

# REFORMS AND INNOVATION IN TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: A HISTORICAL REVIEW

*Ugadu Sunday Ose*

## **Abstract**

This paper traced the history of reforms and innovation in teacher education in Nigeria. In doing this, three periods of teacher education in Nigeria were covered.

The first was the early period, 1859-1959. This was the duration of colonial education in Nigeria. The second period covered from 1960 when the Ashby Commission submitted its report on higher education to 1980, just before the first revised edition of the first National Policy on education. The third period covered from 1981 when the first revised edition of the National Policy on Education was published to the contemporary period of western education in Nigeria. After clarification of the concepts of reform and innovation, epochs of each of the three periods surveyed were identified. The areas that needed improvement were identified. The reform or innovation made for that particular area that needed improvement was also discussed. The result of such innovation was similarly presented. The paper also made a critical evaluation of the reforms and innovations to pin-point where the innovators could have done better. Conclusion was drawn that the teacher being a critical stake-holder in education, teacher education should always be given priority in educational development. Some recommendations were made on specific areas.

Since the teacher is so central in the education process, issues concerning the teacher especially teacher education should not be considered as over-flogged. Teacher education has come a long way from the advent of western education Nigeria. A lot of reforms and innovation have taken place since then, yet teacher education has a lot of challenges to contend with. This is why a critical review of the reforms and innovation was subsisted at each of the periods reviewed. The objective was to find out why the various reforms and innovation did not seem to largely improve teacher education in Nigeria. For example, Colleges of Education, Faculties of Education, Institutes of Education, among others still have a lot of challenges. Also, stakeholders still complain of poor quality of the products of teacher educational institutions despite some reforms and innovations.

## **The Meaning of Reforms and Innovation**

**Reform:** The New Webster's Dictionary (1995) defines reform as to improve by removing faults and weaknesses or by strengthening good qualities; to put an end ( to an evil, abuse, etc) to correct. Ubi and Idowu (2013) stated that reform means to improve by alteration, correction of errors, removal of defects and put into a better form. They further stated that educational reform can be described as adoption of innovation with the ultimate goal to improve educational outcomes through an alteration of practices by educational stakeholders. Ugwuadu and Oparah (2013) also defined reform as the improvement or amendment of what is wrong, corrupt, unsatisfactory, etc. They distinguished reform

from revolution stating that the latter means basic or radical change whereas reform may be no more than fine tuning, or at most, redressing serious wrongs without altering the fundamentals of the system. In the case of teacher education, reform means actions aimed at improving or amending what is wrong, corrupt, unsatisfactory, etc in achieving the goals of teacher education.

### **Innovation**

Innovation can be described as introduction of new things or new way of doing things (Apebende, 2013). Also David (2011) defined educational innovation as the deliberate identification and application of ideas, information, imagination and initiative in deriving greater values and result. Agommuoh (2013) viewed innovation as a tool intentionally used to bring into existence and practice something new, so as to enhance performance and growth... through improvement in efficiency and effectiveness.

Isefe and Ogakwu (2012) explained that innovation is a process whereby a new product is made available, spread through the system and infused into other operating practice. The common ground in all the definitions of innovation is that it involves introduction of something new which may be major or minor.

### **The Emergence of Teacher-Education in Nigeria**

Teacher education in Nigeria was pioneered by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) which established the first teacher-training college known as “The Training Institution” (Fafunwa, 1995, Maduewesi and Ezeoba, 2010). This first teacher educational institution was established in Abeokuta in 1859. According to Fafunwa, the school was moved to Lagos in 1867 when the European missionaries were expelled from Abeokuta. Other teacher training colleges that followed were the Baptist Training College Ogbomosho (1897) and the Wesley College Ibadan (1905). Establishment of those colleges was informed by the urgent need to provide institutions for training of catechists and teachers.

Because teacher training colleges were yet to be established in the eastern Nigeria then, Missions in the Eastern part were providing informal training for teachers and catechists through the apprenticeship system as homeless boys and children of converted village heads lived with the missionaries and were taught to become pupil teachers and catechists.

In 1892, the Hope Waddell (Training) institute was established while in the northern part of Nigeria, the training of teachers started with the establishment of the Nassarawa school by the government in 1909 under the leadership of Hans Vischer, the then Director of education for northern Nigeria.

Presently in Nigeria, teacher education is provided by colleges of education, faculties of education, Institutes of Education, National Teachers Institute, among others (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2004).

### **Colonial Period Reforms of Teacher Education (1859-1959)**

The picture of teachers during the early period of missionary/colonial education in Nigeria as painted by Fafunwa (1995) was not funny at all. The teacher trainees were drawn from Standard VI. Before starting the two-year training course, they were expected to have served as pupil teachers for two years and to have passed the pupil-teacher examination and then to have acted as assistant teachers.

At the end of the two years they took a prescribed teachers' certificate examination and were certified if they passed the examination. Note that those pitiable teachers would combine school work with church work. Consequently, the curriculum of the early training institutes combined theology with teaching methods.

As commented above, prisoners would by far be happier than those early school teachers. Their saving grace, however, was the Phelps-Stokes Report of 1925 which criticized this system of teacher training as being unsatisfactory.

Thus, when Mr. E.R.J Hussey became the first Director of Education under the 1929 merger, he at once addressed himself to the task of the re-orientation and re-organization of the educational system along the lines suggested by the Phelps-Stokes Report and as directed by the Colonial Advisory Committee on Native Education (Fafunwa, 1995). He established two types of teacher-training institutions namely:-

- i. The Elementary Training Centres (E.T.C) for lower primary school teachers and
- ii. The Higher Elementary Training Colleges (H.E.T.C).

The E.T.C course, which lasted for two years culminated in the Grade III Teachers Certificate (TC III), while the H.E.T.C course, also of two years duration, led to the Grade II Teachers Certificate (TC II). Thus, for one to be a teacher, the person would first of all serve as pupil-teacher for two years before proceeding to the E.T.C then on the successful completion of the Grade III course, he had to teach for at least two years before proceeding to the Higher Elementary Training College which offered the Grade II Course.

### **Reforms and Innovation in Teacher Education: 1960-1980**

The first innovation which led to a reform immediately after independence occurred in higher educational institutions in Nigeria. It started with the setting up of the Ashby Commission in 1959. Fafunwa (1995) noted that teacher education at the university level was on the horns of a dilemma when the Ashby Commission was set up. The commission recommended that higher education must be built upon the foundations laid by the primary and secondary education and that if the foundations were too weak or too narrow, higher education would not be able to meet the required needs of the nation. The Commission's report also noted the imbalance between elementary, secondary and higher education. It therefore recommended that one out of every two teachers in a secondary school should be a graduate. The commission specifically recommended that a new corps of Grade I teachers also styled well-qualified, non graduate teachers should be trained to man the lower levels of secondary schools and teacher training colleges (then).

Government accepted the recommendations of the Commission and started establishing Grade I Teachers' Colleges which in 1962 metamorphosed into Advanced Teachers Colleges (ATCs) later christened Colleges of Education (Enyi, 2011).

The first generation of those ATCS which transformed into Colleges of Education (C.O.E.s) were established at Lagos (1962), Zaria (1962), Owerri (1963), Ondo (1964) and Kano (1964). According to Enyi (2011), the establishment of COEs marked a turning point in teacher education and its professionalization because it was designed to meet the middle-level manpower needs of Nigerian economy especially in the education sector. It was meant for the training and production of branded teachers, well qualified non-graduate teachers who will teach at the primary and secondary levels of education.

Another innovation which resulted from the recommendations of the Ashby Commission's Report was the introduction of Bachelor of Arts degree in Education (B.A.ED) in all Nigeria universities. The objective of this innovation was to assist in the preparation of graduate teachers (i.e. graduates who had no teaching qualifications but were teaching). This led to the launch of a three year Bachelor of Arts and Science combined honours degree in education (B.A. and B.Sc. Ed.) at the University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN) in September 1961. UNN example was followed by University of Ibadan in 1963, Ahmadu Bello University in 1964, the University of Lagos in 1965 and the University of Ife in 1967. To ensure a steady flow of this cadre of graduates (with B.A/B.Sc education), the Federal Government launched a crash programme for teachers in 1968. Its purpose was to produce some 2,000 graduate and Nigeria Certificate in Education (N.C.E) teachers annually for five years to enable Nigerians to man Nigeria schools within the foreseeable future (Fafunwa, 1995).

Another innovation in teacher education in Nigeria within this period under review was the establishment of the National Teachers Institute (NTI) through Decree No 7 of 1976. The NTI headquarter was located in Kaduna.

### **Reforms and Innovation in Teacher Education in the National Policy on Education.**

The 1969 National Curriculum Conference eventually produced the National Policy on Education which was first published in 1977 and revised in 1981,1998, 2004, 2007 (unpublished), and 2013 (FRN, 2013:ix). It reaffirmed that teachers will continue to be given a major emphasis in all educational planning because no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers. Emetarom (2012) noted that the National Policy on Education (1977) opened a new page in the development of teacher training programmes in Nigeria.

The NPE also stated that all teachers in Nigeria education institutions from pre-primary to the University will be professionally trained and that teacher education programmes will be structured to equip teachers for the effective performance of their duties. This was an obvious response to some of the reports of the Ashby Commission of 1959, that over 90% of primary school teachers and 70% of secondary school teachers in Nigeria were neither fully trained nor qualified for their work' (Enyi, 2011:2). The Report, accordingly, recommended, among other things, the massive training of teachers for a period of not less than 10 years for the primary and secondary levels of education.

After phasing out the Grade II Colleges (TTC) and making NCE the minimum basic qualification for entry into the teaching profession in Nigeria, the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) was set up to supervise, monitor and accredit the Colleges of Education to ensure some uniformity in standards of curriculum and implementation. It has been stated earlier that the National Teachers Institute (NTI) was set up to upgrade serving Grade II teachers to the NCE level through the distant learning method. Also, some of the COEs run part-time or sandwich NCE programme either for serving teachers or some candidates desiring the certificate.

The Special Teachers Upgrading Programme (STUP) was yet another innovation in teacher education in Nigeria. Iloputaife, Maduewesi and Igbo (2010) explained that all Grade II teachers in service were given a deadline of December 2006 to upgrade to the NCE or leave service. However, as at the deadline, there were still over 150,000 teachers without the NCE nationwide. The deadline had to be shifted by another two years during which a Special Teacher Upgrading Programme (STUP) was introduced for the teachers to acquire the NCE with emphasis on primary education. A lot of the reforms and innovation were introduced at the tertiary level particularly Colleges of Education and the

Universities. The Sandwich programme is of particular interest in teacher education. Sandwich programmes are the educational programmes that are run during the school vacations to create opportunities for civil servants. They were established and run by many tertiary institutions in Nigeria most especially the Universities and Colleges of Education. Sandwich programmes in Nigeria dates back to the mid eighties.

Teachers also participate in weekend programmes. These are run by some Universities, Nigerian Teachers' Institute (NTI) and Polytechnics. Both serving and intending teachers have used the weekend programmes to acquire degrees and upgrade their status.

Correspondence learning is another innovation which has been of benefit in teacher education.

According to Ugadu (2008), correspondence learning was formerly referred to as the Correspondence and Open Studies Unit but later, it was redefined to produce university graduates in disciplines necessary to meet national labour need e.g teachers, nurses, etc. The University of Lagos has established correspondence studies unit as far back as 1974.

Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) also established correspondence Teachers' Inservice Programme (TISEP) in 1976 which offers special programme to prepare middle level teachers for Nigeria's primary schools.

Establishment of Distance Learning Centres (DLC) is another innovation that has been of interest to teacher education in Nigeria. DLC was established by the University of Ibadan's Senate in 1988. It was initially referred to as the External Study Programme (ESP) but later became the Centre for External Studies (CES) and today it is called Distance Learning Centre (DLC). It was established to provide opportunities for teachers on the job to improve their skills and knowledge through on the job training.

Establishment of Teachers Registration Council (TRC) is yet another innovation in teacher education in Nigeria. The Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) was established through Act No. 31 of 1993 (FRN, 2007). Registration of teachers is imperative in order to make teaching a profession. Teaching was bastardised especially as a result of introduction of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) nation-wide in 1976.

The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) stated that teaching is a legally recognized profession in Nigeria. Thus, government set up the Teachers' Registration Council to control and regulate the practice of the profession. It also stated that those already engaged in teaching but not professionally qualified shall be given a period of time within which to qualify for registration or leave the profession.

Internship is another innovation in teacher education in Nigeria. The NPE provided that newly qualified teachers shall serve a period of internship: one (1) year for degree holders and two years for NCE holders (FRN, 2004). This is in line with the yardstick for measuring every profession. The Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) is obliged to adopt internship as practiced by sister professions in Nigeria and overseas such as Pharmacists Council of Nigeria, Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria; Ontario College of Teachers, Canada; General Teaching Council of England, College of Teacher, London; Teacher Development Agency London, among others (FRN, 2008).

The establishment of University of Education is not only an innovation but an index of maturity of teacher education in Nigeria. One of these is the former Rivers State College of Education which has transformed to Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumolumeni Port-Harcourt.

The dual mode of many Colleges of Education attaining degree awarding status in core education courses running concurrently with the NCE programmes is relatively new in teacher education in Nigeria. Nkoro and Ogirima (2014) listed up to 34 COEs that award degrees with their affiliate universities. Some of these COEs are: Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo; Alvan Ikoku College of Education, Owerri; Federal College of Education, Kano, among others.

### **Critical Evaluation of the Reforms and Innovation**

Generally, the objective of every innovation and reform is to improve or correct what is considered wrong or unsatisfactory. But some of the reforms sometimes, become counter-productive. This is why there is need to look at some of the reforms and innovation in teacher education in Nigeria critically in order to identify such lapses.

Looking at the Hussey reform of establishing two types of teacher training institutions, one would observe that the idea behind that was to provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment. This is still relevant and consistent with the goals of teacher education as captured in FRN (2004). But one may question the rationale behind phasing out Teacher Training Colleges (T.T.C.) that produced teachers specifically for the primary school level. The problem with the Hussey reform was that the teacher still served both as an educator and an evangelist. And so like the pupil-teacher, he was over-worked and underpaid.

The next reform was the establishment of Grade I teachers institutes which matured into Advanced Teachers Colleges, later renamed Colleges of Education (COEs).

As captured by Ugadu and Odo (2012), anybody who intends to make career in teaching should rise through the cadres from Grade III teacher to Grade II teacher, Grade I teacher (which is NCE holder) and then Bachelors degree in Education and so on. But with the decision of the National Council on Education to make the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) the minimum qualification for entry into the teaching profession, Teacher Training Colleges (T.T.Cs) were phased out. Students admitted into Colleges of Education have been made to jump from Grade III teachers to do Grade I teachers course at the Colleges of Education.

The NCE could still be made the minimum entry qualification for entry into the teaching profession without phasing out the Teacher Training Colleges. Teachers Grade Two Certificate (TC II) should have been made the basic qualification for admission into the College of Education which is a Grade I teachers College. The policy of making NCE the minimum qualification for entry into teaching profession in Nigeria might be considered an innovation but it created a lot of challenges in teacher education in Nigeria.

As noted by Ekundayo (2007) as cited by Ugadu and Odo (2012), this led to proliferation of Colleges of Education, leading to the scrambling for students by the institutions instead of the students working hard to gain admission. Consequently, admission requirements were highly compromised.

According to Eneasator and Eneasator (2011), a study revealed that 75.6% of the total intake of candidates for NCE in Nigeria in 2007 possessed just 3-4 credits at O' level while the remaining 24.4% had 5 credits and above.

The lowering of admission requirements for whatever reasons has not only affected the quality of the product of the Colleges but also the image and prestige of the teaching profession. The negative effects of those compromised admissions into Colleges of education are many and serious. Ugadu and Odo (2012) listed some of these negative effects of compromised admissions as follows:

1. Many students do not cope with the programme.
2. Many of the students are simply frustrated and helpless during Microteaching and Teaching Practice.
3. Up to 60% of the students do not write original work as their project report in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Nigeria Certificate in Education.
4. Many of the new generation NCE holders could not even write lesson notes and this contribute a lot to the falling standard of education.

### **Conclusion**

Teacher education in Nigeria has witnessed a lot of innovation leading to reforms. However, some of the innovations are rather controversial. For example, many educationists and stakeholders in education question the wisdom in phasing out Teacher Training Colleges (T.T.C) commenting that it has created structural imbalance in teacher education in Nigeria. Also, proliferation of Colleges of Education in Nigeria is responsible for compromised admission and production of poor quality holders of the Nigeria Certificate in Education (N.C.E) with a lot of damaging implications to educational development in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the negative implications identified through critical evaluation of some of the reforms and innovation in teacher education in Nigeria, the following recommendations are made:

1. Phasing out of Teacher Training Colleges (T.T.C) in Nigeria is considered inept as it has introduced structural imbalance in teacher education in Nigeria. It should therefore be reconsidered and restored.
2. Proliferation of Colleges of Education should be stopped since the available ones, (85) (Enyi, 2011) are already scrambling for students, resulting in lowering of admission requirements and it has negative implications.
3. Teacher education in Nigeria should be level specific as suggested by Ugadu and Odo (2012) as follows:  
Grade Two (TC II) (when restored) should handle primary 1-3.  
Grade one (I) (NCE) should handle primary 4-6.  
Bachelors Degree holders in Education should teach at the Secondary schools and T.T.C.  
M.ED. should handle Colleges of Education and Polytechnics.  
Higher degrees (Ph.D and Professors) should handle the Universities and Postgraduate Schools.
4. Government at all levels should actually spend more money on education because it is an investment. Teachers at all level should be paid consolidated salaries and allowances to enable them put in their best and concentrate on the job.
5. Professionalization of teaching should be more vigorously pursued. Unqualified teachers must not be allowed to practice, both in public and private schools.

### References

- Agommuoh, P.C. (2013). Educational reforms and innovations: an imperative for improving the quality of basic science teaching in Nigeria. In kpangban, E., Eya, P.E, P.E and Igbojinwaekwu, P.C. (Eds). *Reforms and innovation in Nigerian education*. Onitsha: West and Solomon.
- Aguokogbuo, C.N. (2000) *Curriculum Development and Implementation for Africa*. Nsukka: Mike Social.
- Apebende, E.U. (2013). Reforms and innovation of the Primary education system in Nigeria. In kpangban, Eya and Igbojinwaekwu (Eds). *Reforms and innovation in Nigerian Education*. Onitsha: West and Solomon.
- David, E. (2011). *The most common barriers to education reform*. St. Louis: C.V Mosby Co.
- Emetarom, U.G. (2012). Issues and challenges in teacher education in Nigeria in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In *Journal of Education (JOE)* 2 (1) 1-22.
- Eneasator, G.O and Eneasator, U.E. (2011). Towards quality teacher education in Nigeria in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In *Journal of Educational Studies and Research* 6 (1) 40-50.
- Enyi, D. (2011). Administering contemporary Colleges of Education in Nigeria. Challenges and options. In *Journal of Educational Studies and Research* 6 (1) 1-22.
- Fafunwa, A.B (1995). *History of Education in Nigeria*. Ibadan: NPS Educational Publishers Limited.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (1981). *National Policy on Education*. Lagos: NERDC.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004 and 2013) *National Policy on Education*. Lagos: NERDC.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2008). *Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (FRCN): Mandatory Continuing Professional Development Programme*. Abuja: Elohim Expressions.
- Iloputaife, E.C., Maduwesi, B.U and Igbo, R.O. (Eds) (2010). *Issues and challenges in Nigerian education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. Onitsha: West and Solomon.
- Isife, C.T. and Ogakwu, V.N. (2012). *The problems and innovation of education in Nigeria: the state of education in Nigeria*. Lagos: West and Solomon.
- Maduwesi, B.U and Ezeoba, K.O (2010). Teacher education in Nigeria in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: challenges and prospects. In Iloputaife, E.C; Maduwesi B.U and Igbo, R.O. (Eds). *Issues and challenges in Nigerian educational in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. Onitsha: West and Solomon.

*Reforms and Innovation in Teacher Education in Nigeria: A Historical Review*

---

- Nkoro, E.A and Ogirima, N. (2014). *Towards the survival of Nigeria teacher education system*. Abuja: Maigida Printing Press.
- The new Webster's Dictionary of the English Language* (1995). New York: Lexicon international-Publishers Guild Group.
- Ubi, S. and Idowu, G.C. (2003): Reforms and innovation in Nigeria education. In Kapngban, Eya and Igbojinwaekwu (Eds). *Reforms and innovation in Nigeria education*. Onitsha: West and Solomon.
- Ugadu, S.O and Odo, F.A. (2012). Restoration of teacher training colleges (T.T.C): a correction of structural imbalance in teacher education in Nigeria. In *Journal of Education (JOE)* 2 (1) 145=154.
- Ugwuadu, E.C. and Oparah, Z.C. (2013). A catalogue of existing reforms and innovation in Nigeria. In Kpagban, Eya and Igbojiwaekwu (Eds.). *Reforms and innovation in Nigerian education*. Onitsha: West and Solomon.

**APPENDIX**

**A Catalogue of Reforms and Innovation in Teacher Education in Nigeria.**

The following is a list of the reforms and innovation in teacher education in Nigeria:

1. Establishment of the first teacher training institution in Nigeria, The Training Institution in Abeokuta in 1859.
2. Establishment of two types of teacher training institutions by Hussey in 1929 namely: Elementary Training Centres (E.T.C) and Higher Elementary Training Colleges (H.E.T.C).
3. Establishment of Grade I teachers institutes called Advanced Teachers Colleges later renamed Colleges of Education.
4. Founding of the Yaba Higher College and introduction of the diploma in education course.
5. Establishment of the University College Ibadan in 1948.
6. Introduction of Bachelor of Arts degree in education (B.A. Ed).
7. Introduction of Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science combined honours degree (B.A/B.Sc. Hons.) in Education (B.A/B.Sc. Hons. (Eds).
8. Launching of a crash programme for teachers by the Federal government in 1968.
9. Establishment of Institute of Education, the oldest being Institute of Education, University of Ibadan in 1956.
10. Establishment of the National Teachers Institute (N.T.I) in 1976.
11. Introduction of crash programme for teacher Training Colleges by the Federal government in 1974 to prepare for the UPE scheme of 1976.
12. The phasing out of Teacher Training College (T.T.C).
13. Making N.C.E the minimum basic qualification for entry into the teaching profession in Nigeria.
14. Establishment of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) in 1989.
15. Special Teacher upgrading Programme (STUP).
16. Introduction of sandwich programme.
17. Establishment of correspondence learning and Distance Learning Centres (D.L.C).
18. Establishment of Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) in 1993.
19. Internship for newly qualified teachers
20. Formal process of induction of newly recruited teachers.
21. Professionalization of the teaching job.
22. Establishment of University of Education.
23. The dual mode whereby many Colleges of Education award both the N.C.E and degree in education.
24. Payment of minimum wage and Teachers Salary Structure (TSS) (even though some state governments either circumvent or renege).