

# TEACHER EDUCATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF NIGERIA ECONOMY: EMPHASIS ON TERTIARY EDUCATION

By

**DR. CHRISTIANA .N. NWADIOKWU**

*Department of Curriculum Studies*

*And Educational Technology,*

*College of Education, Agbor*

*Delta State*

## **Abstract**

*Teachers are seen as professionally trained personnel charged with the responsibility of disseminating positive knowledge, attitudes and skills to learners in the school. Transformation on the other hand involves a shift in our orientation in such a way that new actions and results become possible. The analysis established that teachers serve as role models to their learners. Through this, the character and personality of the learners are molded in the right direction which leads them to their final destinations. The paper examined the concept of teacher education; concept of transformation; concept of tertiary education in Nigeria; Challenges of Teacher Education in Nigeria; Quality of Tertiary Education in Nigeria; Roles of Teachers in transforming Nigeria; Challenges of quality assurance in tertiary education in Nigeria amongst others. It was concluded that teacher education at all levels of the educational industry and the tertiary education in particular remains an agent of transformation for Nigeria economy.*

**Key words:** Teacher education, tertiary education, transformation, Nigeria.

## **Introduction**

Teacher education with its intents and purposes can bring about the expected development for the nation. Education and development are two concepts that are relevant to the advancement of any nation. It is imperative that the nation must commit a substantial amount of its resources to the provision of education and teaching, if development of the various sectors of the economy is desired.

There is a great need for transformation of Nigeria economy in order to achieve the national goal and objective. Teacher education should be a major task for every country which requires collective action by all and to educational institutions. According to Eka (2013), a school system is judged to be effective and of acceptable standard only if it meets the expectations, needs and aspirations of the people it is purposed to serve.

In achieving societal transformation, education becomes indispensable as it is an effective catalyst that brings hope to humanity and transforms societies positively. In the process of acquiring education, the role of teachers is central. They mediate between educational content and the learners. It is in this regard that they are truly the yardstick that measures the achievements and aspirations of the nation. The worth and potentialities of a country get evaluated in the work of teachers.

Thus, the people of a country are the enlarged replica of their teachers because the teachers are the real nation builders. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2009) confirms this by stating that “no nation can rise above the quality of its teachers”. In this connection, it can be safely inferred that no meaningful transformation can be achieved in Nigeria without the teachers playing their roles. The task of teachers in transforming the society is to first of all transform the learners through effecting an attitudinal change in them (Kate, 2013). The paper discussed the following:

- ◆ Concept of Teacher education;
- ◆ Challenges of Teacher Education in Nigeria;
- ◆ Concept of Tertiary Education in Nigeria;

- ◆ History of Tertiary Education in Nigeria;
- ◆ Concept of Transformation;
- ◆ Quality of Tertiary Education in Nigeria;
- ◆ Challenges of Quality in Tertiary Education in Nigeria and
- ◆ Roles of Teachers in Transforming Nigeria Economy.

**(i) Concept of Teacher Education**

Teacher education, without any gainsaying, remains the only agent of transformation for national growth and development. This however, provides the essence of education at the various levels. Okemakinde, Alabi and Adewuyi (2013) noted that every society requires human and material resources to improve its social organization, preserve the culture, enhance economic development and reform the political structures. They added that education is often seen as a prerequisite for quality man power development and creation of wealth, a sure path to success in life and service to humanity.

The adage that, no nation ever rises above the quality of its teachers illustrate the pivotal position which teachers occupy in the society. Thus, schools should always provide a solid training in basic skills with educational arrangements that are friendly, democratic and communal. Teacher preparation reflects more effectively the fact that teachers are professionals, that their job is a complex process of helping students to learn and their preparation is not a one-shot-training, but rather, a life-long process of learning and development. In addition, he has to attend workshops, professional meetings, mentoring, completing a research (Kpangban, 2013).

**(ii) Challenges of Teacher Education in Nigeria**

Once upon a time, teachers were a symbol of respect. Because of the role that they played in transforming the society, they were admired by their students and members of the society. By the simple way of their appearance, they served as good role models for the students. However, there came a time when economic crisis set in and teachers become victims of non payment. In



Dr. Christiana .N. Nwadiokwu

consequence, some teachers began to wear shoes that were tired at the front and worn at the heels. Their clothes become shoddy and the children therefore had less to admire than before and being children, the appearance of their teachers soon became object of ridicule and even of the coining of nick names.

Over time, teachers began to be looked down upon rather than being looked up at. Students began to look elsewhere for their role models. Mentoring therefore became problematic. Resulting from all these, the services rendered by teachers are undervalued thus they are derecognized, not appreciated and disrespected by students, parents and members of the society (Akpa, 2014).

A discussion on some vital factors militating against teachers performance of their roles in transforming Nigeria are as follows:

**(a) Poor Recruitment of Trainees**

In (JAMB) candidates always apply for courses in engineer, medicine, pharmacy, mass communication, journalism, etc but about 2% will apply for education courses. If more than 2%, then they are the rejected from other professional courses. It then imply that the less intelligent are the candidates sent to teacher education. If the less intelligent teach in those professional courses, how can they grow above their teacher? The private institution are populated with the unqualified and untrained teachers who cannot write lesson notes. The resultant effect is literacy incompetency.

According to Nwadiani (2013) over eighty percent of those trainees to be teachers in faculties of Education in Nigerian universities are “trainees by accident and by force”. Those who are finally recruited never opted to study teacher education. The chances are that these categories of trainees not by choice will not make committed and stable teachers in the future.

**(b) Declining Quality of Trainers**

The good and high caliber teacher makes the difference for you cannot teach what you do not know. In the past the teaching problem was that of number because there were few qualified teachers till the 1980s. The principal and probably the vice principal were the only university graduates.

Today the crisis is that of "quality of teachers (trainers). It is observed that most trainers have little knowledge masquerading incompetence (some want to teach philosophy but not certificated in philosophy). Low quality teacher educators will certainly produce low quality outcomes and the later the generation of teacher educators the faster the decline of their quality. This is the main precursor of our underdevelopment pits and woes.

**(c) Poor Reward for both Trainees and Trainers**

The uninteresting aspect of teacher education programme delivery is that trainees are not only deprived of financial assistance but penalized or under rewarded when in service. This is why enrolment into teacher education programme is not attractive to young people except when they are stranded.

The teacher educators in Nigeria are poorly remunerated even with the indispensable nature of his job. Nwadiani (2013) cross-country study of teachers' salaries in thirty countries noted that Nigerian teachers earn less than their counterparts in other countries. In China, Germany, Hong Kong, Korea teachers earn at times higher than engineers and other scientists. In UK the weekly earnings of secondary school teachers with Bachelor degrees are higher than the salaries of both science and engineering professionals.

**(d) Craze for Certificates**

Like the general education, craze for certificates and credentials has taken over the acquisition of knowledge, skill, creativity and innovativeness. Trainees and their sponsors do everything sinful to acquire certificates. This is why examination malpractice is fast becoming a culture though unacceptable in teacher education delivery.

**(e) Non-Professionalization of Teacher and Low Ethical Standards**

The government of Nigeria has no political will to enforce the professionalization of teaching. The policy that NCE will be the minimum certificate for entry into teaching has been a mere statement. Teaching is a free entry zone. Anybody without professional training can be made a teacher. All these anti-development forces are found in teacher education.

**(f) Unemployment of the Trained Teacher Graduates**

The graduated teachers were not employed. This made the youths to look down on admission into teaching profession. They have not seen anything attractive in teacher education since those who graduated were not employed.

**(iii) Concept of Tertiary Education in Nigeria**

Higher education encompasses all organized learning activities at the tertiary level (Okemakinde, 2014). The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) as stipulated in the National Policy on Education defines tertiary education to include the universities, polytechnics, monotechnics and colleges of education. The goals of tertiary education, as captured in the National Policy on Education (2004), are:

- ◆ To contribute to national development through high-level relevant manpower training ;
- ◆ To develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of society
- ◆ To develop the intellectual capability to understand and appreciate their local and external environments;
- ◆ To acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society;
- ◆ To promote and encourage scholarship and community services;
- ◆ To forge and cement national unity; and
- ◆ To promote national and international understanding and institutions.

**(iv) History of Tertiary Education in Nigeria**

The first institution for higher education in Nigeria according to Okemakinde, 2010 was Yaba Higher College, established in 1934. This became the nucleus of the first university college, establish in Ibadan in 1948. The attainment of political independence in 1960 was accompanied by expansion in the education sector in general, and in higher education in particular. There was an improved geo-political spread of universities: University of Nsukka (1960) Ahmadu Bellô University, Zaria , University of Lagos and the University of Ife, all in 1962, and much later, the University of Benin (1970). These institutions are now collectively known as first generation

universities. In 1975, with the advent of the oil boom and the geo-political restructuring of Nigeria into twelve states, there were strident agitations from Nigerians for more universities in the newly created states. The Federal government acceded to this demand by establishing seven additional universities at Jos, Maiduguri, Sokoto, Ilorin, Calabar, and Port Harcourt, which became the second-generation universities.

Polytechnics and monotchnics were established in Nigeria during the colonial era, long before the emergence of university for higher level technical man power in a variety of technical and professional disciplines. Thus, Yaba Higher College, School of Surveying, Veterinary Medicine, Forestry and Agriculture in various parts of the country were established for this purpose. The early 1950s saw the establishment of the Nigeria College of Arts; Science and Technology, which were later absorbed by three of the first generation universities: Ife, Zaria and Nsukka. The early years of independence witnessed the creation of College of Technology in Lagos and in the three regions that existed at that time: Ibadan (Western region), Enugu (Eastern region) and Kaduna (Northern region). As more regions and states were created, new polytechnics (owned by state governments) also emerged.

The Federal Government, in its effort to ensure a judicious geographical distribution of facilities for technological education also established federal polytechnics in various parts of the country. These institutions contributed immensely to meeting the social demands for higher education up till the middle of the 1990. Today, questions are being raised as to their appropriateness and relevance in the contemporary scheme of things, as there has been disenchantment among young people with the nature of polytechnic education in Nigeria.

The first Advanced Teacher's Colleges (for producing highly qualified nongraduate teachers; mainly for Secondary Schools) were established in the wake of independence in the early 1960s-Zaria (Northern region), Owerri (Eastern region), Ibadan (Western region) and Abraka (Mid-west region). The creation of more states in the federation and the increasing demand for



*Dr. Christiana .N. Nwadiokwu*

teachers, (due to educational expansion in the country), led to the establishment of more institutions, now re-named colleges of education, in every part of the country. Most of the institutions are either federally owned or state government-owned, but there has been a rapid increase in private colleges of education in recent years. Like polytechnics, the popularity of colleges of education is steadily waning, as they are no longer anybody's first choice. For this reason, government just has to take a close look at their original "raison detre" and work out a re-orientation process for them. Presently, in Nigeria, all states have either a state higher institution or a federal one located there (Okemakinde, 2014).

**(v) Concept of Transformation**

There are almost as many definitions as writers on conceptualizing transformation because transformation connotes a change that moves an organization in a new direction and takes it to an entirely new level of effectiveness where there is no resemblance with the past configuration or structure. To transform therefore will involve a shift in the orientation of the individual, organization or society in such a way that new actions and results become possible. In relation to the Nigerian society, Osobie (2012) provides an appropriated explanation thus: "It is a mandate for a radical, structural and fundamental re-arrangement and re-ordering of the building blocks of the Nation. It portends a fundamental re-appraisal of the basic assumptions that underlie our reforms and developmental efforts, that will and should alter the essence and substance of our national life. The expectations of most Nigerians are for a development blueprint that will transform the economy, re-invent the politics of our nation, secure the polity, care for the underprivileged and provide responsible, responsive and transformative leadership."

**(vi) Quality of Tertiary Education in Nigeria**

Educational quality can be defined in terms of the inputs, process and outputs. If a society is committed to providing high quality educational experiences and consequences for every person, the resources (human and financial) need to be mobilized in this direction. The worth of any educational



system as an investment lies in its capability to continuously serve its stakeholders better and remain relevant. The quality is dependent upon vision of the leaders for education at the community, the state and the nation at large (Okemakinde 2014). Tertiary education teaching and learning has two dimensions: curricula and pedagogy, that is, content and method. Okemakinde (2014) suggested that tertiary institutions need to change their curricula every two or three years in order to ensure that the content of their teaching reflects the rapidly advancing frontiers of knowledge.

The factors responsible for the poor quality of tertiary institutions programmes (and graduates) appear to be both internal and external to the institutions. Internal factors include strikes, lack of employees' motivation and weak accountability for educational performance. External factors comprised teachers' inadequacy, corruption and inconsistent funding efforts by government and admissions based on a quota system rather than on merit (Okemakinde, 2014).

**(vii) Challenges of Quality in Tertiary Education in Nigeria**

At different levels of the education system in Nigeria, poor quality is being experienced and this is exhibited in many ways. There are reported cases of increases in the rate of absenteeism and ineffective teaching in schools as well as inability of students (school outputs) to read and write, and to be capable of critical thinking and problem solving. It has also been documented that graduates of tertiary institutions are often not suitably qualified to fill available vacancies or to contribute effectively to national development (Okemakinde, 2014).

According to Olaniyan and Okemakinde (2010) challenges of quality in tertiary education should not be attributed to school related factors alone because other factors such as the home, the society, the government and personal characteristics are also important in education development. For the education industry to carry out its functions of developing quality human capital, there is need for checks and balances by regular and effective educational supervision and control. Unfortunately, the inspectorate services

*Dr. Christiana .N. Nwadiokwu*

both at the state and federal levels have not lived up to expectation. This is because the inspectorate service is plagued by a number of issues and challenges (Okugbe, 2010).

**(viii) Roles of Teachers in Transforming Nigeria Economy**

The role of teachers in transforming the society are so important that demands only the best, most intelligent and competent members of the intellegentia to be allowed to qualify for this noble profession. It is however unfortunate to find that generally, the worst and most incapable members of the society find their way into teaching profession. Anyone who fails to find an opening in any other walk of life, gets into this profession and recklessly plays with the destiny of the nation.

Some of the roles of teachers in transforming Nigeria Education should involve the following:

- a) **Information Communication Technology (ICT):** In this 21 Century, there is a debate that teaching should move away from "specific content base teaching to the research based teaching to be current with global acceptance of digital divides.
- b) The teacher education graduates should be given employment at the end of the programme to encourage more enrolment.
- c) **Government fund:** The government should increase funding of teacher education. Poor funding of teacher education poor production of teachers at the end. Countries that have achieved development have also invested steadily in teacher education.
- d) **Periodic training and retraining of teacher** (continuing professional development) with gains at such training session being promotion and salary increase.
- e) **Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN)** should be compulsory for all teachers in all teaching field including private schools. This will be one the way to make teaching a profession.

### **Conclusion**

Teaching is not in any way a lost art; it is disregard for it that is a lost tradition. Suffice it to say that if at all there is any hope of transforming Nigeria and the world in general, the key lies in the hands of teachers. This is because it is the teachers who transmit knowledge, attitudes and skills into the learners. Despite this significant role of the teachers, the society looks at them with disdain as reflected in their pay pockets and disrespect. As rejected as the teachers are, they remain the corner stone upon which societal transformation most build on. The pivotal role of a teacher in all level of educational system cannot be over-emphasized. In conclusion, teacher education at all levels of the educational industry and the tertiary education in particular remains an agent of transformation for Nigeria economy

### **Recommendations**

Based on the above conclusion, if teachers are to assume their rightful place in the transformation agenda of Nigeria, the following recommendations have to be implemented:

- a) Teachers at all levels of the education system – primary, secondary and tertiary should unite under one national umbrella labelled the Nigeria Association of Teachers. (NAT)
- b) The government should ensure adequate funding of education so that teaching and learning will be carried out in a teacher and learner friendly environment.
- c) The minimum qualification of professional teachers should be a Bachelors Degree in education.
- d) Empowerment of a professional body or association to regulate entry into the teaching occupation as well as observance of ethical conduct of the members.
- e) Government should actively involve practicing teachers in the policy formulation as well as implementation.



Dr. Christiana .N. Nwadiokwu

- f) Government should fund teacher education appropriately to attract national development
- g) Teachers should be encouraged to embark on in-service training to align them with the current reforms in the globe.

### References

- Akpa, G.O. (2014). The Teaching Profession and Global Challenges. *A guest speech delivered at the induction of graduating teachers*. University of Jos 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2014.
- Eka E.M. (2013). *The dilemma of Education*: Ibadan Heinemann Education books
- Federal Government of Nigeria (2004) National Policy on Education (4th Ed) Lagos: NERDC Press.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2009). *National Policy on Education*- Lagos. NERDC
- Kate, O.T (2013). Teachers' Quality and Policy Implementation in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Teacher Education* 6(2) 48-56.
- Kpangban, E. (2013). Teacher Education: A Tool for National Transformation. *A keynote paper presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference of School of Education, College of Education, Agbor.*
- Nwadiani, M (2013). Teacher Education as a tool for National Development: The Journey So far. *A Lead Paper Presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual National School of Education Conference, College of Education, Agbor.*
- Okemakinde T, Alabi, C.O & Adewuyi J.O. (2013) The Place of Teacher Education in National Development in Nigeria. *European Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*. 19, (1).
- Okemakinde T. (2010) Determinants of Public Expenditure in Primary Education in South-West Nigeria (1990-2004) *Unpublished Ph.D Thesis*, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

*Teacher Education and Transformation of Nigeria Economy: Emphasis on Tertiary Education*

---

- Okemakinde T. (2014). Transformation of Higher Education towards Enhanced Quality Education in Nigeria. *European Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*. 29, (1).
- Okugbe E. (2010) Supervision of Universal Basic Education Centres in Anambra State, Nigeria: Concept, Challenges and Prospects. 8 (1) 2010 World Education Service in Okemakinde T (2014). Transformation of Higher Education towards Enhanced Quality Education in Nigeria. *European Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*. 29, (1).
- Olaniyan, D.A. and Okemakinde T. (2010) Quality Assurance in Rural Primary Schools In Nigeria. *African Journal of Educational Management* 13 (1) 61-70 Cited in Okemakinde T. (2014). Transformation of Higher Education towards Enhanced Quality Education in Nigeria. *European Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*. 29, (1).
- Osobie, A. (2012). Challenges of Governance: Leadership. *A paper presented at National Conference of ANAN held on 9th October, 2012.*