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POLICY AND PRACTICE OF PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMMES AND FACILITIES IN NIGERIA

Abstract

This paper reviewed policy provisions for *pre-service* and *in-service* teacher training programmes and facilities in Nigeria. It also presented reviews on legislations, agencies involved in teacher affairs management in Nigeria, using the historical and case study approach. Data on teaching qualifications of University of Lagos (UNILAG) lecturers were extracted from the Handbook of School of Postgraduate Studies for 1983-1984, 1991-1995, 2007-2008 and 2009-2010 academic sessions. The paper found that some problems still existed despite efforts to improve the lot of the teaching profession namely: (i) qualified and interested Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) *direct entry* applicants in education are being short-changed yearly for reasons of limited spaces and carrying capacity as experienced in UNILAG; (ii) acute access problem into the regular *direct entry* bachelors programme led to disappointment of much younger, unemployed and inexperienced Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) candidates opting for *sandwich programme* in education; (iii) the bachelors' programme continued to be oversubscribed, leading to shortage of classrooms and lodging, poor quality of reading materials and stressful examination sessions; (iv) the danger of "teaching" without teachers in Nigerian universities is obvious and ominous. In UNILAG, for instance, only in the faculty of education was found an appreciable number (77% and 68%) of teaching staff possessing requisite teaching certificates in 2008 and 2010 respectively. The study recommended that resources for teacher training must be provided urgently and facilities be provided accordingly. Also, any teacher at any level of education in Nigeria must be professionally qualified to be accountable and productive in the spirit and letter of Nigeria's Vision to be one of the greatest 20 economies in year 2020.

Introduction

In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education (NPE) had undergone many reviews since inception in 1977. The 4th edition (FGN, 2004, S. B ss. 70a) stressed that "*since no education system may rise above the quality of its teachers, teacher education shall continue to be given major emphasis in all educational planning and development*". Owolabi (2005) submitted that "a policy is a statement that consists of a plan by some **agent (A)** to **do something (D)** in particular, whenever particular **conditions (C)** obtain, for some **purpose (P)**". According to him, policies of teacher education deal with what the relevant authorities (education ministries, school management boards and teacher training institutions at degree and pre-degree levels) must be doing or be putting in place on a continual basis to enhance the quality of teacher education. In S.8 of the NPE (FGN, 2004) the goals of teacher education are to produce efficient classroom teachers for all levels of the educational system enhance their commitment to the teaching profession.

The policy thrust on training, employment and professional development (S.8 B ss.75-77) further noted that in-service training shall be developed as an integral part of continuing teacher education and also shall take care of all inadequacies. It also says that those already engaged in teaching but not professionally qualified shall be given a period of time to qualify for registration or leave the profession.

Education workers in Nigeria undergo *pre-service and in-service* training programmes. *Facilities* for professional training and development of teachers abound in Nigeria in colleges of education (for primary and junior secondary schools) and the education faculties and institutes of the universities (for senior secondary schools). The National Teachers' Institute, Kaduna is for continuing teacher education (currently for teachers of basic education). Equally, some polytechnics with schools of education also produce teachers of technology for the secondary school level. Nigeria has the National Institute for Nigerian Languages in Enugu and the National Mathematical Centre in Abuja (Education Sector Analysis, ESA, 2003 and FGN, 2004).

Truly, Nigeria needs to focus on quality teacher training because no nation's education can rise above the level of its teachers. Ijaiya (2008) noted that for Nigeria to be one of the world's best 20 economies through Vision 20-2020, it needs a virile, high quality educational system that will make Nigerians active participants and not on – lookers. This paper reinforces these facts, hence, a review of what the nation has and an assessment of her capacity to produce a virile and proactive teaching force through an equally vibrant and transformational teacher education with adequate support system.

The Practice of Pre- Service Teacher Training and Competences Required

To start any training venture, certain skills and competencies are necessary. Peretomode (1999) used Katz's (1955) classification as *technical, human* and *conceptual*, referring respectively to the proficiency or ability to use tools, methods, processes, procedures and techniques of a specialized field (e.g., teacher education) to perform special tasks. The school teacher needs enough technical skills to be able to succeed; ability to work effectively with, and through other people on one-to-one basis and in a group setting; and knowledge of subject-matter, or, the mental ability to coordinate and integrate the entire interests and activities of the organization and apply information and concepts to practice.

Policy on Professionalization and Legislation on Teaching in Nigeria

In Nigeria, normal training programmes of teachers are offered at different post-secondary institutional levels. There used to be *Grade II* Colleges (for 1 – 2 years). At present, Colleges of Education (Conventional, Technical or Special for 3 – 4 years) and at the University level.

Nigerian authorities have resolved to encourage teacher education programmes to enhance adequate supply and total professionalization of the teaching. Meanwhile, the NCE is already accepted as the minimum level approved to be possessed by a teacher in the professional employment of schools (FGN, 2004:S.8, ss.70b). The Nigeria Union Teachers (NUT) further established the Institute of Certified Teachers of Nigeria (ICTON) "as a gate way of professionalism" and "to

mobilize men and equipment for a befitting data-base for its membership and ensuring that those it hopes to serve are duly informed of its aims and future plans” (ICTON *Editorial*, 2001).

ICTON finally became a gate way to professionalism in teaching in Nigeria. It was registered on May 20, 2000 (RC 384,181/3) and was notified by the Corporate Affairs Commission, (CAC) on July 11, 2000. On 25th May, 2000, the NUT, in a national workshop in Akure, deliberated on the *Teachers’ Registration Council Decree 31 of 1993* to empower the TRC to regulate entry into the teaching profession in Nigeria.

Nigerian teachers now belong to a professional body ICTON that will hopefully include all teachers at all levels of education. When this is concluded, the re-engineered teaching service will be professional, strong, and respectable. Since May 2001, many applications for membership were received, and processed into the association’s database. More encouragement is being given by the NUT at all levels to enlist. In fact, up to the University level, forms were already distributed to all practitioners and those who are yet to professionalise fully are being mandated to do so with ultimatum attached that “*all teachers in tertiary institutions shall be required to undergo training in the methods and techniques of teaching*” (FGN, 2004 S.8 ss.61).

Membership is open to serving teachers in public and private institutions, university teachers in departments and institutes of education, consultants and other providers of educational services, retired and other persons with requisite qualifications who are desirous of contributing to the process of professionalising teaching in Nigeria.

Qualifications for Admission as approved by the TRC

Eligibility for admission to the ICTON includes:

1. Grade II Teachers Certificate (holders in teaching continuously for not less than 5 years before the commencement of registration for membership of the Institute);
2. Other Certificates not higher than the NCE (Grade II Teachers Certificate is a pre-requisite);
3. The NCE or its equivalent;
4. A First degree in Education of an approved university;
5. A First degree of an approved university or its equivalent in addition to a PGDE obtained in not less than nine months of studies;
6. A Masters degree in Education for which a first degree or a PGDE is a pre-requisite; and
7. A Doctorate degree in Education.

In case of a non-Nigerian, if a person holds a qualification granted outside Nigeria which for the time being is recognized by the TRC and is by law entitled to practice as a teacher in the country in which the qualification was granted, provided the country accords Nigerian professional teachers the same reciprocal treatment and that he/she has had, in the opinion of the Institute, sufficient practical experience as a teacher.

Any other qualification as may be determined by TRC as being acceptable for teaching in Nigeria and are acceptable to ICTON. In addition, persons who do not have the listed admission qualifications will be able to apply at a later date to be

admitted as students of ICTON in order for them to complete their preparations for acquiring any of the listed qualifications.

In 2002, a handbook of the Council was published during which registration forms were also distributed and are still being distributed) to schools and institutions towards professionalization., hope is rising steadily for pre-service teacher training considering the increasing enrolment into teacher training programmes in Nigeria's tertiary institutions including the programmes of the National Teachers' Institute (NTI), Kaduna, set up by the Federal Government. There are also several education degree-awarding Colleges of Education such as in Owerri and Ondo and the first of its kind, the up-graded Tai Solarin University of Education in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria.

The Practice of In-Service Teacher Training

The objectives are, among others, to:

1. expose serving teachers to the content and modern methodologies of teaching all school subjects and prepare them for new leadership roles;
2. enable serving workers to improve academically and professionally at lesser cost to them and at little or no cost to government;
3. make staff members work together through in-service programmes in workshops, conferences, and study groups in areas of common interest for professional growth and competences.

Various Modes of In – Service Training

They include evening courses, day release, short or full time courses, vacation courses, workshops and seminars, teachers' centre-based courses, Radio-TV courses, distant correspondence and open learning, study leave, research leave with pay, sabbatical leaves, etc, (Akinyemi, 1991). In addition, Arikewuyo (2006) identified orientation programme, coaching, job rotation, temporary promotion, assisting a junior officer with good potentials to gain experience, and committees. Peretomode (1999: 5) also outlined further education, experience and mentor – mentee relationship.

Methods, Structure and Management of In-Service Programmes in Nigeria

Akinyemi (1991) identified ten *methods* but five are discussed in this section.

1. *Induction*: When College and university education students prepare for teaching practice, resource persons present seminars on topics such as classroom management and discipline, continuous assessment, school records, lesson notes preparation, teachers' personality, e.t.c. Such induction programmes may last for one or two days (Akande, 2001: 27-41 and Awoniyi, 1979: 63-67).

2. *Orientation* helps to build staff confidence and boost productivity. Teachers are informed about school regulations, organizational patterns, structure, the curriculum plans, instructional materials and equipment, pupil services, day-to-day activities, curricular activities, school records and procedures for keeping them.

3. *Workshops and seminars* are done to update knowledge and skills of staff in their subject areas, especially whenever a new curriculum is introduced. It is to acquaint employees with the new procedures, new communication systems, new topics or subjects, new policies, etc. Reports generated from such exercises are equally used for planning and policy purposes. Nigerian training institutes include the *National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), Ondo*,

Ondo State and, the *Lagos State Post-Primary Staff Development Centre (LSPPSDC) Magodo, Lagos.*

4. *Professionalization* through in-service education for graduates of Polytechnics and Universities who, having teaching appointments or needing to start their own schools, need to professionalise. Teaching in Nigeria is currently witnessing a lot of revitalisation in many respects. There are notable programmes in place for these categories of 'teachers'. For HND holders, the Federal College of Education (Technical), FCE(T) Akoka, Lagos, a one-year intensive postgraduate course formerly called Technical Teachers Diploma (TTD) exist. It now bears Postgraduate Diploma in Education and is designed by TRCN. For non-education graduates, the PGDE exists on *full-time* or *sandwich* modes for one or two sessions respectively.

Around 2004, at UNILAG, the Faculty of Education packaged a special in-service training programme for other academics or lecturers in other faculties who were 'teaching' without professional pedagogical skills and competences. They were to be encouraged to acquire such a professional diploma teaching certificate to secure their jobs as university teachers. This trend would have redressed the snag of unprofessional hands rendering a professional service with obvious implications on effectiveness and efficiency, manpower development, student learning and mentoring, professionalism, role perception and productivity. The programme, which received some warm embrace, had since been stalled for bureaucratic reasons.

5. *Higher qualifications:* Professional teachers may desire to obtain higher degrees to qualify for higher responsibilities and improved earnings. Such may be *Grade II* Holders gunning for the NCE certificate, NCE Holders seeking first degree certificates, bachelor's degrees Holders enrolling for Masters and Masters Holders running Ph. D programmes in their choice institutions. These programmes exist in direct entry full-time, part-time, sandwich, correspondence and distant learning modes.

Undergraduate admissions are offered by direct entry mode or through the UTME. In UNILAG, it is always stressful, attracting a big chunk of the total JAMB annual applications nation-wide, leading to the university screening above its carrying capacity of 4,992 in 2009/2010 session (Ojerinde, 2010).

The Faculty of Education had been adversely affected since 2003. Candidates from the University's one-year Foundation Diploma programme not admitted in other faculties are always imposed on education faculty's *direct entry* bachelors' programme list, to the detriment of the more qualified applicants with NCE whose originally interest is education.

The *structure* and *management* of NCE, B.A. Ed., PGDE, M.Ed. and Ph.D programmes are noteworthy. The following programmes are highlights:

(i) The NCE primary sandwich programme which is run by Colleges of Education has two categories of students:

- The *Grade II* teachers who spend five years.
- The *Associateship Certificate in Education (ACE)* holders who spend four years to qualify as primary school teachers.

(ii) The B.A. (Ed.) Sandwich programme originally designed for NCE holders is now subscribed by younger graduates of senior secondary schools in some institutions like the UNILAG because of frequent disappointments suffered by

applicants into the regular first degree programmes. The long vacations are utilized for intensive lectures for about six to eight weeks running between 8 am to 6 pm daily, including weekends. Many other universities are involved especially in city centers where the demand continues to increase.

Also, applicants for the Masters programme are education graduates with or without PGDE certificate while applicants for the PGDE programme are mainly non-education graduates who desire to convert to the teaching line to make a career. These programmes run full-time, part-time or sandwich in the Faculties of Education nation-wide.

General Findings on Response to In-Service Courses

Student response to in-service teaching courses is growing fast with increasing awareness of inherent benefits like job security, bursaries, psychological relief, self realization and actualization enjoyed by participants, etc. Subsequently, old and young teachers keep enrolling even when it is evident that having the certificates has little or no impact on their earnings and promotion. Yearly in UNILAG, some sizeable numbers of younger *direct entry* JAMB candidates are found switching to the *sandwich* programme, after many failed attempts to secure regular admissions.

Most in in-service programme participants experience family problems and a lot of stress with attendant adverse consequences on family stability and health. Other challenges include high cost of reading materials, limited classroom and hostel accommodation, time for study and research, poor guidance and counseling facilities, missing grades, and distance, causing many to miss their vital examinations.

In many Nigerian universities are lecturers not trained as teachers; hence the system faces the danger of 'teaching' without teachers! In UNILAG for instance, in 2009 and 2010, Faculty of Education had 77.3% and 68% of lecturers possessing teaching qualifications such as NCE, B.A. Ed., B.Sc. Ed., PGDE or M.Ed. degrees. Education was followed by Arts (0.60%), Social Sciences (0.05%) and Sciences (0.05%). Other faculties simply had none.

Recommendations

The efforts to shove up the quality of teacher preparation and development becomes more imperative because of the popular policy statement that correlates the quality of standard of education in a nation with the quality and standard of its teachers as no one can offer that which he has not. Therefore, the following quality control and quality assurance measures must be pursued:

1. Authorities must match admissions with institutional carrying capacity and resources. Also, facilities for teacher education must be expanded.
2. Rigorous planning and monitoring of teaching, teaching practice, and evaluation processes.
3. Exposing university lecturers without teaching certificates to pedagogical training to repackage them for future challenges. This is a challenge the NUC and universities should treat with dispatch.

4. The curriculum of teacher training institutions be revised regularly to address the content, skills, attitudes, values that student teachers have to learn in training to be relevance and effective.
5. The rate at which Nigeria is losing experienced teachers to retirement is high even when it is evident that many are still physically fit and mentally alert to contribute more than a new comer (Owolabi, 2007). Signing into law of the recently approved bill on raising the retirement age of university teachers to seventy years is also paramount to avail the system valuable experiences like elsewhere in the developed countries.

Conclusion

Training and development of education workers is “a task that must be done” and sustained if the system is to revive for relevance. For instance, Omoregie (2004) noted that “good administrators are developed” and that:

There is nobody that comes into any organization as a finished product, a perfect match. Workers, at one stage or the other have to pass through some form of training and development... these involve activities set to change behaviour of people in the school system so that performance can be improved upon. Development refers to provisions made by an organization like the school system for improving the performance of school personnel from initial employment to retirement (p. 154).

The above position captures the essence of this paper. As school workers, continuous exposure to new ideas, methods and skills will keep us relevant and productive.

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