

TEACHERS AND EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION IN NIGERIA:

Issues, Challenges and the Way forward

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ABSTRACT

Education Transformation begins with teachers for a simple reason that, they are vested with important numerous responsibilities which are primarily related to promoting effective growth and development of students, facilitating the achievement of academic goals and upgrading the overall system of education. When the educators are recruited, there are certain aspects that need to be taken into consideration. These include, educational qualifications, experience, competencies and personality traits. Furthermore, for education to be transformed, teachers are to possess the abilities to work under stress and deal with various problems and challenges in an appropriate manner. With these traits, they will be able to perform their duties satisfactorily and enhance effectively education transformation agenda. Within the period of time, it is necessary to generate awareness in terms of usage of technologies and other modern and innovative methods that would facilitate in the successful implementation of education transformation tasks and activities. This paper examines the significant roles of teachers and stakeholders in ensuring education transformation amidst numerous challenges facing the country today. The paper concludes that, the roles and responsibilities of teachers are considered vital in transforming educational system as well as promoting academic learning among pupils, enabling them to inculcate the traits of morality, ethics, diligence, resourcefulness and conscientiousness, promoting community welfare and leading to effective growth and development of

individuals, so they can render a significant contribution in promoting better livelihoods for themselves. It also recommends that, implementation of education transformation plans as prioritized by World Bank, UNESCO as well as other models analyzed by cheng will significantly help to transform educational systems in Nigeria. Government therefore has a lot to do here because implementation of these frameworks require huge amount of money from beginning to the end.

Key Words: Teachers, Education Transformation, Stakeholders, Nigeria Union of Teachers.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of 'Education' is best understood from the viewpoint of the National Policy on Education document that described it as an Instrument Par excellence in the overall development of any nation (FRN, 2004). Education generally is considered to be major contributory transformation factor to industrialization, political stability, national integration and unity, economic and social stability of nation (Adeyemi 2000). It is the best way to human resource development. The overall goal of education in Nigeria is to contribute to national development through high level relevance manpower training to develop and inculcate proper value for the survival of the individual and society, to develop the intellectual capability of individuals, to understand the local and external environment, to acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful

members of the society, to promote and encourage scholarship and country service (National Policy on Education, 2004).

Education in every society is obviously known to be an indispensable tool for nations' economic growth and development. Education in general and higher level in particular, are fundamental to the construction of a knowledge economy and society in all nations (World Bank 1999). Education has been viewed also as a process of learning and training, instruction as impacted in schools, colleges and universities. In the light of the above, education therefore means a process of transforming society into a better one through which an individual gains knowledge, insight, develop attitudes or skills. It could be described as a process of passing-on cultural values and skills for the development of human knowledge.

This paper therefore highlights a holistic approach to education transformation by analyzing critically the significant role of teachers and stakeholders in an attempt to revamping the Nigeria's education system. The paper majorly relies on secondary sources of data from textbooks, journals, magazines, conference papers and online materials are consulted.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL REVIEW:

Education Transformation:

The concept of education here refers to the overall lifelong process of acquisition and inculcation of requisite knowledge, attitudes, skills, norms and values which are considered critical to the overall development of an individual and equips the beneficiary to contribute his/her quota to the development of his/her immediate community and the Nigerian society at large.

Education Transformation involves teaching and learning geared towards motivating and empowering happy and healthy learners to take informed decisions and actions at the individual,

community and global levels. It is the aggregate of all the processes by which a person develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior of positive and meaningful value in the society in which he lives. Similarly, in the words of Farrant cited in Sharhi (2018) "education transformation describes the total process of human learning by which knowledge is imparted, faculties trained and skills developed"; he added that, "schooling is only one form in which education is transformed and developed".

Education transforms both societies and people in a particular direction by shaping and reshaping their patterns of thoughts, means of problem solving and ways of life. This will then contribute to further individual and social transformation. Our world is facing unprecedented challenges which includes climate change, violent and hateful ideologies, new conflicts and the risks of global pandemics to name only a few. As a result, education systems need to be reoriented to equip learners with the knowledge, values, and abilities to act for the betterment of all people and behave as responsible citizens of a global community (Singh-Gopal, 2015).

Teacher

A teacher is the leader of pupils in the classroom. As the class instructional leader, he should realize that the children are different in physique, sex, intelligence, age, rate of maturity, health, background and character. The teacher should know how to cope with these differences. Exceptional children must be cared for. The teacher must be aware of the factors influencing classroom learning such as heredity physiology, environment and nutritional factors (Mishra, 2014). With these, education system cannot only be transformed but enhanced.

Teachers are employed in schools for the main purpose of instruction. This core role involves the initiation, direction and evaluation of learning procedure. The teachers' effectiveness is thus measured in

terms of the necessary behaviours' that are complimentary to this roles / functions/ duties / responsibilities. As stated in the teachers' manual, the duties of a teacher are classified into academic responsibilities, extra curriculum activities and teachers workload

The teachers' academic responsibilities includes, to teach diligently and faithfully the subjects assigned to him, to encourage pupils in the pursuit of learning, to inculcate by precept and example the highest regard for morality and all other virtues and to maintain proper order and discipline in the classroom and while on duty in the school and on the playground under the direction of the principal or head teacher.

Transformative Learning Theory is used as a theoretical framework of analysis in this paper. The theory focuses on the idea that, learners can adjust their thinking based on new information acquired. The proponents of this theory includes Imel (1998). Mezirov (2000) and Taylor (1998). The theory has three fundamental components that facilitate the learning and transformation of pupils in educational environment. These are critical reflection, centrality of experience and rational discourse.

The rationale behind transformative education is to empower learners to see the social world differently and through an ethical lens so that they will challenge and change the statusquo as agent of change. Transformative learning can be fostered by asking open-ended questions to learners. This will promote critical thinking skills that will help learners relate new knowledge to their own life experiences. Examples here include the use of blogs and internal social tools for online discussions and responses to raised questions.

According to transformative learning theory, learners improve their understanding of the world by revising their "frames of reference," which include their habits of mind (e.g., broad, abstract habitual

ways of thinking, feeling, and acting) and points of view e.g., specific attitudes, values and beliefs. This theory is relevant in this paper due to the fact that, transformational teaching involves creating dynamic relationships between teachers, students, and a shared body of knowledge to promote student learning and personal growth.

INDICES FOR MEASURING EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION

The idea of education transformation came up last year at the 5th UNESCO's Forum on Transformative Education for Sustainable Development which was an event that took place between 29th November and 1st December 2021 in Seoul, the capital city of South Korea.

At the event, UNESCO brought experts from different countries to discuss good education practices, progress, monitoring and mainstreaming transformative education towards sustainable development goal target. They have called for a new social contract on education as part of a landmark report on the futures of education. The new social contract for education aimed at uniting us around collective endeavours and provide the knowledge and innovation needed to shape sustainable and peaceful futures for all, anchored in social, economic, and environmental justice. It must, as this forum does, champion the role played by teachers the world over (UNESCO, 2021).

These according to them are all central to achieving sustainable development goal by ensuring that, education is transformative for every student in every country. They also aim at ensuring that, learners of all ages are supported to care for one another so as to create more peaceful, just and sustainable societies. The forum finally summarized the main aim of education transformation as follows;

- Education for Sustainable Development

- Global Citizenship Education
- Education for Health and Well-being of all students

Cheng (2018), laments that, some indicators are paramount in ensuring education transformation and development especially after experiencing some insecurity situations within the country that led to the closure of schools several times. These indices were designed to develop a plan for the achievement of the overall goals of education sector in accordance with educational mission and vision statements. He therefore, identified eight 8 yardsticks for measuring transformative education as follows;

- i. Provision and sustenance of highly qualified and productive staff
- ii. An Efficient Teaching and Learning
- iii. Imparting self-reliance knowledge and leadership qualities in students
- iv. Provision and maintenance of effective instructional materials and ICT Services
- v. Provision and maintenance of Standard Physical Facilities and a Secured Environment
- vi. Sourcing funds for financing education transformation programs.
- vii. Efficient Schools Administration
- viii. Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation

SIGNIFICANT ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND TEACHERS IN EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION

Transformative education involves teaching and learning geared to motivate and empower happy and healthy learners to take informed decisions and actions at the individual, community and global levels. Learners must engage with the world and

find coherence between the world they experience in school and the world we all wish to build outside school. To build this world, we need to learn to read and write, but we also need to learn collaboration, empathy, complex problem solving, connection to other human beings and nature (Ojo, 2007).

Education can only be “transformative” when students feel valued, acknowledged, safe and are included in the learning community as full and active members. This starts by preventing and addressing school violence and bullying, gender-based violence, as well as health and gender related discrimination towards learners and educators.

Teachers are expected to transform their teaching, for example, ensuring that the curriculum, pedagogy, learning materials, schools or learning environments are meaningful in the natural, political, economic, and socio-cultural contexts (Singh-Gopal, 2015).

i. The Role of Government

Government must act urgently to create the favourable conditions in all schools to sustain education throughout the state. For education to be transformed and developed, teachers’ welfare is of paramount importance. Not only that, seminars, workshops and conferences be organized for teachers to become effectively equipped with their teaching techniques and skills. This can only be possible if schools are fully funded and provided with necessary instructional facilities required for effective teaching and learning.

(a) Role of the State Ministry of Education

The education laws of states varies from one state to the other in relation to general and specific terms of reference concerning primary and post-primary education, colleges of education and higher institutions of learning, management and control.

Basically, the state ministry of education is to establish favourable working conditions of service for teachers such as tenure in the office or job, salaries, fringe benefits, determination of teachers' certification and qualifications. It determines age levels for admission into various levels of education in the state. The state prescribes certain subjects to be taught in schools. The state ministry of education should set the goals and plan the curricular programmes carried out in all levels of education in the state. It should make provision for extra hours in schools to remedy what was lost during pandemic as well insecurity situations.

The state ministry of education should organize the administrative, supervisory and inspectorate staff of education to ensure full implementation of remedial classes throughout the state. They should also provide incentives and allowances so as to motivate teachers to put their best in achieving education transformation plans within the state. The unprecedented increase in the demand for education which called for more schools of learning at primary, secondary, and post-secondary education level made the state ministry of education to decentralize some of their functions for easy achievement of the educational goals (Singh-Gopal, 2015).

(b) Role of the State Teachers' Service Board (TSB)/LGEA's

The Teachers' Service Board as well as Local Government Education Authorities have the following roles to perform in helping to attain educational transformation plans and achieve its goals. These include:

- (a) Recruitment of qualified teachers and school administrators;
- (b) Promotion and advancement of teachers as at when due;
- (c) Positioning and discipline of teachers and
- (d) Payment of teacher's salaries in primary, secondary and technical colleges in the state.

(e) To work in conjunction with the inspectorate division of the ministry of education/department to improve the quality of instruction in the schools (Singh-Gopal, 2015).

ii. The Role of Teachers

Teachers are employed in schools for the main purpose of instruction. This core role involves the initiation, direction and evaluation of learning procedure. The teachers' effectiveness is thus measured in terms of the necessary behaviours that are complimentary to this role.

Teaching is a demanding profession that requires both passionate commitment and a broad range of complex knowledge and skills. Teachers need to be well grounded in the subjects they teach and proficient with the latest classroom technologies. They need to be skilled in managing a classroom and interacting as well as engaging with their students. They must be able to recognize and move beyond their own biases in order to identify the unique strengths and talents of students from every background. They need a command of a variety of effective pedagogical practices and the latest neurological research, especially about how very young children and adolescents develop and learn. As a society, we need to value and respect teachers, maintain a high bar for entry into the profession, and pay them as professionals. Principals/Head teachers should also be experienced teachers who are capable of supervising and helping their teachers (Singh-Gopal, 2015).

Collaboration is also a key factor for education transformation. Says Ravitch (2012), "*Teachers should work in schools where collaboration and teamwork are prioritized. They should expect to get help from their colleagues and to give help in return. A school should have a professional tone, where colleagues cooperate, not compete.*"

Delpit (2011) advocates for focused and collaborative learning environments where teachers meet regularly not just to

report on what they are doing, but to work together to solve problems. They may visit each other's classrooms and give feedback to help each other improve, and work together to refine mandated instruction to be more appropriate for their students. Education scholar Andy Hargreaves points out that, even in the most remote and isolated rural school, teachers are finding ways to come together to improve educational opportunity for their students.

iii. The Roles of the School Head teacher/ Principal

A school is a community of living active people. The school buildings and other structures provide the physical environment and life altogether. Organization is needed if the school is to be run successfully for achieving education transformation plans. School organization requires a good leadership. A good school head according to Farrant (1975) must possess high qualities of leadership because, like a general, he cannot win the battle by himself alone but by involving those with whom he serves. The leadership style of the head teachers influences intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of the followers namely, the teachers.

The head teacher of a school is described by the Nigeria Teachers' Service manual, federal government of Nigeria (1990) as both the administrative and the academic head of the school. The duties of the head teacher are stated as follows:

The head teacher should have a good understanding of the school system, its philosophy and purpose so that he would be able to explain these adequately to his staff, pupils, parents and the local community. To acquire this understanding, the head teacher should endeavor to obtain and study up-to-date materials on the system. The head teacher should establish a cordial relationship with his staff and pupils and encourage both parties to get the best out of the available human and material resources.

He should create a school climate conducive to learning.

The head teacher should ensure that qualified staff to teach the classes are available and provide opportunities for their in-service training. The head teacher should make timely and appropriate recommendations to the Teacher's Service Board or Local Government Education Authority to post the needed teachers to his school. To ensure effective discipline, the head teacher should work with his staff to evolve and implement a programme of discipline in the school (Kelly, 2006).

iv. Roles of Parents Teachers Association (P.T.A.)

The Parents Teachers Association (P.T.A) is an organization which aims at bringing parents and teachers together as partners in developing education and the child. It is most essential both for the school and the home that there must be cordial cooperative relations between the two. The parents and teachers should have the joint goal of promoting the physical, social and intellectual development of the school and the child and the success of their efforts in balanced if they can support and reinforce one another (Ojo and Alex, 2007).

v. Roles of Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT)

Patriotism as a nation-building tonic is one of the most important tools of the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) to be used in transforming education system as well as safeguarding the rights and privileges of teachers. Patriotism is a concept which Ogheneakoke (2014), defined as "love of one nation, country or even an association. This word love when used in the context of the nation is pregnant with a number of components such as national consciousness, placing the nation or union above personal and ethnic interest.

As comrades, members of NUT are expected to be promoters of education transformation and development, rendering

selfless service to protect the interest of not only teachers in particular but learners in general thereby ensuring quality education throughout the state.

Patriotism to unionist may mean, loyalty, hardworking, dedication, commitment and steadfastness to ensure the standards of education within the country. As pressure groups, they are to confront government whenever they realized that educational policies and programmes of government are anti-educational development within the state.

Not only that, NUT should always maintain its stance of 'No Confrontation and No Compromise' on issues affecting teachers directly or indirectly and as such, negotiations and re-negotiations with state governors, education commissioners as well as various stakeholders in education ministries will pave way for ensuring the attainment of education transformation agenda as well as solving teachers problems at the state or local government level.

SCHOOLS CHALLENGES TODAY

- i. Poor staff welfare and delay in the payment of staff salaries especially in primary schools and poor implementation of promotion benefits and advancement.
- ii. Political instability, insecurity, quota system, bureaucracy, political implementation of education policies and politicization of education.
- iii.. Unqualified Teachers, Lateness, Look-warm attitudes of teachers
- iv. Inadequate funding, Mismanagement, high cost of educational materials and equipments.
- v. Inadequate maintenance and shortage and high cost of procurement.
- vi. Inter and Intra Educational Conflicts; e.g., Teachers/Administrators conflict, Student/Student conflict, Student/Government conflict.

viii.. Proliferation of primary and secondary schools and over centralization of administration and planning.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Nigerian educational system today is in a state of confusion and disarray as a result of inconsistencies, non-implementation of educational policies, inadequate infrastructure in schools and indiscipline by stakeholders. That was why there has been a clarion call by all and sundry to re-examine and appraise the Nigerian Educational system in line with current trends.

Implementation of education transformation plans as prioritized by World Bank, UNESCO as well as other models analyzed by cheng will significantly help to transform educational systems in Nigeria. Government therefore has a lot to do here because implementation of these frameworks require huge amount of money from beginning to the end.

Teacher's hardworking, determination, dedication and commitment will also complement government's efforts in attaining the targeted goal. Every teacher shall therefore, be required to discharge effectively and to the best of his/her ability the normal duties of the post to which he/she is appointed as well as such other related duties as the principal, head teacher, board or ministry of education may from time to time assign to him/her.

The roles and responsibilities of teachers are considered vital in transforming educational system as well as promoting academic learning among pupils, enabling them to inculcate the traits of morality, ethics, diligence, resourcefulness and conscientiousness, promoting community welfare and leading to effective growth and development of individuals, so they can render a significant contribution in promoting better livelihoods for themselves. In order to carry out on the roles and responsibilities in an appropriate manner, it

is essential for teachers to augment their competencies and educational qualifications. They need to ensure that, they generate awareness in terms of modern and innovative methods that are necessary to carry out their job in a well-organized manner.

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