

Functional Teacher Education Programme For Managing Security Challenges and National Development in Nigeria

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Date Received: September 1, 2014; Date Revised: September 26, 2014

Abstract - *The paper examined the strategies for managing functional teachers' education programme for combating security challenges and enhancing National development in Nigeria. The focus therefore was on the concepts of functional teachers' education, security challenges and development and how teachers' education can be made functional towards combating the security challenges in Nigeria and how developmental efforts could be enhanced. It was however recommended that teachers education curriculum should be restructured and geared towards combating security challenges and National development especially in Nigeria.*

Keywords: *Functional Teachers' Educational Programme, Managing Security Challenges and National Development.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Currently, Nigeria is tensed by reason of challenges that have already taken place in the areas of science and technology, trade and commerce as well as leadership and governance in democratic setting. Even most disturbed we are by the prospects of future changes. In this direction, Jimba and Odanwu (2009) assert that ideas and values that once seemed workable for religion, for the family life, and for education no longer appear to be viable. The stark reality in our nation is that development and modernization are taking the centre stage. And no development/modernization is costless. Society must pay the bills, hence the crises in different facets of life that we are experiencing, the world over. It is the humans who transform and manage the input and resources to produce desirable outcomes and products. It should be noted that, teacher is the hallmark of any quality efforts in building society. For instance, the health of a nation lies in the spirit and

quality of its teachers (Okenyi, 2008). It is also implied that excellent educational policies for whatever purpose or aim would be meaningfulness unless there are equally excellent teachers to see to their purposeful realization.

Undoubtedly, revolution however potent is likely to fail if teachers are not made the cornerstone. But it is not the case that teachers fuel conflicts. To say the least, teachers' orthodoxy in promoting ethic standards is real. However, this landscape has been eroded by powerful external societal currents, leaving him almost helpless, unable to proffer with certitude solutions to the many questions of life and consequently leading to insecurity. These phenomena are strong enough to destabilize even strong nations. What can we say about these questions?

Can teachers alone stop corruption in the society, can teachers stop leadership-followership mistrust, can teachers stop ineffective leaders from sensitive positions of influence, can teachers curb economic inequality, can teachers stop poverty?, can teachers stop multi-ethnic and multi-religious conflicts.

The answer to these rather rhetorical questions are subject to different interpretations. Some will argue that teachers' curricula activities put then in a better position to address the ills of the society. This is to the extent that every form of inequality in the society is blamed on education. While some people hold views contrary to this that the teacher's duty ends at the pedagogic skills. Hence the teacher is captured in a seemingly web of confusion and social treachery.

The teacher should be concerned. This is because central to his pedagogy is the processing of individual learner's attitudes, skills, knowledge and personality upon which ethical behaviours are shaped and directed. This view agrees with Smith in Dore (1976) that:

An instructed and intelligent people are always more decent and orderly than ignorant and stupid one. They are more exposed to examine and more capable of seeing through the interested complaints of factions and sedition and they are upon this account less apt to be misled into wanton and unnecessary opposition to the measures of the government. (p.56)

Thus, teacher education has a functional role to play in stabilizing the society. The paradox in the teacher is captured by the society. This is because the pride in academic excellence/ achievement have been replaced with the power of money and party politics.

Yet, why are we not to be worried about teacher education when the new generation of students at the secondary and tertiary levels have lost the sense of discipline. Secret cults have virtually taken over the management of institutions of learning? Cultists hold administrators and lecturers to ransom, destroy property, kill and maim their fellow students? When according to Ukeje (2002) professionalism has been replaced with materialism and thus:

Lecturers now willingly participate in examination malpractices. Academic standards and publications have been replaced with handouts, some of which are worthless plagiarized documents. Students are said to purchase grades and grades are awarded to the highest bidder... the ivory tower has degenerated into anthill of confusion and contradictions. (P. 36)

Certainly, all is not well with the system where teacher education has its grounds uneven, weighted and its impact found wanting; assessed and found falling and tested its quality, found it not surviving the crucibles (Ejiofor, 2002). Painfully too, many Nigerians have looked for alternatives in:

Chieftaincy titles, flamboyant cars, money appears to perform the tricks. Apart from buying the trappings of status and power, it can buy educational titles, trophies and certificates. A "honoris causa" is dropped.

By implication, teacher education with its paraphernalia cannot guarantee employment, cannot bring about recognition and may not maintain the status in the family.

More worrisome is the insufficiently packaged teacher education process which accommodates comfortably the mere qualification earning which is destructive of curiosity and imagination. Schooling is simply for the purpose of pursuit of certificates, leading to a situation of educated unemployed and qualification inflation. Invariably, this army of "unemployed:" are ready-made vanguards of destabilization of polity. The task this paper sets to accomplish is to examine the germane role of teacher education in the era of collapsed core values that have hitherto sustained social, economic, religious, cultural, political and other ethos. Our thesis centers on arts and social sciences themes.

Conceptual Descriptions

Teacher Education

It is generally believed that whatever you want in the society is put in the school. This is because the school is the manufacturer of the society as well as the mirror of the society. But these efforts must be properly guided through teacher education. We do know that the curriculum is central to the production and maintenance of any political and social regime. It is as much concerned with what it means to be an intelligent pupil, a loyal worker or the good mother as about the legitimization of certain forms of knowledge (Weiner (1994) in Coffey, 2001).

What is teacher education? It is simply described as an education process designed to identify, select and produce teachers. Expectedly, teacher education is given the responsibility of producing, according to the FRN (2009) documents:

- a) *Highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our education system;*
- b) *Encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;*
- c) *Help teachers to fit into social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals;*
- d) *Provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to changing situations;*
- e) *Enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession. (p. 12)*

In point of fact, teachers are both made and born. He is a human being with certain natural qualities, nurtured through salient teacher education mechanism. The items

a-e are value loaded to drive home the imperative of teacher education in a country.

Teacher education is crucial to the entire education system of any nation, because the future of a nation depends on its teachers. The qualities they possess today will inevitably be reflected in the future of the nation (Hanson, 1964). This is to say, the teacher cannot perform above the quality of his professional preparation. By implication too, the type of teachers a nation has depends on the degree of input, imputed into that nation's teacher education process.

The worry of this paper lies in the fact that, this country currently wastes virtually all resources and potentials that would have made her great. The fear still lies in this rhetorical dirge according to Jimba (2011), sounded by Egbemode that:

What kind of country plants tomatoes and does not have plan for tinned tomatoes? What kind of nation has fisheries everywhere, but import sardine and geisha? What kind of country plants corn in all its regions and import canned sweet corn? Which other do you know where cows obstruct vehicular traffic in all its state capital cities, but still imports canned beefs? Which nation has fertile land to plant all the food it needs to feed its citizens, but leaves it to weeds? Welcome to Nigeria. (p. 64)

The dirge exemplifies the frustration of teacher education, saddled with the responsibility of charting a sure way to social harmony, national integration, unity and stability. Surely hope is not lost. The commitment and will of all and sundry must be harnessed to build the capacity of teachers, who when adequately prepared can then prepare a generation that will build the nation. The result of his teaching will then produce well trained personnel with limited waste or drop-outs from the system (Nigeria Tribune, March 4, 2003 as cited by Amaele, 2010).

Security and Education

We may ask what security is and why it is important in a polity? And where does teacher education matter in security? These are bulging questions of the moment. Security is a social phenomenon potent in any discourse. Descriptively, it is a state of affair desired by human beings who want to be protected from enemies (Jande, 2011). Security facilitates carrying out activities in comfort. Security denotes presence of peace, justice, fairness, respect for persons as centers of consciousness.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica (2010), security is the quality or state of being free from fear or distrust. Agreeing with this definition, Jande (2011) avers that human beings usually care much about freedom from hunger, either as individuals or as group in the form of a state or nation. However, the condition of being 'free' even in relative terms in Nigeria is in a pathetic state characterized by fear, danger, lack of trust, chaos, ritual killings, cultism, internet crimes, armed robbery, uncertainties and other vices everywhere.

Why are we not to be worried, when the entire country is harassed by one form of crisis or the other? In the South-South, the trade mark is youth restiveness, oil bunkering/ vandalization, etc; the South-East, kidnapping, ritualism, armed robbery, etc; the Middle-Belt or North Central, it is communal or ethnic conflicts among themselves, or farmers versus herdsmen and armed robbery; the South-West, area Boys, thuggery, bank robberies; the North West and North East breeding of Boko Haramists, etc.

And in the government sectors, the three arms of the government are no exceptions from high level corruptions so sophisticated that the arms of the law are either too weak to catch up with them or they are themselves deeply suspect. The summary is that insecurity is prevalent in the country because the educated unemployed and certificate inflation abound. The nature of our students from colonial period to date, is one that accepts whatever *fads they are fed* with as being unquestionably true, (Enoh, 1996). This is as a result of the weakness in the educational preparation of even the teacher. The learner is not prepared to develop critical consciousness; education did not equip the child to think about alternatives in life or even to consider issues rationally. But education promotes fear of almost everything: parents, teachers, daylight, darkness, thinking and speaking (Enoh, 1996).

The implications of this curriculum weakness are many. The core values in the curriculum are eroded. Currently teacher education suffers setback in a number of ways; namely, inadequate funding infrastructure decay, low status, poverty and social inequality with other vocations. Even with the curriculum implementers the teachers, there is the social mistrust in status between teachers at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. And at the tertiary levels, Ph.D. holders, for instance in Colleges and Polytechnics in the same disciplines are not accepted by their counterparts in the university as equals. It is the universities that awarded the degree(s). Is it funny? Secondly, the way religious activities are conducted increases insecurity. Religion

preaches fatalism and thus renders the individual an irrelevant factor even to himself. Obviously individuals resign to fate too quickly because his/her religion has prescribed to him/her that “all your cares should be left in the hands of Gods who can do everything for you and without me you cannot do anything” (Enoh, 1996). The teachers of our time need to teach in a manner that learners are existentially challenged to explore freedom of thought, make choices and see the consequences of their actions.

Functional Arts and Social Science Education

The theoretical perspectives on the sociology of the curriculum have been concerned with exploring the ways in which curriculum content, and pedagogical styles contribute to the process of social, cultural and economic reproduction of society. Teacher education functionality in the pursuit of harmony in Nigeria has depended on eclectic approach. Teachers have used several models to influence what they want society to be. By eclectic approach, we mean a composite system of thought which incorporates ideas selected from other system (Enoh, 1996). It does not modify but blends opposite views.

The thrust of our programme of action is functional arts education. In teaching and learning, it is usually agreed that some disciplines are more suitable or amenable to the development of certain human values than others. This seems to be the case with arts, referred to as humanities or liberal arts rather than sciences. When it comes to values adjusted to enhance morality and ethics.

Moreover, functional arts education is a field of study that focuses attention on man’s imagination, creativeness, cultural heritage and respect for human values. According to Oputa (1988), the humanities and social sciences have man as the theme, thus having man as their theme, expresses a positive direction in the way human beings should be treated.

The humanities and social sciences provide wider opportunities for divergent views such that if teachers handle the classroom or lecture halls environment properly it would generate in individuals the feelings of being democratic. The learners are inspired only by attitudes of the mind as self-concept, personal freedom, responsible choice and being accountable. Therefore, learners’ emotional gauge, either as a facilitating or disrupting influence are put in check. For instance, they way in which we appreciate a situation, our belief, and capacity for objectivity are all likely to affect our approach to security issues.

Functional arts education encourages concern for relevance and coherence of facts among pupils. Teachers facilitate learners’ capacity for objectivity, rather than subjectivity as well as concern for relevance and coherence of facts. This is because objectivity ensures reasonable concern for truth and readiness to submit same to public tests; what we think rather than what is plagiarized from the net. For instance, philosophy produces the habit of critical thinking, independence of mind; moral and social studies have concern for human values. All these have direct relevance to the development of human capacity to challenge the unknown worlds of fantasy or glittering vanities causing conflicts and insecurity.

Combating Anti-Social and Materialism

Functional arts education has the capacity for combating anti-social and materialistic tendencies that threaten social life of society. The attractions of information technology, liberalized market opportunities due to borderless society have thrown human race into confusion, frustration and anxiety. This is because globalization with its outlets encourages materialism and lack of respect for human beings. The craze seems to have risen from consideration of the impact of science and technology on economic, industrial and technological development. The real situation in the words of Ogwuejiofor (2002) lies not in the craze but in:

Our problems, be they in moral, economic, political and technological fields arise out of some prejudices and bias of the mind and until our minds are liberalized from these prejudices, no economic activity can hope to advance, where citizens have no sense of duty, the right attitude to work, and a feeling of moral responsibility towards society. (p. 15)

The point stressed here is that morality and society must go hand in hand. Thus, we should view development vide humanities as being for man rather than force sale of handouts, banking and filling education, cults and cultism and so on.

Of course, we are all familiar with the extent that materialism has eroded moral and social values among the citizenry even to the point of disregard for human lives. Like we indicated earlier, even people who have no business with academic, buy and parade on their tables emblems that they are “Drs”, those in academics buy chieftaincy titles for enhancing their status and recognition.

Role of Teacher Education in Managing Security Issues for Development

Teacher education has long been involved in teaching about everyday experiences or realities of citizenship. And outcomes of educational experience have long been a social reproduction of citizens. Crucially, values and attitudes needed for the survival of the citizens, and the society at large must be identified and given specific attention through the improvement of teacher education. Based, as observed, the failure of our system to address crucial issues in the polity consequently has led to insecurity.

Deducing from the views of Ukeje and Ejiofor (1998) that there is no alternative to restoration of the dignity of teacher education in Nigeria. Restoration of yester-years standards must be pursued vigorously. This means that current lapses especially examination malpractice must be hated by all teachers, culture of reading also must be encouraged among teachers and students. We (teachers) must not allow the situation that makes teaching the last hope of the hopeless; students must choose teacher education courses with passion so that on graduation they will see the discipline as a service vocation. In this way, teachers will be able to play their roles according to Ukuje (2000) of producing “efficient, effective and dedicated teachers at all the levels of educational system.

The recruitment into and retention of capable people (and not rent seekers) into the teaching profession should be a priority. Secondly, parents must demand that their children receive proper education and not just be contented with what they call meal ticket (Ukeje, 2000). This will bring about attitude change on the part of the teachers. Parents should approach the issue of the education of their children zealously, like when we are sick, we look for the doctor; when we run foul of the law, we look for the best lawyer (Ukeje, 2000). Let us look for the best teachers through programmed teacher education.

Thirdly, teacher certification and on-the-training behaviours should not be treated with levity. So, bodies that are entrusted with accreditation of courses run in colleges of education must be faithful to evaluate marking schemes. Teachers must be prepared to prepare marking scheme. This is a very strategic way of avoiding sale of grades and marks to the highest bidder. The entire teacher education programmes should be for those who have the zeal capacity and interest.

Ogundele and Olaniyi (2012) also suggested the need to adopt a structural approach for improving teachers’ education standard in Nigeria. The authors

stated the need to prioritize teachers’ education programme right from senior teacher education to Colleges of Education and University Faculty of Education, instead of secondary schools to Faculty of Education. The authors therefore concluded that teachers’ education programme should commence as early as possible in order to enhance standard to combat security challenges in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Teacher education remains the best antidote against societal decay as we observed. Thus, teacher education institutions must be encouraged to discharge their social responsibilities with every sense of dignity. Certainly, with teachers fighting hard to restore the dignity of man, there is hope for Nigeria.

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