

# TEACHER EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURE IN NIGERIA

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## **Abstract**

*Teacher education is a whole range of activities that constitute preparation for and improvement of the teaching profession. This encompasses pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes. The need and demand for more teachers has resulted in re-engineering and expansion of teacher education programmes for all levels of education with the realization that teachers are crucial personnel whose contributions activate the optimal functioning of the social, economic and political facets of a country. This confirms the fact that teacher education is an important driver for sustainable development since literally every knowledgeable and skilled individual in micro and macro productive activity has been shaped in some ways by the contribution of a teacher. It is thus important that teacher education programmes be crafted in a manner to energize their impact on the learners and humanity in general.*

The Nigeria vision 2020, which is the nation's new development blue print recognizes education and training within the social pillar alongside the economic and

political pillars that are cornerstones expected to transform Nigeria into a newly industrializing income country providing a high quality life to all its citizens by the year 2020 (Nganga, 2010). The educational goals of the 2020 vision are to provide globally competitive quality education, training and research for development by increasing access to education, improving the transition rate from primary to secondary schools, raising the quality and relevance of institutions, increasing the adult literacy rate and the integration of special needs education into learning and training institutions. In addition to vision 2020 is the millennium Development Goals (MDGs) whose main aim is to encourage development by improving social and economic conditions in the world's poorest countries by 2015. The MDGs focus on three areas of human development: bolstering human capital, improving infrastructure, and increasing social, economic and political rights. Within the human capital focus, education is the key.

Teachers form an important component of education whose services are important in the realization of educational goals the world over. Due to their central role in the enterprise of education, teachers at all levels require effective and sufficient education to be able to adequately carry out their roles and responsibilities. Otunga, Odeo and Barasa (2011) acknowledge that trained teachers are vital for quality education. Teaching, according to Scardamalia and Bereiter (2003), is an activity, a unique professional, rational and human activity in which one creatively and imaginatively uses himself/herself and his/her knowledge to promote the learning and welfare of others.

A teacher, according to Daresh and Playko (1995), is the most important person in teaching who sees that educational programmes are successfully implemented by organizing and managing the learning experiences and environments. To educate others therefore, one needs to be educated and have a broad background of general cultural training that provides a broad liberal education. Teachers need self-confidence to carry out their duties in demanding unique situations and need to implement their expertise in such a way that their customers, stakeholders and colleagues trust them (Kafu, 2003). They need research based and research informed knowledge and should be open to acquiring and assessing local evidence (Scardamalia and Bereiter, 2003).

Teacher education is an important component of education. Through it, school teachers who are considered mentors of society are prepared and produced (Lucas, 1972). Kafu (2003) orally that teacher education is ostensibly designed, developed and administered to produce school teachers for the established system of education. Loughran (2006) looks at teacher education as the pre-service and in-service teacher preparation where students of teaching seek to develop knowledge and skills of teaching and to learn how to competently apply these in practice. These views summarize the importance and the role of teacher education in the life of a

given society. Education in this respect is regarded as the driving force for social development. Teacher education in this paper is seen as the pre-service and in-service education and training of all those involved in the dissemination of knowledge at all levels of education and is aimed at exposing them to new ideas and practices which continuously improve their ability to educate. The improved ability to educate is an important ingredient for sustainable development.

There are variations of teacher education programmes for the different levels of education from early childhood to tertiary education. These forms of teacher education programmes involve the study of professional disciplines, teaching subjects and general knowledge subjects. The provision of both subject area education and professional knowledge is vital as it makes a teacher competent in the subject content as well as professional areas. Dove (1986) noted that teacher education emphasizes the cognitive development and specialist understanding of the subject. It comprises wider perspectives including an understanding of socio-economic and professional aspects of education, psychological practice and social theories underpinning pedagogical practice and knowledge of teachers' roles and responsibilities. Teacher education is institutionalized educational procedures carried out in colleges and universities, which have vocational and educative objectives.

This paper, surveys the various teacher education programmes at all levels of education in Nigeria in an effort to appraise and propose instrumental adjustments to sharpen their impact on sustainable development. Farrant (1980) orally the need for training becomes more essential as teachers undertake increasingly complex roles and find natural gifts that are sufficient to cope with all tasks expected of them.

### **Levels of Teacher Education in Nigeria**

There are different levels of teacher education in Nigeria namely, early childhood development teacher education, primary teacher education, and under graduate teacher education (Otunga et al, 2011).

### **Early Childhood Development Teacher Education (ECDE)**

The training of teachers for ECDE is done in different ways and by different agencies. There are national and District systems of training and development. The core of the ECDE curriculum is the endeavour to address the total needs of children (MOE, 2008). The aim of ECDE is to develop the whole personality, encompassing physical, intellectual, cultural, spiritual, and mental so as to provide a holistic education, particularly at this formative stage of the child (MOE, 2008). Parents and local communities at the district levels with the help of the central government, local and external agencies, run the ECDE centres. District centres for early childhood education are the most active centres for training ECDE teachers. Here, the teacher trainee should be able to analyze measurement and geographical concepts, apply

practical instructional methods in teaching, develop instructional materials, and design assessment tools to evaluate children's progress in learning (Kafu, 2003).

The student teacher is assessed on the preparation of schemes of work, classroom management and control and record keeping. Trainees also undertake a course in research, monitoring and evaluation. They are to design and research on relevant topics (Nganga, 2010).

### **Bachelor of Education Programme**

The bachelor of education course has various strands which include B. Ed. (Arts) B. Ed. (sc.), B. Ed. (Technology), B. Ed. ( Guidance and Counseling ), and B. Ed. ( Early Childhood and Primary Education) . The teacher is equipped with skills for teaching in ECDE, primary, secondary, teacher training colleges, Institutes, polytechnics and Universities. The course content at this level has two major components, which are teaching subject content and professional areas. In addition, teaching practice is mandatory and must be passed in order to qualify for the award of the certificate (Otunga et al, 2011).

### **Teacher Education Programmes**

Teachers in Nigeria are trained through pre-service and concurrent programme, and competency-based training (Daresh and playko, 1995).

### **Pre-service and Concurrent Teacher Education Programme**

Pre-service and concurrent teacher education programme is generally a fully institutionalized scheme of training in which student teachers participate on full-time basis with a curriculum consisting of subject area content, professional preparation, including principles and methodology of teaching , philosophy, sociology, curriculum theory, educational administration, planning, measurement, finance, history and psychology and teaching practice both micro and field practice. It is a concurrent form of education; simultaneously providing academic and professional studies.

### **Competency –Based Teacher Education**

This programme is also designated as performance-based teacher education. Emphasis is on objectives and assessment. Both student teachers and their tutors aim at goal realization. It is a more precise form of training because adequate performance of a given task is highly valued as well as possession of required knowledge, skills and attitudes.

The student is expected to demonstrate the specified competence to the required level and in an agreed upon manner. He/she accepts responsibility to be held accountable. National Teachers Institute (NTI) has a mission of improving and maintaining quality of education by enhancing capacity of education managers through effective and efficient training, research and consultancy (MOE, 2008)

### **Consecutive Programme of Teacher Education**

Consecutive teacher education is mainly for general-based graduates who wish to become professional teachers and they spend an additional one academic year of further professional training. Such as a trainee will acquire a post graduate Diploma in education. Graduates with first degree of Bachelor of Science and are already teaching as untrained or wish to become teachers have been going to NTI and Universities for this course.

### **Teaching Practice**

Micro-teaching and teaching practice are two phenomena that are mandatory in the profession. They are both used to evaluate teacher education. They give the trainers an opportunity to evaluate the outcome objectives and to assess the effectiveness of the competence-based teacher education (CBTE) offered.

Nganga (2010) viewed “Evaluation of outcome objectives as an evaluation of the extent to which students put the knowledge or skills he has learnt in the course into practice”. Micro-teaching makes evaluation feasible. As Dove (1986) argues, for trainees to evolve personal theories of teaching, they need opportunities to practice and test out different teaching skills and styles. Micro-teaching provides a relatively non-threatening way of teaching as it deals with a small and familiar group. During teaching practice, the student teachers undertake actual teaching in school situations and they prepare professional documents necessary. This is an opportunity for trainees to develop competence, confidence and habits of self-evaluation, which are vital for their performance during post qualification teaching (Dove, 1986). Teachers already in the field should actively guide and supplement the efforts of the supervisors. This is why teacher training institutions place student teachers under the jurisdiction of the school administration that is supposed to write a report about them at the end of the teaching practice session.

### **In-Service Teacher Education Programme**

In-service education covers those activities directed toward remediation of perceived lack of skill or understanding. It is an on-going process that promotes professional and personal growth for teachers (Daresh and Playko, 1995). In-service education is necessary and appropriate when people need special training to correct deficits in their skills. It takes place anytime either as full time or part time during the potential continuous professional life of a teacher.

Daresh and Playko (1995) offered useful guidelines about in-service education:

- 1) Effective in-service education and staff development programmes are directed towards local school needs.
- 2) In-service and staff development participants are actively involved in effective programmes.
- 3) Effective programmes are based on participants needs.

Apart from the traditional institutionalized in-service education, teachers are also trained through mentoring and learning relationships between two individuals who work together in the same or similar organization. It is also called peer coaching or bench-marking. Newly recruited teachers are also in-serviced by the old members of the staff into the life of the school. Daresh and Playko (1995) found that mentoring relationships can serve as strategies to promote on-going dialogue and collaboration between educators at all levels. In-service education in Nigeria is on the increase at all levels.

### **Issues in Teacher Education**

Developments in teacher education in Nigeria have been occasioned by socio-economic and political changes and technological advancements locally and beyond. The impact of these developments on teacher education programmes, education, teaching profession and national development is worth attention. Loughran (2006) says that the status of teacher education has generated great debate among the teacher educators and teacher educationists.

Recognizing that teachers are an important group of professionals who impact virtually on every sector of the economy, teacher education is considered as an indispensable driver for economic development. This realization is made real by a number of developments taking place in teacher education around the country focused on the improvement of teacher education programmes in terms of quantity and quality.

### **Tremendous Growth of Universities in Nigeria**

Whereas there were only few public universities before independence, currently, there are many public universities and many private universities (Otunga et al, 2011). This tremendous growth of universities has presented opportunities for expanded teacher education activities. Besides having many students in education programmes, most of the private universities also have teacher education programmes. This scenario is a clear indication that teachers are important drivers of the economy.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Teachers are in charge of the educative process at all levels of education and their influence permeates all spheres of life. It is for this reason that they are regarded as the drivers of social, economic and political development of society. Consequently, it is suggested that teacher education at all levels should be carefully managed to incorporate all socio-cultural, economic and political aspects of life for the teachers to effectively serve their roles as instructional leaders in their spheres of influence. The best approach to realizing this is for teacher education programmes to be based on relevant research findings focused on enhancement of teacher education programmes

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at all levels. This is the surest way for teacher education to contribute to sustainable development.

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