The Place of Teacher Education in Manpower Development

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Abstract

The focus of this paper was on the place of teacher education in manpower development. Education was posited, as the key that unlocks the door of modernization while the teacher is the centre between knowledge and learning. It was the contention of this paper that the teacher remains the hub of our educational system and manpower development. Some problems of Teacher Education were highlighted. It was recommended among others that, Education should be properly funded and that 26% of the budgetary allocation and 2.5% of the Gross National Product should be allocated to Education.

Introduction

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1995) defines Education as the process by which your mind develops through learning at a School, College or University. Okoh (2002) sees education as the knowledge and skills that are gained from being taught. In the same vein, Professor Frederick Harbison and Charles Myers in their book "Education Manpower and Economic Growth" cited by Ukeje (1986) posited that Education is the key that unlocks the door of modernization. Education therefore is an organised system of learning. Learning definitely involves change in human behaviour, which explains, attitude formation, perceptions, preferences and interests (Ehiamitalor, 1985). The introduction of learning thus enhanced human development. Learning is a major change agent, since it concerns information that comes to the learner to assist him adapt to his environment and meet his needs at a stage of development in the same environment.

One therefore may posit at this point that the National Policy on Education made Nigeria a purpose driven nation with its own identity and with the objective to provide the Nigerian child knowledge that will be of great assistance to his growth and development. Education has no substitute in any economy no wonder Joseph Addison cited by Egbuchunam (2001) posited that, "Education is a companion which no misfortune can depress, no crime can destroy, no enemy can alienate, and no despotism can enslave. At home a friend, abroad an introduction, in solitude a solace and in society an ornament. It chastens vice, it guides virtue it gives at once grace and government to genius without it what is man? A splendid slave, a reasoning savage".

The teacher is the centre between knowledge and learning. The knowledge required to change the behavior of the learner within a given environment, so as to make profound contributions to the overall development of the environment can only be attained by the role of the teacher. According to Ukeje (1986) "the teachers are the hub of any educational system for the schools cannot be better than their teachers. In fact, Professor Karl W. Bigelow in UNESCO (1953) contended, " the teachers constitute the most vital factor in any educational system. Upon their number, their devotion and their quality, the effectiveness of all educational arrangement must chiefly depend." This shows that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers. In line with this assertion, Coombs (1968) asserted that, education is both a producer and a consumer of high level manpower; if it is to serve all other consumers of manpower well and generally better, it must recoup enough of its own best output to reproduce a good further crop."

Manpower development can be viewed as systematic processes educating people to achieve a specific societal goal. In line with this thinking Okoh 2002 opined that the World Bank sees the development of people as encompassing education and training better health and nutrition, and fertility reduction. Manpower is the basic resources; it is an indispensable means of converting other resources to mankind's use and benefit. Also, Heinemann and Yonder (1957) stipulate that manpower development is not only an attempt to enrich the quality of human knowledge through training but the process of preparing man to perform definite tasks and employment roles that help to change the environment. Manpower development is therefore all about the change of available human resources and development of skills.

Man Power Development in Nigeria

Education as stated earlier in this paper, is the key that opens the door to modernization. If Nigeria is to journey on the golden path of modernization, through a fast track, emphasis must be placed on education. Education should be totally put into the main stream of the nation's economic, social, technological and cultural development. In this vein, Okoih
(2002), Odiba (1999), and Enahwo (1990) observed that human resources specifically constitute the overall wealth of a nation. Thus, investment in human capital and complete human capital development form the major parameters of income distribution other things being equal. This is so because; education and level of income have strong positive correlation and move paripasu in the same direction.

Investment in human capital and development call for the provision of educational facilities and materials. The colonial administration paid lip service to this basic investment in human capital, for they vividly understood the consequences and benefits of manpower development; hence the colonial administration left education of Nigerians in the hands and mercies of the Christian missionaries.

To ameliorate the acute problem of high level manpower shortage, Okoh (2002) stipulated that, the government development policies of the past stressed increasing and improving the nation's stock of trained manpower through the expansion of educational facilities. These policies as a matter of fact, led to the establishment of the Ashby Commission.

The Ashby Commission was established in 1959 by the federal government to examine the country's high-level manpower development and make recommendations. The work of the commission gave birth to the formation or establishment of the Nigerian Manpower Board in 1962 with Professor T.M. Yesufu of the present University of Benin as the first president. The Ashby Commission also recommended the expansion and establishment of more tertiary institutions. These institutions of learning are meant to provide avenues for manpower development also with the objective of producing medium and high-level manpower.

**The Place of Teacher Education in Manpower Development**

For any economy to attain modern status through the instrumentality of Education, the teacher is the major ingredient. No Education system as mentioned earlier in this paper, can rise above the quality of its teachers. Investment in teacher education is investment in human capital and manpower development.

Teacher education maintains a central position in the development of the economy, in terms of sectoral development generally and manpower development specifically. This can be clearly epitomized as we consider the purpose of teacher education enshrined in the National Policy on Education. Section 9 Sub-section 58 of the National Policy on Education (1981) states that; the purpose of teacher education should be:

(a) To produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our education system;
(b) To encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
(c) To help teachers to fit into the social life of the community and society at large and to enhance their commitment to national objectives;
(d) To provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to any changing situation not only in the life of their country, but in the wider world;
(e) To enhance teachers’ commitment to the teaching profession.

Grade II Teachers Colleges, Advanced Teachers' Colleges, Colleges of Education, Institutes of Education, National Teachers' Institute and Teachers' Centres are the approved institutions vested with the responsibility to achieve the above purpose(s) of teacher education in Nigeria. Teacher Education therefore is the umbrella sector for the training of teachers to cope with all levels of educational institutions in any given economy. The powers of training teachers (manpower development) is the keystone of the educational system specifically and the economy in general. Teachers are therefore trained in the institutions established and funded by the Government or Voluntary agencies. Before the Nigerian Independence, when the emphasis was on the quantity of trained teachers to meet the need of the then fast expanding school, primary school leavers were drafted into the Preliminary Training College (PTC). The supply of teachers for the primary schools received a greater boost in the 1970s with the establishment of more Teachers Training Colleges. The training periods varied between two to five years depending on the entry qualifications of the candidates. The end result is the award of Grade II certificate. In recent times, the National Teachers Institute (NTI) has made great impact in this sphere, with its well-designed intensive programmes in all its centres in the country. Those who had Grade II certificates can aspire to be admitted into Nigeria Certificate in Education programmes at the Advanced Teachers Colleges, Colleges of Education and National Teachers Institute Study Centres. Teachers produced at this level can properly fit in the lower classes in the secondary schools.

Our colleges of education and institutes of education and the universities are not left out in the manpower developmental efforts. Holders of Nigeria Certificate in Education eligible for admission into the degree awarding College of Education and Universities for a period of two to three years; leading to the award of Bachelor's degree in Education with or without a teaching subject. The Institutes of Education in the Universities also offer programmes that could accommodate University graduates without teaching qualifications for a period of one year leading to the award of Post Graduate Diploma in Education.
The issue of shortage of manpower (middle and high level) in our school system is now a thing of the past; rather there exist an army of unemployed trained teachers for both the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. Odiba (1999) contended that the supply of teachers in recent years is greater than the demand. The question then is, has quality been sacrificed for quantity? Are the teachers well trained; to meet the developmental demands of our society? What actually is the quality of the products of Teacher Education institutions?

**The Quality of the Products of Teacher Education**

Quality should be the major focus of our education for development. Thus manpower development at any level of education should not sacrifice quality on the altar of quantity. For instance, the Bagauda Seminar report of 1980 cited by Ehiametalor (2002) indicated that Nigeria would need 369,000 teachers in 1982. This created a rush in the educational programmes of training teachers in all the states of the Federation. Potential teachers were rushed through the teacher training colleges. Entry qualifications into NCE Teacher Training Programmes were lowered, some institutions (even till date) decided to run remedial programmes, Sandwich programmes and Satellite centres for NCE programmes. According to Ehiametalor (1992, 2003) the end result of these adhoc programmes is that many of the women who had abandoned education to sell pepper and salt in the market enrolled in the teacher training colleges, to the detriment of the system.

A nation that desires modernization through education cannot allow crash programmes of teacher training or sandwich programmes. For sure, a teacher who graduated from a crash programme can only develop crash products. It is important to note that quality of manpower developed in this kind of system is far from that which opens the door of modernization.

As a matter of fact, at the level of teacher training, the stigmatization of the teaching profession as lacking any tangible rewards here on earth, has driven some of the best graduates of Education from our tertiary institutions to seek employment in financial institutions, oil companies and public service, thereby leaving the primary and secondary schools at the mercy of half-baked, incompetent and distressed teachers.

Teacher education has suffered so much in our country. The desired goals are far from being achieved due to some persistent constraints. From the primary schools to the Universities, the story is the same. Some of these constraints are:

1. **Funding:** Education generally and teacher education specifically suffer inadequate funding since independence. Basically, the current funding of educational institutions is not commensurable with the level of expansion in the education sector. Thus the type of environment created by the teaching and learning culture is not sustained by increased funding. This situation has crippled effective and efficient manpower development activities. Igwe (1990), Enaohwo (1990) Odiba (1999) Okoh (2002) Olawumi (2002) and Ehiametalor (2003) are of the view that education is underfunded and this has manifested itself in the poor state of infrastructure, facilities/materials for teaching and learning in our institutions of learning. For instance, the accreditation reports of NCCE (2000, 2001) show that the college of education (a major institution in the achievement of the purpose of teacher education) suffer from deteriorating facilities, antiquated equipment, battered classroom floors, cracked walls, leaking roofs and windows with wire gauze in place of glass (Isyaku, 2002). This reports also showed that dictation, copying of notes and handouts are the major methods of instruction in the Colleges of Education, a problem that has been worsened by the absence of functional equipment and facilities.

Budgetary allocation for the education sector in Nigeria is below the 26th% recommended by Unesco.

**Table 1: Federal Government Budgetary Allocation to Education - 1991 - 2001**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>% Recurrent Expenditure</th>
<th>% Capital Expenditure</th>
<th>% Total Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>7.21</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>9.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
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<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>9.49</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>14.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legend**

- % = Percentage
- NA = Not available

From Table 1 above, it is clear that the federal government investment in education is far below the 26% recommended by UNESCO. In the recent past the Presidential Committee on Future Higher Education recommended 30% of the Federal Budgetary Allocation to Education, as a way forward. According to Okoh (2002) the Nigerian educational development has risen so fast to a level that she was finding it difficult to sustain, because various state governments were establishing tertiary institutions purely on political grounds rather than on well-articulated needs. Poor funding of education has so far resulted in the following:

i. The economy benefits by having an army of poorly educated school teachers who incidentally teach little of what they know to pupils and students. These teachers knowing the academic limitations of their pupils or students assist them to cheat in examinations.

ii. The lecturers in the tertiary institutions feel there is nothing dignifying and satisfying without money. The dignity and envy of the ivory tower have been thrown to the dogs. Standard textbooks are no longer recommended as they are hidden from students only to be replaced by substandard handouts, sold at exorbitant prices. In fact, Nwadiani (1999) captured this truth, when he asserted that, the sale of examination grade in tertiary institutions tend to make education meaningless, because of this ugly development, hard work and scholarship are neglected. The quality of students’ grade depends on how much they offer to those in charge, either in cash or kind. Examination malpractice in sophisticated manners is widespread in the nation’s higher educational institutions.

2. Infrastructure: Both economic and social infrastructure facilities are grossly inadequate in our educational institutions and learning centres. Most facilities are dilapidated. It is vital that those facilities that are fundamental to the impartation of knowledge are available or provided, so as to enhance the quality of manpower.

3. Inadequate or Near Absence of Linkages Between School and Works
   This has slowed down the pace of manpower development. It appears that the trainers and users of manpower move at variance. The society needs qualitative education that can meet societal needs. A defined collaborative effort between the developers and utilizers of manpower will other things being equal lead to the followings:
   a. Identification of manpower constraints and training needs.
   b. Development of training programmes to suit societal needs
   c. Determination of the curriculum and structure of manpower needs
   d. Enhanced financing of training programmes.
   e. Production of quality manpower.

The Way Forward
   Nigeria is endowed with abundant natural human and materials resources needed to provide its citizens with standard education. Many people assume that the standard of education and quality manpower productions have fallen; but something can be done to improve on our education to meet the desired and aspirations of our society.

1. Proper training of our teachers at all levels is vital. In order to strengthen all level of education, the teachers who are the centre between knowledge and learning, or the hub of our educational system should be trained and re-trained on a continuous basis, so as to meet societal needs. Basically Nigerian teachers appear unproductive when in Nigeria but perform creditably well outside the shores of their fatherland; where they are provided the needed equipment, materials and incentives.

2. Education should be properly funded. The Federal Government should allocate 26% of the budget to education. In fact, the present system of spending 0.22% of the Gross National Product on education is no longer in line with the realities of our time. A minimum of 2.5% of the Gross National Product (GNP) should be devoted to education.

3. The government at all levels (Federal, State, Local Governments) should take particular interest in the infrastructural development of our educational institutions.

4. There should be a defined government policy that could encourage private sector participation fully in the education sector of the economy. All stakeholders should be encouraged to participate in the development of manpower to meet societal needs.

5. The teaching profession should be made attractive, job satisfaction leads to job performance. The teachers should be well motivated to do their job. A defined salary structure should be devoted to teachers.

Conclusion
In conclusion there one may say that an unalloyed commitment by the Government, stakeholders and the entire people of Nigeria to Teacher Education will not only enhance manpower development but also would lead to sustainable growth and development of the entire economy.

References


