



## **Teacher Education In A Pandemic Landscape**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to investigate teacher education in a pandemic landscape. As in many countries worldwide, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic lockdown higher institutions in Nigeria closed in March, 2020 and only began reopening in October of the same year. As a result of the lockdown, some higher institutions had to quickly move from the traditional face-to-face teaching method to virtual learning. The finding of this research work shows that this work is to make children/pupils/students the centre of teaching and learning and demonstrate unconditional love and care for children, to have a good understanding of children from the perspective of their social, cultural and political contexts, demonstrate understanding of teaching and learning process and have capacity to create a conducive learning environment and to consider learning as a continuous process.

**Keywords:** Teacher education, pandemic, landscape, COVID-19, lockdown.

### **INTRODUCTION**

There is no nation that can boast of development without education. The fact remains that the quality of education in any nation depends on the quality of its teaching force. Teaching as a profession calls for proper training, acquisition of skills, formation of attitudes and behaviour about learner and subject matter. The teacher therefore, is the most important element and an inevitable driver in the process of teaching and learning. It is therefore, essential for policy makers and government to invest significantly in the preparation of teachers in order to secure education for all. Teacher education therefore should be considered as a *sin-qua non* for quality and relevance in education at all levels. No education system can rise above the quality of teachers, there is a need for the preparation of adequate and qualified teachers for the success of the education system now and in the post Covid-19 period.

As in many countries worldwide, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic lockdown higher institutions in Nigeria closed in March, 2020 and only began reopening in October of the same year. As a result of the lockdown, some higher institutions had to quickly move from the traditional face-to-face teaching method to virtual learning.

### **Teacher Education**

Teacher education has been defined by various authors. The Wikipedia defines teacher education or teacher training as the policies and procedures and provisions designed to equip teacher with knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school and larger community. Goods Dictionary of Education defines teacher education as all the formal and non formal activities and experience that help to qualify a person to assure responsibilities of a member of educational profession or to discharge his responsibilities more effectively. Teacher education

therefore encompasses all programme that is related to teacher proficiency competence, efficacy, belief, satisfaction, self concept and emotional intelligence that would enable and empower the teacher to meet the requirement of the profession in the face of challenges and adversity therein. According to Adesina (1985) teacher education is a conscious and deliberate effort geared towards the acquisition of techniques of teaching the prospective teachers and to improve the efficiency of those already in teaching profession.

Teacher education are indispensable component of education enterprise charged with the responsibility of manpower development. Teacher is the pivot on which every educational development programme hangs and this holds the key to nation's building. They are the most relevant tools for quality, functional and effective education. According to Isaac and Ekundayo (2012), to gain socio-political, economic and scientific development in a nation, qualified teachers who are well equipped with relevant skills, knowledge and attitude are fortified to discharge duties professionally.

Teacher education can therefore be described as the education that equips prospective teachers with requisite skills, knowledge, values, and behaviours necessary to effectively perform expected tasks in the classroom, school, and the immediate community (Mondal, Saha and Baidya, 2015).

These definitions of Teacher Education has the following components:

- Teacher skills,
- Pedagogical theory
- Professional skills
- Teaching skills

These skills according to Adeyemo (2021) would facilitate and guarantee wholistic development of teachers.

### **Features of Teacher Education**

The encyclopedia of teaching and teacher education identified the following as features of teacher education.

- Teacher education is a continuous process.
- It caters for pre-service, induction and in service teachers.
- Teacher education is based on the theoretical assumption that "teachers are made and not born".
- Teacher education is a very broad area and as such, extends beyond the boundary of the classroom and school, but also encompasses such activities as adult education and non-formal education, literacy and development activities of the larger society.
- Teacher education is ever evolving and dynamic. This requires that teacher has to be in tune with the development in their discipline as well as recent development and trends in the society.
- Teacher education and curriculum development, implementation as well as its relevance are inseparable.
- Teacher education has distinct identity in terms of knowledge based and sensitivity to the need of field application, it does not shy away from the theoretical and conceptual blending available in several other congruent discipline.

### **Purpose of Teacher Education**

If the onerous challenge of preparing teacher for effective discharge of their professional duties not only to their students but also to the larger society, the purpose of teacher education includes:

- To make children/pupils/students the centre of teaching and learning and demonstrate unconditional love and care for children
- To have a good understanding of children from the perspective of their social, cultural and political contexts.
- Demonstrate understanding of teaching and learning process and have capacity to create a conducive learning environment.
- Consider learning as a continuous process
- View learning as a search for meaning out of personal experience.

- Show understanding of the learning process and demonstrate the capacity to create a conducive learning environment.
- Consider learning as a continuous process
- View learning as a search for meaning out of personal experience.
- Accept the fact that knowledge does not reside in the pages of textbook, but rather as constructed in the shared context of teaching and learning and personal experience.
- Be open to new ideas and committed to perpetual learning.
- Show understanding and mastery of curricular knowledge and basic proficiency in language.
- Admit the fact that he has responsibility towards society and work to build a better world.
- To be able to analyse the curricular framework and its likely policy implications.

### **The General Objectives of Teacher Education**

The general objectives as stated in the National Policy on Education NPE (2014) include:

- (i) To produce highly motivated conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our education
- (ii) To encourage the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teacher
- (iii) To help teachers fit into the social life of the community and the society at large and to enhance their commitment to national goals.
- (iv) To provide teachers with intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to changing situation not only in the life of their country but also in the wider world.
- (v) To enhance teacher commitment to the teaching profession.

These objectives calls for continuous training and retraining of teachers to adapt to any situation in education including Covid-19 Pandemic situation which the country at present is experiencing.

### **Teacher Education in Pandemic Period**

The emergent of Covid-19 pandemic was hitherto unknown to humanity until it started in Wuhan, China 2019. The ravaging outbreak is still a mirage to the entire world. The devastating outcome has sent millions of people to the great beyond. All aspects of human life felt the effect of this pandemic and it is spreading with unpalatable consequences to human race. In order to curtail the spread of this pandemic, schools were closed, even now, it is extremely difficult for schools and teachers to meet in schools. The alternative to this is online teaching. The Covid-19 pandemic has provided us with an opportunity to pave the way for introducing digital learning. The digital learning, which is sudden and strange has a lot of challenges. These includes:

- Weakness of online teaching infrastructure
- Limited exposure of teachers to online teaching
- Insufficient information
- Non conducive environment for learning at home
- Equity and academic excellence in terms of higher education (Pokhirel & Chetri, 2021)
- Poor level of digital technology
- Ill equipped classroom
- High cost of data procurement by teachers and students
- Ill preparation of teachers
- Inadequate power supply etc.

In spite of these endless challenges, online teaching has come to stay as the best alternatives to teaching and learning.

### **Needs of Teacher in Covid-19 Era**

Since teachers are inevitable in the process of teaching and learning and more importantly in this Covid-19 period, teachers need to update themselves in the following area.

- (1) Exposure to the principles and methodologies of distance learning.

- (2) Collaboration with other stakeholders in education sector through scientific literacy.
- (3) Strengthen educational technology in colleges of education and universities.
- (4) Free and open technologies for teachers and students in higher institutions
- (5) Exposure of teachers to socio emotional learning skills to help students during emergencies.
- (6) Provision of stable power supply.
- (7) Availability of cheap and affordable internet.

## CONCLUSION

Covid-19 has dealt decisively with human race and global education system with its concomitant effect on teacher education. In spite of this trauma, it has exposed a vista of hope and new opportunities to teacher education and educational system not only in Nigeria but the world at large. The aftermath of this pandemic has changed the system of teaching from face to face physical to on-line teaching system. This is achievable through the use of electronic devices such as cell phones, computers, laptop etc. though with some challenges but it has now changed teachers' orientation to become electronically compliant. This can be conveniently achieved if stakeholders rise to meet the dire needs of achieving teacher education through well equipped on-line technologies.

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