REPORT ON TEACHING PROFESSION & FACTORS INHIBITING TEACHING PROFESSION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Issues on teaching profession have come to the fore in recent times. To discuss the status of teaching, this paper delineates a functional meaning and functions of education, the meaning of profession and the promises and limitations of teaching as a career. This paper goes further to inquires into some ways in which policy and discourses are progressively impoverishing the professionalism of teachers and teaching in Nigeria Then we proceed to deliberate on how teaching may be transformed into a strong and powerful profession.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Occupational status depends on the 'public valuing' of the competence, role and overall contribution of a particular occupation to individual and societal welfare. Regardless of development status, the teaching force in most countries has never enjoyed full professional status. However, the status of teachers as a developing-profession is more evident in developing countries like Nigeria.

The chief distinguishing characteristic of the profession is the application of an intellectual technique to the ordinary business of life, acquired as the result of prolonged and specialized training. There are many definitions, but one can be definite about certain clear characteristics that a profession must possess. Professional service and responsibility is individual and personal. It calls for the application and exercise of a body of knowledge of a speech used character, intellectual rather than manual. That body of knowledge, constantly being refreshed and replenished, must be capable of being learned and taught and must, therefore, and be normally the subject of organised system of study and practice.

1.2 Definition of Key Terms

Teaching has been defined by Wells, G. (1982)¹ as cluster of activities that are noted about teachers such as explaining, deducing, questioning, motivating, taking attendance, keeping record of works, students' progress and students' background information.

Farrell, J.P. and J.B. Oliveira (1993)² posits that teaching can be seen as the logical and strategic acts denoting interaction between the teacher and the students as they operate on some kind of subject matter. Teaching involves imparting verifiable facts and beliefs; it encourages students' participation and expression of their own views.

Education developed from the human struggle for survival and enlightenment. Gerald (1994) opined that Education encompasses both the teaching and learning of knowledge, proper conduct, and technical competency. Education has also being defined as the transfer of survivalist skills and advancement culture from one generation to another.

2.0 TEACHING PROFESSION

2.1 Is Teaching a Profession

Not every form of activity is work, even if it brings remuneration to the person engaged in it. It is work only when it produces something of value to others. The business of teachers is to help students to achieve higher standards of knowledge, ability, skills, and moral character. If teachers do their work well, then their work is of great value to others, not simply in a

particular time, but also in the future⁴.

Teachers are more than workers. They are also members of a profession. Their occupation renders definite and essential services to society. As a profession, however, teaching has had a long and difficult history. Its social and cultural functions have never been critically challenged, but nevertheless the public has not adequately supported teaching⁵. Compared with other learned professions - such as medicine, law, engineering, and architecture - teaching ranks rather low. Some teachers are dissatisfied with, and even depressed about their professional standing. They feel that the work load is too heavy, and the recognition and appreciation are too limited. They think that they do not have sufficient opportunities to advance in their careers and that they have no power to control the content and form of their work. They resent prohibition against their direct involvement in policy making in educational affairs. Time and again, they ask: is teaching a profession? More adequately, what is a profession?

Occupational status depends on the 'public valuing' of the competence, role and overall contribution of a particular occupation to individual and societal welfare⁶. Goodson (2003) noted that Occupations that have attained 'professional status' share the following characteristics:

• a high level of education and training based on a unique and specialized body of knowledge

• a strong ideal of public service with an enforced professional code of conduct and high

levels of respect from the public at large

• registration and regulation by the profession itself

• trusted to act in the clients' best interests within a framework of accountability

• a supportive working environment

• similar levels of compensation as other professions⁷.

Premised on the above position, one could note that a profession performs essential social

service. There is no doubt that teaching fully meets this criterion, for education is a social

service. The service which education performs is essential to the individual child who could

not be fully socialized in an industrial society if he did not spend lengthy period in full-time

formal education.

Closely related to this is the view the fact that a profession is founded upon a systematic

body of knowledge This means that a profession is not merely concerned with the exercise of

some skill, but a skill which has intellectual foundation. The intellectual foundation of

teaching, include body of knowledge and systematic delineation of body knowledge,

educational theory and pedagogy.

As noted above, a profession requires a lengthy period of academic and practical training.

Training and certification are essential parts of a profession. Period long training is needed to

develop specialists and technicians in any profession. There must be some specification of

the nature of the training through state regulations. Teaching certainly fulfils this criterion,

but the teacher's period of training is not as long as that required for doctors and lawyers.

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The code of ethics indicates how members of the profession should behave. Professionalization occurs when enforcement is possible and vigorous (Ankomah 2005)⁸. Nigerian teachers have an ethical code of conduct. There exist however, no licensed body to enforce the codes.

2.2 Rationale for Teaching Profession

By its very nature, teaching possesses two very appealing traits. First, it deals with the young, with those whose minds and characters are forming. It is a privilege to be entrusted with the task of facilitating the growth and development of the younger generation. The teacher shares the parents' responsibilities and joy of direct involvement in promoting the healthy and balanced mental and moral life of children. Indeed, teaching is pre-eminent among the callings in its opportunities for cultural and moral services. Second, teaching provides opportunities for intellectual development. It brings those who pursue it into intimate contact with books, experiments, and ideas. It stimulates the desire for increased knowledge and for wider intellectual contacts. Actually, no teacher can be really successful in performing his duties unless he is intellectually curious. Since literature, science, and the arts are taught in schools, the teacher's continued advancement in some or all of these fields is desirable. Thus, in teaching, intellectual development is not a sideline. It is something which fits directly into the demands of the work.

The material rewards that teaching brings are not the chief reasons for going into it. The remuneration of teaching is relatively modest but reasonably sure and steadily increasing.

3.0 TEACHING PROFESSION IN NIGERIA

3.1 Historical Development of Teaching Profession in Nigeria

The development of teaching as a profession in Nigeria should be considered from the standpoint of the first criteria of a profession, that is training and certification. The truth is that proficiency in every art - whether it be painting, music or teaching – involves training, but also needs more than training. Training cannot produce genius, but genius can come from training. Teaching has its techniques as much as any other art and the process of acquiring those techniques is training (Jeffrey, 1971). Training is part of the professional preparation of teachers for his job.

One of the major problems of the country's educational system as a whole is the dilution of the teaching profession by untrained men and women. Fafunwa (1974) reported that the first teacher – training college was established by the church missionary society (C.M.S.) in Abeokuta in1859, and was known as "the training institution". The school was moved to Lagos in 1869 when the European missionaries were expelled from Abeokuta. In 1896 it was moved to Oyo to become St. Andrew's college, Oyo. The Baptist mission also founded the Baptist training college at Ogbomosho in 1897. The Wesleyan Methodist missionary society opened an institution for the training of catechists and teachers in Ibadan in 1905 with four pupils. By 1918, the number had risen to twenty and the institution became known as Wesley College, Ibadan. In 1892, hope Waddell (training) institute was opened with a dual purpose: (i) to train young school leavers in various trades and (ii) to train teachers and preachers.

In the northern part of Nigeria, the training of teachers started with the establishment of the Nassarawa School by the government of that region in 1909. By 1948, the total number of teacher training colleges assisted by the government had risen to fifty-three with a student-teacher population of 3,026. In 1932, the Yaba higher college started a three-year course for

teachers. When the college was merged with university college, Ibadan, twenty-one of the transferred students were in education. The University of Ibadan, in order to train untrained graduate teachers, embarked on one-year course for graduates leading to a diploma in education in 1957-8 session. In 1961 it started a one-year associate-ship course for selected grade II teachers who would take over the headship of primary schools after the successful completion of their study. All the stated effort above is geared towards making teaching a profession. The report of the Ashby commission (set up in 1959) proposed a bold plan for university programmes in teacher-education.

3.2 Nigerian Union of Teachers' Code of Professional Ethics

In 1969, the Nigerian union of teachers (NUT) formulated professional code of ethics for Nigerian teaching profession. The main purpose of the ethics is to regulate the behaviour of teachers. Ethics is the study or the science o morals. It is the rules or principles of behaviour. It has to do with moral uprightness in dealing with others. When applied to a profession, it refers to moral principles or rules of conduct or social control mechanism that governs the actions of members of an occupation.

Ingvarson (1998) state the 'Ethical conduct deals with the standards of right and wrong in the relationships between the professional and his client. The professional code of ethics stipulates rules and regulations which are intended to guide and regulate the conduct of the members of the profession.

The teaching profession code of ethics consists of the rules of conduct. The code of ethics can be divided into five major principles or areas outlining the teachers' commitments to students, parents, community, employer and to the profession.

In the preamble to the code of ethics, NUT emphasised as follows:

We members of the Nigerian Union of Teachers believe that whoever is teaching as career assumes the obligation to conduct himself in accordance with the ideal of the profession. As a guide for the teaching profession, we members of the NUT have adopted this code of professional ethics and since all those engaged in education in Nigeria should be members of a united professional body, the basic rules of Conduct and regulation enumerated herein shall apply to all persons en-aged in the profession at the primary, secondary and college levels. The five major principles as enumerated by follows thus:

The first principle is the *commitment to the student*. The primary obligation of the teaching profession in Nigeria is to guide children, youths and adults in the pursuit of knowledge and skill to develop healthy attitudes and enable them live in harmony with all other Nigerians, and to become happy, useful and responsible citizens. The ultimate strength of the nation lies in the social responsibility, economic competence and moral strength of individuals.

The second principle is *the commitment to parents*. It goes thus: We members of the teaching profession share with parents the task of shaping each student's behaviour towards socially acceptable ends. We share with all other citizens' responsibility of the development of development of sound public policy. We are accountable for participating in development of sound educational programmes and policies and of interpreting them to the public.

Teaching is dependent upon the healthy relationship with the home and the community

The third principle is *commitment to the community*. Teaching profession in Nigeria occupies

a position of public trust involving not only the individual teacher's personal conduct, but

also the interaction of the school and community. Education is most effective when these

many relationships operate in a friendly cooperative and constructive manner.

The fourth principle is *commitment to the employer*. The members of the teaching profession

in Nigeria are inescapably 1nvolved in employer — employee relationship. For the purpose

of fulfilling our obligation to our students the Slate and our nation, employ — employee

relationship should be so regulated that there shall be mutual respect, understanding and

good faith.

The fifth principle is commitment to the profession. The teaching profession unique

occupation hd we believe that the quality of the services of the teaching profession in Nigeria

directly influences the future of the nation and its citizens. We the members of the teaching

profession in Nigeria must strive to give our best to the nation by making the teaching

profession attractive so as to encourage persons worthy of the trust to take up teaching as a

career. Aware of the value of united effort, we contribute actively to the support planning

and programmes of professional organization.

'Apart from the code of ethics formulated by the Nigerian Union of Teachers the Federal

Ministry of Education (1987) published a code of conduct and guidelines for the teaching

staff in the Nigeria teacher's' service manual.

3.3 Acts of professional misconduct

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Any act or behaviours by a professional that violates or goes contrary to the professional code of ethics is considered a professional misconduct. The teachers service manual (1987:8) noted that infringement of, any article of the code of conduct shall incur punishment by the school management board in the case of teachers. It went further to enumerate those behaviours regarded as misconduct.

- * Indecent dealing with a person who he knows to be a pupil/student of a school.
- * Conduct prejudicial to the maintenance al good order and discipline in an institution.
- * Conduct in respect of the staff or pupils of an institution, which is disgraceful or dishonourable.
- * Engaging in political activities which will affect the performance

Other areas of misconduct are:

- * Misappropriation of school funds including teachers' salaries, tuition and boarding fees, and monies that should accrue to the Government Treasury or the School;
- * Dishonest conduct in relation to examinations, for example, leakage of examinations papers and other forms of malpractice;
- * Suppression or falsification of school records or statistics;
- * Engaging in commercial activity of trade including hawking of wares during school hours.

3.4 Discipline of teachers

Depending on the nature and gravity of the professional misconduct, certain punishments can be administered on the offender either by the School Management Board in the case of

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Principal/Headmaster, and by the Principal/Headmaster in case of teachers. Such punishment

shall range from caution to dismissal depending on the seriousness of the offence. The

Nigeria Teachers' Manual recommends that in al cases, fair hearing shall be given to the

offender.

Punishments that can be administered by the Principal/Headmaster in a school can take the

form of oral caution; written caution recorded in the log-book; surcharge for absenteeism

from school or neglect of duty; or adverse annual report. Punishments that can be meted out

by the school management board include: written caution or warning; suspension;

termination of appointment and dismissal.

In some cases of criminal nature, the offender after being punished administratively can still

be sued to court. If after prosecution the offender is found guilty, he may be fined or jailed,

depending on the gravity of the offence.

Regardless of development status, the teaching force in most countries has never enjoyed full

professional status. However, the status of teachers as a developing profession is becoming

evident in Nigeria.

4.0 FACTORS MILITATING AGAINST TEACHING PROFESSION

There is no doubt that teaching profession meets the more widely accepted criteria of a

profession. It is however pertinent to note that there are subverting factors that restrains the

advancement of teaching profession.

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4.1 Education and Training

A key feature of the teaching force in most Nigeria is its heterogeneity, particularly with respect to educational attainment and professional training. Teachers range from those with post-graduate qualifications to secondary school leavers with minimal levels of pre-service training. In most private primary schools in Nigeria, teachers with certificate level pre-service training predominate. Consequently, as an occupational group, teachers do not have the equivalent level of education and training nor the cohesiveness as well established professions, such as medical doctors, engineers and lawyers, which have uniformly high academic entry qualifications.

4.2 Absolute and Relative Size

Teaching is a mass occupation, which also militates against 'professional' exclusivity. The teaching force accounts for one-half to two-thirds of public sector employment. However, public sector recruitment freezes in Nigeria have seriously constrained the remunerations of teachers.

4.3 Self-Regulation

The established professions enjoy a high degree of self-regulation and are successful in maintaining high barriers to entry in terms of qualification requirements and registration. Teachers, on the other, hand, tend to have weak, state-dominated professional organizations with factions.

4.4 Public Service Ethos and Professional Conduct

Teaching has become 'employment of the last resort' among university graduates and secondary school leavers in many countries. Consequently, teachers often lack a strong, long-term commitment to teaching as a vocation. On a comparative note, around one-half of

junior (Form 4) secondary school leavers in Malawi and Tanzania who finished school in 1990 were employed as teachers in 2001.

Thus, in the absence of alternative employment opportunities, becoming a school teacher is the main avenue for social and economic advancement for Nigerian graduates. This has important implications for the development of a critical mass of competent and experience teachers in education.

4.5 The Work Environment and Remuneration

Teachers rarely enjoy the same work environment as other professions. The size of the teaching force coupled with lower educational qualifications means that teachers are also paid considerably less than the mainstream professions.

4.6 The Social Class and Academic Background of Entrants to the Profession

The standing of a profession is to some extent affected by the social class background of its recruits; the higher the 'social strata from which recruits generally come, the higher the status of the profession. And, of course, the higher the status of a profession, the more it will attract recruits from the higher social strata (Hoyle, 1969).

Entry into teaching profession in Nigeria has been a source of worry to discernable observers. In the past, primary six leaving certificate arid Modern School Certificate holders were the requirements for entry into the teaching profession, and to teachers' colleges. Later, School Certificate holder constituted the bulk of teaching forces in primary school, in the early seventies. Currently, the majority of students who apply or enter the Colleges of Education and University's Faculty of Education are usually those with low grade, in the competitive JAMB Examination. Majority of them reluctantly pursue education as a last

resort. So at the end of their course, graduates from colleges of education and Faculty of Education opted out from teaching and looked for more lucrative jobs.

4.7 Balance between the Sexes in Teaching

Women constitute a high preponderance of the teaching force especially at the Primary school level. Although there has been improvement in the social status of women in our society in the last two decades, the preponderance of women in the teaching profession is likely to detract its status for men (Hoyle, 1969). The general status of the profession, compared with other professional occupations, which are usually dominated by males, is diminished through the preponderance of women. This may not necessarily be due to any notion of the interior abilities of women compared with men, although no doubt such ideas will prevail.

4.8 Commitment to the Profession

Another problem that is militating against teaching as a profession is how committed are the teachers to the profession. There is no doubt that membership of the major professions implies a life commitment to the task. In the case of teaching, no such a life commitment to the task of teaching is apparent as in other professions. There are a number of factors that contribute to this state of affairs. One of these factors is the general notion of teaching as a "second Choice" profession with many of the teachers only committing themselves to it at a late stage when they know that they cannot change their profession. Majority of the teachers at the initial stage of their teaching career did not expect to stay in teaching for more than a

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few years. They consider it as a stepping stone to other occupations. This invariably affects their commitment to the profession.

4.9 Salary

The salary level enjoyed by a professor is partly a measure of the esteem in which the profession is held in society. Although the economic status of the teacher has been steadily improving, teachers do not in general receive salaries comparable to those received within the major professions. As a result commitment to the growth of the profession is affected.

4.10 The Nature of the Final Award

The fact that there is no single unified academic award to be a member of teaching profession greatly affects it as a profession. The final academic award obtained by the majority of members of a profession can be regarded as a general indication of its intellectual standard e.g. Medicine and Law. In the teaching profession, a possession of grade II Teachers' Certificate, a national certificate in Education and a degree in education and a degree in education all qualified the possessor as a professional teacher. The bulk of the members of the teaching profession have the lower qualification. This affected the status of teaching as a profession in the eyes of the public.

4.11 The Professional culture in education

The members of a profession interact during their training, in their places f employment, within their professional associations and also informally. Through these interactions, a

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profession thus generates a distinctive culture embracing s fundamental values, the norms which govern the behaviour of members and its symbols — including its history, folklore, special vocabulary, in sigma, and stereotypes. This culture is thus the source of professional solidarity, self-esteem, and self-consciousness. The professional culture, thus serve as a source of unity. Lecturers in Teacher Education Units of various institutions hardly see their students as professional colleagues. The culture of the teaching profession has not been widely studied as to perform the enumerated functions above thus preventing common commitment to the teaching profession.

4.12 Pupil-Teacher Ratios

The weak correlation between school enrolments and the numbers of teachers employed in each school is the most obvious indicator of poor deployment. Variations in pupil-teacher ratios between schools are typically very large in most countries. For example, in the midlate 1990s, they ranged from 50 to 70 pupils to 1 teacher. Recently, however improvements are being made to balance pupil-teacher ratio to 30-40 pupils to 1 teacher.

4.13 The Teaching Career

The concept of 'career' implies both the notion of a commitment to a form of life-work or "calling" and the process whereby an individual progresses upwards through a hierarchy of professional roles. Upward mobility in the teaching profession often requires teacher to leave the classroom for an administrative role in the school or within the local authority, for College or University lecturing, for inspectorate, for a research post, or for any one of a number, of other possibility (Adegoke 1998)⁹. Unfortunately, the prospect for majority of the

teache	rs to	reach	this	peak	is ve	ery	limited	since	there	are	only	few	position	s at	a	time.
Majority thus retired without getting to the top.																
5.0	RE	COMN	MEN]	DATI	ONS	AN	ND CON	NCLU:	SION							
5.1	Rev	iew of	Reni	umera	tion											

It is widely noted that incentives for schools and teachers in the public education system to perform well are frequently weak due to ineffective incentives and sanctions. This is particularly the case when teachers cannot be effectively disciplined for unacceptable behaviour (absenteeism, lateness, poor teaching, and abusive behaviour towards pupils) by school managements because it is very difficult to dismiss them and pay and promotion are largely unrelated to actual performance.

Where worker's pay is very low, there is normally de facto recognition that the 'labour process' in schools has to be organised in such a way that enables teachers the autonomy to generate additional income. More generally, there is a widespread acceptance that 'you get what you pay for', which is not very much when pay does not meet minimum livelihood needs. Secondary employment activities are likely to both directly and indirectly lower the motivation of teachers in their main jobs. Thus this group will wish to recommend an upward review of teachers' remuneration package.

5.2 **Need for Commitment to the Profession**

If teachers do not enjoy their work and have doubts about their careers, they should reexamine their attitudes and intentions and, one hopes, they will renew their commitments to education. By so doing, they will convince themselves once again that teaching is not simply an ordinary job; it is the profession that they willingly choose to pursue. Teaching is how they establish their identity and manifest their values. But commitments bear no fruit until they are substantiated by action. Once they have affirmed their commitments, teachers must devote their time and energies to their professional activities. They should ask themselves, for instance, to what extent are they involved in the new course that has been introduced? In what way have they affected the shifts in subject matter, and the change in

methods of instruction that have occurred? Do they attend professional meetings and help formulate professional policies? What attempts have they made to give direction to educational and social change? All these questions suggest that the functions and responsibilities of teachers are not confined to the classroom.

Teachers should actively join in curricular development, instructional design, theoretical inquiry, and technical planning, as well as policy making. They should have certain organized ways in which they can participate in the formation of the controlling aims, methods, and materials of the school system of which they are a part. Therefore, teachers' organizations have a very important role to play in the advancement of the teaching profession.

Innovative pathways in recruitment and continual innovation in teacher preparation programmes are required.

- Teacher preparation programmes need to broaden their entry requirements to diversify the teaching corps and better represent diverse student populations.
- Teacher preparation programmes require innovative recruitment pathways that allow entry for non-traditional candidates.
- Teacher preparation programmes require continual innovation to respond to changing needs.

Teacher education is enhanced by comprehensive teacher induction that fosters lifelong learning.

- Induction is a vital part in the formation of teacher professionalism and identity.
- Induction is most effective when seen as a comprehensive system beyond just support and

assistance for beginning teachers.

- Effective professional development strategies seek the active involvement of teachers and are largely school-based, developmental in nature and ongoing.

New designs for teacher education will need to rest on strong partnerships with key stakeholders.

The best conditions for successful partnerships in teacher education occur when faculties of education maintain close ties with schools, thus deeply engaging other faculties in the university as well as strengthening community linkages in teacher preparation.

Increasing globalization and the emergence of the knowledge economy are calling into question traditional perspectives on the transformational capacity of education systems and the conceptions of teaching as a profession and the roles of teachers. How well Nigeria respond to these and other challenges will depend upon her capacity to provide expanded opportunities in the building of stronger competencies for the Nigerian child through high-quality schooling. In essence principles and strategies must be put in place to ensure productive and successful partnerships in teacher preparation. More importantly too, governments at various level have key roles in facilitating partnerships in teacher education.

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