

The Nigerian Secondary School Graduate and National Development: A Case of Re-Education of Teachers

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Abstract

The objectives of Secondary Education were evaluated vis-à-vis National progress. Inadequacies in the process of rearing these Secondary School graduates for the realization of national development were critically examined. Expectations of teachers regarding teaching and learning were highlighted and the justification for the re-education of teachers as role models was suggested. Efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness of teachers were noted as desirable hallmarks of teachers. Therefore, teacher traits, attitudes, beliefs and actions must be upright. If teachers shall be reference points of their students in the 21st century and beyond.

Keywords: Secondary school, Graduate, National development, Re-education

1. Introduction

Prior to Independence on 1st October 1960 and shortly till 1970, Nigeria, secondary school products were held with high esteem because of the genuineness of their training in school and the capability they demonstrated in places of work after graduating. Could this observation must have resulted from limited opportunities, small number of students, parents concern, judicious use of score resources and capable and well trained teachers?

Graduates of these schools served in the administrative, commercial and educational sectors. They got involved in editorial jobs in media places and made sincere contributions towards the political, social and economic development of Nigeria. They specifically played significant roles towards political emancipation and got involved in teaching in spite of the fact that trained teachers were not enough.

The belief that educational standard in those days were very high and probably higher than what obtains nowadays in schools is controversial. Whether the standard was high or higher than the standard of nowadays, the praises or blemishes were majorly traceable to teachers. This is because, teachers were the role models and students were at their impressionistic stage. The role of teachers in this stance on could not be exaggerated. Instances exist when students confess that they develop interest in medicine, law, engineering, teaching etc. because of the teacher(s) that taught the fundamental courses leading to such profession. On the other hands many students trace their academic laxities to the inadequacies of the teacher(s) that taught them. In a nutshell, students tend to imitate their teachers in movement, talks, behavior, or attitude towards some things or beliefs. Some students equally imitate the behavior of some teachers (idiosyncrasy, bad mannerism, smoking etc) in school. Consequently, good or bad attitudes of college graduates can be traced to behaviors they inherited from their teachers. What then is worthwhile that can bring the good attitude upon which progress and development depend is the essence of this writing. Thus, the re-education of teachers in schools is of paramount importance. As no nation would rise above the standard of her education, teachers have onerous task of modifying their pupils' behavior in present day Nigeria.

2. Historical Development Of Secondary School Education In Nigeria

The demand for post-primary education started with a Nigerian clergyman, Rev. T.B. Macaulay, the founder of the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) Grammar School Lagos, in 1859. Other post-primary schools founded in the Southern Nigeria between 1859 and 1914 were based on the Lagos Grammar School pattern except Hope Waddell Institute, founded in Calabar by the Church of Scotland Mission in 1895. This was a singular departure as it added practical courses such as printing, carpentry and mechanics to its literary curriculum. Fafunwa (1974) wrote that most of the early secondary schools were boarding schools, for both the missions and the government felt that if children were to develop along civilized lines, their daily life must be supervised, controlled and directed along 'proper lines'. It was hypothesized that if a 'room' of an African is to be made into a civilized 'room' westernized black European", he must be isolated from the evil influences of his ancestral past.

The aim of secondary education in Nigeria according to Fafunwa (1974) should be to develop the following abilities in the Nigerian youth and for that matter in every African youth. To think effectively; communicate thought clearly, make relevant judgments; play his part as a useful member of his home and family and to understand basic facts about health and sanitation. The aim also includes understanding and appreciating his role as a citizen of a sovereign country; understand and appreciate his cultural heritage; develop economic efficiency both as a consumer and as a producer of goods and to acquire some vocational skills. The type of education is supposed to make students recognize the dignity of labour; develop ethnical character understand the world outside his environment develop a scientific attitude and to live and act as a well-integrated individual.

In specific term, secondary education shall:

- Provide all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of sex, social status, religious or ethnic background
- Offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles.
- Provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades.
- Develop and provide Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of world cultural heritage.
- Inspire its students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence.
- Foster National unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in diversity.
- Raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of other, respect the dignity of labour, appreciate those values specified under our broad national goals and live as good citizens.
- Provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development.

3. Qualitative Assessment Of Secondary School Product In Nigeria

In assessing the veracity of the aforementioned aims of secondary schools, Okebukola (2003) observed that results of final examinations, skills graduates display when employed and their general behavior reveal the inefficiencies of the education system. On examination results, a recently concluded survey showed that many of Nigerian students in secondary schools lack the basic literary, numeric and life skills. The results of public and school examinations continue to show declining capability of secondary school students. Report from West African Examination Council, the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board and other examination bodies show a yearly lowering of performance in many key subjects. Okebukola (2003) wrote that at the higher education level, the story is not too different.

These days, some overseas institutions demand that Nigerian universities graduates take qualifying examinations before being considered for admission into higher degree programs. The hurdle was not there in the past when academic performance of students was higher. In work places, indiscipline is high among the workers.

The fact is that those workers were one time or the other graduates of Nigerian schools. Acts of indiscipline include lack of patriotism, favoritism, nepotism, witch-hunting, embezzlement of funds, laziness, eye-service, unfaithfulness, high degree of corruption and injustice among leaders percolates the system to the base of the system. The laxities of the present day Nigerian workers do not emerge in a day; it is a reflection of the accumulation of poor orientations from the school and probably pre-school days.

In the society, there are problems of insecurity of life and properties, drug abuse, forced labour, prostitution, drunkenness, abortion, election malpractices, fraud in public and private sectors, political upheavals and generally, a bartered economy.

All these are traceable to the poor orientations of young school leavers- the consequence of poor implementation of school curriculum programs.

4. Causes Of Problems To Secondary School Product

Origin of problems of secondary school graduates can be traced to vary sources of some these problems caused by the school and its functionaries are attributable to teachers, school authorities and the school environment. The school environment is a reflection of the totality of Nigerian society. The behaviors of Nigerians themselves are not worthwhile enough for children to emulate. Yet school children will imitate their brothers, sisters, parents and leaders. The question then is how many of these category of people are worthy of emulation? Nowadays some people profess to be “Christian’s brothers” by mouth but they are Devil incarnate by attitude; while some Muslim brotherhood are expressive only in dress whereas they are agents of destructions in behavior and in deeds.

Similarly, school authorities in most cases; do not provide adequate materials for effective teaching thereby bringing in laxities among the school products. Fagbula (2010) wrote this about education of the past in the Western Region of Nigeria:

In the past that is from 1955 in the Western Region of Nigeria every school aged card over – aged) children went to school to learn without paying school fees. Parents registered their children willingly and learners were practiced their trade professionally. Teachers were knowledgeable committed and willing to educate their pupils and students. They dedicated their time and expertise to teaching and learning. School environment and infrastructure were new, clean, attractive and learner – friendly. Teaching / Learning materials were available and provided in adequate quantity. Teachers took pride in their own ability to improvise quantity teaching aid children learned and write and do arithmetic. They were also able to fit into the world of work (p.89) nowadays, things have changed.

At the secondary school level, Sofolahan (1992) reported the following among others:

- Inadequate provisions of facilities such as laboratories, workshops and special subject rooms for

practical orientated subjects e.g. Business Studies and Home Economics.

- Inadequate provision of consumable items or funds to purchase items for practical work e.g wood, sheet metal, chemicals, glass ware, food stuff, clothing materials.
- Inadequate number of qualified teachers for the following areas
 - Technical, pre-vocational and vocational subjects
 - Mathematics, Science
 - Nigerian languages
 - Guidance and Counseling
- Poor library facilities in almost all the states of the federation.

The effect of the above is the production of “half backed” products who would not be able to perform well in their future endeavors. The cumulative effect of all these aforementioned deficiencies is the examination malpractices that are extinguishing the fire of learning in various institutions.

5. The Expectations Of Teachers Towards Effective Production Of Secondary School Graduates:

The effective performance of teachers in the school depends on many factors. These factors include the intellectual capability of teachers themselves, the condition of service, the material or learning resources available for teachers’ use, the tune of authority in the school and the readiness of learners for academic works. Adaralegbe (1992) opined that for the professional education of teachers’ required for the effective implementation of Education — for—All, the teachers must - have up - to - date knowledge of the intellectual tools required to participate in the basic task of educating the learners.

Imbibe the appropriate pedagogical concepts, knowledge and skills necessary to arrange the optional conditions for helping learners to learn effectively and to be able to relate their newly acquired knowledge to their specific and societal needs and imperatives for self-actualization as well as for personal and societal development and progress.

Kajubi (1992) added that teachers must possess an appropriate philosophy of life so as to cultivate positive attitudes and values to enable them to (a) continue learning (b) use appropriate educational technology effectively; and (c) to be able to apply results of research to their teaching.

While it is evident that most students initiate their teachers, it is imperative that teachers need to maintain discipline and uprightness in all their activities in their school.

The qualities expected of a good teacher must therefore be the watch-word for any practicing teacher. The qualities according to Adeyemo (1975): The teacher should be sincere, genuine, and free from all hypocrisy. Cooperative and avoiding all, misunderstandings.

Sportsmanlike and willing to take defeats as well as victories. He deals with fair judgment and he is not partial. P 178.

The teacher training institutions equally have some important roles to play in the production of good teachers for the teachers develop their attitude and beliefs towards work right from the time of training. To this end, care must be taken in teacher training institution so as not to produce the type of teachers they would at the end of their course pollute the minds of the young ones they would teach in secondary schools. A teacher is supposed to be clean in thought, words deeds and in the body. He should be honest and careful in all dealings and obligations He should be persistent, courageous and persevering in face of discouragements and difficulties. A teacher must develop good sense of

Judgment and fair play in all his doings. All the above and more of the qualities of a good teacher should equally be upheld in our teacher training institutions. When there is laxity in any of the expected qualities, the evil effect on the teacher and their subsequent students is evident. Example of this include, a teacher in training trained in an environment where victimizations is prevalent, taken, such teachers continue victimizing his future students.

A frustrated teacher is nothing other than an enemy of the society because his acts and deeds would likely pollute the youth and consequently spell doom on many in the society. The implication of such attitude on the society is better imagined than experienced.

6. Justification For Re-Education Of Teachers

Teachers need to be re-educated as most teachers are ill-equipped intellectually, socially and morally to teach either in teachers training colleges or in secondary school.

Therefore, all teachers must undergo teacher training courses. Such teacher training programme will not exclude those who teach without teaching qualification in the universities and polytechnics in this country. Their attitude, orientation and treatment of students must be geared towards maintaining good relationship with students. The outcome of such good relationship would facilitate effective learning, research, thinking and progress as against, fear, anxiety, lack of effective assimilation and failure.

The teachers in training institutions equally need a re-orientation. This is because, the policies that teachers of teachers make, their attitudes to teachers in training, the teacher-teacher relationship in such teacher training

schools would have some effect on both their colleagues and the teachers they are training. If teachers of teachers would achieve the goals of producing good teachers, the teachers in training institutions would be reasonable and shun hypocrisy emanating from bitter politics in their relationship with colleagues and the teachers-to-be. The re-education exercise would have to take care of moral decadence among teachers and curriculum planners. Training institutions should squarely face the challenges posed by problems of immorality, as these constitute the bedrock of the social ills. Teachers' in training should watch their dutiful, morally upright and conscientious teachers and imitate them. Negative and unethical behaviors should be shunned as these may jeopardize academic effectiveness. Also, the introduction of computer device, other innovative teaching techniques and innovations practices in different fields of education make it necessary for teachers to be re-educated — Okebukola (2003) Onyejemezi (2003) Abani (2003) Adesina (2003) Nneji (2003) support the re-training of teachers on the ground for effective performance.

7. Conclusion

This paper took a cursory look at the aims of secondary school education and the assessment of the school products. It considered the causes of some problems that secondary school student's face and the expectations of teachers in removing such problems. The paper also, included the reasons for the re-education of teachers. It is therefore important that teachers should take their responsibilities more serious and get acquainted with the new developments in their fields of specification. It is equally important to be God fearing and to shun policies that could bring retrogression to both the teachers and the learners as unwholesome acts may withhold down the morals of the students.

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