



## THE ROLE OF A TEACHER IN NIGERIAN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPLICATION

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### ABSTRACT

Many countries strive for national development as this is the desire of the citizens. A situation which has to do with raising the level and quality of life of the people and the creation of local, zonal and national income and employment opportunities without damaging the resources of the environment. Unfortunately, while countries embark on this, they do not always employ the appropriate approach, which is, the engagement of quality teachers who are capable of playing their roles effectively. The opinion or position of this paper is to critically examines the role of a teacher in national development. An opinion paper is a non-empirical research which only shares the view of the researcher and does not follow the procedure of an empirical study. Indeed, the teacher cannot do this if he/she is not psychologically balanced. The paper also addresses the psychological implication of the teacher's role on national development. The paper recommends among others, that teachers recruitment process should be critical and strictly based on merit. That, the task of teaching should be reserved to professionals who understand their professional roles. Furthermore, the government should consider teacher's welfare as a non-negotiable concern. This will make teachers feel comfortable and psychologically balanced.

**Keywords:** *Role, Teacher, Development, National Development, Psychological Variables.*

### INTRODUCTION

A teacher is to National Development what a compass is to the ship captain. Any discussion on national development is incomplete without the teacher. There is no gain saying the fact that, the success of any transformation agenda for national development depends largely on the total involvement of teachers at the level of man power training, policy formation and implementation (Jadhar & Palankar, 2013). In time past, the teacher's role was that of a mere subject area specialization for

teaching. However, in recent times, the teacher's expanded role includes that of wholistic human development and management, popularly known as "human engineering" which of course, is the catalyst to human and national development (Nwachukwu, 2007).

Therefore, any nation that undermines the place of the teacher would be doing so at the detriment of its human and national development, as this would be akin to wanting the chicken and hoarding your grain at the same time. It is on this premise that Njoroge and Nyabuto (2014) observed that for any nation or organization to embark on any meaningful development, it must start first with the development of its teachers, if not, such development will remain a mirage or will short-live. Supporting this view, Abang, Eteng and Amalu (2021) and Cassady (2014) opined that the development of any nation depends on the quality of her teachers and the quality of the teachers is otherwise determined by its goal achievement or content delivery. This could be the reason why most nations with vision, focus and concern for national development always pay great attention to teachers, especially as it has to do with their welfare (Denga & Denga, 2007). These nations do so to ensure that the teachers play their roles effectively. Indeed, treating teachers well will eventually be translated to the learners under their tutelage. This will in-turn affect national development when the learners would have acquired wealth of knowledge and experience from their teachers and inject into the system later.

## **DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

In a discourse such as this, it is necessary to have a clarification of the main concepts of the paper which are: Role, Teacher, Development and National Development.

- **Role:** The concept of Role could be described as the function or position "-somebody has or is expected to have in an organization, society or relationship. (Horby, 2015). Here, we are considering the function, position or place of the teacher in National Development.
- **Teacher:** A teacher according to Isangedighi (2007: 378) is "a trained professional with knowledge and skills, as well as a level of competence in the task of teaching and remodeling the learners under his/her care".
- **Development:** an attempt has been made to present a concise definition by Nsanganira (2011) who sees development as "a multi-dimensional process involving quantitative and qualitative changes in

social, political and economic domains of the society and it is undertaken essentially to lead to a better state of life". Sharing the same position, Israel (2018) describes development as a process that creates progress, positive change or the addition of physical, economic, environmental, social and demographic components. He explains further that the purpose of development is to raise the level and quality of life of the population and the creation or expansion, of local regional income and employment opportunities without damaging the resources of the environments.

## ROLE OF A TEACHER

A teacher is a maker of nations. So, for the development of the country, it is very important to have good teachers who will ensure that, they play their roles effectively. The role of a teacher is explained in different ways by different people but with the same meaning. Jadhav and Palankar (2013) view the role of a teacher to be multi-faceted, comprising academic, pedagogical, social and other roles. The academic role according to them, comprises teaching, counseling and supervision. The Pedagogical role includes instructional, evaluation and facilitating. The teacher as a facilitator is involved in motivating learners to learn, maintaining classroom and school control and creating a conducive environment for learning to take place. The *social role* includes socializing activities which prepare students for the way of life of the society. *Other roles* of the teacher are reference role, detective, surrogate (in loco parentis), confidant and affectionate roles (Jadhav and Palankar, 2013).

According to Isangedighi (2007), a typical teacher sees their role in relationship with the learner, ministry officials, parents of learners and local community. In any case, the ones that are paramount that are discussed here are the roles that relates the teacher with the learner. Isangedighi (2007) went further to summarize these roles into negative, authoritarian and the role of a Helper. *The negative role* of the teacher by his explanation, consists of those roles that induce stress on the learners. They include the teacher's role as a detective, disciplinarian, a police man and a judge who detects faults, brings culprits to book, dispenses and executes justice (Enim, 2010; Ettah, & Asu-Okang, 2019; Ajayi & Saka, 2015). Among *the authoritarian roles* played by the teacher, are those of surrogate parents, dispenser of knowledge, group leader and role model. The teacher *helping role* is that of being a counselor, friend and confidant to learners.

However, Diener and Dweek (2008) observe that teachers all over the globe have one common role they demonstrate which has to do with the impartation of knowledge and moulding of learners' character. The only difference according to Diener and Dweek (2008) between teachers' from different nations is the government policies in respect to their welfare.

### **ROLE OF A TEACHER IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The teacher is described as a catalyst for national development based on their significant role in the process. The major role of the teacher is to teach, and this goes with enormous responsibility. The grand finale of the teacher's role is the production of quality individuals for the society. For this reason, teachers are perceived as nation builders and their task of moulding the young minds as an endeavour in nation building. Learners are adults in the making, their exposure to the guidance and instructional services of an accomplished teacher guarantees a viable future for the nation. An impoverished system of education is a harbinger of an impoverished nation (Isangedighi, 2007). The teacher therefore occupies a central position in national development. This is so because development is dependent upon the teacher. It is on this basis that the Nigerian National Policy on Education posits emphatically that, no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). In the same vein, Jadhav and Palankar(2013) maintain that, a flourishing national development and a society truly prosperous with knowledge, all begins with its teachers. Thus, teachers are undoubtedly among the most significant contributors to national development through education. Supporting this view, Saharan(2009) observes that a nation is built by its citizens while citizens are moulded by teachers. Sharing the same position, Ogbin (2018) states that, the teacher is the most important factor in the translation of educational ideologies, philosophies, policies and programmes into actions and reality, since national development is predicated on the philosophy of education and the standard of education. Therefore, the role of the teacher in national development is very strategic and crucial and as such, should not be left in the hands of quacks or impostors.

Development as had been explained earlier, has to do with the improvement of life in all ramifications - economic, social, political, culturally and otherwise and the agents of such development are human beings who have acquired the knowledge, skills and technical know how

from teachers. Here, the teacher's role remains outstanding because, those involved in the process - scientists, engineers, politicians, agriculturist, lawyers, medical and business experts and others were and are still being mentored by teachers (Obanya, 2006). So, describing a teacher as the "Master key" that can unlock any gate of development is not an overstatement (Bemo 2015). Having the same view, Tino (2012) describes a teacher as the main tool that advances or catalyzes development, as without a teacher, education has no meaning in national development.

Infact, if not for negative role of the teacher, most experts who are making progress in their different fields of endeavor and tremendous contributions to national development today, would have wasted their career and potentials. This is the role which Isangedighi (2007) explains, induces stress on the learners, which of course, learners are not comfortable with. This has to do with the administration of punishment or discipline to learners for different acts of indiscipline behavior. Learners with their myopic tendencies see this as wickedness on the part of the teacher, whereas, the teacher's role here, is for behavior reformation, transformation, modification and correction. By this, some wayward, stubborn, lazy and indisciplined learners whose career would have been frustrated, are reformed and become concentrated, focused and eventually becoming successful to themselves and making meaningful contribution to the nation (Abang, 2023).

Most teachers are models to their learners (Abang, 2023). The learners imitate the teacher's manners, customs, etiquette, style and above all, believe their teachers even more than their parents; especially during the formative years (Saharan, 2009). Learners tend to determine their aim in life and their future in consultation with their teachers. Therefore, a corrupt and decadent class of teachers can harm a nation more seriously than a class of corrupt and perverted judiciary, army, police, and politicians to mention a few. Hence, a corrupt and incompetent teacher is not only a danger to his/herself but to the generation and nation at large. Indeed a nation with corrupt teachers is at risk of collapse and failure (Tino, 2012). This is enough for one to understand the central position occupied by the teacher in respect to national development.

The teacher's role of transmission of cultural values of the nation and history is also very strategic to national development. It is mostly in school

that learners are taught the basic cultural values of their nation by the teachers Isangedighi (2007). For instance, in Nigeria, the National Pledge and Anthem are said by learners in the primary and secondary schools every day during the morning assembly. This makes learners to know their origin as Nigerians, though tribes and tongues may differ. This knowledge would make the learners develop the spirit of patriotism for the nation which is the basis for national development.

In the development of any nation, great attention must be paid to instilling of good morals and discipline in its subjects especially the youths. Infact, nobody is more suited to assist in this process than the teacher. Without the teacher, both knowledge and morals would suffer. And if this is not done, whatever achievement the nation has attained could be ravaged within a day by hooligans, hoodlums, gang stars and others with such related anti-social behavior. This is exactly what most nations are passing through including Nigeria, because most of the bandits perpetrating havoc are academically deformed. They actually need a teacher.

Teachers continue to play a great role to national development by their contributions to national programmes like Population Census, electionary activities, invigilation of national examinations and other national assignments (Anonaba, 2015). The government has often depended on teachers in carrying out most national programmes due to their simplicity, obedience, wealth of experience and concern for national development; even though at the end, they have little or no reward, only being cajoled that their reward is in heaven. The question is, have teachers been actually effective enough in carrying out their roles? It is the opinion of the author that teachers at different levels have succeeded in their roles but are limited to some extent as, Denga cited in (Nwachukwu, 2007: 219) summarizes thus:

“Most of the crisis involving teachers can be etiologically traced to the inadequacy of factors such as salary, fringe benefits, employer policy affecting teachers, welfare issues, job security and other miscellaneous conditions that can raise or lower the teacher's morale”.

Above all, individual teacher qualities, character, qualifications and professional competence are the cornerstones on which successful national development ultimately depends.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPLICATION

The psychological implication of the teachers' role in national development has to do with the psychological variables that can trigger either positive or negative behavior among teachers that can enhance national development or otherwise. Some of these major psychological variables that the researcher will be discussing on are emotion, motivation, anxiety and attitude.

### Emotion

To start with, emotion generally has to do with feelings – positive or negative. The concept of emotion can be explained as outward expression of inner feelings which are aroused by the individual behaviour or that of other persons (Mane, 2012). Negative and positive emotions are the broad classification of emotions (Lane, 2004). Emotions are considered negative when their agitations or motivation within the organism is associated with unpleasant experiences (Ojo, 2011). The psychological or psycho-physical responses or reaction within the individual under these circumstances express complex complications which threatens the psychic balance of the organism. Most often, individuals exposed to unpleasant situations manifest the following –fear, anger, anxiety, displeasure, sadness, depression, bitterness and others. Whereas, positive emotions are associated with pleasant experiences which motivate or arouse the organism into meaningful reactions within the environment. Positive emotion can trigger reactions like joy, happiness, love, pleasure, excitement, delight, laughter and so on (Abang, 2023). Though the origin of emotion can be traced to the basic genetic factor, however, there are more environmental factors that are the major causes of emotion such as the effect of adjustment in home, school and society. Others are the deprivation of basic economic needs lack of security and independence (James, 2015).

From the foregoing therefore, the place of emotion in teachers' role for national development, remains very significant. If the teacher is exposed to negative emotion, such teacher cannot function appropriately, he/she will be distracted and cannot be focused, otherwise if the teacher is not emotionally stable his/her objective of transmitting knowledge to the learners would not be achieved. On the other hand, where the teacher is emotionally stable or has positive emotions, such teacher will be excited, happy, interested and motivated to ensure that he plays his role effectively, not just for the good of the learners, but for the enhancement

of national development. The Nigerian teacher is emotionally unstable because he is confronted with deprivation of basic economic needs, security and basic amenities.

### **Motivation**

Motivation is another psychological variable that has an implication on the role of the teacher for national development. Motivation is a psychological feature that arouses an organism to action towards a desired goal. Ukpong (2020) posits that motivation as a determinant of behaviour refers to the factor which increase or reduce the vigor of an individual's activity. She explains further that it is the internal conditions that arouse sustain and direct behaviour in response to situations and objects in the environment. Motivation whether intrinsic (explain) or extrinsic is geared towards goal achievement. It is motivation that drives one to commitment and dedication, and lack of it can also bring about nonchalant and indifference behaviour. When one is motivated positively, he demonstrated positive behaviour and portrays negative behaviour when he is negatively motivated (Abang and Amalu, 2018). National development as earlier pointed out is dependent to some extent on teachers who are the major drivers, and for teachers to play this role effectively, their motivation is not negotiable. Where teachers' stipends are increased and their working condition improved, they will be motivated to put in their best to do the needful by contributing meaningfully to the learners positive performance which by implication will translate into national development. On the other hand, where teachers are negatively motivated, this will definitely be seen on the performance of the learners under their tutelage and this can slow down national development of any given nation.

### **Anxiety**

Anxiety is an unpleasant emotion characterized by fear and worry or a feeling of fear and uncertainty about something unknown (Abang 2010). Isangedighi (2007) defines anxiety as an emotion characterized by feeling of tensions, worried thoughts. Whereas, Lucan and Rogers (2013) describe anxiety as an intense, excessive and persistent worry and fear about every situation. Anxiety generally has to do with worries about known and unknown issues, which the researcher considers to be one of the characteristics of Nigerian teachers. Nigerian teachers are faced with varied problems which have caused them to always live in persistent worries. They are worried about poor remuneration which cannot afford



them to pay for their bills, rents, children fees and to meet up with other social responsibilities and poor working environment. Being in this condition is enough for teachers not to deliver any given assignment, resulting to a crucial psychological implication on national development. This is because if teachers who were supposed to transmit knowledge and the technical know-how to learners become incapacitated and frustrated it means the whole system will be in trouble and this will render national development a mirage.

### **Attitude**

Attitude is another crucial psychological variable that can affect the role of the teacher in national development positively or negatively. The variable has a very serious psychological implication to national development. Mukherigee (1978) describes attitude as one's feelings, thoughts and pre dispositions aspects of his or her environment. Whereas Ezewu in Ukpong (2020) defines attitude as one's mental response to the stimulus to which the attitude is directed (pp. 166). According to Ukpong (2020), attitude can therefore be said to be a like or dislike for, a positive or negative motion about objects or situations. This could be based on one's interest, gain or value placed on the said object or situation. That is why attitude is classified as negative or positive.

Positive attitude according to Dany (2018) is a favourable mental predisposition which is directed towards a target stimulus. It prepares one's mind and gives the will-power towards responding favorably to the target stimulus and an attraction to it with a view to achieving it. Negative attitude on the other hand, is a direct opposite of the former as it rather produces a dislike and aversion for the stimulus in question. Attitude actually plays a very significant role in any job performance. A worker in a conducive and stimulating environment, and with a promising pay package, will definitely develop positive attitude towards the job and this will enhance the performance. Whereas, a worker whose work environment is very poor coupled with a poor remuneration will always portray negative and non-challant attitude towards the job. The treatment of teachers in Nigeria is so sad that most teachers cannot afford to develop a positive attitude towards their job and this of course, cannot enhance a promising performance. The teacher work environment is not conducive, the job is not stimulating and the remuneration is extremely poor. This situation has compelled many teachers to develop lack of interest, negative attitude and non-challent behaviour in their discharge of

their responsibilities which is otherwise affecting national development. This is because the students who would have been taught and trained and would later be injected into the system are left half-baked or not trained at all. To enhance national development therefore the government must ensure that teachers are treated well.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion therefore, one can emphatically state that the teacher and national development are inseparable. The teacher can only play his role in national development effectively if the environment upon where he operates is stimulating, comfortable and favourable as this will also enhance his psychological balance. Furthermore, the teacher must possess the pre-requisite requirements of an ideal teacher to be able play his role in national development.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

1. Teachers' recruitment process should be critical and strictly based on merit.
2. The task of teaching should be reserved to professionals who understand their professional roles.
3. The government should consider teachers' welfare as a no-negotiable concern. This will make teachers feel comfortable and psychologically balanced.

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