

The Policy and Practice of Preparing the Nigerian Teacher for the Challenges of the New Generation: The National Policy on Education in Focus

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Abstract: *Nigeria like all other countries in the world has a National Policy on Education which provides the template to guide among other things the preparation of its teachers for the challenges of the new generation. While this is on paper, its implementation is a serious challenge thereby making it difficult for the state to effectively use the teacher as a tool of development to execute his mandate. This will make the state not to fulfil its role in the new generation. It is therefore, the opinion of the authors that the Nigerian Government and other stakeholders should brace up by summoning the political courage to faithfully implement its provisions on teacher preparation as provided in the NPE so that the country will be a key player in the new generation.*

I. Introduction

Due to globalization the world has become a global village. The implication of this on the country's teacher preparation programme is to align itself to world-wide best practices so that the products will be relevant in the highly competitive global market.

The new generation is an era that is being identified as the knowledge age, an age according to Obanya (2004:3-4) that is being characterized by

- ✓ a prevailing influence of Information Technology (IT),
- ✓ easy flow of information and ideas,
- ✓ improved communication and interaction among people in different places,
- ✓ greater inter-dependence among nations,
- ✓ creativity as the key to having a competitive edge over all others,
- ✓ virtual realities, with geo-physical boundaries and spatial distances losing their meaning,
- ✓ very rapid changes in every aspect of life.

The above indices have given tremendous advantage for countries that are already well organized and have taken off technologically. These are the 'globalisers'. For the emerging states on the other hand, to become full members of this village, they need a great deal of committed hard work without which they end up being 'globalised'. This is where Nigeria currently stands due to the state of the country's education system as the educational system determines the pace of development in any country which is usually being facilitated by a well prepared teacher through a well packaged teacher education programme. It is, however, no news that the Nigerian education system currently does not appeal to foreign students at the global level any more in this era of knowledge age. The reason is simple- no Nigerian university is ranked among the best five hundred in the world. This is a bitter pill in the mouth. It is a sign of vote of no confidence on the country's education system, the engine room of development that is being facilitated by the teacher. Buseri and Paulley (2011:223-224) citing the 2008-2009 Human Development Report (HDR) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on Nigeria as noted by Abimboye said:

Now at the threshold of the golden jubilee of Nigeria's political independence, the country surely has a scorecard; but it is an unimpressive one relative to its contemporaries in the 1960s and 1970s. What is different about Nigeria is that its poverty and poor human development performance are avoidable. Forty nine years (then) of managing its own affairs has shown that the country has immense potentials, is blessed with human and natural resources, yet exhibiting significant deprivation in the midst of

plenty... It is a country of extremes, extreme wealth on the one hand and extreme want on the other which makes it possible for some 20 percent of the population to own 65 percent of its national wealth.

The above as noted elsewhere is a serious setback on the developmental aspirations of the country which education as a tool with well prepared teachers made possible by a good teacher preparation programme (teacher education) is capable of turning around for good so that the country can as well join the league of the 'globalisers' in this new generation. Ukeje (1992:20), was, therefore, right when he asserted that if the child is the centre of the educational system, the teacher is the pivot of the educational process, the tool for national development. This is because it is the teacher who in the final analysis translates educational policies into practices and programmes into action. What the teacher knows and does can make a difference and what he does not know and cannot or will not do can be an irreparable loss in the life of the learner. Putting the above in perspective, Okeke (2004:90) said "minus students, teachers are the largest and the most critical inputs of an educational system for they constitute the quality of education anytime and anywhere". Who then is a teacher?

II. Defining a Teacher

The Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) Handbook (FRN:2002:11) defined a teacher as a person who had undergone approved professional training in education at appropriate levels capable of imparting knowledge, attitudes and skills to the learner. Paulley (2011a:62) sees a teacher as a professional who helps a learner through a purposeful activity or activities to transmit or facilitate the transmission of skills, attitudes, ideas and knowledge to the learner(s) that will create or influence desirable changes in their behaviour. This the teacher does because he/she has been specially prepared in a professional institution to teach in both formal and non-formal institutions of learning. This is because teaching in the professional context has methodology which forms the pedagogy for teachers. As a result, any person who aspires to be a teacher must be taught the methodology of teaching. It is this that makes one a professional teacher. The teacher, therefore, must not only be a well educated person and a specialist in an academic subject but one who is educated and having a specialized knowledge related to his professional task. Those who do not have these professional principles are, therefore, not teachers. As a professional, the teacher is a change agent, a builder of nation, a prime mover of the educational sector, the soul and heart of modern educational enterprise.

The teacher, therefore, is the most crucial component of the education industry in any country in the world as he is charged with responsibility of helping the learners to acquire relevant skills, attitudes and information necessary to make the learner becomes a functional member of the society. Through this process the much needed critical mass of skill manpower for sustainable growth and development of the country in all fields of society are produced. However, for the teacher carry out this function creditably, he has to be subjected to a professional preparation process to enable the would-be-teacher become competent and of the required quality needed for the task ahead. This deliberate process of preparation is called teacher education.

The 'why' and 'how' of this preparation process more often than not is being guided by the country's philosophy and national objectives, the aim is to produce well qualified, appropriately motivated, dedicated and competent teachers for the enhancement of real quality education for development. In Nigeria, the 'why' and 'how' of preparing the teachers for the assignment ahead is provided for in the National Policy on Education. However, before looking at the specific case of Nigeria with reference to its National Policy on Education and its provisions on teacher preparation let us beam our searchlight on the concept of Educational Policy.

III. What is an Educational Policy?

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1980) defines a policy as a plan or course of action in directing affairs, as chosen by a political party, government, business company etc.

An educational policy on the other hand according to Emmerji (1970:65) implies a clear definition or identification of educational goals, structures and objectives with clearly spelt out criteria, priorities, strategies, resources and other implications necessary to reach them. Without a good degree of clarity on these issues, we cannot achieve an acceptable level of sophistication and realism in the planning and implementation of educational policy goals and objectives. What appear to be reasonable policies on paper may not be truly so unless there are means of converting such policies into feasible field operations or programmes. It is the programmes that are then implemented to achieve the goals of the educational policy.

For Adedeji (2012) an educational policy is a general statement containing the principles, regulations and rules, which govern many of the decisions on how to educate children, where to get them educated, who is to teach them, how to finance their education, where to get them employed, and so on. It is, therefore, a generally explicit or implicit (written or unwritten) statement that guides the future thinking, initiatives and actions of individuals, group of individuals or a country as it relates to education.

An educational policy to Fabunmi (2005:60) is the framework within which education is administered in a given place and within specific period. The time dimension in the definition above indicates that the educational policy of a country is not static. It keeps evolving from one state to state or from one form to another. Edem (1982:116) defines educational policy as the thinking at a high level of abstraction which expresses educational goals as well as the means of achieving such educational goals. According to him, it is the basis which guides the educational administrators in their day-to-day operation and serves as a guide to the administrators when deciding the lines along which the system should be conducted.

Osokoya (2010:3) describes an educational policy as the determination of major educational objectives which include the selection of methods through which the objectives can be achieved as well as the continuous adaptation of existing government policies to solving problems.

Usually an educational policy of the government states in a written form among other things how its national objectives can be achieved using education as a tool. This, therefore, means that the first step in the formulation of an educational policy in any country is the identification of the country's philosophy as well as the national objectives. A case in point is the Nigerian five point national philosophy as clearly stated in the National Policy on Education (FRN:2004:6).

From the above definitions, one can deduce that an education policy can be interpreted as the government's written statement on education which is legally or constitutionally supported. Such should include goals and ways or means through which it will be realized. In other words, it is the government generally agreed ways of operating an education system of a country. It is a vital tool in the assessment of a country's educational system as it provides the parameters by giving direction on what to do at any point in time.

3:1 Features of an Educational Policy

An educational policy is characterized by the following. It is

- ✓ a body of rules, regulations and guidelines which guide the operation of the education system in a geographical region, usually a country.
- ✓ man-made as they are the creations of human beings for human convenience and the development of both the individual and the country concerned.
- ✓ normative as it contains the norms guiding the behaviour of educational practitioners at work.
- ✓ persuasive and not coercive, even though it has some elements of law. It should not look like a directive.
- ✓ has a territorial limitation meaning that it is for a particular education district, region, state, province or country as it with the Nigerian National Policy on Education under consideration; and
- ✓ dynamic not static as it keeps evolving in line with societal demand and changes in technology.

3:2 Functions of Educational Policy

Education has as its basic concern the improvement of the quality of life for the people as it generally has as its major function the transmission of societal worthwhile values, skills and information among others to its recipients so as to be functional members of the society. Accordingly, the specific functions of an educational policy which guides the operations of education in any country are the

- ✓ maintenance of order in the education sector through the application of specific rules, guidelines and procedures.
- ✓ promotion of justice as the same policy guides the operation of education in different segments of the society. There is no room for preferential treatment.
- ✓ assurance of individual freedom, liberty and development in the education system. Individuals are free to learn whatever they want, wherever they prefer and at specific sessions, provided they have the basic admission requirements.
- ✓ providing legal status to education. An educational policy provides a legal status to education as it is a product of the legislative system. A bill is usually initiated for its adoption in the parliament. This makes it an act of the parliament.

IV. The National Policy on Education in Nigeria: Its Historical Background

The Nigerian National Policy on Education (NPE) is a product of the 1969 National Curriculum Conference being hosted by the then Nigerian Education Research Council (now the Nigerian Educational Research Development Council (NERDC), in Lagos between 8th-12th September, 1969 (Adaralegbe:1972). It represents the first attempt at evolving a truly Nigerian education policy in the country. According to Paulley (in print) it opened a new page in the development of teaching and teacher preparation (education) in Nigeria as it clarifies the country's philosophy and objectives to guide its investment in education in general and teacher preparation (education) in particular and spells out clear unequivocal terms the policies that guide the country's effort and decision-making in the field of education in general and teacher education in this particular context.

The conference was followed by a seminar held at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), Victoria Island, Lagos between 4th-8th June, 1973 under the chairmanship of Chief S.O Adebayo, a former Nigerian Permanent Representative to the United Nations and at that time the chairman of the National Universities Commission. The published report of the seminar was handed over to the Federal Ministry of Education with a covering letter dated June 2nd 1973. This report was referred to the various state governments, the then Nigerian Educational Research Council (now Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) and the Joint Consultative Committee for their inputs and comments. The inputs and comments of these bodies were later considered by the National Council on Education for ratification. The end result was the Government White Paper titled "Federal Republic of Nigeria, National Policy on Education (NPE)", which was published in March, 1977. In the same year, the Federal Government of Nigeria set up a seven-man committee called the "Implementation Committee for the National Policy on Education" headed by Professor Sanya Onabamiro. The committee submitted its report in 1978 and in 1979 the Federal Government of Nigeria issued a White Paper on it entitled "Government Views On The Implementation Committee's Blueprints" on "The Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education" The document has subsequently influenced greatly decision making in the education sector of the country ever since as it is the collective wisdom of Nigerian educators. It has undergone three revisions one in 1981, another in 1998 and the latest edition in 2004.

Accordingly, in this paper, we shall make an attempt to examine the provisions of the NPE in the area of teacher preparation (teacher education) and see how in practice these policy statements are adhered to so that the Nigerian teacher as a member of the global community will be set for the challenges of the new generation more so with a Vision 20:2020 in focus.

4:1 Analysing the Strategies in the National Policy on Education for Making Nigerian Teacher Preparation (Education) Qualitative For the Challenges of the New Generation

The policy guiding the preparation of the Nigerian teacher for the challenges of the new generation as noted above is provided in the National Policy on Education (NPE) (FRN:2004). It is worthwhile note once more that the place of the teacher in the implementation of any educational policy cannot be overemphasized. Adapting Obanya's (2008:43) educational reformers' anthem, we can safely say that

high sounding educational (policy) goals, elegantly written educational (policy) documents, elaborate structures for (policy) implementation, loud propaganda in favour of educational (policy), huge financial outlays WOULD yield near zero results IF ... teachers remain out of the equation

This is because it is the well prepared professional practising teacher that will internalize the spirit of the educational policy in order to make its actualisation possible.

The NPE (FRN:2004:39) in the area of teacher education (preparation) started by observing and rightly too that "... no education system may rise above the quality of its teachers" and that "teacher education (preparation) shall continue to be given major emphasis in all educational planning and development" As a way of rising the standard and improving the quality of teachers in the country to face the challenges of the new generation, the NPE (FRN:2004:39,37,40-41) went on to itemise the following **strategies**. That

✓ the Nigerian Certificate on Education (NCE) shall be the minimum entry qualification into the teaching profession.(FRN:2004)

This is yet to be implemented in the country as the country's teaching profession is having a harvest of Teacher's Grade Two certificate holders particularly at the primary school level due to the shortage of teachers in the country.

✓ all teachers in educational institutions shall be professionally trained, (as well as) all teachers in tertiary institutions to undergo training in the methods and techniques of teaching.(FRN:2004)

There are a lot of nonprofessional teachers particularly at the tertiary level in the country not minding the policy statements of both the National Policy on Education and that of the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria making teaching a profession in the country. At the primary and secondary levels, the case of the Bayelsa State government readily comes to mind when the State ordered the redeployment of non professionals to schools to teach.

Another violation of this at the national level is the use of non Education National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members nationwide to teach. The NYSC scheme is a one year mandatory service programme of the Nigerian government for fresh youth graduates of the country to serve the country in an area/place other than the graduate's state of origin before proceeding to take up either an appointment or start any further study programme. The major aim is to ensure national cohesion (unity) among the diverse people of the country.

- ✓ teacher education shall continue to take cognizance of changes in methodology and in the curriculum. Teachers shall be regularly exposed to innovations in their profession.(FRN:2004)

This again is lacking in the Nigerian teachers as most teachers are not given the opportunity to go for refresher courses or training programmes once they are engaged in teaching. Accordingly, teachers do not in most cases update their knowledge in order to accommodate innovations in the teaching profession which is a pre-requisite for making the Nigerian teacher set for the challenges of the new generation.

- ✓ in-service training shall be developed as an integral part of continuing teacher education and shall also take care of all inadequacies.(FRN:2004)

Teachers in most cases are not provided with such programmes except the several sandwich programmes of various universities which in most cases are primarily aimed at shoring up the weak economic base of such institutions due to inadequate funding. As a result the quality of teachers produced through this means according to Paulley (2010:153) are even more toxic to the health of the existing teacher preparation programmes in the country. This is because what could not be done in a full residence semester of fifteen weeks is what the institutions attempt to achieve in less than eight weeks with less academically endowed students. A glance at teacher statistics in Nigeria will show an improvement in quantity and certification but the quality of teachers has not risen. Instead of producing ‘qualified’ teachers, the institutions have been and still are producing ‘certificated’ teachers which is likened to growth without development! Accordingly, instead of taking care of the inadequacies, they are adding to existing inadequacies.

- ✓ promotion opportunities shall be created to allow for professional growth at each level.(FRN:2004)

Teachers in the country are in most cases denied promotion as at when due which in turn retards their professional growth by way of not attending workshops, refresher courses, seminars among others thereby killing the morale of serving teachers in the country.

- ✓ teaching services shall be so planned that teachers can transfer from state to state without loss of status.(FRN:2004)

This strategy is not working in the country’s teaching force except for federal teachers as in the various states’ teaching service, the questions of state of origin/local government identification certificates are usually asked from prospective teachers by government officials before appointments are offered in the country. These are equally being provided in forms to be filled as part of the documentation process for the formalisation of appointment in the country. There are cases where teachers’ appointments were terminated for not disclosing their identity properly. The implication of this on the teaching profession in the country is that merit is usually sacrificed for place of origin thereby lowering standards.

- ✓ teaching is a legally recognised profession in Nigeria,... (accordingly) those already engaged in teaching but not professionally qualified shall be given a period of time within which to qualify for registration or leave the profession.(FRN:2004:)

This is not the practice in Nigeria where not only those in the profession without professional qualification are given opportunity to be prepared professionally but non-professionals are up till now given opportunity to come into the profession with ease not minding the genuine effort of the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) in the registration of teachers as a pre-requisite for entry into the teaching profession. A case in point in this direction is a recent policy statement of the Bayelsa State Government in 2010 directing all graduate staff of the State Environmental Sanitation Authority to be posted to schools to teach irrespective whether they are professional teachers or not without any form of pre-professional preparation before assuming the status of teachers. This directive which has taken effect in the state according to Paulley (2011b:16) is certainly not good for the promotion of quality teaching profession for the challenges of the new generation in stimulating the development of the country. The move instead will certainly weaken the already weak teacher education programme as such teachers will poison the profession with their non-professional skills.

- ✓ newly qualified teachers shall serve a period of internship one (1) year for degree holders and two (2) years for NCE holders.(FRN:2004)

This strategy aimed at strengthening the products of the country's teacher education/preparation process is yet see the light of the day up till the time of writing.

- ✓ effort towards the improvement of quality education at the primary and secondary levels shall include:-
- (a) appointment of academically and professionally qualified persons as teachers and head teachers;(FRN:2004)

With reference appointment of professionals as heads of schools at both primary and secondary, yes, but appointment of only professionals as classroom teachers in the country's secondary and primary schools, no, as the country's schools at both primary and secondary level is having a bountiful harvest of non professional teachers.

- (b) regulate in-service training programmes for teachers and head teachers.(FRN:2004)

This is better said and provided for as a policy statement than being implemented among teachers in the country.

Teacher education programmes shall be structured to equip teachers for the effective performance of their duties. (That) the following institutions, shall give the required professional training provided they continuously meet the required minimum standards(FRN:2004:40)

- ✓ Colleges of Education;
- ✓ Faculties of Education;
- ✓ Institutes of Education;
- ✓ National Teachers' Institute;
- ✓ Schools of Education in the Polytechnics;
- ✓ National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN); and
- ✓ National Mathematical Centre (NMC).

These centres/institutes in the execution of their mandates to prepare the Nigerian teachers for the challenges of the new generation are collectively being faced by the challenge of underfunding as it is the case with the education sector generally in the country.

4:2 Goals of Nigeria's Teacher (Preparation) Education in the National Policy on Education

The above strategies of the NPE not minding the pitfalls as identified by authors in the assessment as we have tried to show, are aimed at enabling the country to achieve the goals of teacher education (preparation) in the country. These goals as contained in the NPE (FRN:2004:39), are identified as the

- ✓ production of highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of the country's education system.
- ✓ further encouragement of the spirit of enquiry and creativity of teachers.
- ✓ helping of teachers to fit into the social life of the community and society at large and to enhance their commitment to national goals/objectives.
- ✓ provision of teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to any changing situation (not only in the life of their country, but in the wider world; and
- ✓ enhancement of teachers' commitment to the teaching profession. (FRN:2004:39)

Buseri, Paulley, Agih and Egumu (2013), had opined that a beneficiary of the above goals of the NPE, will be a well groomed teacher who it is hoped should be able to

- ✓ arouse and maintain learner's interest in learning things presented to him or her.
- ✓ motivate learners towards achieving set targets.
- ✓ helping the learner to develop appropriate life-skills that will make him or her to be a functional member of the society he or she belongs to.
- ✓ help learners to develop critical thinking skills; and
- ✓ help the learners to communicate ideas learnt in a clear, lucid, logical and in an organised manner.

The above provisions in the NPE in relation the teacher and his preparation for the assignment ahead no doubt if faithfully implemented in the country will certainly equip the Nigerian teachers for the challenges of the new generation. This notwithstanding, Nigeria's problem is not the absence of policies, blueprints and plans to guide the operators of the system as the country's educational landscape is dotted with such beautiful ambitious plans, policies and blueprints laying fallow in the belly of history. It is rather that of the leadership of the state having the strong political will to provide the enabling environment to implement the policies, plan and blueprints so that the people in the country will have the positive effects of these policies on them so as to facilitate the development of the country even as the country gradually move towards 2020 when Nigeria is

hoping to be counted among the first twenty developed economies of the world, which is what Nigeria's **VISION 20:2020** is all about. This is the crux of this paper. In essence, having seen the policy, what is the state of practice, that is implementation as it is at the level of practice/implementation that the surrender value of the policy will become manifest to the Nigerian society.

4:3 Implementing the National Policy on Education Goals of Teacher Education (Preparation) in Nigeria for Meeting the Needs of the New Generation: The Challenges

The implementation of an educational policy which is the gateway for the realization of the purpose of such policy can be described as the Achilles heel of educational policy management in Nigeria. It is not, therefore, enough to lay down policies, programmes and regulations to guide educational practice without converting these policies into reality by taking appropriate actions. In an attempt to put them into practice/implement the policy on teacher preparation of the National Policy on Education (FRN:2004) for meeting the challenges of the new generation in Nigeria, certain factors are hampering the successful practice/implementation thereby creating a wide margin between intention and practice. The knowledge of such challenges according to Nwaobasi (1990:223) is necessary as it will assist government and other stakeholders in the area of policy formulation and implementation to deal with them in order to achieve the intended educational objectives of the policy.

Since the policy guides the practice, let us this time around use the five goals of teacher preparation as provided in the NPE (FRN:2004:) as our tools of analysis in the preparation of the Nigerian teacher for the challenges of the new generation.

4:3:1 The Challenge in the Production of Highly Motivated, Conscientious and Efficient Classroom Teachers for all Levels of the Country's Education System

The Nigerian school system needs highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of the country's education system to ensure quality products since no education system anywhere in the world can rise beyond the quality of its teachers. While these set of teachers are needed for the challenges of the new generation, in sourcing for good raw materials for preparation in order to actualize this goal of the NPE (FRN:2004:39), most teacher preparation institutions in the country have become dumping grounds for candidates who could not secure admission in other disciplines. Experience has shown that majority of the candidates admitted into the Faculty of Education in almost all universities in the country are those who have no interest or aptitude whatsoever in teaching. They are usually pushed to education through the supplementary admission as their University Matriculation Examination (UME) scores could not meet the cut off points of their first and second choice departments. Such candidates wanted just a university degree and that is why they accept the offer by their respective universities to Faculty of Education as a last resort and not that, they wanted to become teachers. Even most of those who were admitted into pre-degree programmes on account of weak entry qualification are not ready for teaching on graduation. Teaching in the country is thus fast becoming a profession of failures and disgruntled elements, and the last hope of the hopeless. Accordingly, the goal of "producing highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of the country's education system is fast becoming a dream that cannot be realized in the country as a means of meeting the challenges of the new generation. Putting the above in perspectives, Ikeotuonye (2010:35-36) opined that

the only boys and girls who go to Colleges of Education, (a professional institution with the mandate of preparing professional teachers at the Nigeria Certificate in Education-NCE level) and reluctantly too, are those with poor performance in the School Certificate examinations. As soon as they obtain the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), most of them make frantic efforts to get into the university to read courses other than Education. Only those who fail in this still read Education most unhappily.

As long as many student teachers enter into the teacher preparation programmes with an attitude of self pity arising from their choice of the teaching profession as a last resort, the quality of teachers will continue to be low which implies that the production of highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of the country's education system to ensure quality products will be a mirage in the country. This is because such teachers will often see themselves as runners up in a highly academic environment in which they after being frustrated through repeated failure to enrol into the so called 'privileged' courses like law, medicine, pharmacy, engineering, etc often come into teaching as last resort. In other words, it is the rejected ones in other fields that come to education as the last option. The implication of the above on quality of teachers in Nigeria for the challenges of the new generation is that such teachers will not have the needed spirit of enquiry and creativity to make Nigeria a full member of the world knowledge-based economy. This ought not to be case if the country

is serious in meeting the challenges of the new generation. Allowing or compelling people to be prepared professionally as teachers without even the slightest interest in teaching in the country is one reason for the poor and abysmal performance of students and teachers and ultimately the education sector in the country since the teacher cannot give what he does not have. Accordingly such teachers cannot be highly motivated, conscientious and be efficient in the classroom to ensure quality education for all levels in the country in preparation for meeting the challenges of the new generation.

4:3:2 The Challenge of Further Encouragement of the Spirit of Enquiry and Creativity Among Nigerian Teachers

This goal of the NPE (FRN:2004:39) is again being hampered in the country's teacher preparation process as a way of meeting the challenges of the new generation due to lack of regular retraining of teachers to update knowledge and skills in their field. If the premise that the level of education in a country cannot rise above the quality of its teachers is anything to go by, then regular professional development of the teacher by way of retraining becomes imperative because the education of the teacher must be a continuing process. It is through this means that the teacher's spirit of enquiry and creativity will be enhanced so as to be relevant in the ever dynamic world knowledge-based economy. This is lacking in the Nigerian context in spite of the intention of the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria's Mandatory Continuing Professional Education (MCPE) Programme, which is yet to make its impact on the teaching profession in the country. It is hoped that through this programme, according to Paulley (2012:14-15), teachers will be kept on their toes regularly by searching for the latest information, skills and breakthroughs as managers of the educational sector.

What the teacher knows and does makes a difference, what he does not know and fail to do on the other hand can be irreparable loss to the learner. If teachers due to lack of regular retraining to update their knowledge which is dynamic, complex and shifting make mistakes in the upbringing of the learners as required by the dynamics of the society, the entire society and generations yet unborn may suffer the consequences for many years. This, therefore, gives credence to the assertion of Henry Adams that "a teacher affects eternity, (for) he can never tell where his influence stops" The teacher as a change agent must, therefore, be subjected to constant professional preparation and retraining so as to be abreast of current happenings around him in his area of specialization. As noted by Abraham & Oluwuo (2009:96)

it is even more persistence in the Nigerian State due to the introduction of a new programme of education- the Universal basic Education (UBE), which has some novel goals. These have put new demands on the teacher coupled with the issue of globalization as well as need for Computer literacy, Information Communication Technology (ICT)

among others. These might not be the things most teachers who were prepared professionally before this time were exposed to in their pre-service preparation in schools. The implication, therefore, of this is that regular retraining of the teachers is needed to enable them update their knowledge so as to become relevant agents in the actualization of the national education goals of the country in preparation for the challenges of the new generation.

4:3:3 The Challenge of Helping the Nigerian Teachers to Fit into the Social Life of the Community and Society at Large and to Enhance Their Commitment to National Goals/Objectives

The achievement of the above goal of the NPE (FRN:2004:39) is equally being hampered among the country's teachers due to the low social status/poor condition of service meted out to them in the country. It is one major challenge facing the teaching profession in Nigeria. This is manifested in poor remuneration and the way society is treating issues related to teachers in the country. Paulley (2007:172-173) putting this in perspective said teachers

in Nigeria are operating under lamentable working conditions, inadequate facilities, lack of job satisfaction, stressful classroom situations which often lead to burnout . And so a lot teachers believe that the society does not value their inputs and that they are not getting enough respect....Subjecting teachers to such odd and menial jobs as lining the streets with pupils and organizing cultural dances for visiting public officials, even against their consent which is degrading are also some other reasons why people are showing lack of interest for the teaching profession in the country.

Governments at various levels in the country also find it convenient to withhold teachers' merger salary. Ikoetuonye (2010:34-36) on his part while berating this pitiable social status of the Nigerian teacher in the country said

teachers are treated as under-dogs by society, including government, members of the community and even students themselves. They are looked down upon as individuals who could not make it in more prestigious and paying jobs. Teachers are not expected to enjoy the good things of life. They are condemned by society to living at subsistence level. He is a teacher; why should he want this or that? ... teachers are used as scape-goats for the country's socio-political and economic woes. The first indication that government is running out of funds is non payment of teachers' salaries. Government is ready to sink a lot of wealth into political adventures than payment of teachers' salaries".

Buseri, Paulley, Agih and Egumu (2013) opined that the estimated cost of the proposed National Dialogue of 2013 being conveyed by the government of President Goodluck Jonathan is far more than what the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in the country is asking for the full implementation of 2009 Agreement between the Union and the government in based on a joint Needs Assessment of the universities in the country carried out by both parties to revitalize the country's universities so as to enable them meet up with international standards. The non implementation of the agreement led to the 2013 strike action embarked upon by the Union in the country which lasted for more than five months thereby paralysing the country's entire university system in the year.

Discussing the implication of the above on the future of the Nigerian teaching force which at present is far below the number needed to meet the educational needs of the country now not to talk about the future, Ikeotuonye (op cit:35) said

the situation is so bad that almost every young adult thinks it is a curse for anybody to suggest to him or her to apply to study Education in the university. This is the fate we have carved for our teachers. What should we expect in return? The nation can only reap what it has sown. In our teachers we have sown inferiority complex, low self esteem, dissatisfaction, bitterness, hunger, nakedness and every other thing that is demeaning.

Ukeje (1988:27) on his part in discussing the competition to get the best of what the teachers have groomed into its fold as possible replacement of the teachers who are currently in the business of teaching said "it is an irony in the country as it is in many countries of the world that education, (that is the faculty of education as the engine room saddled with the responsibility of grooming professional teachers), is usually at a disadvantaged position in the competition to win back enough of its own best products".

Teaching should not be the hope for the hopeless- a job to be considered when everything else has failed. If Nigeria is serious about taking her rightful place in the new generation, then teachers and their professional preparation must be given their proper place in the scheme of things. This way, high fliers will be attracted to the profession in order to improve their quality and productivity in preparation for the challenges of the new generation. For it will be national disaster for the poorest brains to educate the country's youth due to the way teachers are treated in the country. The result would be unimaginable and unpatriotic work force. One thing we should forget as noted above by the NPE (FRN:2004:39) is that no nation can rise above quality (condition) of its teaching force. All countries in the world that have made serious impact at the global level placed a high premium on issues bothering the teacher. This was the path followed by the USA, Britain, Singapore, Thailand, France, Russia among others.

Due to the above challenge the achievement of the **goal of producing highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of the country's education system** as noted above as one of the Nigeria's NPE goals of teacher preparation is fast becoming a tall dream in the country that will not see light of the day. Again as follow up of the above is the fact most teachers in the country are not committed to the profession. Accordingly, the achievement of the goal of **enhancement of teachers' commitment to the teaching profession** is equally being threatened in the country thereby presenting the country's teaching force as not being ready for the challenges of the new generation as other countries that have put in genuine efforts in making their teachers to be committed to the teaching profession.

4:3:4 The Challenge of Providing the Nigerian Teachers with Intellectual and Professional Background Adequate for their Assignment and Making them Adaptable to any Changing Situation not only in the Life of their Country, but in the Wider World

The achievement of this goal of the NPE (FRN:2004:39) is faced with serious challenge in the Nigerian teacher preparation process as a result of the fact that the new generation is a generation that belongs to the ICT revolution which is yet to kick off fully in the country. This is because the days of chalk and duster is fast becoming extinct as the keyboard and the mouse are gradually replacing paper and the biro in lecture rooms. While this is the trend in most advanced countries, this revolution is yet to be integrated into the country's lecture rooms due to the fact that the knowledge ICT and computer literacy among majority of the teachers in the country is at best at the elementary level not minding the conscious efforts of some stakeholders in the education industry even in this era of globalization.

To make matters worse, most teachers do not go for refresher courses to update their knowledge to accommodate new things in their areas once they are certified as teachers due to the poor salary structure. Accordingly most teachers in the country's educational system even in 2013 are computer illiterates. The implication of this is that most teachers find it difficult to integrate computer based literacy/ICT in their teaching as they are not competent, lack the experience and ability to implement such skills, the reason being that the teacher cannot give what he/she does not have.

Effective use of modern ICT has a huge potential to improve the teaching and learning situation as well as reducing stress in the management of education in modern society. Accordingly, the effective use of modern ICT in educational delivery will significantly contribute to launching the country into the desired e-society. The challenge, however, is that since the teacher cannot give what he does not have, the effective implementation of this becomes an uphill task as the teacher himself too is not equipped with the relevant knowledge.

Having discussed some of the challenges facing the Nigerian teaching profession in preparation for the needs of the new generation using the NPE goals on teacher preparation as our point of reference, what should be the way forward so that credible people will be attracted to teaching in addition to retaining those who are in the profession right now?

V. Conclusion and Suggestions

Teachers are builders of tomorrow, and poor teachers made possible by poor teacher preparation will definitely build a poor tomorrow. The alleged falling standards in the country's education system, indiscipline, immorality, cheating and dishonesty at examinations and so on in our schools at all levels is blamed on poor teachers. One of the way out of these maladies is to stop teaching from being the hope of the hopeless – a job to be considered when everything else has failed. The Nigerian school system is in dire need of excellent teachers to inspire our youth and to instil confidence in the teachers in our country. The needed crop of excellent teachers can only be produced through effective teacher preparation process.

To make the Nigerian teacher relevant for the challenges of the new generation, it is suggested that the government should have the political will to implement the policy frameworks of the National Policy on Education as it relates to teacher preparation. Through this means the Nigerian teacher will be fully set to face the challenges of the new generation as tools of development. In other words, the slogan for the Nigerian government and other stakeholders in the repositioning the education industry for meeting the needs of the new generation should be seek ye first the faithful implementation of all the provisions of the National Policy on Education as they relate to the teacher and all other things needed to reposition the country's education for the challenges of the new generation as a member of the global community will be added unto Nigeria.

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