CROSS RIVER	12,326	13,369	15,791	15,769	16,044	2.9	3.0	4.3	3.2	2.7
10.	DELTA	21,503	21,212	22,145	20,378	22,044	5.0	4.8	6.0	4.1	3.7
11.	EBONYI	9,117	9,729	11,279	9,571	10,591	2.1	2.2	3.0	1.9	1.8
12.	EDO	10,296	10,185	10,701	9,757	17,133	2.4	2.3	2.9	2.0	2.9
13.	EKITI	7,921	8,434	8,811	9,657	10,261	1.8	1.9	2.4	2.0	1.7
14.	ENUGU	12,286	12,212	12,161	12,086	12,550	2.8	2.7	3.3	2.6	2.1
15.	GOMBE	6,656	7,339	9,436	8,022	9,167	1.5	1.6	2.6	1.6	1.6
16.	IMO	12,660	13,014	13,897	14,454	16,880	2.9	2.9	3.8	2.9	2.9
17.	JIGAWA	9,395	10,047	11,286	11,212	13,368	2.2	2.6	3.1	2.3	2.3
18.	KADUNA	9,135	11,077	14,881	21,500	31,090	2.1	2.5	4.0	4.4	5.3
19.	KANO	19,145	19,670	21,712	23,514	25,868	4.4	4.4	5.7	4.8	4.3
20.	KATSINA	12,621	13,037	14,606	14,436	18,101	2.9	2.9	3.9	2.9	3.1
21.	KEBBI	6,764	7,146	8,624	8,804	10,840	1.6	1.6	2.3	1.8	1.8
22.	KOGI	13,011	13,289	14,096	11,887	17,393	3.0	3.0	3.8	2.4	2.9
23.	KWARA	10,868	11,035	12,118	14,412	14,356	2.5	2.5	3.3	2.9	2.4
24.	LAGOS	17,589	17,678	18,040	20,387	29,864	4.1	4.0	4.9	4.1	5.1
25.	NASARAWA	11,432	11,626	12,385	11,272	10,021	2.6	2.6	3.3	2.3	1.7
26.	NIGER	13,920	13,812	15,739	17,472	23,556	3.2	3.1	4.3	3.6	4.0
27.	OGUN	17,529	18,199	19,159	19,042	17,607	4.1	4.1	5.2	3.9	3.0
28.	ONDO	12,008	12,573	13,793	14,821	11,492	2.8	2.8	3.7	3.0	1.9
29.	OSUN	15,822	15,459	15,896	16,326	14,262	3.7	3.5	4.3	3.3	2.4
30.	OYO	28,446	29,588	30,798	29,066	31,474	6.6	6.6	8.3	5.9	5.3
31.	PLATEAU	15,943	16,474	17,526	17,926	18,938	3.7	3.7	4.7	3.6	3.2
32.	RIVERS	8,885	8,553	8,321	9,602	9,368	2.1	1.9	2.2	2.0	1.6
33.	SOKOTO	9,601	9,970	11,343	12,554	17,956	2.2	2.2	3.1	2.6	3.0
34.	TARABA	8,426	9,507	10,138	10,013	17,608	2.0	2.1	2.7	2.0	3.0
35.	YOBE	5,565	6,409	7,663	7,330	7,789	1.3	1.4	2.1	1.5	1.3
36.	ZAMFARA	5,310	5,163	5,612	5,882	6,722	1.2	1.2	1.5	1.2	1.1
37.	FCT ABUJA	4,155	4,755	5,725	5,573	7,390	1.0	1.1	1.5	1.1	1.3
TOTAL		432,098	446,445	369,988	491,565	591,041					

• *incomplete Returns

Source : [11]

Table 2: Geographic Distribution of Secondary School Teachers

S/N	STATES	SECONDARY SCHOOL					Percentage Shares				
		1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003

1.	ABIA	4,251	3,306	-	3,370	3,743	3.4	2.5	-	2.0	2.1
2.	ADAMAWA	625	587	699	*81	2,952	*0.5	0.4	0.5	-	1.7
3.	AKWA-IBOM	2,488	4,757	3,465	5,884	6,610	2.0	3.6	2.5	3.5	3.7
4.	ANAMBRA	5,516	5,422	5,333	5,933	3,606	4.4	4.1	3.8	3.5	2.0
5.	BAUCHI	1,740	1,489	1,762	-1,888	2,018	1.4	1.1	1.3	1.1	1.1
6.	BAYELSA	1,021	1,226	1,574	919*	2,040	0.8	0.9	1.1	-	1.2
7.	BENUE	1,855	1,443	1,519	4,475	5,511	1.5	1.1	1.1	2.7	3.1
8.	BORNO	1,294	1,290	1,335	1,943*	2,786	1.0	1.0	0.9	1.2	1.6
9.	CROSS RIVER	2,818	2,881	3,178	4,060	3,703	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.1
10.	DELTA	7,814	8,692	10,736	11,007*	12,566	6.3	6.5	7.6	-	7.1
11.	EBONYI	274	212	469	348	2,311	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	1.3
12.	EDO	5,115	5,056	6,034	5,892*	9,768	4.1	3.8	4.3	-	5.5
13.	EKITI	1,399	1,480	1,608	1,965	5,414	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	3.1
14.	ENUGU	4,573	4,603	5,078	5,469	5,725	3.7	3.5	3.6	3.2	3.2
15.	GOMBE	2,235	2,088	3,119	2,623	2,503	1.8	1.6	2.2	1.6	1.4
16.	IMO	3,048	2,635	2,852	4,230	7,012	2.5	2.0	2.0	2.5	4.0
17.	JIGAWA	654	680	800	757*	1,671	0.5	0.5	0.6	-	0.9
18.	KADUNA	3,321	2,563	2,850	5,410	6,320	2.7	1.9	2.0	3.2	3.6
19.	KANO	4,299	4,332	4,730	4,689	5,173	3.5	3.3	3.4	2.8	2.9
20.	KATSINA	1,898	1,969	2,146	2,400	2,856	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.6
21.	KEBBI	3,358	2,183	2,537	2,437*	1,596*	1.6	1.6	1.8	-	-
22.	KOGI	3,358	3,310	3,456	3,394	4,059	2.7	2.5	2.5	2.0	2.3
23.	KWARA	3,216	2,987	2,832	3,805	3,108	2.6	2.2	2.0	2.3	2.8
24.	LAGOS	14,605	14,951	15,815	18,344	17,560	11.8	11.3	11.2	10.9	0.9
25.	NASARAWA	2,018	2,512	3,421	3,519	3,785	1.6	1.9	2.4	2.1	2.1
26.	NIGER	3,937	4,084	4,307	4,711	4,070	3.3	3.1	3.1	2.8	2.3
27.	OGUN	6,890	7,272	7,289	7,276	7,131	5.6	5.5	5.2	4.3	4.0
28.	ONDO	4,626	5,555	8,949	7,118	7,152	5.9	4.2	4.9	4.2	4.0
29.	OSUN	6,969	6,840	5,565	6,067	5,398	5.6	5.1	4.0	3.6	3.0
30.	OYO	9,257	10,376	12,130	12,538	12,878	7.8	7.8	8.6	7.5	7.3
31.	PLATEAU	4,765	4,779	4,805	4,852	5,277	3.8	3.6	3.4	2.9	3.0
32.	RIVERS	4,408	4,370	4,275	5,667	4,456	3.6	3.3	3.0	3.4	2.5
33.	SOKOTO	1,618	1,567	1,808	1,985	1,741	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.0
34.	TARABA	709	718	790	967	1,192	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.8
35.	YOBE	1,1203	1,205	1,657	2,749	2,235	1.0	0.9	1.2	1.6	1.3
36.	ZAMFARA	685	839	837	1,060	1,130	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
37.	FCT ABUJA	2,350	2,625	2,873	3,133*	3,223	2.0	2.0	2.0	-	1.8
TOTAL		124,136	132,884	140,631	167,649	177,278					

- incomplete Returns

Source: [11].

Table 3: Summary of Statistics on primary and Secondary school Teachers

PRIMARY	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Graduate Qualified	15383	17980	2219	4149	33754
NCE & Equivalent	2832	3221	4449	23667	6276
Grade I	174931	184641	200626	296429	247270
Grade II	16532	15719	15788	14680	17782
WASC/GCE	136618	131934	136297	136245	151185
Others	30424	32103	40243	51515	46397
Special Teachers	39731	40389	45857	46950	79036
Not Specified	5257	5362	6395	7660	9342
TOTAL TEACHERS	432096	446406	488164	491751	591041
% QUALIFIED	44.0	45.4	45.7	42.8	47.6
SECONDARY					
Graduate Qualified	14009	15920	18532	18303	79216
Graduates Unqualified	48902	51771	55914	59308	27939
NCE & Equivalent	49399	51017	52367	48907	61148
Grade I	1266	1008	1109	1413	1996
Grade II	387	414	472	629	1121
WASC/GCE	393	413	466	532	1216
Others	25	25	22	4926	7045
Special Teachers	274	316	343	328	597
Not Specified					
Total Teachers	114655	120884	129225	134366	180278
% Qualified	55.3	55.4	54.9	50.0	77.9

Source: [11]

The government had taken some steps to ensure the implementation of the prescription which stipulates NCE as the minimum qualification to teach in primary rthermore, [5] submitted that the minimum entry qualification in the teaching profession in Nigeria today is the Nigeria certificate in Education (NCE), meanwhile, table 3 on summary of statistics of Teachers in Nigeria by Qualification (1999-2003) reflects that an average of 45.1% of primary school teachers were qualified. The bulk of the teachers within the period were NCE and Teacher Grade Two Certificate holders. Besides, an average of 58.7% of secondary school teachers within the period were also qualified

A considerable large number of graduate teachers were without teaching qualifications (average 38.9%) at the secondary school level. The situation was, however, considerably redressed in 2003 with 77.9% qualified teachers.

The government had taken some steps to ensure the implementation of the prescription which stipulates NCE as the minimum qualification to teach in primary schools in the country. The steps are; all existing grade 2 teachers' colleges are being phased put and serving grade II teachers are being retrained to obtain NCE before the deadline to disengage them. In furtherance of this, the National Teachers' Institute (NTI) was established with the mandate of mounting in-service training programmes through Distance Learning System for serving teachers.

Relevance of Teacher Education

According to [14], the heartbest of manpower development and training for prudent use and sustenance of resource in nation building is teacher education. Hence, it is a process of imparting

relevant knowledge, skills and value-orientations that would promote the production of efficient and effective teachers.

Teachers are the most important refined human species that skillfully, identify, develop and nurture the potentials of productive citizenry or meaningful creation of wealth; pleasure and services which will sustain quality life. Relevance of teachers to individual is wholly dependent on their pervasive role in providing functional education and training to the learners within and outside the school settings. Production of efficient educated profession such as doctors, pharmacists, nurses, engineers, technicians, agricultural officers, managers of business and public enterprises, officers of the armed forces, politicians, lawyers and other enlightened artisans or citizens are the refined products of teacher from education industry.

Thus, [14] opined, that teacher education, being inextricably linked with general educational and social goals is constantly caught up in a series of dilemmas which derive from educational expansion and social change. The prevailing crisis in education and society typified by under-achievement, corruption, indiscipline and under utilization of capacities in all facets of human life and national development could be ascribed to the neglect of general education, teacher education and pitiable plight of the teachers.

Aims of Teacher Education

According to the [10] the general aims of teacher education are to:

- i. Produce highly motivated conscientious and efficient teachers for all levels of education system.
- ii. Encourage further spirit of inquiry and creativity in teachers.

iii. Help teachers to fit into social life of the community and society at large and to enhance their commitment to national objectives.

iv. Provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to any changing situation not only in the life of the country but in the wider world.

v. Enhance teachers commitment to teaching profession

Thus, the teacher in training in our teacher training institutions should be encouraged and motivated by government to achieve, the above stated aims through equipping the would be teachers with those experiences, skills attitude and knowledge that are necessary for making the physical, social, intellectual, emotional, cultural, moral and aesthetic need of the learner at all levels of education and also to enable teachers in training to be effective and useful members of the community, loyal citizens of the country, men and women of high moral standard and integrity.

V. CONSTRAINTS OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Teacher Education has suffered too much in our country and the desired goals are far from being actualized due to some constraints. The major among the constraints is inadequate funding. The funding of teacher education in Nigeria has been irregular and are always not enough to procure and maintain equipment for teaching-learning. Education is under funded and this manifests itself in the poor state of infrastructural facilities, materials for teaching and learning in our institutions of learning.

This implies that qualitative manpower cannot be attained without adequate finance, ill-trained teachers cannot contribute positively towards teaching and learning and hence the product faces the problem of academic malnutrition. In an ideal situation, the data used in funding teacher education should be based on the cost of training each student teacher, this is not so in Nigeria.

Ell-gam (2004) in [1] stressed that inadequate funding has introduced the following in the teacher education in Nigeria.

1. Standards are being compromised
2. Difficulty in replacing dilapidated facilities in the institution
3. Loss of confidence in the system by the general public
4. Products of the system also lacked confidence in themselves. All those have multiple effects in the society at large.

VI. STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING FUNCTIONAL TEACHER EDUCATION

1. Adequate Funding: The funding of teacher education should not be left in the hands of the governments alone, because education is very expensive; the private institutions, organizations and multi-national organizations should play a contributory role in the funding and properly equipping the students with the needed skills and technology in our society.
2. Teacher Education as a discipline should be professionalized made attractive, adequate motivational

incentives in terms of condition of service provided the government should provide working conditions comparable to what professional colleagues are enjoying in industries

3. Competent and qualified graduate teachers in education should always be given the opportunity to be administrators and supervisors this will enable them to articulate policies, administer, implement, and supervise various aspects of teacher education programme.
4. Proper training of our teachers at all levels is very important. If the nation will advance educationally and otherwise, the teachers who are the centre between knowledge and learning of our educational system should be trained and retrained on a continuous basis, in order to meet the societal needs. The entry qualification in teacher education should be standardized.
5. Functional Teacher Education Curriculum development and implementation which will spell-out functionality should be defined in the policy to serve as a base for the effective and efficient take off of functional teacher education.

VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Functional teacher education helps teachers and those in training to cope with the problems of education as they manifest and in order to keep pace with rapidly changing society. For one to excel in teaching profession, the profession demands that he/she must continue to update his/her knowledge.

In order to enhance functional teacher in Nigeria, the following measure need adequate attention

Making the much talked about the teacher's salary scale a reality and boosting the social standing of teachers in the society so as to encourage more qualified persons to join the profession.

The Federal Government should upgrade the standard of products of College of Education by providing adequate facilities and human resources.

Adequate fund should be provided by the government for all teacher training institutions to enable them perform the major training of qualified teachers.

The government should provide regular workshops, seminars, conferences and in-service trainings to up-date the knowledge of teachers.

The teacher's registration council of Nigeria should make sure that the policy of making Nigeria certificate in Education (NCE) as a minimum requirement for teachers are carefully followed in our various schools.

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