

## **TEACHER EDUCATION FOR THE SECONDARY SCHOOL SYSTEM: CHALLENGES BEYOND THE 1990S**

**By**

**KAYODE I. JIMOH**

*Dept. of Social/Studies, Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin*

**AND**

**BOLAKALE A. ALANAMU**

*Dept. of Int. Science College of Education Lafiagi*

### **ABSTRACT**

*The preparation of efficient and effective teaching personnel is crucial to the attainment of the goals of the national policy on education (FME, 1981). The current emphasis on quality of teaching depends largely on the quality of teachers. While the national education policy on paper recognises the need for better-qualified and progressive teachers, there is, however, an obvious contradiction between the requirements of the policy and its practical implementation. As the meaning of education becomes clearer and with increasing knowledge. All of which have far reaching implications for the status and role of teachers, there is the need for definite policy guidance for effective teacher training programmes for the future.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the developing countries, there is a common faith that education contributes to economic growth and overall national development. Consequently formal education is being expanded at all levels to involve increasing numbers of people in addition to the expansion of educational opportunities. Governments are modifying educational systems to make them more efficient and effective agents in the achievement of national goals. Teachers constitute the second most important input in any educational system after the learners. Without efficient and qualified personnel in the education industry, qualitative learning outcomes cannot be achieved. Teacher takes long time to prepare and no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers (Oriaifo, 1982).

It is a misconception to believe that anybody can teach particularly at the level lower than the tertiary level. Gone are the days when the view held of a good teacher is the ability to model the master teacher. (Oriaifo, 1982). Modern educational theories and practices see teaching as scientific, containing elements of scientific procedure with the skills of effective teacher being cultivated rather than in-born, (Itotoh, 1966). This view point should be clearly understood if the problem and inadequacies of

teacher education at the secondary school level can be fully appreciated and changes made for better practices.

The purpose of this paper therefore is to show the nature as well as the functional features of teacher education, considered in particular in national building, as well as to highlight the inadequacies of the present structure in terms of implementation of the national policy on education (1981) at the 3-3 levels of the 6-3-3-4 system.

### **PURPOSE OF TEACHER EDUCATION**

According to Oriafio (1982), the amount and quality of learning that take place in the school depend on the competence of the teachers in the school efforts aimed at the improvement of education should be focused on the preparation of the teachers.

In line with the thinking of Oriafio is the axiom that, no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers. Hence, this statement cannot be over-emphasised for it aptly and succinctly underscores the decisiveness of the teacher - factor in any educational system.

Musella (1970) is of the view that:  
The purpose of teacher education is  
Ultimately and objectively the improvement of  
Education in its totality, (p 74).

Arising from the qualities and functions of the teacher, this writer is of the view that the purposes of teacher education should include the following.

- (a) The production of academically and professionally sound and highly motivated, Conscientious and dynamic breed of teachers,
- (b) Cultivation of social life, adequate adaptability and positive national awareness in prospective teachers to the changing educational conditions,
- (c) The production of knowledgeable, competent and effective teachers capable of Inspiring children to learn.
- (d) The inculcation of the quality of progressive thinking in teachers. (Musella 1970).

### **HISTORICAL OVER VIEW OF TEACHER EDUCATION FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL IN NIGERIA**

The historical development of teacher education is dated back to the missionary period and appeared to have grown side by side with the development of secondary education. At the early stage of Nigerian educational history, there was no specific institution for the education of teachers. All categories or qualifications were accepted to teach ranging from those who had as few subjects as three subjects or advanced level certificate holders. In the same way, salaries of teachers and other remunerations varied from one institution to another. As time went on. More serious efforts were made to educate teachers following increase in school enrolment brought about by the introduction of the universal primary education (U.P.E) in 1976.

This programme of training teacher was referred to as a crash programme; majority of the intakes were West African School Certificate (W.A.S.C) holders or General Certificate in Education. Ordinary level. On the completion of two years course, they were designated "Pivotal Teacher", other categories of teacher included those that were produced from Colleges of Arts and Science and Technology, and the

holders of N.C.E. who were regarded as "Well qualified non-graduate teachers. (Alele - Williams, 1981) these groups of teachers contributed immensely towards the solution of teacher shortage for the post primary institutions at that time. Majority of teachers in this card ceased to be recruited, as qualified graduate teachers emerge from faculties of education of our universities.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE CURRICULUM FOR TEACHERS AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL**

Nigeria is a country that was firstly ruled by Britain a colony for several decades and with the rise of nationalism in the then British West Africa, Nigeria gradually sought for her independence (1st October, 1960).

Before its independence, However, its political and educational systems were patterned after those of Britain. (Fafunwa, 1960), the examination and certificates obtained also emphasised the essential requirements of British. These created some problems as recipients of such education could fit into nothing but white-collar job.

Secondary education, in terms of its content and methodology came under very severe criticisms (Adelabu. 1971). Most people saw such education as not emphasising the essentials of Nigerian environment. The need for the kind of education which should reflect the aspirations of the Nigerian people and demands of the environment came in to focus. At the same time, quality instruction was seen as a corollary quality product.

These criticisms resulted into various conferences and activities or various commissions among them is the national curriculum conference of 1969: (Fafunwa. 1960) deliberated on, among other things, the issues of curriculum and quality teachers for the secondary schools. The conference outcome stated:

The need to emphasised the training of highly motivated, conscientious And successful classroom teachers for all education levels.....

Provides teachers with intellectual And professional backgrounds  
Adequate for their assignment; produce teachers  
Who by their training and discipline  
Will be adaptable to the changing role  
Of education in a society effective  
Teachers who can inspire children to learn, (p 4).

The deliberations from the various conferences and similar others were later articulated to form the general guidelines for educational ventures at all levels in Nigeria, crystallising in the document referred to now as the national policy on education: FRN: (1977) revised (1981). In the national policy on education, (FRN: 1931), secondary school curriculum is essentially pre-vocational, geared towards inculcating in the youths at early stages the skills of science and technology. The curriculum is divided into two, comprising core and pre vocational subjects:

Maths, English lan.,  
Nig. Lan., Social Studies,  
Religious instruction,  
Physical Education,  
Vocational courses and Sciences.

Wood work, Electronics  
Mechanics, Local Crafts,  
Business studies,  
Pre Vocational

## CORE SUBJECTS

### **CHALLENGES OF TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME BEYOND 1990S**

The meaning of education becomes clearer, many reforms are expected in the field of education. These will no doubt have important implications for the status and function of teachers. Improved selection techniques, training programmes, change in ideas regarding the learning process have far reaching consequences for the status and role of teachers, such changes may bring about changes in the types of personality and skills needed for active performance in future: (Imogie, 1990).

The new knowledge coming up and the desire for more knowledge by all categories of young teachers, there is the need for government to provide guiding principles for developing teachers sufficiently and qualitatively beyond this century. At present, the educational policy on education (FRN: 1981), has no clearly worked out philosophy of teacher qualification with respect to further education of teachers.

The unresolved issue of teacher education is whether education of teachers should simply be referred to as a mechanical process, divorced from reference to an overall conception of the training and purpose of the life long process in which teachers will be involved and which should act as the touch stone of their professional life or should teacher education emphasize skill acquisition and methodological process where teacher education programmes emphasize the latter, it constitutes a soulless prescription, concerned with processes rather than purpose with quantity rather than quality, with earning a living rather than making a life; with ephemeral rather than cultivation of attitudes and values that will make permanent guides throughout one working life. (Solaru, 1964).

The current emphasis on education as depicted by large budgetary allocations by various governments whether in a developed or developing economy shows that education is a core instrument for economic and technological advancement. (Aso, 1985). This also shows that there is an urgent need to build a solid foundation for our educational ventures, flaws of our educational system dating back to the colonial period are still seen as insurmountable. Whatever problems we have encountered in our efforts to correct these inadequacies should be seen as an experience and guide for the future whatever programmes that are designed for education of teachers should emphasise the danger of sacrificing quality in our race against time.

Secondary education constitutes a crucial stage in the preparation of manpower for technological and scientific advancement. Youths who constitute the large population at this level of instruction must be guided and equipped with the right attitude and skills. With poor teacher preparation and the existence of unqualified professionals in our school system, successful implementation of the national policy on education appears illusive.

The abilities of the teacher are crucial determinants of the quality of education in any society. It is also the general belief that teachers with bare competence are not likely to help the youths meet the challenges of modern living. In the same way, ineffective curriculum at best produces efficient drill masters rather than teachers. As indicated in the national policy on education (FRN: 1981) "no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers" (p.1).

Teachers therefore, ought to be sufficiently prepared in order to meet the complex demands of the teaching and learning processes. In the light of these

inadequacies of the present teacher education programmes and enkindled public interest on matters relating to quality teachers and instruction, certain issues ought to be given serious attention. These include:-

1. **Standards in Teacher Education Programme:-** Teaching as a profession is fast receiving recognition all over the world in Nigeria, the federal government has established the national commission for colleges of education (NCCE) charge with responsibility of ensuring the existence and maintenance of high standard performance. The issue of accreditation needs to be tackled urgently to avoid further pollution of Teacher Education Programmes.

The "housing" of teacher education programmes or faculties of education of universities. Should teacher preparation be handled by an institution that can afford its operation or should there be rationalization of courses so as to have some measure of quality control? Whatever means used in resolving this issue, the idea of teachers teaching preparing teachers must be considered in relation to the overall efficiency of school learning.

2. **The Issue of Clientele In Teacher Education Programmes:-**

Teachers have been the major areas of criticisms in matters relating to the school system. The public believes that the standard of education is falling, while some see the massive failure in our public examinations to in effective teaching procedures and lack of personnel commitment on the part of teachers. There is need to review the nature of employment to teacher education programmes.

Should the present situation continue where by the major clientele for teacher education holders of West African School certificate (WASC) are or general certificate in education (GCE) who do not possess any teaching experience? Considering the length of time of Teacher Education programmes, do these actually imbibe sufficient knowledge and skills before graduation? If we actually require a solid foundation for teacher professionals, it is necessary to begin the training of teachers at a very early stage, preferably during the selection period of admission into the Junior Secondary Schools:(Akubue 1981, alele williams, 1961).

### **Funding Issue:**

Although, education has continued to attract a large portion of government financial resources, the situation in our school reveals the existence of inadequate facilities amidst large enrollment figures. as a result of little funds in relation to the large enrollment government alone cannot finance educational ventures. What should constitute sources of educational funding should be decided early.

Many people have advocated the bearing of the larger portion of financial responsibility for education by the government as well as co-operate organisations. These will enable more people join the teaching force and make it a career.

### **The Issue of Further Education:**

Without quality teachers, the goal of the national policy on education (FRN, 1981) cannot be achieved. (Akubue, 1981) observed that the pre-service education of teachers can hardly be said to have sufficiently prepared them for the problems they face in school situation. It is also observed (Adelabu, 1971) that most teachers are

trained in the traditional core subjects and therefore unsuitable for the vocational competence now required. After about many years of introduction of the guidelines, no appreciable steps have been taken to provide the right calibre of teachers in our secondary school since it takes time to train a teacher, the best way of helping is through the in-service training which will give them the opportunity to further their education: (Itotoh, 1989), in this case the period to be granted and all other modalities (including finance and remuneration to be attached) more than ever before ought to be decided to ensure effective role performance.

### **The Issue of Technical and Science Institution:**

The number of science and technical teacher in our secondary schools deserve some attention if the current emphasis on science and technology is to contribute to industrial development. Courses and appropriate facilities must be provided to enable the vocational content of the national policy on education to be achieved.

### **CONCLUSION**

National policy: (FME: 1981) provides guidelines for educational practice in Nigeria, teachers who constitute the crucial element in the teaching learning process must be provided in sufficient quantity and quality to facilitate the achievement of goals. The content teacher education programmes should be related to the curriculum of secondary education and must emphasise skills necessary for vocational competence. Preparation of teachers should start early to ensure sufficient exposure to knowledge and relevant ideologies.

Qualified teachers are crucial to quality instruction. Quality is related to the nature of knowledge and experience of professionals. Successful implementation of the goals of secondary school education requires decisions on certain issues. These include the issues standard technical science institutions etc.

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