

REPOSITIONING TEACHER EDUCATION TOWARDS AN END TO UNEMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA

Afannamuefuna A. Eze

*Department of Adult and Continuing Education,
Michael Okpara University,
Umudike.*

Dr. Ngozi E. Eya

*Department of Adult and Continuing Education,
Michael Okpara University,
Umudike.*

And

Nwanneka G. Aniemeka

*Department of Adult and Continuing Education,
Michael Okpara University,
Umudike.*

Abstract

The paper looks at repositioning teacher education in Nigeria by pointing out the pivotal roles of education as the arrow – head towards an end to unemployment in Nigeria. The challenges of unemployment make it imperative that the teacher education in Nigeria be repositioned for employment generation. Doing this requires that the practical aspect of teacher education in Nigeria be reinvigorated by creating an educational environment that is aimed at job creation. The importance of teacher education to man and his environment is to bring to an end the challenges of unemployment. Therefore any system of teacher education that is not aimed at solving this singular problem should be rejected and discarded. The paper contends that it is only a repositioned teacher education system that will improve the level of employment and wealth creation in Nigeria.

Education everywhere is a dynamic and sophisticated process of socialization, that reforms individuals into social beings equipped with the necessary tools to participate fully in the dynamics of life. Therefore, the teacher education of the individual must continue to be repositioned for better as long as the teaching profession desires to adapt to new challenges facing education (Ogbali, 2012). Acknowledging the importance of repositioning teacher education as the fountain-head; means acknowledging education for employment creation. This substantiates the views of Analytes on Education (2000) which propounded that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers.

This assertion can be translated even further; as no nation can bring an end to unemployment without first addressing the quality of its teachers. The quality of a nation's teacher education is the hallmark for measuring the quality of education obtainable in the school environment. This invariably determines a nation's preparedness to face the challenges ranging from unemployment and other numerous problems posing a threat to human survival. This assertion is evidently justifiable in the Americans attempt to launch her own space craft after Russian. After Russia had launched its space craft, the SPUTNIK in 1957, they argued that her inability to perform a similar feat at that time is due to the incompetency of science being taught in her schools. Repositioning in Science teaching, which was aftermath of innovations in Science teacher education, led America to successfully launch her own space craft years after.

Development of Teacher Education in Nigeria

Repositioning the present day teacher education in Nigeria, demands a good knowledge of the development of the teacher education since 1859 when the Church Missionary Society founded a Teacher Training College in Abeokuta. The Training College according to Agbo (2004), was moved to Lagos in 1867, when the Missionaries were expelled from Abeokuta and relocated to Oyo as St Andrew's College in 1896. It was an all male institution and fully residential. The Baptist Mission probably spurred by the Church Missionary Society's example founded a Baptist teacher training College in Ogbomoso in 1897. Elsewhere in Nigeria, the Presbyterian Church of Scotland in 1861 founded the Hope Waddell Training Institute in Calabar. The institute was not an exclusively teacher training for primary school teachers to become preachers, tradesmen and teacher, it was thus a seminary, trade centre and teacher training college combined into one.

However, the teacher training college did not start early in the Northern Nigeria. The first attempt was under the auspices of Hanns Visoles, Director of Education, Northern Nigeria, who founded a teacher training college in Nasarawa in 1909 (Musa 2000). Teachers of these teachers training college were standard six certificate holders, who invariably must have served as pupil teachers for two or more

years. Entry into these prestigious teacher training colleges was by a competitive examination. Within the 19th century, the training of teachers was the exclusive preserve of the Christian mission, which gave teacher education a religious bent in a religiously plural society, and their aim was to produce teacher catechists for the purpose of Christian evangelism. It was upon this foundation that teacher education was built in Nigeria.

Teacher Education as the Nucleus of Employment

There is no doubt that the teacher is at the centre of education enterprise. Peterson (2011) observed that education is power. If education is power, then the teacher as the dispenser of knowledge holds the secret to that power. Quality teachers thereafter mean good education, which invariably turns into tremendous power in the hands of the people. The power we mean is the knowledge to create wealth and generate employment for the Nigerian population who are left without job (Lassa, 2013). Education can transform the Nigerian society into a better place to be. Countries like Americans and Chinese which long understood that whatever strategy or reform a country wishes to adopt must primarily be introduced into her schools and this must be reflected in the school curriculum. Teachers as the implementers of the curriculum must therefore be reformed to implement the curriculum. Thus, we are all aware of the importance of good and quality teachers could make in repositioning education towards an end to unemployment.

United States of American Educationists organized a national conference on repositioning education several years after the Russian Sputnik was launched. Hederfieli and Stinnett (1998) rightly quoted Jack Allen as observing during the conference:

One of the main jobs of the school, indeed the number 1 job, is to provide a setting within which boys and girls can grow intellectually. This can only be made possible through the student's relationship with information, knowledge, facts. Books can help, so can numerous other types of learning materials. But always there stands the teacher, very often on the stage, front, back and centre. What he knows can make a difference. What he does not know can be an irreparable loss.

However, Egbe (2012) noted that the Nigerian teachers who are expected to carry out these reforms in schools unfortunately passed through the old system of education that is today out dated. This according to Ibeji (2010) recommends that any attempt at reforming and repositioning education toward employment must include with it the provision of quality, competent and certified teachers for job creation.

Teacher Education and National Development

Nigerian's development requires tremendous influence of education, through quality teacher education, to face her increasing challenges such as unemployment, ethnicity, indiscipline, corruption as well as greed. By so doing, Nigeria will achieve rapid national development in employment generation. Den (2001) stated that teachers by nature of their profession are vanguards of reforms and national development. The quality of education that teachers receive will in turn determine the quality and quantum of reforms that they can inculcate in a nation's youths. It is an accepted fact that the minds of human beings at their early age are overwhelmed by their life experiences within the environment. The said experiences are in the form of values, norms and attitude usually acquired through education in the school system. The teacher's role in the school system makes him the greatest influence on the child as a learner. If the teacher is important to the child's proper upbringing, then his education is a key to the proper dissemination of the right values to the child. It is in this context that the teacher is seen as the harbinger of a country's development. Good and quality teacher education equips the teacher to provide the enabling environment needed for a child to attain his full potentials. Thus, the teacher education should be the arrow – head and the spirit of employment creation through education in Nigeria. Our teacher education programme should be in synchronization with our national aspiration for development.

It is an undisputable truism that the development of a nation depends on the human resources, the nation is endowed with, and the quality of human resources is unavoidably tied to the quality of education dispensed by the teachers. Good and quality teacher education is therefore, a key strategy to the challenges of unemployment in Nigeria.

Experiencing is said to be learning, but not all experiences end in learning. Teachers as the supplier of information provides the right type of "experience" which results in learning. The main goal of education is wealth and job creation, which brings about national development. These goals can only be achieved if there are good and repositioned education programmes for alleviation of unemployment for national development. A repositioned teacher education towards an end to unemployment is a dispenser of good teaching, which in turn gives birth to good quality workforce namely; teachers, engineers, medical doctors, architects, lawyers, and accountants etc. All of them put together work towards bringing an end to unemployment. On the other hand, the consequence of poorly trained teachers is the production of incompetent medical doctors who cannot treat the mildest ailment; lawyers who cannot move motion in court and engineers who cannot match theory with practice.

Recruitment of Potential Teachers into Teacher Education Programme versus Employment Creation

The Biblical injunction of what you sow, you shall reap apply clearly in the Nigerian education industry. You cannot plant cassava and harvest yam. Thus, if you want cassava, you plant cassava. If we want good teachers, we must admit into teacher training colleges, good quality students by bringing to an end the present day style of admission by Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB). Nigeria is presently harvesting unemployment because we planted unemployment by way of admission. Nwafor (2009) observed that the days of good teaching and good teachers may have gone with independence. The quality of input into teacher training institute will determine the output. Before now it has been debunked by (Ogbodo, 2004) that the present minimum qualification of three credits level passes at entrants into colleges of Education does not guarantee the entrance of good students. Rather, it discourages willing and expectant candidates with better results from applying to the colleges of education. This is so to avoid being classified as never do well candidates.

However, it is a simple mathematics that candidates with good results at the school certificate level, thinks it is a belittlement on their performance to apply for colleges of education that needs only three credits level passes. This invariably lowers the status of colleges of education and other similar institutions. The implication of this style of admission is that these candidates at the time of graduation may not be employable let alone create jobs on their own if faced with challenges of unemployment.

Most scholars in education over the years have queried the style of entrants into teacher education and have suggested a way forward in the method of admission into teacher education programme (Eze, 2011). A more grievous implication of absorbing teachers for elementary training from the bottom level of school products suggests that teachers are perpetually associated with poor performance. Unless something very positive is done to correct this impression of intakes into teacher education, the teacher and teaching profession will continue to be the home of mediocre for academic junks and candidates that were refused entrance into other professions. It is only when this negative impression about teacher and teaching profession is repositioned that we can partly solve the challenges of unemployment in Nigeria because nobody can give what he or she does not have.

Thus what we need to do is to be objective and result oriented. We must admit into teacher education, high quality materials for training (Ukeje, 1996). The National Certificate in Education (NCE) has assumed a new importance given that it is the minimum teaching qualification and its holders are to dispense the Universal Basic Education. Given the importance of NCE, effort should be made towards ensuring that only quality materials for training are admitted into colleges of

Education for the NCE programme. This is because, it is these teachers that can inculcate the appropriate skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical into learners as equipment for employment creation in Nigeria. Doing this requires the lapping of a good foundation of formal education anchored on job creation not only on numeracy and literacy education.

It is therefore suggested that a practical environment whereby candidates' abilities and skills not only on their academic performance but also on the taxonomy of educational objectives are examined, will give room for the intake of candidates with different qualities because varieties they say is the spice of life. This will add meaning to the views of Uzor (2015) when he said that there is need to bring in good stuff into our teacher education institutes right from the day candidates are given admission.

Repositioning Teaching Practice for Employment

Teaching practice engaged in by students' teachers is the practical aspect of teacher education. This is the equivalent of internship undertaken by young medical doctors as part of their training. Usually in all the teacher training institutions, teaching practice takes place twice during the student's career. It usually last for six weeks on each occasion. In some cases teaching practice is done in one stretch of 12 weeks. In some schools student are sent out for teaching practice for one academic session. Repositioning teaching exercise is an attempt to establish a link between education theories and practical work (Tab, 2009). Practical work is guided and shaped by theories.

Therefore, there is need to create an arrangement between theory and practice for the teaching practice students that will address the practical component of teacher training. It is by repositioning teaching practice that student teachers will begin to understand that teaching practice is beyond classroom exercise. Uzor (2015) argued that the knowledge or mastery of the subject matter of instruction, though important, does not automatically translate into the ability to transmit such knowledge to learners. There is also the need for some pedagogical skills and abilities to transmit theoretical knowledge into practical work which will invariably crate employment for the unemployed.

A repositioned teaching practice, enables the student teacher to put those pedagogical training he has acquired in methodological courses into practice. Despite the importance of teaching practice in the training of teaching students, examples abound that the conduct of teaching practice in our preparatory institutes is not adequate (Agbedo, 2000). Ukeje (1996) did not mince word when he asserted that:

University Education students hardly ever have enough time and suitable supervision for teaching Practice. In many cases it could

actually be said that teaching practice, which is the most vital aspect of professional preparation and experience, is non – existent.

This tells us that there is need to address the problem of the inadequacies of the teaching practice in our teacher training institutions to make it employment based. To achieve this, there is need for greater collaboration between the schools of practice teaching and teacher training institutions. The school of practice teaching should pay student teachers some remuneration for the period they have worked or reach an agreement with them that the outstanding once be employed at the end of their academic programme with the institution. This argument is in line with the views of Hirst, Burdic and Miles (2007) when he noted that there is a universal agreement about the centrality of the role of school sixty years ago, the Mc Nair committee appointed by the Board of Education in Britain to look into the supply, recruitment and training of teachers concluded that the key to an effective teacher education was to give the practical side greater weight. The committee recommended that staff of schools in which students were placed on teaching should be primarily responsible for directing and supervising them. The committee also noted that the recommendation will amount to training institutions relinquishing some measure of responsibility in the training of their students to subject specialists in schools where students are placed for teaching practice. This will certainly make teaching students take their exercise serious because of close monitoring by the practicing school.

However, the intimidating number of students on teaching practice, most often make it impossible for their lecturers to thoroughly supervise them. Most at times students are not supervised at all throughout the duration of the exercise. When situations like this arise lecturers end up grading student's note of lesson instead of grading their practical teaching in the classroom which is where the teaching exercise takes place proper. The said recklessness on the part of supervisors is because there is no remuneration on the both sides. Hence, the freewill to do as you likes syndrome. Thus, if it is the other way round, where the student teacher is taking over from the school subject teacher, unlike the college or university lecturer who comes once in a while to supervise student' teaching, is always present in the school. He is better placed to monitor the student teacher. Moreover, he has a stake in the quality and quantity of teaching dispensed by the student teacher to the learners because he will be held responsible for the learners' academic performance at the end.

Supervising Teaching Practice for Employment

Supervision for teaching practice for development must be objective oriented. Days whereby all academic staff in the colleges of education or university faculties of education is allowed to supervise students on teaching practice are over. We concur with the assertion of Ukeje (1996) that all Academic Staff of Colleges of education should be professionally qualified. The National Commission for Colleges of

Education (NCCE) has also provided that only lecturers with teaching qualification should supervise students on teaching practice so that the aim is not defeated. In regard to the practical training of teachers, the minimum standard appears inadequate. Uzor (2015) further argued that those who teach subject methodology in our teacher training institutions must have taught the subject whose methodology they are teaching at the secondary school level. This is in addition to being professionally qualified teachers. In a similar instance, lecturers supervising students on teaching practice in the secondary school must have themselves taught at that level.

There are situations in our universities where a professor of psychology or philosophy of education has never been opportune to teach in primary or secondary school is allowed to produce for a level he himself never had the privilege of teaching. In the same vein, there are many lecturers in the faculties of education and colleges of education who have never taught at the secondary level, yet such lecturers supervise student teachers on teaching practice at the secondary school level. The worry is how do you supervise students on teaching practice in a secondary school when you have never taught at that level? Lecturers of these kinds teach the theory of teaching that does not have practical application in the classroom experience. This undermines our position that subject teachers at the school of practice teaching, should be actively involved in the supervision and monitoring of students for the actualization of the goals of teacher education which is employment creation. It is our submission, that in an attempt to ensure job creation through supervision, lecturers should only supervise teaching students at a particular level, he or she must have taught for some years back.

Conclusion

A repositioned teacher education is indeed the nucleus of the education business of employment generation. A society where there is availabilities of job opportunities is a society that has value for the worth of their teacher education. On the other hand, a society where their teacher education is neglected is bound to have challenges of development and unemployment. Thus, a repositioned quality education offered to student teachers is the foundation for employment in any meaningful educational environment.

References

- Agbedo, T. U. (2000). Evaluation in Teaching: A Study of Science Student Teachers during Practical Teaching. *The Nigerian Teacher*, Vol. 1 (1), 104 – 109
- Agbo, E. A. (2004). Developing in Teacher Education: The Challenges of the 21st Century, in Camp U. P. *et al* (ed) *Curriculum for Education: an Imperative for National Development*. Abuja: NCCE.

- Analyses on Education Sector (2010). Abuja: Federal Ministry of Education.
- Den, S. F. (2001). *Curriculum and Instruction for Near and Distance Learners*. Kano: Rainbow Royale Publishers.
- Egbe, K. C. (2012). *University School Teacher Certificate in Canada, Italy and Nigeria*. University Trust Publishers.
- Eze, B. D. (2011). Teacher & Teaching Factor in the Development of Science Education, in Allijere, I. L (ed) 33rd Annual Conference of the Science Teachers of Nigeria.
- Federal Government of Nigeria (1998). Investment in Education: Report of the Commission on Post – School Certificate and Higher Education in Nigeria.
- Hederfieli, A. & Stinnet, B. (1998). *The Education of Teachers*. NJ: Prentice – Hall.
- Hirst, P. H., Burdic, U, N. & Miles, S. (2007). Initial Teacher Education Conference. New York City.
- Ibeji, W. G. (2011). The Continuing and In-Service Education of Teachers in the 6 – 3 - 3 – 4 System of Education, in Ogbereke, C (ed) *Education in Nigeria: Teacher Education for the 6 – 3 – 3 – 4 System*. Jos: The Nigeria Academic of Education.
- Lassa, P. N. (2013). Way Forward for Teaching Profession in Nigeria in Lassa P. N. (ed) *Teacher Education in the 21st Century*. Kaduna: NCCE.
- Musa, T. W. (2000). *Principles and Methods in Vocational and Technical Education*, Nsukka: University Trust Publishers.
- Nwafor, B. D. (2009). Quality Teacher Education for Development in the 21st Century: A Proposal for Professionalization, in Ugwueze, E.D (ed) *Teaching Teacher Education: Key for Nigeria Development*. Lagos: University Press.
- Ogbali, T.U. (2013) A Paper Presented by the Kogi State Honourable Commissioner of Education at the Meeting of Directors and School Heads of the State Ministry of Education, held at the State School Board on (Wednesday 6th Feb, 2012).
- Ogbodo, F. G. (2004). Professional Teacher Education in Nigeria. The Way Forward *Journal of Science Education*. Vol. 11 (11).

- Peterson, V. E. (1985). *Wealth in Education*. New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston.
- Tab, About us (2009). Retrieved April 16, 2016 from [http:// teaching for artistic behaviour.org/aboutus.html](http://teachingforartisticbehaviour.org/aboutus.html)
- Ukeje, B. O. (1996). Teacher Educational Development in Lassa P.N. *et al* (ed) *Teacher Education. An imperative for National Development*. Kaduna: NCCE.
- Uzor, D. V. (1999). Understanding the Importance of Teacher Education in Nigeria: the Teacher Preparation Paradigm. *Journal of Physical Education and Research*. Vol. III (11).