



**THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER
EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**

Suleiman Ibrahim Na'ibi & Abida A. Baba

Department Of Education

Aminu Kano College of Islamic and Legal Studies Kano

Abstract

Although various efforts have been made since the early period of western education in Nigeria to improve teacher education which culminated in the award of various education certificates by different teacher training institutes still there are certain problems surrounding the conduct of teacher education. This paper reviews the literature on the contributions of Christian missionaries towards the development of teacher education in Nigeria, the impacts of Phelps-Stoke's and Ashby's Commissions on the development of teacher education in Nigeria and the teacher education in contemporary Nigeria. The paper further examines the challenges facing teacher education in Nigeria, which include poor policy implementation, poor condition of service and the brain drain syndrome, quality assurance and internal efficiency, insufficient knowledge and the use of information technology (ICT) and the non-professionalization of teaching, among others. And finally it recommends solutions for

improvement, such as establishing supervisory bodies at the state level, making funds available to teacher training institutes, making teaching job lucrative and upgrading programmes, such as distance learning to meet up with minimum standard, e.t.c.

KEY WORDS: Development, Teacher Education, Challenges, Recommendations

Introduction

This paper reviews the contributions of Christian missionaries towards the development of teacher education in Nigeria, the impacts of Phelp-Stoke's and Ashby's Commissions on the development of teacher education in Nigeria and teacher education in contemporary Nigeria. It also examines some challenges facing teacher education and suggests recommendations for improvement. Teacher education refers to the professional education of teachers towards the attainment of the attitudes, skill and knowledge considered desirable so as to make them efficient and effective in their work in accordance with the need of a given society at any point in time. It includes training and/or education occurring before the commencement of service (Pre-service) and during service (In-service) (Ogunyinka, Kayode, Okeke, Innocent, Adedoyin, Charity, 2015). Adewuyi and Ogunwuyi (2002) also opined that teacher education is the provision of professional education and specialized training within a specified period for the preparation of individuals who intend to develop and nurture the young 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 would be sensitive and equipped with peaceful co-existence, environmental management and democratic process. Every society requires adequate human and material resources to improve its social organisation, preserve the culture, enhance economic development and reform the political structures. Education is often perceived as a prerequisite for quality manpower development and creation of the wealth, a sure path to success in life and service to humanity (Ogunyinka et al, 2015). Thus, teachers have an important role to play to adequately prepare the young for their roles in the society in order to achieve the set national objectives.

Christian Missionaries and the Development of Teacher Education in Nigeria

The origin and development of formal teacher education in Nigerian can be traced to the beginning of Western education in the pre-colonial period. The various church missions, such as the Wesleyan Methodists, the church missionary society, the Baptist, the church of Scotland (Presbyterian) and the Roman Catholic were not only the pioneers, but very active in the area between 1842 and 1860. Certainly, they contributed in no small measure to the development of teacher education in pre-colonial Nigeria (Ogunyinka et al, 2015). Adeyinka (1971) also opines that the missionaries trained their teachers through the apprenticeship pupil-teacher system. In such a system, the missionary teacher organized the school in

his residence premises and some of his pupils lived with him as part of his family. Fajana (1970) added that at about 14 years, pupils ought to have written and passed the Standard V examination. They were then recruited as teachers, but further received a one-hour instruction daily from the head teacher on teaching methodology. The duration of the course was two years after which they would sit for the pupil-teacher examination. Beside being the foundation of teacher education, the significance of this system was that it enabled the student-teachers to receive further training and education while contributing their quota in the formal educational needs of the society through teaching other pupils. From this very humble beginning, the system developed into a more complex one, involving college institutions and universities.

According to Ogunyinka et al (2015), the first teacher training college, known as the Training Institution, was established in Abeokuta in 1859 by the Church Missionary Society (CMS). The school was later moved to Lagos in 1896 after the missionaries were expelled from Abeokuta due to some disagreements between the missionaries and the local population/authorities most of whom were not very receptive to the new religion and the form of education being introduced by the missionaries. Perhaps the preponderance of the British presence and the security assurances in Lagos influenced the decision to relocate to Lagos. Subsequently, it was again relocated to Oyo where it became known as the St. Andrews College, Oyo. Later, in 1896, it was established as a Grade II Teacher's College (now Emmanuel

Alayande College of Education, Oyo) and ranks as the oldest Teacher's Training College in Nigeria. In 1897, the Baptist Mission established the Baptist Training College at Ogbomoso and in 1905 the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society founded an Institution for the training of catechists and teachers in Ibadan. The latter started with only four pupils, but the number of pupils increased to twenty by 1918 when the institution became known as the Wesleyan College, Ibadan.

As the missionaries made frantic efforts to provide teacher training institutions in the western part of the area that later became Nigeria, so were they trying to provide formal education and training for the early crop of teachers in the eastern part of pre-colonial Nigeria. Fafunwa (1974) argued that under the apprenticeship system, homeless boys and children of converted village heads lived with the missionaries and were taught to become pupil teachers and catechists. This practice of using the apprenticeship system to train teachers was very common in the western part of pre-colonial Nigeria before and after the establishment of teacher training institutions. The training of teachers in the Northern part of what became Nigeria started with the opening of the schools in Nassarawa by the British government in 1909. Generally, the pre-requisite qualification for admission into a teacher training institution was Standard IV. In addition, the candidate must have served as a pupil – teacher for two years, passed the pupil-teachers certificate examination and would then qualify to act as an assistant teacher before starting another two-year training course at teacher training institution (Fafunwa,

1974). At the end of the two years, the candidate would sit for and pass a prescribed teachers' certificate examination and be certified. With the development of the system, the need to review the principles and practice of teacher education arose, leading to the inauguration of the Phelp-stokes commission to undertake the task.

The Phelp-Stoke's Commission and the Development of Teacher Education in Nigeria

After the investigations and reviews done by the Phelp-Stokes Commission in 1925, the report severely criticized the teacher training system of the Christian missions. It revealed that the teacher training system was unsatisfactory, the pupil-teachers were over-worked and under-paid and the curriculum was poorly conceived (Fafunwa, 1974). He added that the supervisory system was inadequate and seemed that the missions were not adequately prepared for the task of training African teachers. In order to re-orientate and re-organize the teacher education system along the lines suggested by the report and redress the problems of teacher education in the colony, two types of teacher-training institutions were recommended, namely:

- (a) The Elementary Training College (ETC), for lower primary school teachers, and
- (b) The Higher Elementary Training College (HETC), for higher primary school teachers.

Both the ETC and the HETC programmes lasted for two years each and culminated in the award of Grades III and II Teachers certificates, respectively. Any candidate

willing to go for the ETC course would have served as a pupil-teacher for two years and on the successful completion of courses leading to the Grade III Certificate had to teach again at least two years before proceeding to the HETC for the two-year Grade II Programmes. This signifies a radical departure from the system adopted by the Christian Missions as it represents a more standard approach towards teacher education, training and development. However, the need for further reforms gave rise to the Ashby Commission.

The Ashby Commission and the Development of Teacher Education in Nigeria

In 1959, Nigeria's Federal Government set up its Sir Eric Ashby Commission to investigate and determine the extent of manpower needs of the country, especially within the education sector, with an eye on the future. After its works, the Ashby report prescribed that education was indeed the tool for achieving national economic expansion and the social emancipation of the individual (Urwick and Aliyu, 2003). It recommended the establishment of four Federal Universities in the country and also the introduction of some education vital courses in them. Subsequently, five Universities (instead of the recommended four) were established; these are University of Nigeria, Nsukka (1960), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (1962) and University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University, Ille-Ife (1962), Ibadan, first established as University College, Ibadan in 1948. A decade later, further demand for manpower compelled the country to establish the University of Benin (1982).

The implementation of the Ashby Commission report not only led to the establishment of Universities and the introduction of courses, but also birthed new degrees. In other words, before the commission's report, Bachelor of Arts in Education [B.A (Ed)] or Bachelor of Sciences in Education [B.Sc. (ed)] or Bachelor of Education [B.Ed] were not awarded by Nigerian Universities. Graduates of degree awarding institutions earned Bachelor in Arts or Sciences (i.e B.A., or B.Sc, e.t.c. degrees). Also, some of the institutions ran programs leading to the award of Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), sometimes as affiliates of the University of London (Fafunwa, 1974). Reporting on the state of the facilities for post-secondary education in Nigeria, the Ashby Commission observed that there was a gravely inadequate supply of trained and educated teachers in Nigerian secondary grammar schools, as opposed to the increase in demand for more of this category of education institutions. In view of the need to reconcile this contradiction, particularly as regards teacher education, the Ashy Commission, among others, recommends:

- (a) The establishment of more universities
- (b) The introduction of a Bachelor's degree in Education, i.e. B.A (Ed), B.Sc (Ed), or B.Ed
- (c) The training of more teachers for the nation's post-secondary schools

The Commission further recommended a teacher education program at the University level, observing that the new crop of Grade I teachers, popularly referred to as well-qualified non-graduate teachers, should be further

trained at the University levels to man the secondary schools and teacher-training colleges. The Commission therefore recommended the introduction of a Bachelor of Arts/Science degree in Education [B.A (Ed)/ BSc. (Ed)] in all the Nigerian Universities. The B.A (Ed) and B.Sc (Ed), according to Fafunwa (1974), was launched at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in September 1961 with 50 students. The University of Ibadan followed in 1963, Ahmad Bello University in 1964, the University of Lagos in 1965 and the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) Ile-Ife in 1967. From the foregoing, it is evident that the Ashby Commission played a part in the development of teacher education in Nigeria. In fact, one major significant event in the development of that was the transformation effect of the recommendations and the subsequent implementation of the Ashby Commission report.

Furthermore, the Ashby Commission's recommendation for Teacher's Grade I College was modified by the Federal Government to give rise to a new program, the successful completion of which earned a given candidate the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). This program was meant for the training and preparation of teachers for Junior Secondary Schools and the teacher training colleges in the country. The schools where these new programmes were run were popularly called Advanced Teachers Colleges (ATCs). The ATCs were established in different parts of Nigeria in the 1960s. For example, in Lagos and Zaria in 1962 and Ibadan also 1962 (but transferred to Ondo State where it became the Adeyemi College of Education). Others were established

at Owerri in 1962, Kano in 1964 and Abraka in 1968 (Jekayinfa, 2000). Admissions into these ATCs were open to candidates who held either the Teachers' Grade II Certificate passed two subject at the ordinary level of the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Examination or West African School Certificate (WASC) examination with credit passes in at least two subjects or those with GCE (O' Level) with credit passes in five subjects, including English. Beside admission criteria, NCE graduation requirements was such that a candidate must pass a final examination in two science or arts subjects, education and practical teaching, and must have passed ancillary subjects like General English, Library work, health and Physical Education offered during the program (Jekayinfa, 2000).

Teacher Education in Contemporary Nigeria

The responsibility of teacher education development in contemporary Nigeria is vested in the hand of Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) by virtue of the Teachers Registration Council Act that began in 2007 with the mandatory registration of all professionally qualified teachers. The TRCN began the implementation of the NPE provision that "all teachers in education institutions including Universities shall be professionally trained" [NPE section 8 (b) paragraph 72, 2004]. This was in a bid to ensure an adequate supply of manpower in Nigerian schools in conformity with the goals of teacher education, as specified in section 8 (b) of the NPE (2004).

Today, teacher education is much improved than it was before and a few decades after independence. The NPE, released 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 makes it mandatory for all teachers in Nigeria to be trained and stipulates the NCE as the minimum qualification for the profession. It also provides that teacher education shall continue to take cognizance of changes in methodology and curriculum, even as it underscores the need for teachers to be regularly exposed to innovation in their profession. It further recognizes the need for in-service training as an integral part of continuing teacher education. Today, the statutory responsibility for teacher education in Nigeria is vested in the Colleges of Education, Institutes of Education, Polytechnics, National Teachers Institute (NTI) and the Nigerian Universities, Faculties of Education. Nigerian Polytechnics and Colleges of Education award the NCE, which is a sub-degree qualification. The admission requirement for the NCE programme is senior secondary school certificate (SSSC) or its equivalent with passes in five subjects, including English Language, and the curriculum for NCE teachers is designed to produce teachers exposed to a range of courses, covering all that is required to make them competent professionals. New courses such as Computer Education, Mathematics and General English have been made compulsory for all NCE students. Also, relevant themes such as Nigerian Constitution, Environment/Conservation Education, Population and Family Life Education, HIV/AIDS

Education, Drug Abuse and Women's Education have recently been integrated into the curriculum. On its part, the National Teacher Institute (NTI) was established in 1976 by Decree No. 7 of 1976 to offer upgrading programmes for teachers through distance learning. Over the years, NTI has been providing in-service training for teachers during school holidays and weekends, leading to the award of NCE, B.Ed and the Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) Certificate. Similarly, Institutes of Education in the various Universities have also been involved through distance learning and offer part-time courses for the training of teachers who earn NCE, B.Ed and PGDE Certificates on successful completion of studies. Also, Faculties of Education prepare pre-service teachers for B.Ed, B.A (Ed), M, Ed and PhD degrees.

The Major Challenges Facing Teacher Education in Nigeria

Despite various recommendations and reforms that Nigerian teacher education underwent in several years, still various challenges bedevil the system. This may be connected to the fact that government neglected the education, the high growth of the population, the high demand of education services, e.t.c Some of these challenges are specifically examined as follows:

- 1- **Poor Policy Implementation:** - Poor policy implementation is a challenge to the quality delivery of teacher education. Poor quality delivery is responsible for the abysmal low performance of teacher graduates from the institutions of higher

learning in Nigeria. Anyakoha (1994) argued that our policies are written by knowledgeable writers who have foresight and believe strongly in what they write for the future, but the problem comes when it comes to translating theory into practice by implementers. However, several factors could be adduced as inhibitors to the smooth implementation of educational policies, thereby resulting to poor quality delivery, such as government underfunding education and the injudicious utilization of available funds by implementation agencies.

- 2- **Poor condition of Service and the Brain Drain Syndrome:** - In Nigeria, teachers' conditions of service do not hold enough incentives to attract and retain the best brains in Nigerian Schools (Osokoya, 2012). As a result of the weakening attraction to the teaching profession and, by extension, the resultant dwindling enrolment in the teacher education programs, those who remain in the profession maintain relatively low social status with accompanying psychological problems. Consequently, teachers either seek opportunities in other sectors with better service incentives or even migrate to other countries where teachers' conditions of service are much better in search of greener pastures.
- 3- **Quality Assurance and Internal Efficiency Issues:** - The academic quality of intending candidates for the teacher education is critical for quality assurance and internal efficiency in teaching profession. In Nigerian Tertiary Institutions, a trend has been evolving to the effect that candidates who apply to higher institutions

for teacher education are those who have either been denied admission in their choice areas of study or are basically unqualified for admission into such popular professional courses as medicine, law, engineering, architecture, e.t.c.

In addition to the above, the low quality of teachers produced through in-service training by National Teachers Institutes (NTI) is a serious challenge to teacher education in the country. Some Nigerian Scholars have noted that most of the teachers Upgraded to Teacher Grade II and teachers produced by the Pivotal Teacher Training Program (PTTP) by NTI were very deficient not only in the academic subjects they teach, but also in the techniques of teaching (Obanya, 2008).

4- Insufficient Knowledge and use of Information Technology (ICT): - Another major challenge to teacher education in Nigeria is that of insufficient knowledge and use of the ICT in a globalizing world. The knowledge and use of computer technology as well as the internet are a necessity for all teachers to guarantee the relevance of the system and its products in the 21st century. Many schools in Nigeria still operate the traditional education system with little or no adaptation to ICT (Osokoya, 2012).

5- Non-Professionalization of Teaching:- Many teachers in Nigeria have not measured up to the minimum international standard. This is because a large number of untrained and half-baked personnel are still retained in the system, leading to a scenario in which career in teaching is not yet professionalized. Many unqualified teachers are still in the employment

of some state Teaching Service Boards, while most higher education lecturers are yet to undergo training in education. Until government makes this training mandatory and pursues the policy vigorously, teaching will continue to be open to anyone. This situation holds the potential of further eroding professionalism in the teaching profession (Osokoya, 2012).

Conclusion

Findings from the literature and the challenges facing teacher education in Nigeria reveal a pathetic situation. This paper concludes that although various Nigerian governments did a lot to improve the system, teacher education programs in Nigerian higher institutions are largely lacking in quality. Neither do they confirm to international standards. This situation is mainly because of the governments' inability to keep up their commitment in the education sector in a way that answers to the needs and the changing, socio-economic dynamics of the country.

Recommendations

As a result of the critical examination of the above challenges, the following recommendations are suggested for improvement.

- 1- Supervisory bodies should be established at the state level to closely monitor and supervise frequently the activities of Colleges of Education. This will help in the proper implementation of the new minimum

standard envisaged by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE).

- 2- Government (Federal and State) should make funds available to Colleges of Education and other teacher training institutes. This will enable them to overcome the problems arising from shortage of funds.
- 3- Government should try to make the teaching job lucrative in order to attract better brains in to it and retain experienced ones from draining away.
- 4- The condition of teacher upgrading programmes, such as distance learning, should be improved to meet up with the minimum standards. Otherwise they should be scraped.
- 5- Computer literacy should be made mandatory to every teacher at all levels. And computer facilities should be made available to every teacher for use.
- 6- Teacher training programmes, such as the NCE requirement for admission, should be upgraded and strictly adhered to in order to select the best prospective teachers from the beginning.

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