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Opinion

# Revitalizing teacher education for political stability and national security in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: Teacher Education is a veritable tool for the educational development in Nigeria. It is a process of preparing teachers for professional roles. This paper discussed revitalizing teacher education for political stability and national security. The paper discussed the conceptual model of educational dimension in any political process. The trend of educational development and political dimension was also discussed. The paper examined the evolution of teacher education over the years in Nigeria as well as goals of teacher education as contained in the National Policy on Education. Some of these goals include production of highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of Nigeria's educational system, encouraging the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers; helping the teachers fit into social life of the community and society at large and enhancing their commitment to national goals among others. The challenges of teacher education in Nigeria were also highlighted. The paper submits that, despite numerous challenges facing teacher education, there is a way out. These include redefining teaching as high level profession, curriculum overhauling, and improved welfare package, improvement in academic and professional training among others.

**Keywords:** Nigeria, national security, political stability, revitalizing, teacher education.

# INTRODUCTION

Education is a potent instrument for social, economic and political transformation of any nation. It is the mainstay of human capital development which is a function of effective education at all levels. The delivery of functional, qualitative and competitive education can only be achieved by deploying responsible teachers produced from a dynamic and innovative teacher education system. The training, recruitment, deployment, motivation, retention as well as continuous training and retraining are at the heart of education reforms for quality and quantity education at all levels (Okolo, 2013).

Today in Nigeria, there are yearnings for more strategic actions to be taken that include continued expansion of teacher training opportunities; continuous programme of enhanced status and professionalism for teachers through training and retraining, reviews of current remuneration packages, and enhanced career opportunities; programs

designed to address the capacity needs of schools and educational management; building the capacity of the inspectorate services to improve quality; engaging civil society partners in the roles of quality assurance, monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment work at all levels.

In spite of the various recommendations and reforms aimed at repositioning teacher education for optimal performance, the challenges facing teacher education in Nigeria are still numerous. While some of these challenges are due to changing socio-economic and political conditions overtime, others evolved as a result of government's neglect of the education sector especially as it concerns keeping pace with emerging realities (Ogunyinka et al., 2015). For the purpose of this discourse, the concepts of revitalizing, teacher education, political stability and national security were explained; a

conceptual model of educational dimension in the political process was used to illustrate the nexus between education, political stability and national security; the political interference and its consequences on educational policy formulation and management were examined; evolution of teacher education in Nigeria was discussed while the challenges of teacher education were also highlighted and finally strategies for revitalizing teacher education were suggested.

# CONCEPTS OF REVITALIZING, TEACHER EDUCATION, NATIONAL SECURITY AND POLITICAL STABILITY

Revitalizing refers to imparting strength or power into something to restore it to an active or fresh condition. It means there is a gap in teacher education programme that is crying for help. In other words, it is the ability to restore quality functional education to the teacher education programme.

Teacher education is a process of preparing and training teachers for professional role. Such training is often a specialized training and in a formal school setting. Teacher Education therefore is aimed at providing would-be teachers with pedagogy and technical competence needed for effective teaching. According Osuji (2009), teacher education is the professional education for the attainment of attitudes, skills and knowledge needed to make a teacher efficient and effective on the job. In a similar vein, it is also seen as procedures designed to equip prospective teachers to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom (Eduwen and Osagie-Obazee, 2016).

National security is a requirement to maintain the survival of a country through the use of education, economy, diplomacy and politics. In recent times, Nigeria is faced with multiple security challenges ranging from terrorism, kidnapping, banditry, arm robbery, human ritual among others. The apparent surge in security challenges has made the job of the military and other security agencies more cumbersome. There are also issues of ethnic and religious crises. These criminal activities and crises create insecurity and the breach of peace is already affecting legitimate social and economic activities of Nigerians. Absence of quality education has been linked to violent crimes in recent times. According to Joshua et al. (2016), lack of requisite and proper education has rendered most youths jobless, unemployable, poor and disenchanted and as such they find it difficult to resist temptation to commit crimes and engaged in violence on a slight provocation. In addition to the earlier scenario, this situation is now compounded by politicization and political interference.

Politics is seen as the science of administration of human society. It is practiced to enhance peace, social order, stability, growth and development in any nation (Adegboyega, 2010). It is also the science and act of securing, advancing and maintaining the welfare of a society. Politics is an instrument for finding solutions to social, economic, scientific, technological and educational problems of a nation. Today, Nigeria is grappling with political instability largely due to socio-economic and political crisis which leads to citizens' struggle to protect and promote their respective interests. The eroding trust between government and citizen has created a form of apprehension among them. Thus, political stability is a function of quality of human capital which is only achievable by providing quality and functional teacher education. Political stability can be achieved when a large segment of the population are able to access inclusive and quality education that do not only prepare them for global competitive labour market but also enable an upward socioeconomic mobility. Such quality education is considered as the key to escaping poverty which can only be delivered by a professional and highly motivated teacher who have undergone sufficient and adequate teacher education training.

# CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF EDUCATIONAL DIMENSION IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS

In the political process, there is a thin line between politics and education. Politics influences the direction of education via policy formulation and education moderate or modifies politics. Politics comes before education and determines the type of education to be adopted. According to Ukeje (1988) in Wanekezi et al. (2011), education unlocks the door to modernization and sustainable development but it is the teacher that holds the key to the door. Thus, it is the responsibility of the teacher to translate educational policies into practice and programmes into action. It is therefore clear that the national security can only be attained by giving priority to human capital investment through teacher education and training. It is a well known fact that allocation of scarce economic and social resources to individuals, groups or sectors is politically influenced. Consequently, there are competing demands among the various sectors of the economy including education. For this reason, Nigeria has not been able to meet the UNESCO standard on the amount that should be allocated to education yearly from the national budget because of poor education policy.

As shown in Figure 1, the politician begins by formulating the political creed and national policies. The managers of the educational system key into the educational goals and objectives which in turn translate into allocation of funds, materials, equipment and school plant. The political leadership and power influence what is allocated to a particular sector of the educational system. To enhance quality in the production process, it is the duty of institution to supervise and ensure proper programme implementation.

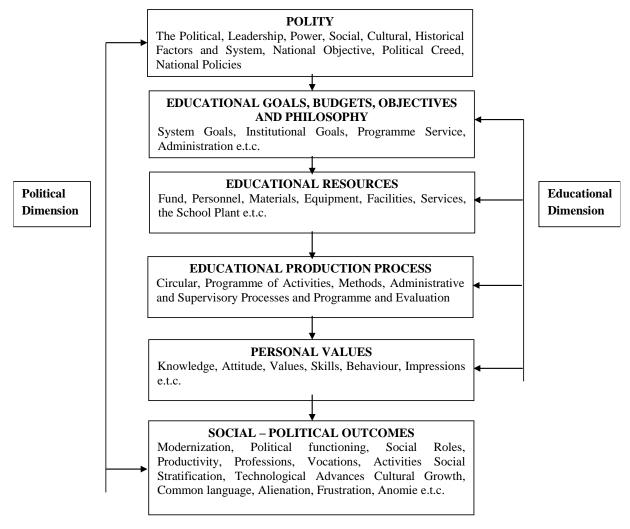


Figure 1. Schematic diagram of a conceptual model of educational dimension in the political process.

All these will impact on knowledge, attributes, value and skill which in turn results in change in behaviour, political enlightenment and increase the level of productivity. Each time there is a shift in power, the holder or party tends to articulate certain aim, creed in line with the aspiration of the society. Experience has shown that Nigerian leaders were concerned with political objectives, each time they attain political leadership perhaps, to show that they have something new to offer to the electorates. For instance, one fundamental reason for universalising basic education is the sense of national unity and equality of educational opportunities. No government of any country is likely to succeed without articulating the kind of education they need. That was why every government had a political agenda on education. The successful implementation of teacher education therefore, depends largely on the synergy between education and political stability of the country. Any attempt to break the link between these two dimensions would normally result in dysfunctional system.

# TRENDS IN EDUCATION AND POLITICAL DIMENSION IN NIGERIA

Education and politics are inseparable. In Nigeria, the relationship between education and politics dates back to colonial era. After the independence, politics in education had taken a new dimension which manifested during the implementation of a carefully prepared educational development plan. The implementation of the plan was later truncated. The impact of this led to termination of external assistance in terms funding, training and capacity building for teachers (Adesina, 1981). According to Edward (2013), the non-cohesion among political elites and undue politicization toward developing an all-inclusive system of education led to a separate system of education across the three regions of the West, North and East. The government of the Western region adopted a 6-3-3-2-3 system; 6 years primary education, 3 years modern school, 3 years secondary school, 2 years higher school, and 3

years university education; both Northern and Eastern regions settled for 7-5-2-3 system; 7 years primary education, 5 years secondary/teacher education, 2 years higher School, and 3 years university education. This inconsistency was informed by the adoption of the Federal Constitution in the country in 1954 which granted internal self-government to the three regions and as such the division did not only affect the political sphere but also regionalized the education system. This continued until the committee of Simeon Adebo on National Policy on Education submitted its report in 1973. The policy document contained laudable objectives which were not fully implemented because of primordial and patrimonial politics and ethnic and religious considerations.

Post independence politics have given birth to the enthronement of ethno-regional confined educational policies which are exploited to pursue ethnic and religious interests. For instance, appointment and recruitment is been determined by primordial identities in all sectors including education. This practice is very much visible in contemporary Nigeria and it is indeed responsible for identity rivalry in recent times. Education sector's quest for autonomy and funding was consistently stifled. This further enhanced divisive tendencies and made educational institutions fallow grounds for ethnic and religious mobilization.

The failure to distinguish between political aspects of an education reform decision and its technical aspects had fusing effect on education development plan. Hence, it is in order to consider a seasoned and competent educationist in cabinet positions for proper planning and implementation of educational policies and goals. Unfortunately, this has not been the case in Nigeria today. Further more, undue politicization has led to transitory changes in education policies regarding all aspects and level of study. Government often claimed it is on a search for effective policy and system of education but alas, such actions were motivated by unpatriotic and unrealistic reasons.

#### **EVOLUTION OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

The history of Teacher Education in Nigeria dates back to 1859 when the first teacher training college was established as a Training Institution. The college was later moved to Lagos to become an arm of a Grammar School. The founding of St. Andrew's College in Oyo in 1896 however, signalled a very important landmark in the training of teachers in Nigeria which was later strengthened by other missionary societies. For instance, the Baptist Mission founded the Baptist Training College at Ogbomoso in 1897, the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society established an institution to train catechists and teachers in Ibadan in 1905 (Akindutire and Ekundayo, 2012).

After the independence, there was an increase in enrolment of students in the teacher training colleges owing to greater competitions in schools establishment among missionaries and regional governments. The establishment of more schools then, made the demand for teachers increase drastically hence, there was a genuine demand for more teacher training institutes. This demand culminated into recommendations for the training of more teachers for the nation's secondary schools, establishment of more universities and institutions offering Bachelor's Degree in Education, where qualified teachers could be produced.

Today almost all the universities in Nigeria have faculties of education where qualified teachers are trained. Equally, statutorily; responsibility for teacher education is vested in Colleges of Education, Institutes of Education, Polytechnics and National Teachers Institute (NTI). Some Polytechnics and Colleges of Education award the National Certificate in Education (NCE) and more recently B. Ed degrees. NTI also provides in-service training for teachers during school holidays and weekends leading to the award of NCE, B. Ed and Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) certificates. In addition, Institutes of Education in some universities are also involved in training teachers through open and distance learning leading to the award of NCE, B. Ed and PGDE certificates.

There is absolutely no doubt that, teacher education is a veritable tool in educational development. It is in recognition of this, that the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2013) outlined the goals of teacher education in Section 93 of the National Policy on Education. These goals include to:

- produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system.
- encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
- help teachers fit into social life of the community and society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals;
- 4. provide teachers with the intellectual and professional backgrounds adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to changing situations; and
- 5. enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

The policy further stated in Section 94 - 100 that, all teachers in educational institutions shall be professionally trained. Teacher education programmes shall be structured to equip teachers for the effective performance of their duties in the following ways: Information technology training shall be incorporated into all teacher-training programmes; At NCE and degree levels, education programmes shall be expanded to cater for the requirements of technical, vocational, business and

special education; Teachers shall be regularly exposed to innovations in the profession; Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) shall continue to register teachers and regulate teaching profession and practice; Only professionally qualified and registered teachers shall be allowed to practice; provision of improved conditions of service and incentives to motivate teachers and make the teaching profession more attractive and revamping teacher education curricula and training. In spite of the reforms that attempted to repositioned teacher education in the country, Nigeria is still facing numerous challenges that are hindering it from performing optimally which justifies the need for this write up.

#### CHALLENGES OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

There are several challenges of teacher education in Nigeria. Some of these challenges include:

### Non-professionalization of teaching

Professionalization is the process of enforcing the rules and regulations of an occupation by its practitioners. Such rules and regulations are usually in form of autonomy and prestige of the profession, ethics, working conditions, and requirements for admission into the field, training requisites, certification and registration. Unfortunately, teaching in Nigeria is not considered as a profession despite its unique demand for training of the country's labour force. According to Eduwen and Osagie-Obazee (2016), teaching profession in Nigeria has no direct and systematic control into the profession as such any person can become a teacher even without requisite qualification. For teaching to be considered as a profession, some of its salient aspects should be revisited. For instance, improvement should be made on the quality of existing teaching force (recruitment of brilliant teachers) through extensive in-service training with incentive system built into it; admission into teacher training programmes should be improved and structural weaknesses of teaching must be expunged.

### Poor implementation of policies

The issues of teacher preparation, supply, status enhancement, motivation and retention as well as continuous training and re-training are at the heart of revitalizing education at all levels. The goal of human capacity development for efficient and effective delivery of Universal Basic Education (UBE), Education for All (EFA) and related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is that by 2015 Nigeria will have resources to implement (National Action Plan [NAP], 2006). The critical issues of poor implementation of policies have been a major challenge in revitalizing teacher education.

# **Poor funding**

The percentage of budgetary allocations to education in general is very insignificant. In 2012 the World Bank rated Nigeria the least (attaining 20th position in the annual budgetary allocation to education) among some selected countries. Despite the United Nations Education and Scientific Organization (UNESCO)'s recommendations that, 26 percent of the total expenditure be devoted to education, in Nigeria, the percentage allocated is always meagre. For instance, in 2017 fiscal year, an amount of N7.44 trillion was presented as budget estimate out of which education sector was allocated N550.01billion representing only 6.39 percent of the total budget (Table 1). Earlier in 2016, N480.30 billion was budgeted representing 6.09 percent of the total national budget. It is an indisputable fact that, the sector is witnessing financial constraints coupled with the lean government budget as a result of economic recession and gross national product available to education financing. Hence, teacher education has a fair share of the poor funding from all levels of government. This is evidenced in inadequate provision of teaching and learning materials, obsolete textbooks, dilapidated school buildings, overcrowded classes and illequipped classrooms lacking in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities.

Poor funding has been identified as the major reason for the rot in the education sector especially tertiary education which led to frequent strikes by teaching and non teaching staff of our institutions. This is because Nigeria's education sector has always been allocated budget far much lower than 26% of the national budget as recommended by United Nations. In ten years, education gets a paltry sum of N3.90 trillion out of N55.19 trillion (Table 1).

#### **Teaching practice**

Teaching practice is one of the vital components of teacher education programme. It is a period where students are sent to schools of their choice for at least six months to undertake teaching under the supervision of the school and their training institution. Unfortunately, this important component of teacher training programme is embroiled in confusion and some times little or no attention is paid to its organization and execution. For instance, there is evidence that the period students spent on teaching practice varies. This is capable of affecting the standard and quality of production and revitalization of teacher education in the country.

#### Admission and evaluation of students

Criteria for admitting and evaluating students into teacher institutions have been a matter of controversy. It is contended in many quarters that students seeking

**Table 1.** Federal Government Allocation to Education (2009 – 2018).

Year	Budget (In Trillion)	Education Allocation (In Billion)	% of Budget
2009	3.049	221.19	7.25
2010	5.160	249.09	4.83
2011	4.972	306.30	6.16
2012	4.877	400.15	8.20
2013	4.987	426.53	8.55
2014	4.962	493.00	9.94
2015	5.068	392.02	7.74
2016	6.061	480.30	6.09
2017	7.444	550.00	7.39
2018	8.612	605.80	7.03
Total	55.019	3.90 Trillion	7.07

Source: Vanguard Newspaper (2018).

admission into teacher education programmes are less competent students who choose teaching as a career. This is wrong and is some times responsible for the oversupply of weak students from the admission office that did not applied to study any programme in teacher education in the first place. Furthermore, there is an oversupply of aspiring teachers for most subject areas, the exception being the sciences and technical disciplines. Therefore, the way to ensure quality control and professionalism is to evaluate and assess the individual qualities or intake characteristics of students as well as to focus the programmes on the abilities of students which are valued by those who eventually employ these teachers.

### Quality assurance and internal efficiency issues

The capacity and competence of teachers are a reflection of viability or otherwise of the teacher education programmes. There are arguments that the quality and standard of teacher education programme has gone down especially in the light of the performance of teachers in the discharge of their duties. No doubt, obsolete textbooks and teaching methods cannot aid the provision of qualitative and functional education in this competitive world. Corruption, political interference and lack of proper regulation are also responsible for low quality and standard of teacher education. Nigeria has been ranked 152 out of 157 countries in the first ever Human Capital Index (HCI) released by the World Bank. Unveiling the report Jim Yong Kim, World Bank president said education outcomes from Nigeria are too poor. In other words, Nigeria is adopting a wrong approach to education and the country is in the red zone.

#### Insecurity

According to World Internal Security and Police Index

(WISPI) in 2016, out of 127 countries that were assessed. Nigeria Police Force (NPF) is the worst in the world. Nigeria was again ranked the third most terrorised nation in the world. Nigeria is a place where people live in a state of uncertainty or fear that the necessary and sufficient conditions for the realization of their aspirations and hopes could be taken away from them against their will or be out rightly denied. This hinders the revitalization of education and the practice of teaching profession. Thus, the insecurity threatening the future of teaching profession is beyond the violence occasioned by insurgency. The security situation especially in the North East zone of the country induces fear in the minds of the people. Indeed, the peculiar nature of the prevalent insecurity in the north east in which educational institution are targets of frequent deadly attacks make the future of teacher education in that part of the country uncertain. Teachers and students cannot come to school to teach and learn because they constantly live in fear. They cannot realize their potentials in an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty.

#### THE WAY FORWARD

It is established that, there are numerous challenges facing teacher education and its development in Nigeria. No doubt these challenges have slowed down the pace of teacher education development with attendant consequences on teacher training, motivation, competency, professionalism and above all capacity. The following are some suggestions to consider in revitalizing teacher education for an enhanced national security:

# Redefine teaching as a high-level profession

There is the need to change the orientation and mindset of people as regards the perception of teachers and the teaching job. More often, teaching job does not attract the best candidate available and the perception has always been that 'teaching job is made for the below average candidates'. Stakeholders must advocate for a shift in the mindset and orientation of people concerning the teaching profession. This could also be achieved by sectoral changes that takes into account several reforms and recommendations.

# **Curriculum overhauling**

For the teacher to keep abreast of the goings in the world and in his area of specialization, there is the need for the teacher to be ICT compliant. The teacher education curriculum needs to be reviewed so as to incorporate ICT at all levels of teacher education. Besides, Durasaro (2006) posited that as a result of the growing graduate unemployment in Nigeria, there is the need to include some entrepreneurial skills development courses into teacher education programmes. The teachers must be trained, not only in the act of self-development through continuous learning; they must also be adequately prepared for self-employment.

### Improved welfare package

Motivation for teachers should be considered as a means of improving output and productivity in the school system. Welfare package does not mean increase in salary alone; it entails regular payment of salary and improved conditions of service. The following are the hints on how to improve conditions of service: teachers with relevant additional qualification should be appropriately upgraded; teachers can transfer from one state to another without loss of status; capacity building for teachers at no cost; special incentives for teachers in difficult terrains; and regular payment of allowances and leave bonuses. All these would enhance increase in productivity of teachers.

# Professionalization of the teaching profession

It is necessary to play politics with the professionalization of the teaching profession. By professionalization, the code of ethics will be respected and the profession will not be open to every Tom, Dick and Harry. In making a professional qualification teaching mandatory, government should make it compulsory for all in the teaching jobs, at all levels, to acquire teaching qualifications. Nothing much had been done to ensure that all teachers are professionalized but thanks to some state Governments in Nigeria that gave a salary differential in the payment of the Teachers Salary Structure (TSS). While teachers with educational background enjoy 27.5%, those without education certificate enjoy 12.5%. The Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) needs to do more to enforce the code of ethics and standard in order to safeguard the profession from the influx of unqualified job seekers.

# Befitting infrastructure in the schools

There is also the need for improvement in the level of the infrastructural facilities in schools. This, however, depends to a large extent, on the level of funding made available to the system. Modern educational gadgets like computers, modern instructional materials and packages need to be deliberately introduced into the teacher education programme. It must be noted that no programme, no matter how well intended, can succeed if adequate infrastructural facilities are not provided for implementation.

# Teacher's self-image

Teachers are advised to show high level of dedication and commitment to their jobs. They should demonstrate good sense of responsibility in carrying out their duties. Regardless of the magnitude of societal negative attitude to teachers, they must not deviate from their traditional role of modelling and nation building. Hence, they must stick to the ethics of the profession irrespective of the challenges that confront them.

# Improvement in the academic and professional training of teachers

More time should be provided for practical work before students are certified as teachers. There is the need to review upward the twelve weeks of internship for education students in the university. To provide sound teacher education in future, the present curriculum needs to be reviewed so as to provide more time for students in the practical aspect of teaching before certificates are awarded to them as qualified teachers.

#### CONCLUSION

Neither pedagogical training nor instructional aid will make a good school without quality teacher education. Excellent curriculum, pedagogical skills, provision of relevant materials, standard libraries, and improved admission policies into teacher education programmes, encouraging staff and students by giving incentives, national security and political stability will definitely enhance revitalization of teacher education. However, without enhanced security and political stability, the pursuit of revitalization of teacher education would be a mirage.

#### **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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