

**THE PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES OF NIGERIAN  
EDUCATION AS IT RELATES TO  
TEACHER EDUCATION**

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## **Abstract**

No education system can rise above the quality of its teachers, and there is no nation that can rise above its education system. While education unlocks the door to modernization, it is the teacher who holds the key to the door. Hence, the paper presents the position of teachers in the realization of the philosophy and objectives of Nigerian education. It examines and discusses the role of teacher education in the preparation of effective teachers towards the attainment of the objectives of Nigerian education. It also looks into other determinants of teacher's influence on the attainment of the philosophy and objective, of Nigerian education. Suggestions on ways through which teachers could be made to play an appreciable role in the achievement of Nigerian educational objectives are proffered.

## **Introduction**

The importance and significance of education cannot be overemphasized because it is the process through which the cultural values of a people, knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities are transmitted among its populace in order to prepare them for further membership and participation in the maintenance, growth and development of the society.

Education takes care of the total development of the individual personality and the society of which all individuals are a part. Hence, no worthwhile development and progress can take place in any society unless the citizens are well educated and are fully equipped to use their education as a tool for solving the diverse and complex problems facing that society, thereby bringing about meaningful change and positive progress in that society.

In Nigeria, education has been adopted as an instrument par excellence for achieving the national objectives (FGN, 1981 revised). As an independent and developing nation confronted with the problems of nation building, social integration and economic development, education is seen and adopted as a means of dealing with the great problem of national development. It is through education that the sense of national unity, patriotism, loyalty, etc, are transmitted into members of the society.

However, it must be noted that nothing meaningful and convincing can be achieved through education without the efforts of teachers. Teachers are the main actors in the development of both the individual and the society at large. Hence, the

need to equip him for the job through exposure to the knowledge, skills and abilities relevant to his noble assignment.

### **Philosophy and objectives of Nigerian Education**

The philosophy and objectives of education of a nation is usually an off-short of the people's goals which can be regarded as the identified societal values to be attained or sustained through education. It is to be noted that the philosophy and objectives of Nigerian education has metamorphosised into the present state, having passed through some stages with appreciable landmark.

Unlike the colonial education which was a replica of British education system lacking harmony with the needs and aspirations of Nigerians and was geared towards the production of mere subordinates who would never rob shoulders with the colonial masters but remain perpetually at the bottom of the economic, as well as political ladder (Fafunwa, 1974), the current philosophy and objectives of education was formulated based on the following criteria:

(i) A systematic thought of the nature of man, the caliber of man to be produced through education, the type of society desired for him, the type of values cherished in the society and such that the individual would cherish.

Nigeria as a nation aims at building a free and democratic society, a just an egalitarian society, a united strong and self reliant nation a great and dynamic economy and a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens (FEG 1981, revised).

Based on these national objectives, the philosophy of Nigerian education has to be geared towards, self-realization, better human relationship, individual and national efficiency effective citizenship national consciousness, national unity as well as towards, social, cultural, economic, political scientific and technological progress.

The aims and objectives of education to which the philosophy is linked are;

- (i) The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity.
- (ii) The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the society.
- (iii) the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around and
- (iv) The acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competences both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society. (FGN 1981 revised)

The philosophy and objectives of education stated above are quite Laudable and necessary. But to achieve them, the teacher who teaches the values and all that are needed for the survival of the individual and the society in all ramifications must be fully equipped for effective teaching.

### **The Place of Teachers in Education**

Except for the individual recipient of education, the teacher remains the most essentials and critical element in a student's achievement. The teacher has always played very important role and has been serving as the great hub upon which educational development has been hinged.

Stressing the place and role of teachers in education, Oltaway (1980) pointed out the following duties of a teacher:

- An academic specialist a character trainer
- The source of authority of the adult society
- One that is responsible for the socialization
- Of young ones on behalf of the adult society
- A moralist and the final arbiter of the rules (P. 186-189)

Teachers represents the hope of any society. He is the possessor of the education needed to solve the perplexing problems of our times, such as juvenile delinquency, cultism etc. whatever a society is or will depends become largely on the teacher that grooms the individual member of that society.

Ajayi (1993) identified teachers as the main focus of development several educational philosophers also stressed the dynamic role being played by teachers in the development of the society. John Locke (1632-1706) saw the teacher as the main agent of through which values, ideas attitudes and knowledge needed by a child in passed to him

In the same vein Dewey, (1905) saw a pragmatic teacher as the gate way towards the attainment of technological advancement. Spencer Herbart (1920-1903) argued that it is only the teacher that can ensure that education aids the preparation of a person for complete living.

Through exposure to all the branches of knowledge provided by the teachers, man is made truly human comenius (1592-1670). Hence, the teacher, can be seen as the main agent of change, (maver. 1966 do 7. 229 and 214).

Regardless of the preparation put up by the government in terms of preision of educational facilities, the absence of a teacher in the classroom makes the efforts fruitless.

### **Teacher Education and the realization of Nigerian Philosophy and Objectives of Education**

The adage goes that teachers are made, they are not born. It is a truism that unqualified teachers will mar, rather than make the individual needed for the much anticipated national development. If men and women are to be fully prepared for life, and if our cultural values, knowledge, understanding and skills are to be adequately transmitted to the members of the society if effective citizens are to be produced and for the national unity, and national consciousness to be displayed in Nigeria, the place and impact of teacher education are very crucial. Teachers will also have to be fully equipped to meet up with these challenges

It is true to say that one can only give out what he has an empty barrels have nothing to give other than the loudest sound. Retardation of the highest order is being invited in a situation where unqualified teachers dominate the nation's classrooms.

Stressing the need for teacher education, Ukeje (1995) pointed out that the teacher has always been on the stage. What he knows and can do will make a great difference, and what he does not know and cannot do can be an irreparable loss, not only to the child, but also to the nation. Since teachers are in constant contact with the students who are to be prepared for self -realization and for the upliftment of the society through exposure to societal values and expectations, the teacher ought to be fully groomed for this assignments.

### **Summary and Analysis of the National Policy guideline on Teacher Education**

Realizing the strategic importance of teacher education to the attainment of the general educational objectives, the policy guideline states that Teacher Education will continue to be given a major emphasis in all Nigerian educational planning this is because no education can rise above the quality of its teachers.

To achieve the stated educational objectives required for National development, the Federal Government (1981, revised) states the aims and objectives of teacher education as:

- (a) The production of highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of education system.
- (b) Further encouragement of the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers
- (c) Helping teachers to fit into the social life of the community and society at large and to enhance their commitment to national objectives
- (d) Providing teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and making them adaptable to any changing situation not only in the life of their country but in the wider world
- (e) Enhancing teacher's commitment to the teaching profession

For the attainment of these objectives, Nigerian Government thus intends to make teachers that are teaching at all levels of education professionally trained. Teacher training institutions earmarked to give the required training were: (i) Grade II Teachers College (ii) Colleges of Education (iii) Institution of Education/faculty of Education (iv) National Teacher Institution.

For the realization of teacher education objectives, and to ensure that quality teachers are produced for the Nigerian educational institutions the government proposed to use the following techniques.

- (1) Training on the job the untrained teachers teaching in Nigerian Schools.
- (2) Quality and quantity of teaching staff to be ensured at all levels of education.
- (3) Training of teachers through various crash programmes in preparation for the commencement of the universal Primary Education (UPE) e.g Pivotal programmes and the like.
- (4) As an off-shoot of the UPE and the 3-3 secondary system the existing Grade II programmes especially the 5 - year post primary will be replaced with 3 - year post Junior Secondary school training programme
- (5) Making NCE the minimum basic qualification for entry into teaching profession. Only candidates with minimum qualification in WASC or its equivalent would gain admission to colleges of education.
- (6) To provide teachers with the intellectual and professional

Background adequate for their assignment while in training, all categories of teachers are to be exposed to general and professional course structured on the following components:

- (a) General studies (Basic Academic Subjects)
  - (b) Foundation studies (Principle and practice of education)
  - (c) Studies related to the student's intended field of teaching (e.g Religious studies, History, Mathematics, Economics, Technical education, Chemistry, English etc.)
  - (d) Teaching practice
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- (7) Widening the scope of teacher education to cater for the requirements of vocational, technical and commercial education.
  - (8) Universities to work out the modality through which holders of NCE certificate are allowed to run two years degree programme
  - (9) Replacement of the one final examination hither to embraced in schools with continuous assessment system of evaluation of instruction.
  - (10) Teacher's Bursary scheme to be revised based on the constitutional provision in order to involve state and local governments.
  - (11) Catering for teacher's inadequacies through in service programmes.
  - (12) Establishment of National Teacher's Institute to cater for in-service training of practicing teachers
  - (13) The same dignity to be accorded teachers with identical qualification teaching at varying levels of education
  - (14) Promotion opportunities for every teacher for professional growth at each level.
  - (15) Legal and public recognition of teaching as a profession. Teacher's council to be set up to perform the following functions. Accreditation, Certification, Registration, Discipline and Regulation Governing teaching profession. Stipulated time within which to qualify to be given to teachers without requisite qualification or leave the profession.
  - (16) Introduction of measures to enable teachers to participate more in the

production and assessment of educational materials and teaching aid, the planning and development of curriculum, school buildings and furniture, evaluation of technical innovation and new techniques

The question to be addressed is "to what extent is teacher education aiding the attainment of Nigerian educational objective" One can say that teacher education programme has indeed contributed towards the achievement of Nigerian philosophy and objectives of education. However, great efforts are to be made towards the attainment of perfection

### **Recruitment of Trainees**

Presently, several Nigerian teacher training institutions are overflowing as a result of the sporadic increase in the number of the candidates. Facial assessment of this will arouse a sense of satisfaction that the problems of inadequate supply of teachers in Nigerian schools are becoming a forgotten issue.

But to a great extent, the quality of candidates admitted into some of these institutions is nothing to write home about. According to the National Policy on Education (FGN 1981 revised), Grade II Trainees drawn from holders of the Junior School Certificate are those who cannot proceed to the senior secondary school. The same is true of those recruited for NCE programme. Most of the NCE candidates are mainly those who could not secure admission or are not qualified for admission into universities or polytechnics.

While some colleges of education give admission to students with a minimum of four credits at a sitting in relevant subjects together with a pass in English Language, some others settle for three credits, some admit candidates with only two credits. The situation is further worsened as more deficient candidates are admitted through the Pre-NCE programme. (JAMB 1995. P 100).

Unfortunately, too students with low entry qualifications may repeat several times and when they have overstayed they go about canvassing for leniency through lecturers who are either their relations or townmates. The spoken as well as the written English of many of these students are nauseating. What is to be expected from such teachers after the completion of their training? The answer is basically emptiness and failure etc.

Thus one can say that some who are recruited for teacher education programmes are people of low quality.



How then do we produce teachers who can be regarded as citadel of knowledge needed for the realization of a developed nation. What to be borne in mind is the fact that the quality of a product is determined by the quality of the input.

Added to this is the fact that after the completion of courses the possession of needed competencies and personnel characteristics are hardly considered in the recruitment of teachers into the school. All sorts of teachers are found in our schools because the basic factors of stateism, religion, ethnicity etc, rather dictates the choice of the employment of teacher in Nigeria. Who you are and the person know are the conditions that counts not merit.

The realization of teacher education objectives especially the production of conscientious and efficient teachers will be difficult unless those who are keenly interested in the job are brought in. The national consciousness and national vision that propels a teacher to go extra mile in the realization of educational objectives are lacking in many Nigerian teachers.

Fafunwe (1974) classified individuals found in teaching profession in Nigeria. They are:

- (i) Those who believed that they are called into the profession and are ready to give all that it takes for the success of the work.
- (ii) Those who for personal reasons opted for teaching.
- (iii) Those who have other doors closed to them and had to go in for teaching.

One can conclude that many who go in for teaching as the last option are not likely to display their best in the classroom.

### **Curriculum of Teacher Education**

Towards the realization of the cardinal objective of teacher education which is the production of teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for the profession while all categories of trainees are groomed in general and professional courses. Student teachers are given extensive academic training in their subject specialization and the general studies. They are also exposed to the principles practice of education and at least twelve weeks of teaching practice under the supervision of experienced teachers. Quality production of teachers is also ensured by giving meaningful trainees to the teachers / lecturers of the trainers.

Presently, attainment of minimum standard is being encouraged by the National commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and the National University commission. The issue of publish or perish syndrome operating in our ivory towers influences lecturers dedication and commitment to teaching.

For effective classroom performance, trainees are taught the pre and post instructional skills and different methods of teaching Turney et.al (1977) Moor (1089)

In line with the above Borish (1977) said that the teacher education also imparts three main types of competencies needed by teachers. They are

- (i) Knowledge -Cognitive understanding to be demonstrated.
- (ii) Performance - Demonstrated in the classroom and
- (iii) Consequence competencies (specifying pupils behaviour viewed as evidence of teaching effectiveness)

### **Students Dedication to Studies**

Many students today display non-challant attitude to their academic work. Rather than facing their studies squarely, several prefer to gyrate round the town hoping to 'burn the night' a week to examination for miracles to happen, such laissez-faire attitude mostly resulted into failures or a 'basket - full' of let my people go' kind of grade. In such cases, students eventually graduate with close to nothing learnt from school undoubtedly the society cannot be developed through such 'half-baked' teachers.

The quality of knowledge, performance and consequence competencies imparted into trainees either at the universities or colleges of education is adversely affected through the immoral attitudes of some lecturers. Female teachers in this category cannot be said to have received what will make them truly effective in the classroom.

Teachers education helps the trainees to fit into social life of community and society. It also aids the development of national unity. For instance, religious programmes, cultural activities are allowed in most of the teacher education institutions. Peaceful co-existence is also encouraged as people with different religion and ethnic background relate together everywhere on our campuses.

### **Teaching Practice Exercise**

Another teacher education programme that aids the attainment of Nigerian educational objectives in the teaching practice exercise. It is an essential component of teacher education programme which last for 12 weeks. Since practice make perfection, teaching practice is made compulsory for all trainees. It gives the opportunity to apply educational theories learned in classroom to practical situation under the supervision of well organized supervisors. Trainees are able to acquire practical experience of directing the learning of a group of learners over a period of time. Also they are able to develop personal characteristics, professional competencies, knowledge and skills needed for teaching.

The problems associated with teaching practice which can hinder the effectiveness of the scheme include;

- (1) Obtaining enough qualified cooperating teachers to assist in the assessment of the students
- (2) Rejection of students from schools where they are posted for several reasons.
- (3) In adequate preparation of students through the micro-teaching programme (Gadgets needed like video tapes, tape recorder etc, for the teaching skills may not be available).
- (4) Teachers laizefaire attitude to micro-teaching programmes
- (5) Students are sometimes ignorant of the importance of micro-teaching to their teaching effectiveness
- (6) Obtaining reliable assessment of student teachers and
- (7) Non - availability of sufficient funds for effective teaching practice organization and inadequate remuneration for supervisors. (Daramola 1996)

### **Teacher's In-service training Programme**

Teachers who are the possessors of the key to the door of national development are expected to be abreast of time. Training should not be once for all. In-service training has been conducted by the NTI, institutes of Education, Colleges of Education, Ministries of Education etc. but the fact remains that only few teachers benefit from the scheme as a result of limited fund. And since the attendance at such programmed had not been considered for the advancement of teachers, many who attend such programmes do so with levity.

## **Other Determinants of Teacher's influence on the Attainment of the philosophy and objective of Nigerian Education**

### **Teacher's condition of Service**

Although teacher education is to produce highly motivated, conscientious and effective teachers, their salaries have always been delayed and their benefits have been denied them over the years Adewumi (1995). Since good treatment breeds good output, teachers must be encouraged to display their best by giving them what is bonafidely theirs in good time. This will prevent qualified and experienced ones from seeking other softer grounds elsewhere. Teachers must also be prevented from going into other businesses like farming, trading etc out of frustration. Unless better treatments are accorded, teachers, commitment to duty will be impossible.

### **Professional status of teaching**

Teaching has not yet become a profession in Nigeria contrary to the National Policy guidelines which stressed that legal and public recognition will be given the teaching profession. Teaching in Nigeria is yet to attain the main characteristics of a profession such as:

Acquisition of absolute knowledge by teachers before practicing strict control of entrance into the profession provision of a code of conduct strictly guiding the behaviour of practitioner having a governing body vested with the power to monitor the behavior of its members, and having absolute and complete freedom to practice the profession Leberman (1956) Hoyle and Megamy (1980).

Since teaching has not become professionalized like other professions such as medicine and law, the society does not attach much importance to it. Consequently, teachers are accorded very low status in the society. This treatment demoralizes rather than encourages the teachers in the discharge of their duties. In such a situation, their best could not be displayed in the classroom. Lack of educational facilities in Schools

It is possible for teachers to be well trained and posted to schools, but close to nothing will be done when the necessary teaching tools and gadgets are not available. Teachers who are 'choked' as a result of lack of teaching materials are sometimes frustrated and merely give a fraction of their best in the classroom. Teacher's Self Image

The belief of teachers about themselves contribute tremendously to teacher's input and the output of their work. Teachers who come from low-socio-economic

backgrounds never encourages their children to go into teaching. Many find it difficult to introduce themselves in the public as teachers because of the low status attached to teaching in the society. Hence, many are so self defeated and rejected which has greatly reduced teaching to a mean job.

### **Conclusion/Suggestions**

Teacher education has indeed contributed to the realization of Nigerian educational objectives. With a very rich and relevant curriculum, several teachers have been produced and posted to Nigerian classrooms over the years.

However, in order to allow for qualitative teacher education, the following suggestions should be considered by the government and our teacher education institutions.

- 1 Instruments of selection into all Nigerian teacher's Colleges must be modified and improved upon. This will enhance qualitative teacher education.
- 2 Government should be more committed financially to the development of teachers by supplying teacher colleges with enough funds and teaching facilities (classrooms, libraries, Micro-teaching equipment, good students/lecturers accommodation attractive salaries etc).
- 3 Trainees should be re-orientated on what Teaching practice entails.
- 4 Teachers should have self esteem and be proud of their profession.
- 5 Teaching practice supervisors should be adequately remunerated in view of the economic crunch being currently experienced.
- 6 For the sake or effectiveness, the cooperating schools/teachers should give necessary assistance to all students on teaching practice exercise.
- 7 Due to the cruciality of it to the overall education system, Nigerian government should make teacher education completely free. Bursary award and other allowances should also be given the students.
- 8 Untrained teachers should be disallowed.
- 9 Workshop and Seminars should be regularly organized for pre-service teachers and those on the field.
- 10 Lecturers teach the student teachers should be more dedicated to their jobs. Moral bankruptcy must not be displayed by lecturers who are the custodians of the trainees.

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