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RE-CRAFTING THE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN NIGERIA FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

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Abstract

The paper appraised the teacher education programme in Nigeria and discussed the need to re-design it for effective service delivery. The admission policies and duration of teacher education at all levels were appraised and the reforms to close identified gaps were suggested. Issues involved in the training of teachers were also identified while the strategies to make teacher education programme more effective were proposed. The paper concluded that teacher education is critical in translating the goals and objectives of education into reality and should therefore be organized for effective service delivery. It was recommended among others that teaching as an occupation should be professionalized.

Introduction

Teachers assume responsibility for the most challenging assignment of converting the human population to human capital, that is, economically valued people with critical skills and knowledge. The responsibility that the society bestows on teachers underscore their importance across time and space. Teachers therefore occupy a central role in advancing and developing ideas; nurturing critical thinking skills and; the thirst for knowledge discovery in learners. This implies that the teacher is the foundation upon which growth and development in the society hinged. It stands to reason therefore that the society will develop if this

foundation is strong and unable to develop if otherwise weak. It is the proper understanding of the teachers' role in national development according to Ejiogu (1997), Afe (1992), Fafuwa (1992), Harris (1980) and; Liberman (1956) that influenced the development of many countries such as the USA, Japan, Canada, Britain and recently, Malaysia. In these countries, persons with high intelligence quotients are identified, trained and motivated to teach in schools. This is necessary because no quality of education can rise above the quality of its teachers.

In Nigeria, the reverse is the situation. Persons that are below average in intelligence, including those seemingly denied entrance into tertiary institutions to study high profile professional courses (such as medicine, engineering, pharmacy and law) are pooled and trained as teachers (Urevbu, 1997). For instance, majority of student teachers in the faculties of education in Nigerian universities are student whose application for admission to others faculties were rejected or those withdrawn from other faculties owing to academic deficiency or inability to continue with scholarship in other areas of learning. Worse still, there are several unemployable graduates from other academic disciplines not trained as teachers that are employed to teach at all levels of education. The consequence of this today is the observed impoverished citizenry that is bereft of positive attitudes, truth, integrity, patriotism, dignity in labour including critical skills and knowledge needed as pre requisite ingredients for the society to develop. Apart from the fundamental problem of pooling persons with the weakest capacity together to be haphazardly trained as teachers, the teacher training process is observably entropic and impoverished to the extent that student teachers graduate from the system ill-qualified. The effect of this is the observed phenomenal rise in student wastage, collapsing bridges and houses, soaring morbidity rates in the hospitals and general display of gross ineffectiveness amongst different categories of manpower in the economy. This debacle according to Awanbor (2014), Nwadiani (2015) and Musa (2015) is because teachers are carelessly selected and poorly trained. It is therefore the purpose of this paper to examine how the teacher education programme in Nigeria can be re-designed to equip teachers with the capacity for better role performance. The specific objectives are to appraise the:

- admission policies at all levels of the teachers training programme;
- training period of teachers at all levels;
- issues involved in the training of teachers and;
- strategies that will make teacher education programme in Nigeria more relevant and purposeful

wise weak. It is the pro
ment according to Eji
ed; Liberman (1956) (logramme
the USA, Japan, Canada to the education ordinance of 1908, Taiwo (1980) and Fafunwa (1974)

ports that there was non-existence of any specific requirement that qualified
ons with high intelligence to be trained as teacher. Anyone that was able to pass *Reading, Writing,*
ach in schools. This yone to be trained as teacher. Anyone that was able to pass *Reading, Writing,*
above the quality of *Arithmetic, Grammar, Composition, Geography and History*, which
ere subjects taught at the primary school then were awarded the Pupil Teachers
at are below average certificate. What this meant was that primary school graduates were employed as
to tertiary institutions achers. The 1908 ordinance in what however, looks like an attempt to
engineering, pharmacandardize entry requirements into the teachers training programme provided for
For instance, majorite classification of teachers into *School Master, Assistant Teacher and Pupil*
gerian universities areacher for infant, primary and secondary schools respectively. The pupil
were rejected or thoseachers, selected from those who had passed standard five were made to receive
ency or inability at least one hour instruction daily based on standard six and seven syllabuses from
all, there are severa Headmaster or from other experienced teachers commissioned to teach. These
trained as teacherupil teachers, according to Fafunwa (1982) and Taiwo (1980) then sit for the
consequence of thisfirst and second pupil teachers' examination including a practical teaching test at
of positive attitudeshe end of the daily instructions on standard six and seven syllabuses. Those that
critical skills andpassed the two examinations were deemed qualified to teach while those that
y to develop. Apartfailed were still recognized as assistant teachers even without the requisite
a weakest, capacityqualification to teach.

More than 12 decades after the 1908 ordinance, teacher training
t teachers graduateinstitutions in the country have increased both in number and in scope without
phenomenal rise in any radical change in the overall situation that preceded the very first education
pidity rates in the ordinance in Nigeria. There is no specific requirement for intending teachers to
ifferent categories meet before placement into any of the existing training institutions. What we have
awanbor (2014), is a nebulous policy on admission into all academic programmes in colleges and
essly selected and faculties of education across the countries. For instance, while some universities
xamine how the admit N. C. E. holders at credit level into 300 level, others admit same into 200
ip teachers with level and in most universities diploma; certificate holders and NCE holders
are to appraise irrespective of grade are both admitted into 200 level. Similarly, at the sandwich
programme, most universities admit TCH holders and NCE holders irrespective of
grade into 6 and 5 contact years programmes respectively. At the NCE and
diploma awarding institutions, variations and fraudulent waivers in entry
requirement exists. More worrisome is the fact that some applicants that are too
weak to secure entrance into any of the regular teacher training institutions have
found solace in the NCE distance learning programme anchored by the National
Teachers' Institute (N. T. I.), Zaria with very inconsistent admission policies.
What all these explain is that the teacher training institutions in Nigeria are known
in the colloquial parlance as *Dugbe Markets* where barriers do not exist for
"weaklings", the rejected and the misfits from other disciplines are

accommodated. It has therefore become imperative to urgently reverse the trend by harmonizing entrance requirements *vis-a-vis* the diverse institutions presently available for training teachers with a view to paving way for the 21st century teacher to play his role more professionally as practised in developed countries.

Appraising the Training Period in Teacher Education Programmes in Nigeria

The practice in the past made provision for four grades of teachers' certificate the lowest being Grade IV Teachers. The Grade IV or vernacular teachers had 4 years of training after completing 4 years Junior primary education; Grade III teachers had two years training after the completion of eight years primary education programme. The phasing out of these grades of teachers led to the introduction of higher elementary also known as Grade II Teachers where primary school leavers spent 4 years to train as teachers. Grade III certificates and secondary school certificate holders spent two years each to train to acquire the grade II teachers certificate. The Grade I teachers certificate was awarded to TCII holders with five years teaching experience in addition to crediting two subjects at the advanced level of the General Certificate in Education (GCE). In all, about 17 years were needed to train in order to qualify for the award of the teacher grade I certificate, a requirement then to teach in classes at the secondary school level.

To improve on the above situation, the legendary Ashby Commission report in 1959, recommended the production of professional high level manpower in the teaching sub-sector of the economy. Consequent upon this, different types of teachers training programmes have been inaugurated in the universities, colleges of education and polytechnics, though with haphazard training duration for all kinds of certificate holders. Ogbinaka (2012) observed that most students admitted to study education courses in these institutions never bargain for it. They only take it up as courses of last resort after effort to secure their choice courses of study failed. Sometimes, candidate who posses two (2) credits or even less and without credit in English and Mathematics are admitted with fraudulent waivers. A typical admission requirement into faculties and colleges of education in Nigerian tertiary institutions as chronicled by JAMB (2016:2) on the average for all universities shows that candidates with any of the following qualifications are considered for admission:

- At least two merit level passes in relevant subjects and Nigeria certificate in education (NCE) and three other ordinary level credit passes in WASC, SSC/GCE (NECO, WAEC) NCB/NBC (NABTEB) or at least three merit level passes in teacher grade II Certificate (TCII) or any of their recognized equivalent obtain in one sitting. The "O" level credit should include English Language.

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- Three level merit passes at the NCE in the relevant subject areas and two ordinary level credit passes in WAEC/SSC/GCE/(NECO, WAEC) NTC/NBC (NABTEB) or two merit level recognized equivalent obtained at one sitting. The "O" level credit should include English Language.
- At least a merit pass in university Diploma in any of the following: Adult Education and Community Development, Social Work (DSW), Theatre Arts (DTA), Physical Education (DPE), Health Education (DHE), Public Administration (DPA), Mathematics Education (DAE), fisheries, Forestry and Wild Life Management (DFFN), Agriculture Extension and cooperatives (DAEC) and three ordinary level credit passes in WASC/SSC/GCE, NECO, WAEC) NTC/NBC (NABTEB) or three merit level passes in TC ii, or any of their recognized equivalent obtain in one sitting. The subject should include English Language.
- Diploma with at least credit level pass from any recognized university in Adult Education (DPE) Health Education (DHE), Public Administration (DPA), Mathematics Education (DAE), fisheries, Forestry and Wild Life Management (DFFN), Agriculture Extension and cooperatives (DAEC) and three ordinary level credit passes in (NABTEB) or three merit level passes in TC II or any of their recognized equivalent obtained at one sitting.
- At least two advanced level passes in the GCE or Higher School Certificate (HSC) In Art/Social Science subjects obtained at one sitting and three ordinary level credit passes in WASC, SSC/GCE NECO, WAEC, NTC/NBC NABTEB or three merit level passes in TCII or any of their recognized equivalent obtained at one sitting.

The polytechnics and colleges of education offer two and three years training programmes respectively while the universities have 2/3/4/5/6 years academic programmes duration leading to the awards of certificates, diplomas and degrees in education.

The noticeable uncoordinated structure in the training duration of teachers in the country's training institutions has therefore created the need for teachers to be professionally trained as in medicine, law and engineering. This can be done by commencing the training of teachers from teacher training secondary schools where only primary school leavers that passes the competitive entrance examination will mandatorily spend six years. Thereafter, those who graduate will be awarded the Teacher Training Certificate Examination (TTCE), where they are expected to pass five papers at credit level, mathematics and English language inclusive. It is this set of persons in this reform that should proceed through JAMB to spend another six years in either the universities or in the colleges of education for the award of bachelors degrees in education. This suggests that teachers will no longer be trained at the polytechnics. Five out of the six years

training period should be spent on class work while the last will be spent on one year practicum/teaching practice experience.

To ensure that only certificated teachers were recruited to teach in the past, the education ordinances of 1908, 1916 and 1926 made it mandatory for every school teachers irrespective of grade to possess a teaching certificate. Available information in the archives shows that both external and internal educational system efficiencies were high at that time because teachers were certified to teach. But today the slogan; *falling standard* in education (in terms of increasing failure rate; dropout, drug abuse, moral decadence, hooliganism and the likes) is echoed everywhere. The cause of this may probably be attributable to the present day teacher that is not trained popularly. The ones that are haphazardly trained are not certified by any known legislation as practised elsewhere. So the school as it is presently is staffed with teachers teaching not necessarily because they are trained or interested in teaching but because there are no other alternative jobs. To cure this malady, in the days ahead, there is an urgent need to re-craft the teacher education programme by adapting the education ordinance of 1926.

The policy mandated teachers to be registered before being employed as a condition to teach in any school in the defunct colony and southern province (Emenike, 2004). For this reason therefore, only graduates from the university faculties and colleges of education should then proceed to get certified by the proposed Teachers Registration Council (TRC). This means that only teachers whose names appear on the teachers register will be qualified to practice teaching in all Nigerian public/private primary and secondary schools. The reform that is being proposed here therefore is to continue from where the 1926 education ordinance stopped by activating Act 31 of 1993, the Act of parliament that established the TRC. The mandate of TRC according to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2002:1) is to determine what standards of knowledge and skills are to be attained by persons seeking to become registered as teachers; establish and maintain a register of teachers; regulate and control the teaching profession in all its aspects and ramification and; finally classify from time to time members of the teaching profession according to their level of training and qualifications.

A forensic analysis of this mandate shows that only the teachers trained in the universities and colleges of education and thereafter licensed by TRC will be employed as teachers to teach in both public and private schools. This is very germane because the quality of any educational programme can not be greater than the quality of its teachers (FRN, 2014). In this regard, the admission requirements, duration and the curriculum contents of the teacher education programme need to be re-crafted to meet the needs of the 21st century learners. The present haphazard training modes in the assertion of Urevbu (2006), Nwadiani (2014), Omoifo (2016) and Owie (2016) is the reason why teaching has not assumed the status of a profession in Nigeria. To enshrine quality assurance in

the training process therefore, Urevbu (2006) opined that academic requirements for admission into the teacher training institutions in the country should be harmonized and properly defined like to be that of medicine, engineering and the law professions.

Issues Involved in Teacher Education Programme Delivery

Teachers training colleges used to be part of the secondary education programme. They awarded the Teacher Certificate, Grade II (TC II), which in the past was the qualification required for primary school teaching across the country. However, since the National Policy on Education made the National Certificate in Education (NCE) the minimum qualification for teaching in the country, the teacher training secondary schools also known as Grade II colleges have since been disbanded. Other issues in the teacher education programme that need attention have been identified by Eresimadu and Arinze (2010) to include the:

- shortage of primary school teachers needed to attain the proposed 1:30 (1:40 in the transition years). The teacher-pupil ratio is far from being met and is more current operating at 1:76.
- low numbers of graduate going into the teaching profession are of grave concern. The major causes are due to inadequate funding levels and poor salaries. However, the prompt payment of salaries in 1998 improved the situation.
- fact that teachers have become marginalized and the profession is the most impoverished of all sectors of the labour force in Nigeria (UNESCO 1996). In almost every area of the system the conditions of the work environment, access to information, resources needed for supplies and equipment, salaries and benefits are extremely poor. Access to new technologies is virtually non-existent.
- teacher quality throughout Nigeria is unequal. There are also inequities in the availability of qualified teachers in the different states.
- most current primary school teachers have yet to attain the minimum qualification (NCE) as required by the National Policy on Education.
- most colleges of education offer courses which are not appropriate or relevant to the level and needs of most primary teachers. Teachers largely receive an education that is suited more to junior secondary level. The courses are largely of an academic nature as opposed to the development of processes, skills and career development geared towards the primary school.
- over-supply of NCE and graduate teachers in some disciplines and subject combinations while there is a general shortage of teachers in Physics, Mathematics, Home Economics, Business Education, Technical

Education, Primary Education Studies, Nursery Education and Computer Science.

- leadership in colleges needs to be streamlined by the NCCE. Not all colleges are staffed with professionally qualified and competent staff
- serious gender imbalance in some states is of concern, particularly a decline in the numbers of male teachers and their importance as role models.

Need to Re-Craft the Teacher Education Programme for Relevance

Teaching is a systematic rational and organized process of transmitting knowledge, attitudes and skills in accordance with professional principles. A teacher according to TRC (2006) therefore is a person who had undergone approved professional training in education at appropriate levels and capable of stimulating desirable changes in the behavior of learners. Adequate professional training of teachers in this regard is no doubt a *sine-qua-non* for quality assurance in the training programme. The framework established by the Teachers Registration Council (TRC) categorized teachers into four (4) groups:

Category	Qualifications	Where to teach
A	Ph. D holders plus Educational cert.	Universities polytechnics and colleges
B	Masters Degree Holder plus Educational cert.	Universities, polytechnics and colleges
C	B.Ed; B. A(Ed.) and B. Sc(Ed.) Holders	Secondary schools
D	NCE Holders	Primary schools

Figure 1: Model of Teacher Categorization in Nigeria

Source: Federal Republic of Nigeria (2002). *Teachers registration council handbook*. Abuja: NERDC

The categorisation is a good starting point for remodeling the *status quo ante* for quality assurance in the programme. Categories "A" and "B" teachers that did not study education at NCE and B. Ed levels can not technically or professionally be referred to as "teachers". Those that can be called teachers according to TRC (2006) are the teachers in categories "C" and "D". This is because to qualify as a teacher, professional training and regulation is needed. The Minimum Academic Standards (MAS) established by the NUC and NCCE for the training of teachers therefore, needs to be adopted by the teacher training institutions in Universities and colleges. The adoption of MAS for quality

assurance means that the minimum training period for B.Ed degree holders must be 4 years intensive academic work and one full year teaching practice for B.Ed degree programs and 3 years for NCE academic work and a full year teaching practice.

The teacher training programme curriculum also needs to be re-worked. Obsolete contents in the curriculum need to be expunged and replaced with requisite experience in the psychomotor domains that will impact more on both the learners and society. Additionally, innovations in the Information Communication Technology (ICT) need to be incorporated in the curriculum. To preserve the teaching profession, it is important that all qualified teachers are to apply for license to practice as a teacher. The condition to renew the license annually should be predicated upon presentation of evidence for participation in the proposed mandatory Continuous Training Conference of Teachers (CTCT). The advantage or usefulness of such a continuous training conference cannot be overemphasized.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Education is generally perceived as an *instrument par excellence* for affecting national development. The teacher is therefore critical in translating this perception, especially that of government into tangible developments. It is in this regard, that the teacher education programme in Nigeria needs to be overhauled to meet the need of the 21st century learner. On the basis of this, it is recommended that teaching as an occupation in Nigeria should be professionalized. This can be done by increasing the training period to 5 or 6 years; adjusting the curriculum to reflect professional training and; standardizing the minimum requirements for the selection of members into the profession. The enrolment of teachers and the conditions of service should also be re-designed to be at par with international best practices.

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