

REFLECTIONS ON BECOMING A TEACHER AND THE CHALLENGES OF TEACHER EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

I am greatly honoured to have been given this unique opportunity to deliver today my inaugural lecture. An inaugural lecture is an initiation ceremony. The idea is that a new appointment to a chair must be accompanied by an inaugural ceremony during which the new professor makes a vow to his profession by giving an inaugural address.

A search through the records of this University reveals that I am one of the lucky ones to be given the opportunity to deliver his inaugural lecture barely three years of my appointment as Professor of Educational Psychology. I am happy to come from the Faculty of Education to join the rank of professors who have been privileged to give their inaugural lectures. This inaugural lecture is coming as the seventh from the Faculty of Education.

Today, I stand before you to speak about an issue of contemporary interest and concern. This issue is very central to the process of teaching and learning and the overall educational development of Nigeria. Simply put, both teaching and learning depend on teachers, for there can be no meaningful socio-economic and political development in any society without teachers. Upon their number, their quality and their devotion, rest the effectiveness of all educational arrangements. Even with the best of educational policy and design and the expenditure of colossal sums of money for education, the ultimate realisation of any set of aims for education depends on the **TEACHER**, as he will ultimately be responsible for translating policy into action and principles into practice in his interactions with his students. Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, I have therefore titled my lecture, “**REFLECTIONS ON BECOMING A TEACHER AND THE CHALLENGES OF TEACHER EDUCATION**”.

In this lecture, the context and conditions of becoming a teacher from the time of being selected into the programme, through the process of training and being retained to teach are discussed within the framework of Teacher Education in Nigeria. First, the concepts and the history of teacher education are examined. Then, some critical issues as well as my personal research efforts on teacher education are discussed. Finally, recommendations for meeting the challenges of Teacher Education in Nigeria are made.

Writing about the issue of supply and demand of teachers, Coombs (1968, Afe, 1991e) stated that next to students, teachers are the largest, most extensive and crucial inputs of an education system. This fact is also realized by the governments who in various documents recognized the central importance of teachers in the educative process. Some examples abound in literature. In the Second National Development Plan (1970 – 75) and again in the National Policy on Education (NPE, 1981), Government lamented the acute shortage of trained and qualified teachers for the education system. In the Third National Development Plan (1975 – 80), the Federal Government asserted that “The quality of the teaching staff is probably the most important determinant of educational standards at all levels.” Again, in the NPE, the government declared:

“Teacher education will continue to be given a major emphasis in all our educational planning because no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers”

Similarly, (Fafunwa, 1967; Afe, 1989) noted that of all educational problems that beset the African Continent today, none is as persistent or as compelling as the one relating to the training of a competent teacher who directly and indirectly is bound to influence the quality and quantity of services provided by all other teachers and professors, as poor teachers tend to reproduce their own kind.

Though teacher education should be regarded as the bedrock for national development (Talabi, 1985; Fafunwa, 1967; Bolarin, 1986; Afe, 1995), the major problems facing the nation has been that of getting teachers of quality. For teacher quality to rise above the education system, a strong **teacher education programme** is required. It is in the light of the foregoing that I am addressing this issue on *Becoming a Teacher* and the *Challenges of Teacher Education*.

CONCEPTS RELATED TO TEACHER EDUCATION

Education is a most powerful instrument for social progress. It is the greatest power yet known to man for his own improvement. According to Brembeck (1966), education can heal or kill, bind up or tear apart, lift or deprave. Broadly defined, it is the aggregate of all the processes by means of which a person develops abilities, skills and other forces of behaviour of positive (and sometimes of negative) value in the society in which he lives (Fafunwa, 1982). For us, education is seen as a tool used for the integration of the individual into the society so that he can achieve self-realization, develop national consciousness, promote unity and strive for social, economic, political, scientific, cultural and technological progress (Afe, 1995).

Training differs from education. While the skills, knowledge and attitudes acquired in training are directed to improve performance in a specific vocation, that of education is a broad knowledge, skills and attitude not directed to any particular job. Training does not take place in a vacuum. It involves people, money and material. However, there are five essential factors that affect training output, positively or otherwise. These are:- quality

of the programme, students, teachers and instruction, equipment or facilities and overall management capacity (administrative, financial and physical).

Teaching has existed for ages so that sometimes it is difficult to trace precisely its origin. It is one of the oldest of human activities or occupations. As an activity, it consists of a body of “actions intended to induce learning, through the “conscious and deliberate efforts” by a matured or experienced person to impart knowledge, information, skills, attitudes, beliefs, etc to an immature or less experienced person (Afe, 1998).

“The Teacher” in the educational process refers to the person who instructs to provide the teaching-learning process. He assumes various capacities as educator, instructor, tutor, lecturer, counsellor, professor and so on. He is the mainstay or prime mover of the educational system. According to Aghenta (1991), as an input operator into the educational system, the teacher plays a big role in the conversion of raw materials (particularly students) into finished products i.e. graduates.

Teacher Education is that component of any educational system charged with the education and training of teachers to acquire the competencies and skills of teaching for the improvement in the quality of teachers for the school system (Afe, 1993). Having examined the basic concepts, let us now examine the history of Teacher Education in Nigeria.

HISTORY OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Teacher education commonly referred to as teacher training is recognised as the keystone to national development. Since the history of teacher education is coterminous with the history of education, one can claim that its beginning dates back to the coming of the Christian missionaries in the second half of the 19th century. From the literature, authors have the congruent opinion that it was the missionaries who initiated the teacher education system in Nigeria, although there is disagreement as to the exact year when formal teacher training started in Nigeria (Okafor, 1988, Afe, 1995). For instance, Taiwo (1980) credited the Church Missionary Society (CMS) with initiating teacher-training in Nigeria in 1833 when it established a Teacher Training Institution in Abeokuta, Solaru (1964) and Fafunwa (1974) credited that same CMS with establishing the first teacher training college in 1859, while Adesina (1977) cited 1896 when the CMS opened St. Andrews College, Oyo. These missions produced teacher evangelists on a limited curriculum with the assistance of colonial government through the promulgation of Education Code and Ordinances to complement the efforts of the missionaries through grants-in-aid to the missions.

The 1925 memorandum on education, the formation of the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) and the 1947 Constitution were significant landmarks. The Phelps-stokes Commission Report of 1922 paved the way for the 1925 Memorandum on Education for government’s reorganization of education, to provide education adapted to local conditions, while at the same time conserving all sound elements in local tradition and social organisation. According to Fafunwa (1990), the 1925 Memorandum more than

any other Commission or Report guided the Nigerian education policy and development from that time to independence in 1960.

The Education Code of 1926 gave rise to the formation of the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT), when all the existing teacher associations which were concerned mainly with the improvement of the school system and welfare of teachers came together under one umbrella in 1931 for the purpose of fighting the cause of teachers. According to Igwe (1990), one important factor that led to the formation of the NUT was the frequent cuts in the salaries of missionary/voluntary agency teachers by their employers. In 1941, it got registered as a Trade Union and since then has succeeded through negotiations and strong threats of strike to improve the conditions of service of teachers to the extent that teachers in primary and secondary schools now enjoy similar conditions of service with the Civil Servants. Though, the greatest achievement of the Union is in bringing all teachers' unions and individual teachers in the primary and secondary schools in the country to become members of NUT, the major obstacle preventing it from becoming a Professional body has however, been the lack of extended educational training for all members of the union. The implication is that NUT has no control over its members as compared to other professions such as medicine, law and engineering amongst others.

The 1947 Constitution, which divided the country into three regional administrative units, decentralised educational administration by classifying education as a regional service. As a result, a great challenge was thrown to teacher education by the Universal Free Primary Education Schemes of the Western and Eastern Regional Governments in the 1950s'. The impact of this sudden expansion of primary education for school instruction was noted by Nwagwu (1987), who emphasised the need to have well qualified and trained professional teachers in sufficient numbers to man the schools.

Teacher Education Since 1960

The Grade 1 teacher was the highest level of professionally qualified teachers in Nigeria before the Ashby Report of 1960. The idea of Advanced Teacher's Colleges emerged from the recommendation for a two-year Grade I Teachers' Colleges, which should be associated with Institutes of Education of Universities. This two - year proposal was modified by government to three years, which gave rise to a new programme and a new certificate - Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). With this modification came a change in concept and the main purpose was to train for the expanding school system, well qualified non-graduate professional teachers for work in secondary, teacher training and technical institutions (Aghenta 1983, Afe, 1989^c, 1992). Initially five of these Advanced Teacher Training Colleges were established at Lagos (1962), Ibadan (1962), later transferred in 1964 to Ondo; at Owerri (1963) now Alvan Ikoku College of Education; at Kano (1964) and at Abraka (1968). These early colleges were largely funded and staffed by the UNESCO. By the 1970s, the establishment of Colleges of Education took a new turn (Udoh, 1983) by the decision of the Federal Government to establish Advanced Teachers Colleges in states that did not have any. Today, there are 56 Colleges of Education in Nigeria that award the Nigeria Certificate in Education and some prepare students for the award of the University degree in education (B.Ed). These

early ATCS and Colleges of Education attracted experienced Grade II teachers who saw the programme as an avenue to higher education, but in the 1970s, there was a mass entry of young secondary school products into Colleges of Education (Afe, 1989).

With the National Policy on Education in (1977, 1981), a new system of education known as the 6-3-3-4 emerged. The policy, without equivocation, noted that **no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers**. Since teacher education is the pivot of the educational system, one would have thought that teacher education expansion programmes would far exceed that of primary school expansion. This was not the case. For example, between 1970 – 71, primary school enrolment increased from 3,575,827 to 3,984,539 (about 11%) while teacher training enrolment increased from 32,310 to 38,095 (about 10.7%); which meant that for every 65 pupils one new teacher was trained (Oyedeji, 1983), whereas the policy had recommended an ideal enrolment of 36 pupils per class. Also, teacher education programme at the beginning was predominantly concerned with the provision of teachers for the primary school system only, and prior to independence there were differing and confusing systems of training school teachers (Ozigi and Ocho, 1981). In essence, there was little concern for the appropriate teacher education for secondary school teachers.

The National Policy on Education, section 9:8 envisaged the establishment of the **Teachers Council** and although Decree No. 31 of 1993 has established the Council, it has not taken off up till now. When Teachers Registration Council is translated into action, so as to have a legally constituted body to handle the issues of training, registration and discipline of teachers, then teaching would be fully professionalized.

The foregoing discussion highlighted some significant landmarks in the history of teacher education in Nigeria. The historical and social factors that shaped teacher education development in Nigeria have implications for the selection, recruitment, training, retention, working conditions, morale, motivation, productivity and job satisfaction of teachers. Since the teacher is considered the key factor in the entire education programme, his programme of training must seek to assist him to grow and to develop as a person, provide him with the necessary skills and professional abilities that will help him become an effective teacher and a community leader. We may ask: ***Have our teacher education programmes been related to every phase of our socio-economic, political and cultural development?*** The answer is NO! Wherever we turn, be it in the social, economic and political sphere of activities or lack of it, one is faced with the problem of manpower.

The Dysfunctions of Teacher Education

Education viewed from a social system perspective comprises of three main elements: students, teachers and curriculum. The efficiency and effectiveness of any educational system depend on the cohesion between these three elements. If one has some deficiency or weakness in performing its role, reduced productivity may result within the educational process as a whole. However it is clear that one of the three elements has a significant effect on the other two. In this case, the teacher is the basic element affecting

the educational process more than the other two. Consequently, we have applied the concept of dysfunction in teacher education against the background of the objectives of teacher education as spelt out in the National Policy on Education.

- to provide highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers;
- to encourage further the spirit of inquiry and creativity in teachers;
- to help teachers to fit into the social life of the community and society at large;
- to produce teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment;
- to enhance teachers commitment to the teaching profession.

In assessing the achievement of these objectives, we find that our teacher education programmes have been deficient in providing teachers with intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment in the society.

As Provost of College of Education, I carried out an intensive study of student–teachers’ perception of teaching and why they have chosen the profession. Some of the results of my study were quite revealing. The factors responsible for determining the attractiveness of the teaching profession were those relating to salary, fringe benefits and working conditions, poor teachers’ public image and lack of job satisfaction. These findings are corroborated by other studies (Aghenta 1971; Omoregie, 1994; Ossai, 1995; Awanbor, 1996). Other reasons usually advanced for not wanting to remain in the teaching profession are lack of retirement benefits, lack of regular promotions and irregular payment of salaries.

The Professionalization of Teaching

Our discussion is guided by the following questions.

- a) What is a profession?
- b) What are the traits of professionalism?
- c) What factors have hindered teaching from attaining full professional status?

Professionalisation of teaching has been a topic of controversy and, in Nigeria, it has been an issue of concern among educators, teachers, administrators, organizations and the public at large. The question of whether teaching is an occupation, a vocation, a calling, a semi profession or a profession has further complicated the situation to the extent that members of the public have accorded low status and recognition to teachers. As a result, no one is proud to identify or introduce himself as a teacher in the manner and way a lawyer or a medical doctor would proudly and gladly do. Two examples are cited to illustrate the plight of teachers in Lagos, Delta, Edo, Ondo and probably many other States. Landlords will not lease their houses to teachers. From bitter experience, they

know that the teacher is sure to fall into arrears of rent, not because he is a congenital debtor, but because he is poorly paid and because rarely does he get paid regularly. Parents do not hesitate to *disown* a daughter foolish enough to fall in love with a teacher. This situation led Legatt (1970) to say that teaching is a profession, but not a highly esteemed one and may never be.

What is a Profession?

According to Stanley et al (1956), profession may perhaps be defined as an occupation based upon specialized intellectual study and training, the purpose of which is to supply skilled service or advice to others for a definite fee or salary. With regards to **teaching**, UNESCO Inter government conference on the **status of teachers (1966)** states that:

Teaching should be regarded as a profession. It is a form of public service which requires of teachers expert knowledge and specialized skills, acquired and maintained through rigorous and continuing study; it calls also for a sense of personal and corporate responsibility for the education and welfare of the pupils in their charge.

Traits of Professionalism

The search for a set of criteria by which a profession can be recognised has been on for at least a century now. Yet, there are no universal lists of characteristics of professionalization that are universally acceptable. However, in literature, there are works of Millerson (1964), Wilensky (1964) Liberman, (1956), Caplow and Wilensky (1972) Flexner (1963), Hightower (1969) and Olatunji (1988). Among these people, there are also wide variations. However, there are areas of widespread consensus, to include:

1. Performing an Essential Social Services

Teaching meets this criterion. The service which education performs is essential to the individual child who cannot be fully socialised into our modern society if he does not receive a full time formal education. To the society, it prepares individuals for various occupational roles.

2. Possessing a Body of Specialised Knowledge

There are some differences of opinion as to whether teaching meets this requirement. In teaching, both the subject matter knowledge and knowledge of education theory are essential to the preparation of teachers'. What is not appreciated is the fact that education differs from other professions in having the subject matter component, but in many ways the theoretical knowledge needed by the teacher is the same as that needed by the doctor. It could therefore be said that teaching meets this particular criterion.

3. Having a High Degree of Autonomy

A profession must be self-regulating and self-governing. The autonomy to practice the profession relates to two main factors that are inter-dependent. The autonomy of the individual professional to perceive his role and responsibilities the way he feels best in the interest of the profession and the autonomy of the profession as a whole. Teaching has not met this criterion.

4. A Code of Ethics

Professions usually have well defined code of ethics to regulate the conduct of their accredited practitioners. The NUT has a code of ethics guiding its relationship with students, parents, community, employer, and the profession. Unfortunately, it has little or no influence in matters of policies for auditing and registering professionally qualified persons into the profession. In addition, it lacks the control and the legal backing to enforce the standards set by it.

5. Organization into Professional Groups

Every profession institutes and operates a professional association or organization to which it ascribes certain functions and powers such as the advancement of the professional competence and maintenance of prescribed standards. Every professional association has a self-concept that transcends that of a mere trade union. Unfortunately, the major obstacle preventing the NUT from becoming a professional body has, however, been the lack of extended educational training for all members of the union. The implication is that NUT has no control over its members as compared to other professions such as medicine, law and engineering amongst others.

6. Exalting Service Above Personal Gains

Members of any profession are expected to regard their services to the public as altruistic, with public interest put over and above financial and other gains.

7. Recognition by the Public

Recognition by the public is closely linked to the nature of the service which the profession renders. It must be such that is very essential to humanity. Further still, the practitioners or the profession must have a high self-esteem coupled with this is the question of self-satisfaction demonstrated by members of the profession. This is not true of the teaching profession.

8. Setting its Own Standards

Standards are set and it is only when the new entrant satisfies the stipulated requirements that he or she can be registered as a member of the profession. The medical and legal professions for example, have laid down standards which new entrants must meet before they are admitted into the professions. This is not true of the teaching profession, where the NUT lacks the control and the legal backing to enforce standards set by it.

Judged in the light of the above discussion, teaching has not met all the characteristics of a profession in many countries of the world. In Nigeria, however, teaching is yet to achieve **autonomy** and to require a **license** or **certificate to practice**. A decree setting up a **Teachers' Registration Council** has been promulgated since 1993 but is yet to be operational. Thus, it can be said that in Nigeria teaching is progressing towards full professionalization.

PROBLEMS HINDERING PROFESSIONALISATION OF TEACHING IN NIGERIA

a) The Social Status of Entrants to the Profession

The standing of a profession is, to some extent, affected by the social class background of its recruits. The higher the social strata from which recruits generally come, the higher the status of the profession. The higher therefore the status of a profession, the more it will attract recruits from the higher strata (Lieberman, 1956). According to Cahander (1962) and George (1963), recruiting candidates of high potentials will make possible the production of effective and adaptive teachers. In the teaching profession, Fafunwa (1967) identified five categories of teachers to be found in Nigeria as:

- (i) those who are convinced that teaching is their calling and that they can best serve their country in that capacity;
- (ii) those who choose teaching and find satisfaction in it as compared with other professions;
- (iii) those who join the teaching profession from necessity rather than from choice;
- (iv) those with inadequate and poor academic records, but who have had some secondary education;
- (v) those who have not been to the secondary school because of their inability to pass the required entrance examination or because of lack of opportunity to do so in the past;

Such a medley of entrants to the teaching profession in our schools today constitute the root of the problem of the recruitment of competent and professionally trained teachers into the school system (Afe, 1992b). It also contributes to the low status accorded members of the teaching profession. Besides, the image that members of the public have of most teachers is very unfavourable. Thus, teaching is not regarded as important but as commonplace. Since everybody or anybody can practice the profession, it does not enjoy the status of a profession and other professionals and the society at large hold it in ridicule.

(a) The Inability to Control or Legalize Entry into the Profession

Any profession should have control over entry into the practice of its profession. For example, the medical profession in Nigeria enjoys self-government through the Nigeria Medical Council (NMC). This is not true of the teaching profession, though the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) constitution (Article 2) states that among the objectives of the Union is the desire to raise the status of the teaching profession and improve the quality of education. Unfortunately, the NUT has little or no influence in matters of policies for auditing and registering professionally qualified persons into the profession. While members of the Union fervently believe that it is not just anybody that can be permitted to become a member of the profession, the union is unable to act, as it lacks the control and the legal backing to enforce the standards set by it.

(b) Lack of Standards

Standards in education have connotation for quality, efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and pragmatism in education and management at classroom, school and the entire education system (Afe, 1989, 1991e, 1994a; Coombs, 1985). The setting of standards is closely tied to the equally important job of raising the status of the teaching profession while improving the quality of education. The society's ambivalent attitude to the emerging professional crises in education partly arises from the indiscriminate and unchecked ways by which all and sundry are recruited to train as teachers. One step to raising educational standards in Nigeria is to recruit only well qualified entrants into the teaching profession. With such a step comes a careful review of such teachers' status, remuneration and other conditions of service, which will invariably not be lower than those for other professionals. This step is one way of raising the teacher's social image and his place in society.

As long as many student teachers enter into the Colleges of Education and Universities with attitudes of self-pity arising from their choice of the teaching profession as last resort, the quality of teacher education will continue to be low. This is because they often see themselves as runners-up in a highly competitive academic environment in which they, after being frustrated through repeated failures to get enrolled into so called "privileged" courses (like law, medicine, pharmacy, engineering and so on), often go into teaching as a last resort. There is need to attract people of the right academic qualification to the profession to enhance standards.

Teacher Morale and Job Satisfaction

There is a large body of literature on salaries and emoluments of teachers in developing countries (UNESCO Conference Report 1966; ILO Report, 1978; Kelsall, 1970). Teachers' salaries account for over 90% of primary school recurrent budget, as well as the single costly item, generally attracting between 65% and 95% of the educational budget in developing countries (Zymelman and Destafano, 1993). In the employment sector, teachers constitute the largest group of public employees (Oliviera and Farrell, 1993).

In Nigeria, teachers are found to be poorly paid and inadequately motivated. These are translated to teacher absenteeism, lukewarm classroom practices, frustration, decline in professional standards, militancy and early departure from the profession. Zymelman and Destefano, (1989); Lockhead and Verspoor, (1993) have summarized the major reasons for these absenteeism to:

- absolute salaries that are so low that teachers have to hold other jobs to supplement their allowances;
- lower salaries than those of workers in other callings
- poor working condition
- scarce opportunities for professional advancement and
- deficient local supervision, authority and administrative procedures.

Nwagwu (1981) and Abangma (1981) in their studies found that their respondents rated salaries as the most crucial single factor in attracting candidates into, and retaining those already in the teaching profession. They also complained about salary differentials between government teachers and voluntary agencies teachers. This, coupled with poor conditions of service and late payment of salaries, accounts for the low morale in the schools. As noted by Itotoh (1993), the struggles for improved conditions of service had often in the past led to strike actions and closure of institutions. One of such strike was embarked upon by the Nigeria Union of Teachers in 1984, when all legitimate moves to make government improve the conditions of service of teachers failed to yield the desired results.

In a study titled “Late payment of teachers’ salary as it affects the quality of education in Lagos State Primary Schools”, Bolarinwa (1994) found that 62.94 percent of the 570 public primary teachers sampled took up menial jobs as financial coping techniques, 41.18 percent withdrew their children from fee paying schools to non-fee paying schools, 59.22 percent expressed the opinion that they are ashamed to be introduced as teachers, 78.82 percent expressed the view that if given opportunity to start their career lives afresh, they would not opt for teaching and 82.35 percent indicated that they were not satisfied with the teaching profession. Several other researchers have come up with similar findings (Adesina, 1969; Awanbor, 1996).

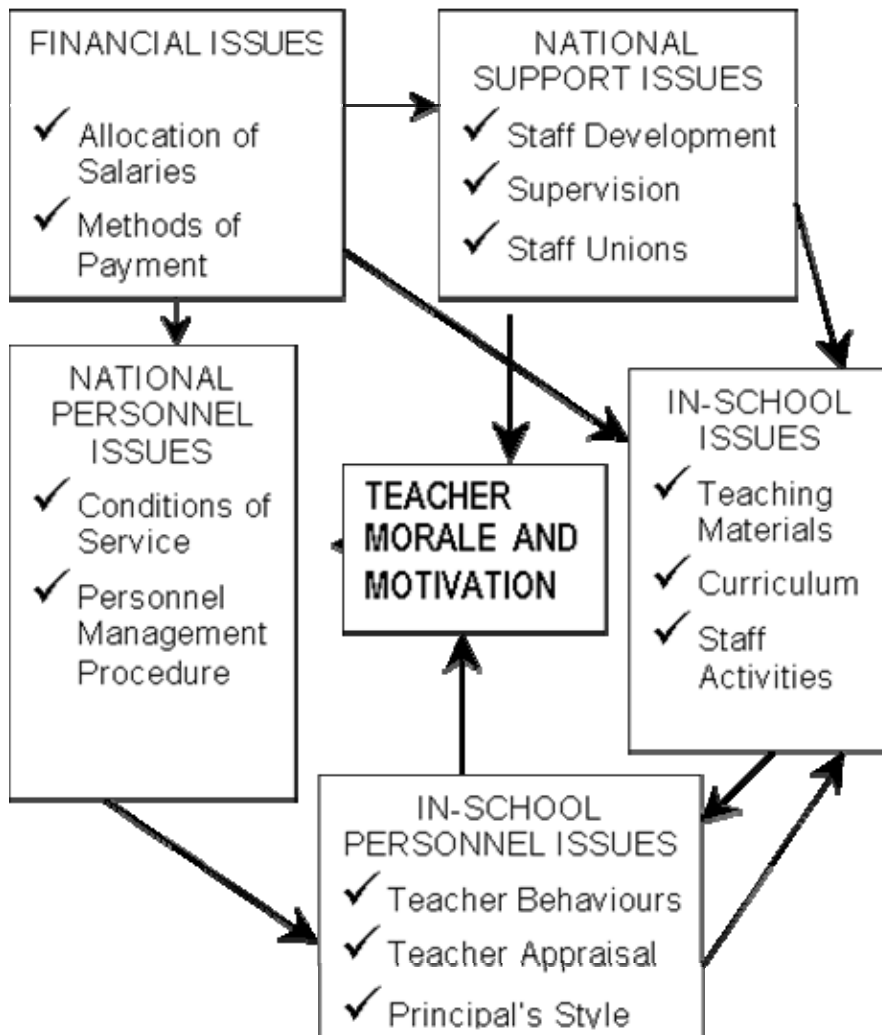


Fig. 1: RELATIONSHIPS AND PRIORITIES AMONG CRITICAL ISSUES AFFECTING TEACHERS' MORALE AND MOTIVATION - Adapted from Paper by Donors to African Education Working Group on Teaching Profession (1993)

In spite of the immensity of the roles teachers play in society, there is abundant evidence to suggest that teachers have not been receiving sufficient attention in terms of their management and support. The issues of most concern to their morale and motivation, performance and productivity are **in the areas of salaries and conditions of service**, recruitment and deployment, teacher management, professional support system, teacher development and education. This is demonstrated in Figure 1, which shows the relationships and priorities among critical issues affecting teachers' morale and motivation.

These factors include: Financial Issues, National Management and Personnel Issues, In-School Management and Professional Issues. Of great significance are **Financial Issues**.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

The governments of Nigeria recognising the critical importance of education to the development effort have invested in education. Since independence both the Federal and State Governments have invested over 30% to 40% of their annual budgets to provide education at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. For example, the Federal Government expenditures on education since 1979 to 1995 increased significantly between 1979 and 1980, both as a proportion of recurrent and capital expenditures and as a proportion of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It fluctuated at about 10 percent of recurrent expenditure up to 1986 and declined sharply in 1987 after the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1986 (Okojie, 1995). The result is that Federal and State governments have found it increasingly difficult to meet recurrent and capital costs required to support the rapid expansion in education. Thus, the economic pressures on education have been reflected in declining allocation to education.

Ajayi (1996) differentiated between **economic values of education and economic aspects of education**. While the former is basically concerned with the assessment of the contribution of education to economic growth, the latter is often concerned with the financial implication of the cost of education. Consequently, when teacher education is treated from economic perspective, it should be noted that just as the production and maintenance of teachers would attract some cost, their functions and activities would also have some beneficial returns to the economy. We tend to be oblivious of this fact and fail to realise that **education is not only a costly venture but also an economic venture without immediate return**. In other words, the benefits derivable from teacher training cannot be fathomed immediately, yet the contributions of such to the national economic development cannot be over-emphasised since teachers constitute the largest single group of public servants, they consume, in terms of salary, legitimately though, between 90-98% of the recurrent budgetary provision (Okoro, 1998). In spite of the roles teachers play as major agents in the transformation of society from “industrial-based society to technological and knowledge based society”, governments tend to look at issues affecting their morale with disdain and with reluctance, hence up till now they have failed to implement **a separate teachers’ salary structures**.

Salaries are not only offered for services but also as inducement to take up a job or stay and retain same. Similarly, salary differentials among occupations and professionals are not only offered for services but also as incentives to induce manpower shift as well as high or low morale, job satisfaction, performance, productivity, efficiency as well as effectiveness. Consequently, if any attempt is made to hold teachers’ salary constant while other wage earners increase their earnings (either due to perceived increased productivity, status or economic environment), then the quality and output of teachers would decrease and/or deteriorate. The resultant effect will be a tendency for the best and most qualified teachers or candidates to **shift** to other occupations and/or activities.

The ILO report (1978) noted that:

Inadequate pay levels affect recruitment to, and stability within the profession and create frustration, which may give rise to MILITANCY and even a decline in professional standards.

These points raised were further buttressed by Nwagwu (1998). Contributing to the debate on the growing teacher militancy in Nigeria, he examined the causes, trends and solutions to the apparent inability of teachers to improve their lot. According to him, at all levels of the education system, the teacher no matter the name by which he is identified - **teacher, instructor, tutor, master, lecturer or professor**, was shown to be labouring under much frustration. He has been treated by his society as a professional with a difference in the sense that much lip service is paid to his importance and contributions to human resource development without which there will be no socio-economic development. Yet the same society is unwilling to accord teachers the professional status that will enable them to live decent and respectable lives within their community. Consequently, teachers are angry about the encomiums heaped on them at public rallies by politicians, government functionaries and even their former students who have become rich and successful business people and professionals. The general assumption by society and even some politicians and government officials that teaching can be engaged in by anybody and, **the outworn beliefs and attitudes towards teachers** and their profession, e.g. that teachers do not work as many hours as other professionals and that they enjoy too much holidays in the year, despite changes in the organization and management of the education system in general and teacher education in particular, has further complicated the situation.

The growing sense of frustration of teachers arises from both **internal** and **external factors**. These are **the motivators and the hygiene factors**. While some are intrinsic to the school and teaching, others relate to social, economic and political circumstances in the country. Many research studies have been conducted on the level of morale and job satisfaction among Nigerian teachers (Ossai, 1995; Ojo (1971) and Obanya, 1993). The findings have been consistent in declaring that the teachers are poorly motivated, thus resulting in low morale and lack of job satisfaction. Of all the theories on motivation in literature, that of Herzberg (1959) has often been used to help explain the factors that lead to job satisfaction or lack of it. He pointed out that the presence of certain factors helps to increase the individual's job satisfaction and their absence does not necessarily give rise to job dissatisfaction. These are the *motivators*. On the other hand, when certain factors are not gratified, people become unhappy and negative attitudes to their work develop, thus leading to job-dissatisfaction. These are the hygiene factors or *dissatisfiers*. In the case of the Nigerian teacher, neither the motivators nor the hygiene factors of motivation are gratified. Consequently, there is little or nothing in the working conditions to increase teachers' level of job satisfaction beyond the neutral point. Worse still, certain elements or factors like **feelings of achievement, recognition of one's worth and work, status, prestige and advancement** are also in short supply within the profession, hence, the sense of frustration and dissatisfaction.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, we have come thus far on our reflections on "Becoming a Teacher and the Challenges of Teacher Education". From the foregoing, it is clear that Becoming a Teacher is fraught with obstacles and problems from the time of deciding to become a teacher, through the selection and recruitment process, training and being retained in the school system. The prospective teacher may not be of high academic status; he may not come from a high socio-economic background; he may have taken the decision as a last resort, having failed in his attempts to enter other *high profile* professions. He is coming into teaching that is caricatured and ridiculed, lending

credence to Bernard Shaw's view that **“He who can does, he who cannot, teaches”**; where the work environment is crisis-ridden, frustrating and humiliating, where teacher educators are ill-prepared, of low morale and motivation and of low self-esteem; where the programmes are disjointed; where the public and society see teaching as an occupation for all comers variously called as **“cheaters” “martinee idols”, “teacher tyrants” “tell-tale teachers” or “part-time teachers”**; where teachers are haunted by either self-doubt or self pity; where teachers are treated like beasts of burden and/or like villains; where they are sinned against by government, their employers, parents, society and even students who abuse and intimidate them, burn down their offices, cars, houses, or rape their wives and daughters. In some cases, the lives of the teachers are threatened by parents and/or the students.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, you can appreciate the scenario we have painted about the travails of becoming a Teacher in Nigeria. To work in a system where pupils have no textbooks, no reference libraries and the teachers have become the most vital resource for teaching and learning and yet have to work under the most unsafe and unhealthy conditions; overcrowded classrooms, non-conducive school environment and lack of adequate teaching materials coupled with social isolation all add to the unattractiveness of teaching compared with other occupations.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, one can go on and on, on this subject. **But where do we go from here?** It depends on what we do from now on. If we want to ensure the full professionalization of teaching, we should only attract people of the right calibre, orientation and intelligence to be interested in teaching. If the future of the nation rests in the hands of its teachers, then, there is need to improve their working conditions, because, what the teacher does and how he does it are important in the determination of quality in education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, permit me now to offer some suggestions on how we can attract the right kind of people into their teaching profession, boost their morale and job satisfaction, strengthen the professional commitments and enhance their working conditions. First, let me say that although the central importance of teachers in the educative process is recognized by government and also in various documents, very little attention is given to their training and ensuring that they remain in the profession. It is not realised that there can be no meaningful social, economic and political development in any society without teachers. For upon their number, quality and their devotion, the effectiveness of all educational arrangements must clearly depend. While recognizing the need to produce teachers of great depth of knowledge, increased skills in teaching, right attitudes and improved human relationships, we wish to suggest that our major concern should be on how to produce teachers with diversified specializations and interests willing to work in a changing school environment, where the emphasis will be on creating new ways of teaching for new ways of learning.

We have argued, in this lecture, that teaching is yet to be fully professionalized, hence the incursion of all types of people into teaching as a last resort, having failed to enter other *high profile* professions. To address this sordid situation and halt the drift from the profession, ways of enhancing the teachers' morale and job satisfaction were discussed. On the whole, the key areas that need to be stressed in order to improve the lot of

teachers include a redesign of teacher education programmes, restructuring the remuneration system and boosting in-service education for professional growth. The following suggestions are offered for the prosecution of these broad areas:

1. According to Okoro (1998), when the Teachers Registration Council is established it may consider the following measures:

(a) adopting periodic licensure examinations to qualify both private and public school teachers as professionals.

(b) adopting a training and certification system for managers of the educational system and administrators to qualify them as professional educational administrators/managers.

(c) adopting a career service system for teachers. Such a system should include, among others, just and adequate compensation for entry into the position, and subsequently for promotion through the ranks, a clear and transparent career path definition for teaching and opportunities for administrative work, if so inclined, as an alternative career path choice when the teacher reaches a level of teaching experience, qualifying him/her for the pool of prospective administrative personnel.

2. The education of teachers can never stop because research advances or knowledge of the world in which we live, and the fundamental principles of various subjects to be taught or how the young people live and learn will be dynamic. For the improvement in the education of teachers and general professionalization of teaching, we recommend the establishment of **Professional Renewal Centres (PRC)** of multidimensional nature, as alternative approaches to in-service education of teachers for all levels of our educational system. These centres should be the nerve centres for academic investigation and information dissemination in matters relating to teaching at various levels. They should also provide for learning opportunities, on a continuous basis, that should meet both the academic, professional and social needs of teachers in their quest for professional renewal and excellence. They should also provide collegial collaboration for all agencies concerned with planning, designing, executing and evaluating in-service programmes. In addition, they can become useful back up to teacher education programmes in the Universities, Colleges of Education and other Institutions of Higher learning. The library facilities and curriculum materials locally made based on the identified practical needs in the classroom are thus placed at the disposal of all students and teachers. These centres should be established at the National, State and Local levels.

3. The importance of a virile professional body cannot be overemphasised, as it would be its function to guide the professional image and status of practitioners. The Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) is more of a trade union, compared to the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) and the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), which have professional bodies known as the Nigerian Medical Council (NMC) and the Legal Council of Nigeria (LCN), respectively. These bodies guard jealously the dilution of standards and ensure strict adherence to the legal instruments setting them up. As warned by Nwagwu (1992), individual action can make little or no impact on the environment of mistrust, corruption

and violence within which the teacher has to perform his professional duties. **Group action is imperative.** Thus, teacher unions and associations no matter the names by which they are known and called, must strengthen their **membership and solidarity.** This is only possible if teachers contribute their monthly and annual dues in order to have a strong economic base. Without finance, they cannot do much, because money is needed to publicise the activities and problems of the teachers in newspapers, radio and television, like the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) mobilized the Union members at both national and local levels to publicize the rot in the education sector in general and university education in particular. Public enlightenment through seminars and conferences, rallies and lectures, followed by mobilization of public opinion brought to the forefront the demands of university teachers.

4. Since there had never been a clearly perceived, identified, planned and sustained pattern of teacher training and since almost every programme had evolved as **an emergency or temporary remedial approach to an unanticipated situation or need,** it is hereby recommended that the curriculum of teacher education at the NCE and university levels must move away from the general professional preparation to a variety of specializations in population, migrant, nomadic and environmental education to mention a few among many other areas (Afe, 1991/92, 1995^a). The needs of Nigeria are more complex and diversified, so our present education system should be re-oriented towards a policy and culture of science and technology. For, according to Fafunwa, (1992); Afe (1992^f; 1993^c, 1990^d), it is imperative that a **revolution in scientific and technical education** should take place in Nigeria. Therefore, changes are required in teacher education to facilitate this technological development, for no amount of tinkering with teacher education curriculum or re-shuffling of courses and credits, as important as this may appear, is likely to result in the needed quality in teacher education. For parity of status and training of teachers, the period of professional education at colleges of education and universities should be extended from three to five and from four to six years respectively (Afe, 1990; Imogie 1999). This model, which embraces the Clinical Laboratory Approach to student Teaching Practice as a necessary tool for preparing the teacher-trainees for an eventual one-year internship, would enhance the professional component of teacher education.

5. While sound academic attainment may contribute positively to the teachers' motivation, conscientiousness and efficiency, one should not forget that those virtues operate in a social milieu. As noted by Johnson (1971), socio-economic factors associated with teacher preparation, experience and job satisfaction are positively related to teacher effectiveness. Therefore, to sustain the teachers' morale and consequently guarantee their job satisfaction, it is recommended that a separate **Teachers Salary Scale (TSS)** be put in place, as a teacher's salary is a crucial factor in the process of attracting and maintaining good and virile teaching workforce (Afe, 2002).

6. There is the urgent need to address the present deficiencies in the physical and instructional facilities in our Colleges of Education and Universities. What is required is adequate funding, which is crucial to the success of good primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. Consequently, it is recommended that in line with the United Nations (UN)

policy, the Federal Government should devote annually 30% of the annual budget and, at least, 5% of our Gross National Product (GNP) to education.

With respect to funding for Research, Okebukola (1993) noted that only about 0.1% of the research conducted in education in Nigeria was funded directly with government or public funds, which are grossly inadequate, as good research needs “good money” or appropriate funding. It is therefore recommended that funds be made available, as the research capacity in teacher education in Nigeria is relatively high.

7. To improve the quality and productivity of our school system, there is need that carefully developed, rigorous criteria be enforced for admission into teacher education institutions so that such institutions will secure a fair share of the best students. When well-qualified people are recruited into teaching, high standards are ensured.

8. Good intentions are of little value unless they are followed with constructive planning and backed by the means, the men and the materials to make these plans work (Hawes, 1972). It is said that education unlocks the door to modernization, but it is not often realised that it is the teacher who holds the key to the door.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, let me conclude my reflections on Becoming a Teacher and the Challenges of Teacher Education by going back to the point with which I started, in order to state in explicit terms what I conceive as the deeper relevance of my discipline in today’s lecture. I made the point that becoming a teacher in Nigeria is fraught with dilemmas and problems that have influenced the teaching profession. In the course of the lecture, the centrality of the teacher in the education process was emphasised and buttressed with examples of various policies of government implemented to speed up National Development. From the historical viewpoint, teacher education was presented as the pivot of the educational system, though conditioned by both historical and social factors. We found that when teaching is examined as a profession in Nigeria against the defining characteristics of control of entry, conditions of service, maintenance of standards and autonomy, we run into problems. To remedy the situation and make teaching a full fledged profession, a number of recommendations were made, with the emphasis that a profession should be organised in such a way that the members would have a sense of belonging to a particular body which stipulates codes of conduct; regulates conditions for entry into the profession; plans for the welfare of members; organises for the exchange of ideas and disciplines the erring members. Finally, the implementation of the provisions of the Teachers Registration Council would take care of the issues raised in the lecture.

As Hanson (1964) put it:

*An important sign of the long-range health of a nation is **the spirit and quality of its teachers...** the future of the nation rests in the hands of its*

teachers, for the qualities they possess today will inevitably be reflected in the citizens of tomorrow.

The challenge for the 21st century is that the education and training of Nigerian teachers must top the list of priorities of government, because the services of the teachers are indispensable to any nation and they, more than other professionals, influence the lives of the Nation's Youths and the Nation's Future.

Thank you for listening and God bless you all.

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