

# TEACHER PREPARATION, QUALITY EDUCATION AND EMERGING ISSUES IN CURRICULUM IN AFRICA

**Anne Achieng Aseey PhD**

PhD., Senior Lecturer, Department of Research, Monitoring and Life Long Courses, ODeL Campus, University of Nairobi and Fellow, Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria, P. O. Box 30197-00100, Nairobi, Kenya

**Musa Idris Harbau PhD**

Senior Lecturer and Head of Department, Educational Foundations and Curriculum, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria

**Aaron Anap Vera**

PhD Candidate, Assistant Lecturer, Department of English, Innovation and Technology Managements, University of Jos, Nigeria, P. M.B 2084, Plateau State, Nigeria

\*Corresponding Author

## ABSTRACT

*Quality education should be the dream of any education provider globally. Teachers are the ones trusted to teach and prepare learners for future goals and aspirations hence the need to strengthen teacher preparation process. Every country needs to develop hence education is critical Education realization of for sustainable development goals. Teacher education policy and practice has not been able to conform to the education demands and requirements for the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in Africa. In some countries in Asia, Africa and other developing continents, achieving quality education has been hampered by the quality of teachers trained In Kenya and Nigeria, the status of the teaching profession has been compromised due to mirage of challenges like old and outdated curricular, fragmented education polices which does not reflect the societies needs and wants. Using a descriptive survey, the study was TO investigate the concept of teacher preparation, quality education and emerging Curriculum in Africa with specific reference to Kenya and Nigeria. Carried out in two cities that is Nairobi County, Kenya and Jos City, Nigeria, the study targeted teachers, teacher trainers and trainees, education managers and curriculum developers. The target population was 500 respondents from each of the two states. The study was carried out within a period of two years. The study was grounded on Change Theory or Change knowledge. The study realized that teacher preparation process in the two countries still faces a number of ups and downs which need to be addressed. The other major findings was that despite the two countries having an increase in population for the last 20 years and global changes taking place, the teacher education curriculum is yet to change much to accommodate the new breed*

*of learners entering the education sector at various levels. The recommendation was that, teacher training curriculum has to confirm with societal expectations.*

**Key words:** Africa, Changing education, emerging curriculum, developing countries, teacher preparation.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In Africa, there has been an exponential population growth which calls for more attention to be given to the education sector but this has not been the case. This has led to millions of school going children being out of school in Africa with majority being in Sub Saharan Africa. It is projected that by 2050, some countries in the world will realize double or more than triple population growth from their current population in 2018(BBC World Report August, 2017).To strengthen its education systems the African Union(AU) Commission in its 2063 Agenda developed an Africa comprehensive ten-year continental education strategy (CES).The strategy is driven by the desire to set up a qualitative system of education and training to provide the African continent with efficient human resources adapted to African core values and therefore capable of achieving the vision and ambitions of the African Union (CESA 16-2 2016 – 2025).

Nigeria and Kenya has had their education system running for over 20 years without review and the teacher education programme is a major casualty of the new education changes taking place. The ration of pupils to teacher in Nigeria is about 32.32 (Nigeria teacher pupil ratio) while for Kenya, the current teacher to pupil ration is 56.1 which is far above the recommended ration according to the teachers service commission records. (TSC: high teacher –pupil ration cause for concern).In a way to improve quality education Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action (2015) stated that the framework will ensure that teachers and educators are empowered, adequately recruited, well trained, professionally qualified, motivated and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems. This is because Quality education fosters creativity and knowledge, and ensures the acquisition of the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy as well as analytical problem-solving and other high-level cognitive, interpersonal and social skills

In Kenya, the Sessional Paper No.2 of 2015 on Reforming Education and Training takes into cognizance the importance of teacher preparation as a strategy for realizing the national development goals, relevant and quality education and training is required to meet the human needs of a rapidly changing and more diverse economy (KICD Pre Service teacher education framework 2018). The African Union, supported the new vision for development of the continent - Agenda 2063 and which will ‘create’ a new African citizen that can be an effective change agent of this drive (CESA 16-25). This strategy is the African response to own the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and adopt them to the specific needs of the continent and at various stages in the education system. Since then, CESA has set a goal of “Reorienting Africa’s education and training systems to meet the knowledge, competencies, skills, innovation and creativity required to nurture African core values and promote sustainable development at the national, sub-regional and continental levels”(CESA 16-25)

## 2. GLOBALIZATION AND TEACHER EDUCATION REFORMS

Globalization and reforms in education is being practiced in many countries to ensure relevancy to the global changes. These policies and reforms come in different ways and per different countries. Some of the reforms may not be tailored to teacher training but they at times touch on professionalism which is the major aspect of teacher education. Issues of

professional development, some systems require teachers to have completed a certain amount of professional development in addition to passing an appraisal, in order to be eligible for promotion (Crehan (2016). Education is diverse and every country needs to get a good idea on what its education needs are especially with the changing needs of the society. Kenya and Nigeria as well have different needs and also have different challenges which its education system needs to address. At the heart of all this there is the issues of technology, changing economy, need for new skills, future teachers and learners. All these need to be addressed using different approaches hence the need to understanding and develop new curriculum which is relevant to the current society. Teacher's position in education is critical and the better and more professional they are trained the more quality they add to the education system.

Several policies have been formulated in relation to teacher education. Quality Assurance for teachers for instance is a global phenomenon. Tattoo (2015; Pullin (2017) noted that, a more promising approach is to develop the capacity to generate valid and usable data on and for teacher education programmes from within the enterprise without distracting a those programmes from their core mission. In Australia for instance, Professional standards for teaching are impacting Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes, as universities respond to requirements imposed in response to the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) recommendations (TEMAG 2014) and graduating teachers are asked to demonstrate their competency in relation to standards(McGraw et.al.(2017). In Nigeria, a study by Maina (2016) noted that, a good system of education is a function of availability of quality teachers in the systems who then lead to identification of problems in system as it operates.

The education system and structures have relied on many sources

Incheon 2030- Korea (2015) initiative sets out a new vision for education for over 160 countries for the next fifteen years. Its commitment is to ensure quality education and to improving learning outcomes, which requires strengthening inputs, processes and evaluation of outcomes and mechanisms to measure progress. Various researchers have argued that the challenge of education in Africa is to have enough teachers in education at various levels to take care of all learners effectively. The Constitution of Kenya, 2010 has the Bill of Rights and education is one of the major rights under economic and social right(Constitution of Kenya,2010)and Kenya Vision 2030 , acknowledges the need to reform education and training to create a sector fit for purpose. The Vision is also very candid on teacher training as it notes that, more teachers will be recruited to improve the teacher student ration to conform with the national standards of 1:40 and on raining there will be gradual phasing out of Primary1 (P1) teachers to pave way for more diploma-level teachers at primary level in public schools (Kenya Vision 2030). This will ensure that highly qualified teachers are who can use modern technology and other emerging technologies at schools.

In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education is anchored on Nigeria's philosophy on education as envisioned through the nation's objectives. Nigeria has five main national objectives as provided by the Second National Development Plan and accepted as the necessary foundation for the National Policy on Education and other relevant documents are like, the Nigeria Country Programme Document 2014-2017, in line with other regional and international underpinnings form the basis for this study.

In this study, we looked at the various stages in teacher education and how they prepare teachers for emerging curriculum implementation. We also analyzed the various challenges teacher education faces in those particular countries and the strategies for improving teacher education to align them to education needs for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### 3. TEACHER EDUCATION PREPARATION AND ITS CHALLENGES

According to Sonia and Karolina (2017), teaching profession has been on the policy agenda of most OECD countries and partner economies. Researchers in Africa have also indicated with a lot of concern challenges to teacher preparation which if not addressed, achieving teacher preparation goals especially in countries like Nigeria and Kenya which are the major focus of this study may not be possible. Researchers continue to do more work on teacher education in Africa by looking at its various components like policy guidelines, funding, planning and many others. The Federal Government of Nigeria seems to appreciate the following about teacher education;

“Teacher education will continue to be given a major emphasis in all educational planning because no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers” (FGN, 2004: 39)’ Uchenna (undated).

In Uganda, Opolot (2006), the government recognized that education was a vehicle for national development and set up a commission that found that there was a need for a systematic identification of the needs of teachers so that the welfare practices programmes could be organized systematically. The Jomtien education for all report led to rapid education expansion in primary schools places across the developing world. It noted that;

‘Learning does not take place in isolation. Societies, therefore, must ensure that all learners receive the nutrition, health care, and general physical and emotional support they need in order to participate actively in and benefit from their education. Knowledge and skills that will enhance the learning environment of children should be integrated into community learning programmes for adults. The education of children and their parents or other caretakers is mutually supportive and this interaction should be used to create, for all, a learning environment of vibrancy and warmth’ (World Declaration on Education for All, Jomtien, Thailand (1990).

However, the expansion has not been accompanied by an equal rapid increase in the number of qualified teachers joining teaching force (Crehan, 2016; Maina 2016). Schools are supposed to develop skills and capabilities while encouraging kids to “think differently” and maximize their abilities. Sadly, most schools are failing to do so today due to various factors within the society. Curriculum and teacher preparation are some of the major barriers to quality education in developing countries which need to be addressed.

In Kenya, the Teacher’s Service Commission (TSC, 2012) Report indicated that many teachers have left teaching in government schools for better paying jobs in the privately managed schools or other sectors of the economy. Replacement of teachers also takes long after the retirement hence the burnout of teachers as noted by Crehan (2016). In Nigeria, the Federal states have a greater control in education, which includes policies that handle issues like staff promotions and other personnel issues. According to Maina (2016), the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2013 noted that no nation can achieve economic, social and technological progress and self-sufficiency without a good system of education. The Nigeria national government has a coordinated this role (Musaaazi, 2002). Education scholars have always note that teacher education is important to any developing economy. The teachers should be trained in all ways possible whether it is through in service, e-learning or distance learning among other modes to reduce teacher shortage in most countries in the developing world.

Education 2030 Incheon- Korea (2015) resolved to develop comprehensive national monitoring and evaluation systems in order to generate sound evidence for policy formulation and the management of education systems as well as to ensure accountability. Teacher education policies need to be dynamic considering that learners are quite different at any

given period of 10 years. The Nigerian National Teacher Education Policy (NTEP) which is the outcome of the collaborative efforts of the Federal and State Ministry of Education, and major stakeholders in the education sector, underlines the pivotal role of quality teachers in the provision of quality education at all levels as a strategy towards the realization of both the Education For All (EFA) goals, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and currently the Sustainable development Goals (SDGS). The major objective of the policy is to enable the Country produce highly knowledgeable, skilled and creative teachers who are capable of producing learners who can compete globally.

Kenyan and Nigerian teacher education policies and frameworks which guide teacher education and preparation need to address some of the following issues raised by scholars; (i)The need for up-dating of recruitment, admissions and graduation requirements (ii)Incentives and measures for attracting talents into the teaching profession should be considered (iii)Course content in Teacher training Institutions and university should be up to date (iv)Undergraduate programmes that do not meet the expectation of demands in teachers as it relate to the job market(v)inadequate syllabus coverage and mastery of content knowledge due to short duration given to teacher preparation process especially for preprimary and primary levels which is between One to two years in the two countries (vi)In the case of special subjects and ICT, most teachers in the two countries have been graduating without knowing how to use technology in education and the type of technology to be used.

Osuji (2009) noted that teacher education, both pre-and in-service programmes are being offered in the Universities, Colleges of Education and Polytechnics with different tags, such as, distance education, sandwich and part time. Even the interest of the country over knowledge and skills of teachers could be seen through the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (1993), duty of which includes: determining what standards of knowledge and skill are to be attained by persons seeking to become registered as teachers and raising those standards from time to time as circumstances may permit: classifying from time to time members of the teaching profession according to their level of training and qualification. This role is replicated in Kenya by the TSC which is body mandated by an Act of Parliament to promote and transfer teachers exercise disciplinary control over teachers, terminate the employment of teachers and review the standards' of education and training of persons entering the teaching service(Functions and mandate-TSC). In Nigeria, teacher development is central to the four-year strategic plan for the development of Nigeria's education sector (2011 to 2015). This policy document views teachers as central to the success of the education system. The national report clearly states, "The quality of any educational system is determined by the quality of the teaching-learning process", and that "teachers interpret and communicate the curriculum to learners" (Osuji, 2009).

#### **4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Using descriptive survey and targeting trained teachers, teacher trainers and trainees and education officers, the study was conducted in two states in Kenya and Nigeria. In Kenya, it was conducted in Nairobi County while in Nigeria it was done in Jos city, Plateau State. Data was collected using questionnaires with both open and closed ended questions for teachers and student teachers. Interview schedules including phone and email were used for teacher trainers and education officers and observation schedules were also used for the in the study. This was possible because the researchers were available in these cities.Data collected was edited, coded and entry tasks/activities to ensure accuracy, consistency and completeness. This study used on both quantitative and qualitative data analysis.

#### **4.2. Theoretical framework: Change Management Theory**

This study is based on Michael Fullan's Change Management Theory. His work is grounded on educational change. The theory is focused on the human participants taking part in the change process. The New Meaning of Educational Change presents guidelines for resisting, coping, or leading change efforts from perspectives ranging from the student to the national government. Fullan (2011) focuses on the roles and strategies of various types of change agents. This relates to our study because the teacher education preparation process needs to change and various stakeholders need to play their roles well.

## 5. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Education sectors in Kenya and Nigeria are almost similar from the study; the researchers found that, teacher preparation curriculum which goes alongside the countries' entire curriculum for the two countries has not been reviewed for many years but there was concentration on short-term trainings which are basically skills-based.

The study also found out that the budget for teacher training is not specified in the budget given to the ministries concerned with education in the two countries. This has led to low morale among teachers and teacher trainers.

The respondents, especially the education officers and the teacher trainees, indicated that there is a lack of commitment among teachers, hence low morale and poor performance in schools.

The respondents also indicated teachers' burnout, which could be as a result of teacher to pupil ratio in schools.

Pedagogy and learning environments are changing and need to be structured in new ways. This study found that the teacher preparation curriculum in the two countries is not so well structured for interactive learning.

Preparation for nursery and early grade learning was found to want this study. The respondents indicated that the teacher training structures are not so well defined and in Nairobi, it was found that 45% of the teachers were not trained while in Nigeria about 55% don't have the necessary skills to teach the children skills which are related to current curriculum changes.

The respondents in secondary school teacher education preparation indicated that they get their teacher preparation trainings at the university level, which are managed by both the government and other bodies/individuals. But the observation indicated that the private institutions have better facilities for learning and teaching unlike the government institutions.

Primary teachers in both Nigeria and Kenya are trained in teacher training institutions managed by government and in some cases privately owned. Here there were mixed responses. One teacher trainer for a government college in Kenya had this to say;

'The facilities in this college have been in existence for over 50 years without replacement, hence the teacher trainees are not up to date with new skills requirements in schools.'

Secondary teacher education is mostly managed at University level and the training programmes face issues of non-compatibility with what is on the ground on teachers' requirements, lack of adequate facilities, lack of reference resources, teachers learning at their own time and space, lack of ICT integration among others.

Technical teacher education in the two countries was a bit organized with teachers prepared in few institutions which had facilities to take care of the training needs of the teachers. For instance in Kenya 75% of the tutors interviewed agreed that teacher preparation at that level is fairly structured though challenges still are there from different quarters.

Special needs education teachers in the two countries was found to be slightly organized. In Nigeria, the teachers undergo special training in special institutions and the same case was replicated in Kenya. In this study, 75% of the respondents also indicated opposing and conflicting paradigms in education curriculum which has resulted in having a non-conformed teacher education process in the targeted countries and this also goes along lack of curriculum review and proper supervisor by the government which has affected the teacher training process in both the two countries. There is need for constant curriculum review in the teacher preparation process. The government and other stakeholders need to invest more money in the teacher preparation process. In Nigeria, there are Poor and inadequate infrastructure, Poor policy education policies, Poor infrastructure, poorly covered curriculum, lack of teaching materials

The study also found that Jos State and Nairobi County which were that targets of this study lacked adequate resources for teacher training and preparation. This should be a priority in teacher preparation in the two countries. In Kenya, most of the teacher training institutions lack teacher's reference materials, computer laboratories, classrooms among others. One teacher training in Kenya had this to say

*'Here at our college, the facilities we are using are as old as 40 years and are not relevant to current learners needs and the job market'*

In decision making, in both Kenya and Nigeria, more than 50% of the respondents indicated lack of consultation between the education officers and the institutions and officers training the teachers. The teacher trainees also should be considered as key stakeholders in the teacher preparation process.

In Nigeria, major education challenges realized in this study were; laziness, strike, insufficient time, poor budgetary policies. For teachers, the challenges which were realized were; very poor, poor School community relationship, lack of proper promotion channels procedures which make other teachers leave the profession.

For both countries, the school programme was realized as monotonous, not well structured to the current education requirements. In terms of Teacher student ratio, it is a challenge for teacher preparation and practice. In most of the case, over 78 % of the targeted teacher's population indicated that the teacher pupil ratio is about 45:1 which is quite high for effective learning to take place.

In financing, the study indicated that there is inadequate funding in teacher preparation process but this goes alongside the budget lines of the two countries. Mostly, education is the least underfunded sector in most countries and Kenya and Nigeria are no exception. so there is need for more financing of teacher education.

Teacher's remuneration was found to be poor and non-attractive to teachers hence affected the training of teachers in the two countries. The teacher training institutions are poorly funded and there was no proper allocation of money to fund the training of teachers as per the government budget hence its left to the ministry of education to decide on what to give the teacher training institutions. The federal government and national government institutions are having dilapidated and outdated facilities with very few new resources which makes training and preparation of teachers for the 21<sup>st</sup> century a challenge.

The other challenge realized in the study is that, in both countries, the respondents indicated that the education officers are not involved in active supervision of the teacher in the schools and also at preparation stage. More than 64 percent of the officers in Kenya and 68 % in Nigeria indicated that there is lack of supervision by education officers to the teacher preparation process. These possess a major challenge to curriculum implementation in most

institutions in Africa and not only in Kenya and Nigeria as issues of quality will be compromised

## 6. DISCUSSIONS

The study realized that in the two states, teacher education standards are regulated by the Federal/national government and supported by the state /County governments .This is in line with Incheon-Korea declaration 2015 which stated that, the role of the state is essential in setting and regulating standards and norms of education.

Teacher motivation was realized to be quite low hence this affects the performance of teachers in the two states. This is in line with Osuji (2009) who noted that, the quality of any educational system is determined by the quality of the teaching-learning process”, and that “teachers interpret and communicate the curriculum to learners”.

The study found out that teachers’ voices are not being heard as they cannot make any suggestions to be used in formulating policy. For instance in Kenya, one teacher trainer noted that they receive the teacher trainees from the government and the curriculum hence their role is only to teach and supervise would be teachers.

Teacher to student ration and class sizes was a major issue in this study. This is in with the findings of Maina (2016) the teacher to student ration is still a challenge in teacher education in Africa. And lastly, there is need to have good motivation strategies for good teacher motivation public and state schools in in Africa are not well motivated enough hence the low uptake of education and performance by teachers in most training institutions.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

Every country needs to understand the rigour of teacher education and training in emerging curriculum and accord it the necessary facilities and structures to function and serve its mandate effectively. Global changes are affecting the way education is being offered hence the need for countries in continents like Africa to align their educational systems to international standards. Technology is one factor which has changed the world completely and education systems in Africa need to look at the aspect of technology in education from teacher preparation perspective.

The world is becoming larger day by day and the highest number of school going children and non-school gong children are in Africa. The continent needs to work for ways and means of ensuring accessibility and affordability to that in need of education without compromising quality. This calls for an increase in the budget allocation for education for Kenya and Nigeria and other countries in Africa too where the education budget is low.

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