



MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES AS DRAWBACKS TO TEACHER DEVELOPMENT: THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE NIGERIAN TEACHER IN BASIC EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Teaching as a profession is deeply rooted in historical antecedents. Granted that its journey from the status of a voluntary service in the hands of Christian missionaries with no legal instruments and reliable conditions of service to the present one of its integration into the public service has been a giant stride, its management challenges have, in many instances, constituted drawbacks to the optimal development of the teacher. Some of the management challenges touch on the inconsistencies with regard to admission requirements for teachers' training, discrepancies in their recruitment and deployment, irregular career progression, inadequate provision of teaching and learning material, the non-inclusive nature of curriculum review, the reluctance of government to address teachers' genuine grievances, inadequate teacher incentives and others. As a remedy, the school should be recognised as a learning organisation that, among other things, should find expression in the Nigerian teacher being equipped to cope with the modern practices that are required of a new teacher.

Keywords: management challenges, teacher development, basic education

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INTRODUCTION

To prepare a new teacher requires a paradigm shift from what constitutes the old concept of a teacher to what should constitute the concept of a new teacher, given the knowledge explosion as a result of globalisation. Teaching generally – both in Nigeria and elsewhere – is regarded as a special profession, characterised by deeply rooted historical antecedents. It has its unique challenges, but there is compelling evidence of progression. It has been operating in terms of the incremental model of policy-making. It graduated from a level of voluntary service without any legal instruments to the present level of a pensionable profession in the public service.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Contextual clarification of two salient concepts is considered necessary (Okafor, 1984). These are basic education and teacher development.

Basic education

In section 3 of the National Policy on Education (NPE), the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) explains that basic education shall be of nine years' duration, comprising six years of primary education and three years of junior secondary education. It shall be free and compulsory. It shall also include adult and non-formal education programmes at primary and junior secondary education levels for adults and out-of-school youth.

The goals of basic education include, among others, the inculcation of sustainable literacy and numeracy, and the ability to communicate effectively, laying a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking, offering citizenship education and opportunities for developing manipulative skills, character moulding and providing basic tools for further education.

Teacher development

Teacher development seeks to prepare teachers adequately to fit into what Obanya (2007) calls "the international framework for teacher education". For this, he emphasises two sides of the pedagogy inculcation principle, namely mastering the teaching model and modelling the master teacher. The former stresses excellent grasp of learning promotion principles, techniques and technologies, especially the capacity to inculcate these in learners. The latter stresses the internalisation of

learning promotion principles, techniques and technologies, especially radiating these in classrooms, in school in general and in workplace interactions with students.

To achieve this would involve continuous updating of knowledge, making the teacher comfortable, as well as giving him or her a sense of belonging.

ANTECEDENTS OF BASIC EDUCATION AND TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

Because the level and nature of education suggest the level and nature of teacher development, different levels and periods of educational development are identified in Nigeria.

Period of traditional pre-colonial education

This was the period of self-rule before the coming of colonial rule. During this period, every normal adult was regarded as a teacher with parents playing a major role in education, without having undergone any formal school learning. Every normal adult member of the extended family was a teacher, emphasising vocational skills, abilities, attitudes and acceptable behaviour patterns (Ukeje, 1992). During this period, the child learnt many cultural practices at home from his or her significant others, including parents, uncles, cousins, children in senior grades, members of peer groups and other adult members of the community. The method of learning was imitation or "do as I do". While the boys learned especially from their fathers and other adult male members of the community, the girls learned from their mothers and other adult female members of the community. Everything was done traditionally in the indigenous way.

Period of sole voluntary agency system and control (1842–1887)

This period witnessed the coming of voluntary education agencies. The voluntary agencies were the various missionary groups that came to Nigeria for their primary work of evangelisation but who used education as an instrument. The various missionary groups included the Wesleyan Methodist Mission, the Church Missionary Society, the Roman Catholic Church, the Presbyterian Church and others.

This period witnessed the introduction of formal education in 1842 by the Wesleyan Methodist Mission and the opening of the first known Western form of school in Nigeria in 1843 (Fafunwa, 1974). Teaching was a voluntary occupation.



Ukeje (1992) notes that the Church Missionary Society “established perhaps the first teacher training institution in the country...” The teacher taught what the church wanted him to. Government had no hand in education, implying that there was no uniformity in the curriculums provided by the various churches or in teachers' conditions of service.

Period of dual control (1887–1953)

This was the period of control of education by both the missionaries and the colonial government. Essentially, while the missionaries had the upper hand in the provision of manpower (mainly teachers), the colonial government had the upper hand in the provision of administrative instruments for education.

This period provided for four classes of teachers: school masters, assistant school masters, pupil teachers and monitors. During this period, the first indigenous Nigerian Education Ordinance was introduced. It provided for a Board of Education and the appointment of an inspector. The different missions established more schools, including teacher training institutions, of which there were now three. Margery (1960) notes that there was a strengthening of government control of education.

Period of increased government control (1952–1970)

This was the period of emerging regional universal primary education with local education committees. Four inspectors of education were appointed, who were in charge of primary, secondary, teacher training and technical education respectively. Teachers were more or less policed.

Exceptional growth in private proprietary secondary schools, the use of common syllabuses by private and indigenous schools, and the same staff qualifications and registration characterised the period. The unsatisfactory state of affairs in curriculum and its delivery led to the National Curriculum Conference (NCC) of 1969 (Fafunwa, 1974).

Era of state takeover and national universal primary education (1970–1979)

This was the era during which educated and concerned Nigerians expressed dissatisfaction over the irrelevance of the curriculum in schools as the emphasis was on arts, and science and technology were neglected in a country that was

agrarian in nature. Teachers' knowledge was very shallow and limited. The NCC paved the way for the first National Policy on Education in 1977 (Fafunwa, 1974).

The NCC was an impressive gathering of Nigerians from all walks of life – engineers, lawyers, farmers, teachers, businessmen and women, members of various trade unions, artisans and members of religious bodies. These Nigerians gathered and questioned the rationale behind the offering of such an arts-based foreign curriculum in a country that was naturally endowed with abundant mineral resources and prospects for scientific agriculture, given the vast area of arable land. The result of the NCC was the articulation of the first National Policy on Education, which has been reviewed several times subsequently.

Era of the knowledge explosion and globalisation (1980 to the present day)

The knowledge explosion and the burden of the teacher teaching a curriculum he or she never took part in developing, infrastructural decay, inappropriate teacher recruitment, the image of the teacher and the comparison syndrome were among the characteristics of the era, suggesting that a way forward had to be found.

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES OF TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

To prepare a “new teacher”, it is necessary to identify the management challenges facing the present teacher.

Lack of interest in teacher education

There is a lack of interest in teacher education programmes, which can be attributed, among others, to the declining social status of the teaching profession. Data sourced from the Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board's (JAMB) 1999/2000 and 2000/2001 Applications and Admissions into Tertiary Institutions shows that while universities and polytechnics are still highly competitive, with attrition rates of 81% and 72% respectively, it seems that colleges of education have to go out literally begging for students – a situation that has given rise to an increase in pre-Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) programmes, which seldom attract the most motivated students (Obanya, 2007).

The candidates in the pre-NCE programmes lack the basic requirements to pursue the NCE programme. Therefore, they are once more taken through the senior secondary school subjects on which they write qualifying internal examinations



conducted by the college of education. Candidates who pass the examination with the acceptable minimum requirements enrol for the NCE programme. So, the benefiting candidates are graduates of the remedial programme, who have now entered the regular NCE programme, whereas for the polytechnics and universities, the enrolled students are qualified graduates who enter the programme directly from the senior secondary school.

Teacher recruitment and deployment

Poor decisions have adversely affected the way the recruitment and deployment of teachers is handled. Normally, before government or any formal organisation recruits or deploys new employees, there are basic considerations that have to be heeded. The considerations would include collecting data on the number of vacancies, noting the various categories of staff required, the gender mix (especially with regard to teaching in mixed gender schools), the advertising of vacancies, shortlisting applicants, the establishment of a panel of interviewers, interviewing candidates, selecting and recruiting candidates, and the deployment of staff to areas of need. But, unfortunately, because of poor decisions, these guidelines for recruitment and deployment are hardly followed by some state governments.

The result is that most urban schools, especially those in the southern part of the country, have a preponderance of female teachers in basic education. The situation therefore shows gender insensitivity (Federal Ministry of Education, 2007), as most of the schools do not have enough male teachers to cater for the special needs of male learners. The worrying situation prejudices the realisation of the Dakar Education For All (EFA) goal of eliminating gender disparities among teachers, since there are not enough male teachers to cater for the male pupils in primary and secondary education in that area by 2005.

Unqualified teachers still teaching

The minimum teaching qualification approved by the Federal Government of Nigeria is the NCE. Regrettably, many states, especially those in the northern part of the country, record low percentages of qualified teachers. For instance, the Federal Ministry of Education's Basic and Secondary Education Statistics in Nigeria for 2004 and 2005 (2006) show the following low percentages of qualified teachers for four states, as reflected in Table 1.

Table 1: Percentage of qualified teachers in four northern states of Nigeria (Federal Ministry of Education, 2006)

States	Percentage of qualified teachers	
	Primary school	All schools
Zamfara	20.45	65.85
Yobe	20.70	57.64
Taraba	29.67	61.33
Sokoto	19.19	67.88

Irregular career progression

Once employed in most organisations, a career progression path is made available to the new employee for him or her to study and follow in order to achieve personal development. This is done with the assistance of the employing organisation. The organisation then provides the enabling environment for career progression. The enabling environment may include financial assistance, the identification of courses and recommending or nominating the individual to attend the courses. Furthermore, employees' organisations frequently sponsor members to attend workshops. This makes it possible for them to grow fast and perform more effectively.

Teaching is lacking in this respect: Many teachers need to pay for themselves from their meagre salaries to attend career development programmes, such as sandwich courses, evening study programmes and even workshops. Sometimes the teachers attend workshops without financial assistance from their employer to cover their transport and meals. Often, when they receive meals, it is of a poor quality and they receive shabby treatment. Sometimes, the stipend proposed for them to attend workshops is politicised. In the Nigerian context, when an issue is said to have been politicised, the general understanding is that it was not handled in the proper way. This implies that some people may have been favoured, while others may have gone without anything even when there are concerted efforts to convey the impression that the government cares for the teachers. Given this unpleasant situation, teaching at this level is seen as a "dead end" or an unattractive proposition.

Moreover, for many years, teachers who retired from government service in most of the states have not been paid their pension and gratuity. Many retirees have died without receiving their pensions and gratuities. This situation resembles what



the Nigerian author Njoku (2007), in his treatment of manipulating administrative principles, calls manipulative democracy or pseudo-democracy.

Inadequate provision of teaching and learning material

There is an acute shortage of teaching and learning materials in schools. Granted that a resourceful teacher should be able to improvise teaching and learning materials, it should be noted that there is a limit to improvisation by a teacher. The absence of such materials adversely affects the level of teachers' performance. It is obvious that teaching without the materials that would aid learning will not make learning adequate: not seeing the learning aid, not touching it, not smelling it in some cases, and even not hearing the sound would all constitute significant limitations to effective mastery of the subject matter.

Absence of teachers from curriculum review processes

A principle of curriculum review is that all those who are affected by a given curriculum should be involved in its review, at least through representatives. Much curriculum review and innovation done in Nigeria does not have the support and commitment of teachers. Edozie (2005), while examining constraints to curriculum innovations in developing countries, points out that most curriculum planners hardly involve teachers in curriculum innovations. Accordingly, "new learning experiences are quietly included in existing curricula and thrust upon unprepared teachers to implement". If teachers, as the real technicians in teaching, are not involved in the review of the curriculum they are operating, but are merely asked to implement what was reviewed without approving of the changes, they might view the implementation as an unfair imposition.

Government reluctance to address teachers' genuine grievances

Over the years, lip service has characterised attempts by government to resolve teachers' genuine grievances. Yet, what teachers are asking for is to be given reasonable remuneration that should take cognisance of ever-increasing inflation.

A typical instance of government reluctance in this regard is the recently approved teachers' salary structure (TSS). The issue of the TSS came up as a result of pressure exerted on the Federal Government of Nigeria by the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) because of teachers' dissatisfaction with their conditions of service. The implementation of the TSS is proving problematic after its approval by government.

The manner of implementation varies between states. While some states have implemented the new salary structure to some extent, others have not.

THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE NEW TEACHER

The old and present teachers have not satisfied the yearnings of the public in respect of service delivery in education. Therefore, there is a need for a teacher development programme for the new teacher.

National education sector development planning

Planning is a process whereby a direction is set forth and the way of following that direction is specified (UNESCO, 2006). Nigeria needs a National Education Sector Plan (NESP), a National Education Sector Operational Plan (NESOP) and similar plans for the states. It is interesting to note that some states have embarked on these plans. Among other things, the task of carrying out national educational sector development planning would require a business-type process and re-engineering that should start with carrying out a SWOT analysis to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (Obanya, 2007) to obtain reliable baseline data.

Treating schools as learning organisations

A learning organisation is one that works to facilitate the lifelong learning and personal development of all of its employees, while continually preparing to respond to changing demands and needs (Griffin, 1997). The teacher should be constantly exposed to learning portals – gateways or avenues of knowledge. These would include the provision of internet services, computers, newsletters, journals, training workshops and research to keep abreast of global trends.

Government readiness and preparedness to address teachers' genuine grievances

Government needs to provide a legal instrument that will address teachers' genuine grievances. This can be referred to and tendered as evidence in a court of law.

Constitutional provision for uniform teachers' salaries

In Nigeria, education is in the Concurrent Legislative List (Gazetted Amended Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2011). This situation has given rise

to varying salary structures and conditions of service for teachers in the various states. To rectify the anomaly, the constitutional provision in respect of this should be amended to provide for uniform teachers' salaries across the states.

Involving teachers in curriculum innovation

Planning is involved in curriculum innovation. A recognised principle of planning is that those who will be affected by any plan should be involved in its development from its inception to its implementation. Curriculum innovation can only be confirmed as serving the purpose when professional teachers are involved in curriculum innovation at all levels. This will give teachers a sense of belonging and recognition in this profession and, eventually, emotional stability.

Making the study of education as a discipline more attractive

At the moment, the study of education is less attractive than that of other disciplines, such as the sciences and business subject areas. There is, therefore, a need to conduct an elaborate empirical study with a view to restructuring, repositioning and revamping the faculties of education at universities, colleges of education and other higher educational institutions where they exist. The empirical study envisaged should cover the curriculum, skills acquisition and job prospects, improved conditions of service, political will and the professional status of teaching, among other variables. The essence of the suggested study is to empirically identify the various areas of intervention in the discipline of education with a view to upgrading and making the discipline more attractive, so that new entrants will see it being as good as other disciplines in other tertiary institutions.

Adequate provision of teaching and learning materials

The teacher should have learning support material to work with. Teaching and learning materials concretise learning, making it more enduring and facilitating skills and knowledge acquisition. The Comparative Education Study and Adaptation Centre (CESAC) highlighted the production of actual curriculum material – pupils' texts, teachers' guides and workbooks – as indispensable, emphasising audiovisual aids to facilitate teaching and learning (Okeke, 1981).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This paper provides conceptual clarification of basic education and teacher development. A brief reference to historical antecedents of educational development, which suggests the nature of teacher development, is made. Education in Nigeria progressed from the level of the traditional pre-colonial era when every adult was regarded as a teacher, passing through a voluntary agency control era when the teacher volunteered to work as guided by missionaries, to the policing of the teacher, which started with the era of dual control of education when government started partnering with voluntary agencies. A somewhat uniform standard in education was ushered in by the era of state takeovers of national universal primary education up to the present era of globalisation. To be able to address the way forward, management challenges in the system were identified, such as a lack of interest in teacher education (Obanya, 2007), poor decisions and practices regarding teacher recruitment and deployment, unqualified teachers still teaching, irregular career progression, inadequate provision of teaching and learning materials, the non-inclusive nature of curriculum review and government's reluctance to address teachers' genuine issues.

As a way forward, the following suggestions are made: national education sector development planning, treating schools as learning organisations, government readiness to address teachers' grievances, constitutional provisions for uniform teachers' salaries, involving teachers in curriculum innovation, revamping facilities of education and adequate provision of teaching and learning materials. It is therefore concluded that if these recommendations are judiciously implemented, a good road map would have been charted for the development of a new teacher.

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