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TOWARDS A REDESIGNED TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN THE 21ST CENTURY: CHALLENGES, STRATEGIES AND IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract

The paper looked at the challenges facing teaching profession in Nigeria currently and identified lapses. Lapses include poor teaching curriculum that is often not easily revised. Despite global changes in the last decade of the last millennium, revolutions in the Information Communication Technology (ICT), one profession has remained the same and that is the teaching profession and specifically provoking is the area of teacher preparation. Though much has been ascribed to the profession, less is done. The profession has become unattractive and cannot attract the best as it used to be. The paper recommended a complete rebranding of the profession and repackaging teacher development programmes.

Introduction

The world is continuously experiencing transformation occasioned by changes in processes, environment and needs. Education has variously been described as the bedrock of transformation and development (Babalola, 2011; Afe-Babalola, 2010). The growing and diverse trends in modern life endeavour require that education receives similar treatment to continue to remain relevant. Key indices and resources in the field of education include infrastructure and the teacher. Most nations have observed the important role teachers play in their development and have given a place of priority to the production of teachers and the curriculum of teacher education as they pass from generation to generation. In addition, the mores and values of the society are dynamic hence the transmitter of these mores and values must equally be dynamic.

Human Capital Theorists (HCT) have since recognised the role of teachers in building and transforming human capital stock into reusable values for example, Adekanbi, (2008), Schultz, (1971)

and Becker (1964) opined that the role of education was so important that they recommended that government should invest heavily in education. Similarly, Psacharaopolous and Patrinos, (2002); Psacharaopoulous, (1973) recommended investment in higher education much unlike the early HCT that considered investment in higher education a luxury. The initial HCT's postulated that returns to investment in primary education and secondary education far outweighed investment in any physical good but also noted that though higher education was good, it did not require the priority that primary and secondary schools need. Hence, the classical HCT's did not encourage government investment in higher education. though it appears the notion is changing, it has not changed among global financial organisations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Organisation (IMF), Babalola (2011).

Omolewa (2008), Adeyemi and Uko-Aviomoh (2004), Akpochafo and Fellio, (2006), Babalola (2003), Longe (2003) and Onuka and Emunemu (2009) identified the following as catalysts to provision and enhancement of quality in education. Omolewa (2008) identified teachers as one of those resources and insisted that despite all research and what has been done in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) there has been no alternative found to the role of the teacher. Adeyemi and Uko-Aviomoh identified the dearth of teachers and teaching infrastructure as a major problem to education at technological levels in Nigeria. Akpochafo and Fellio (2006) were able to express the fact from their observation that much needed to be done on infrastructure while Onuka and Emunemu (2009) showed the extent of infrastructural damages in schools exposing students and pupils to various hazards. From all the items mentioned above, it could be deduced that the teacher stands out distinct as the most irreplaceable resource in the school system. Any improper preparation on the part of the teacher quickly manifests in the system.

Thody (2011) while studying changes in the education sector since the 18th century in Australia and Tasmania was quick to point out that tremendous changes had taken place in education: teacher, teaching, teaching methods and the school system. Thody (2011) identified the changing role of the teacher as an important aspect of society. The future is important hence today determines

tomorrow and consequently planning (Nwankwo, 1982; and Blaug, 1970). The foregoing has helped to establish the role and centrality of teachers and teacher education in nation building.

The modern teacher faces several new challenges specially with increasing changes in global trends. The changes require global education which further makes the position of the teacher strategic in the combat of these challenges. In the first instance, traditional teacher education was intended for the local audience (designed for the nation) but today, the role of the teacher has crossed the national audience with the emergence of globalisation assisted with the use of ICT and the internet, increased biodiversities in classes and liberalization of education. Provision of education is no longer the exclusive preserve of a class of citizens as it used to be. This occurrence has repositioned the teacher with increased pressures from society, coupled with the fact that accountability to stakeholders has increased tremendously but despite these changes, teacher preparation and training has not been repositioned to meet these challenges.

Another factor calling for the repositioning of teachers is the socioeconomic pressures on teachers and the teaching profession. Phillips and Evans (1968) considered the teachers' social status as a major impediment to the teaching profession. What was identified by Phillips (1968) as status issues has developed in the new millennium as gender bias. Most male folks avoid the teaching profession due to its denigrating status in terms of salary, social standing and societal perception. The challenges arising from this is a major issue that requires a redesign of the teaching profession. In a recent study, Obanya (2010) observed that the choice of education as a course of instruction ranked far behind other subjects. In an analysis from Nigerian undergraduate students, Obanya (2010) observed that only 8% of Nigerian undergraduates agreed to take education as a first choice subject, 32% took as second choice, 37% as third, while 23% took it as the fourth choice. The implication is that education has no attraction for the young, indicating that it may not compete favourably with other professions. The advanced nations of the world appear to have overcome this syndrome though the same cannot be said of the developing countries. Most people in the developing countries perceive the teacher today that was once the light bearer in communities as most underpowered despite his important role in nation building. In a study undertaken by Erwat

and Isah (2010), it was discovered that teachers in California undertook several national and global environmental preservation strategies that led to environmental literacy on climate change. Teachers understood their roles and the society cooperated with them due to their high social ranking in those societies.

The teachers referred in California, undertook free weekend lectures as advocacy to complement societal awareness of the effects of climate change. They also constituted school children into clubs with donations to assist in the mitigation of the effects of Green House Gas Emissions (Climate change). School children volunteered to spend time to go round homes to put out electricity bulbs not in use to stem the tide of green house gas emissions that formed the main ingredient in Ozone layer depletion. This shows the variation in perception between developed and developing nations on the role and effectiveness of well motivated and equipped teachers.

The 21st century is one of great global dynamism. With the role, centrality and importance of the teacher, the future of mankind needs to be secured. Such security can only come in a revitalized teacher education system and from the perspective of this paper must involve curriculum design.

Trends in this century point to the use and increasing use of technology with the fact that gradually these technologies have become the means of communication and teaching. In the case of libraries, the traditional library has become virtual, the chalkboard has transformed from blackboard to whiteboard and has now progressed into smart boards requiring the use of technology (Babalola, 2010). Traditional office manual jobs have become automated with the use of computers (Madu, 2004), and most teachers have not been trained to incorporate these changes into their curriculum. A sad point in this case is where government expends scarce resources to purchase such equipment but forget that those who are to use the equipment lack the requisite capacity to do so as the case of Nigeria and where the capacity is available, absence of fundamental infrastructure as electricity negates all efforts and plans.

The composition of classrooms with pupils and students from different social economic backgrounds expose the students to learning equipment which most teachers have not been exposed to and such increases pedagogical pressures on teachers. Teachers are

often caught in between lack of capacity to discharge their functions or absolutely low capacity due to changes in the educational sector. Larose, Grenon, Morin and Hasni (2009) opined that teachers are agents of social change, hence their educational and occupational disposition must be adequately taken care of from time to time.

Issues in 21st Century Teacher Education

Several issues manifest in the 21st century teacher and his preparation. In this light, this paper will consider traditional education and modern education before looking into;

1. Globalization and world trends
2. Social dynamics and the teacher
3. The teaching profession and other professions
4. Teacher preparation in the face of other challenges
5. Changing teacher/teaching methodologies
6. Increasing natural changes to the ecosystem and environment

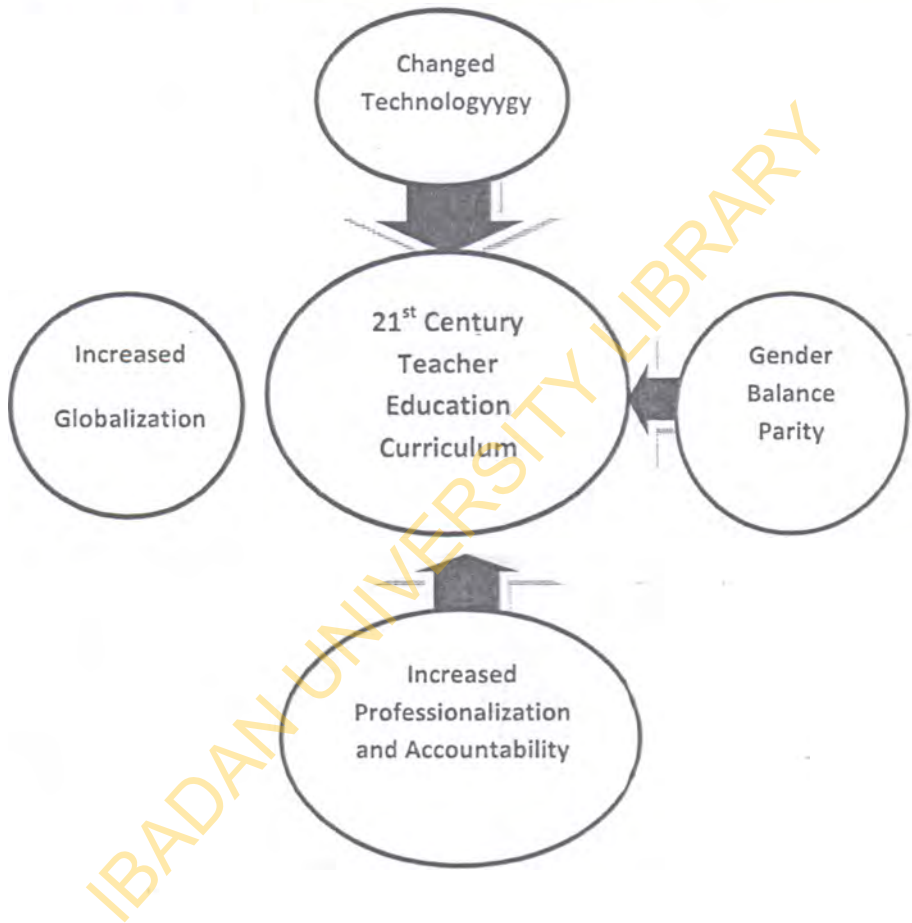
Table 1: Difference between Traditional and Modern Education Practices

S/N	Traditional Teacher Education	Modern Teacher Education
1.	Informal education setting	Formal educational setting
2.	Use of local resources	Resources now globalized
3.	Any could be a teacher then	Increased professionalization
4.	Less emphasis on teacher certification	High emphasis on teacher certification and skill acquisition
5.	Low accountability to stakeholders	High accountability to stakeholders
6.	High socio-economic perception	Very low socio-economic perception specially in third world countries
7.	Comprised balanced gender parity with male gender advantage	Increasing female dominance due to poor social perception.
8.	Perceived as government function	Concurrent legislative list
9.	Highly attractive as career	Decreasing interest by the

	in the 19 th century	young
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Source: *Researcher*

Fig 1:- Anticipated Changes to Teacher Education Curriculum Model



Revolutionizing Teacher Education for Global Prosperity

Most developing nations accept the role of teacher education as a tool for national economic prosperity. For example, the (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) in its introductory aspects describes education as 'instrument par excellence. The global Millennium Development Goals (MDG) also observed the place of education as pivotal. The International Bank for Reconstruction and

Development, 2007 and 2008 further observed that education is one that can transform any society and economy drawing copiously from the transformation of the East Asian countries. Revolutionising education simply means transforming education and specially educational human resources (the teacher). This can be done through curriculum modification. What therefore is a curriculum?

Yates (2000) expressed the fact that the perception of the term curriculum varied between one organisation and another depending on the angle of their perception but among stakeholders, it means different things to parents, pupils, educators etc. Some see curriculum as academic stuff that is done to children in schools while others see it as teacher and pupil activities in the course of instruction, but however, Doll (1966) perceived curriculum as:

...formal and informal content and process by which learners gain knowledge and understanding, develop skills, alter attitudes, appreciations and values under the auspices of a school...

Dye (2003) perceived curriculum to be the educational outline of courses that must be undertaken in a programme of education. He emphasized that the curriculum design must of necessity include the planning domain and the direct application domain. The planning domain according to Dye (2003) must include institutional resources while the direct application domain must capture individual needs and pressures. The study further indicated that a good curriculum must spell out the mode of instruction. In this regards, a wide gap has been observed between developed and developing nations. For example, in the study of Larose et al (2009), the Canadian Education Authority (CEA) redesigned teacher education curriculum and incorporated a certificate of teacher competence. Another certificate in Information Communication Technology (ICT) was incorporated into teacher training in that country. According to Larose et al (2009), the certificate of teacher competence is not recognised in Canada unless such a teacher is also certificated in the Pre-service ICT programme. The authority made a distinction with already in-service and pre-service teachers. The teachers already in service were subjected to on-the-job training while the certification was made compulsory for in-coming teachers in Canada. The purpose

of such distinction was to prepare the in-coming teachers for the challenges in the new century while efforts were made to acclimatize older teachers with the emerging realities of our times.

21st Century Teacher Education Challenges in Developing Countries

Several challenges face teacher education in this century that may turn the teaching profession into a jungle of all comers and eventually drive it into extinction despite well worded education policies by national leaders. The challenges include but not limited to the following:

Poor Psycho-social Perception of Teaching as a Profession

In a study by Obanya (2010), it was reported that education is not a respectable career choice in Nigeria. The same study observed that the teaching profession is skewed in favour of women as most men have abandoned the profession due to its poor social perception. In a related study by Babalola (2011), it was observed that most parents are not in favour of their children taking to the teaching profession especially at the primary and secondary school levels. Teachers are seen as second class workers in their own countries who have to weep and cry at the mercy of politicians and government officials to get what they are legitimately entitled to. An earlier study conducted on the occupational prestige among urban Africans in Northern Rhodesia, Mitchell and Epstein (1959) discovered that the teaching profession lacked prestige and social recognition among several other professions. This study is of the opinion that if such practices continue, very soon most informed people will abandon the teaching profession. Psychological perception of teaching by teachers is poor as most teachers do not wish any of their children join the teaching profession.

In this study, evidences captured from several empirical works specially Thody (2010) emphasized on the changed roles of teacher and teaching between the 19th and 21st centuries. The study observed that in Canada and Tasmania, head teachers were often sponsored by government to study best practices in other countries and to return home to put those practices into use. In those countries, teachers are certificated and professionalized but in developing countries, other professions are accorded the privileges of their professions. There is no level of shortages of personnel that

will allow the World Medical Council allow uncertified doctors either as professionals or to do the slightest jobs in hospitals. If such quacks are detected, they are prosecuted immediately. Also, there is no level of personnel shortage that will allow uncertified people in law stand for advocacy in courts. In the dispensation of justice in traditional courts, the capacity of the court officers are well enhanced but as far as teaching is concerned, it is believed by government that anybody can be a teacher as entry and exit into the profession are not regulated at all. It is observed that teaching, though called a profession in developing countries, does not enjoy the qualities that professions enjoy as uncertified people in education are allowed to teach especially in countries of sub Saharan Africa.

Inability of Traditional Teacher Education Curriculum to Meet Emerging Challenges

Emerging global challenges point to the school system as a place where solutions will eventually emerge. As pointed out earlier in this paper, the scourge of the global climate change requires mass environmental literacy education that can be met from the teacher's role in society. Again, the challenges arising from sustainable development could get its solution from the teaching profession. Like pointed out by Larose et al (2009), the profession is one in which new innovations and ideas can be injected into society. Previous teacher curriculum in most countries did not concentrate on the environment and its preservation but rather on the cognitive aspect of the subjects to which a teacher specializes. The scope that such curriculum met then has become narrow for today's world. The curriculum of teachers must be enlarged to incorporate modern challenges that will create a conducive atmosphere for rapid world transformation irrespective of the area of specialization chosen by the potential teacher.

Professional Difficulties in Practice Due to Infrastructural Teaching Deficiencies

Teachers face unsavory school situations that make their jobs very difficult. Such difficulties include poor infrastructural deficiencies such as explosive school populations without adequate facilities to match. In a recent study by Onuka and Emunemu (2009), it was observed that infrastructures in schools in Oyo state in Nigeria were

so bad, that buildings that collapsed for a long time were neglected. The study further revealed that most teachers had extra stress in ensuring adequate infrastructure in schools that were never met. The public school system is characterized with overblown Average Class Size (ACS), Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) and inadequate teachers. The existence of the foregoing results in poor students' performance in external examinations.

Another study embarked upon discovered that the teaching profession was large in almost every country of the world and, so it is not been accorded its rightful place. For example; a study conducted by the United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2006) observed that there are over 1,300 teacher training colleges for primary schools in Pakistan alone. The study further said that Pakistan has 56.4% of its teaching population as women. Also in the same study, India was reputed to have a Primary school teaching strength of not less than 4.52m with at least 700 Colleges of Education. It is stated in the study that a sizeable portion of the 4.52m teachers in India have no training in Education.

The Influence of Politics on Education

A major challenge to education in developing countries like Nigeria is the incursion of politics into education. Fabunmi (2004) in explaining the theory of power play explained that power cannot be divulged from educational planning. This is exemplified in the use of education as a political campaign weapon/tool to win votes. Politicians often promise electorates free education during electioneering campaigns. Such promises eventually result in the provision of poor quality education due to improper funding and school authorities will not be permitted to charge school fees. Government in these countries like Nigeria, often promise to fund schools but it results in a reduction in the quality of teaching. A surprising twist is that in many places where such practices obtain, the politicians evolve policies that don't allow poor performers to repeat classes claiming 100% system efficiency. Dauda (1983) in a study of Nigeria pointed out the educational lapses that were inherent in the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) free education policy then. Also, Akangbou (1985) faulted the incursion of politics into education in Nigeria. The results of such bogus promises resulted in the collapse of teacher morale as teachers who were more in number than any other working group were left unpaid for upward

of six months above. The school system was destroyed and most unfortunately for the system, political power did not reside with educational planners. The above situation commenced the exodus of well trained, competent and qualified personnel from the teaching profession and created a negatively skewed gender imbalance in Nigerian schools specially at the primary and secondary school levels.

Revamping the Teaching Profession through Policy and Curriculum Reform Strategies

The present situation painted by the foregoing sections points to the fact that the teaching profession especially in Sub Saharan Africa requires urgent diagnosis and reforms. Bjorkman and Olofsson (2009) strongly recommended preconditions for revamping schools and one of their contributions was the preconditions for capacity building in schools. A teacher without adequate capacity in the present global education scenario can only be likened to a ship without a ruder. The ship does not pose danger to itself alone but to every other object in the sea. A single teacher has the capacity to destroy a nation over the years if not well equipped. Other strategies are discussed below.

Strategies for Re-designing Teacher Education Curriculum to Meet with Emerging Global Challenges

This paper is of the opinion that the teaching profession singularly is the largest professional association in the world for example;

Curriculum Content Review

There is need for urgent curriculum review for teacher education in developing countries. Phillips and Evans (1968) identified teacher education curriculum needs to include; needs of the learner, team teaching, consideration of teaching methods in educational levels, technological developments and curriculum evaluation. The work of Phillips et al (1968) is most relevant today as it reviewed the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains in education. Specifically, the study mentioned the needs of the learners and made reference to technology.

Today's world of work requires skills in technology irrespective of the discipline and education is not left out. To find teachers who are computer illiterates is at the best undesirable for

this millennium. Teacher education curriculum must incorporate ICT. Further to this, this paper is of the view that environmental literacy in all spheres must be part of the teaching curriculum. Teachers can withstand the challenge of inculcating skills through appropriate pedagogy and mass literacy to stem the drift in climate change factors.

Curriculum review must of necessity include its planning before the design. Dye (2003) after identifying planning and learner needs as some of the most essential considerations in curriculum design, this paper considered the following factors to be important in considering a new design for teacher education especially in developing countries:

1. What are the current global trends? On whom is education/teaching and learning being centered on; is it the teacher, the learner, the society or all of them?
2. What will be the curriculum content for each of the segments mentioned above and what pedagogical techniques will be required?
3. Are teachers going to require enhanced capacities to be able to deliver in the new curriculum and if yes, how will that be done?
4. What levels of preparation has been accomplished; is preparation commensurate with intended commencement date of the new curriculum?
5. Is there adequate preparation for funding the expected changes. For example, in the process of improving capacity for a new programme schedule to commence, current participants who will eventually be the pioneers of the new order require exposure to best practices in other parts of the world where such practices are already in existence. Where the whole idea is novel, then what are the trials and controls that have been designed into the new programme? Are there provisions for funding, researching and running these trials over and over again until the desired impact of the designer is achieved?
6. Finally, what are the objectives of the new curriculum, pedagogical only, transformational or ...?

Rebranding Teachers and the Teaching Profession

In a study, Babalola (2011) explained that the case of the African teacher can only be captioned as '*rescue the perishing*' because the teaching profession has passed through untold negative transformation. For example; it is no longer possible to attract the best brains to the profession. Those who attempted to do so have left in what is called brain drain. Babalola (2011) suggested that the profession has to make the best use of what is available. What is available may not be the best but the best has to be made out from what is available. To this end, teaching needs complete overhauling and rebranding that will transform both the teacher and the teaching profession especially in Africa and Nigeria in particular. Most people ask if teaching is a profession. Reasons for such questions are that a profession must possess certain characteristics that include; Special knowledge acquired over a period of training with a good and virile trade union, a body of ethics (Code of Conduct). Despite these, it is opined that with the role of the teacher, he needs a complete overhaul and reformation.

Implications for Theory and Practice -Strategies for Teacher Reformation

It is the opinion of this paper that education needs a new life in Africa and Nigeria. To do this, the following could be useful to policy makers and administrators:

1. A complete new name change for teachers (Instructor, Schools Administrator) etc because the name teacher has been bastardized. People don't like hearing the names and in most advanced countries that have been done. Though, the roles performed are still teaching, there has been a change of nomenclature. Such name changes should be accompanied with ideal motivational perks that will enable the profession compete favourably with others. The universities appear to be emerging in Nigeria.
2. Revised Teacher curriculum
The continuous use of an obsolete curriculum in a changing global environment is far responsible for several malaise been encountered in the education sector. Teachers are loaded with work, relevant or irrelevant because government engaged only a few hands. Unqualified teachers are in schools, and teachers being made to teach subjects for which they are not qualified

even in examinations classes. Also, instructional materials have changed. It must be reflected in teacher curriculum.

3. This paper is of the opinion that teachers should be sent for overseas training and there should be regular in-service training for teachers that is beneficial to the school system. In-service training, conferences, seminars and workshops capable of revolutionizing the profession by re-training old hands should be approved for teachers.

Conclusion

This paper looked at the current challenges facing the practice of teaching profession in Africa and compared same with what obtains in the world. The paper was able to establish that Africa is far behind other nations. It has recommended that policy planners and administrators rebrand the profession and motivate the current teachers to attract better intellectuals into the profession.

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