

QUALITY TEACHING AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper explain n the concept of teaching which is the process of imparting knowledge, beliefs, etc from a person to the younger ones. It also discusses about teacher education and quality of teaching. The paper then gave some accounts of development and education and national development in Nigeria. Recommendations were made which include adequate provision of funds to the education sector, provision of infrastructural facilities, regular in-service training, conducive teaching and learning environment, etc

The concept of education is difficult to define because of its complex nature. However, some scholars in the field of education have defined it based on their experiences and background. Wilmot (1985) defined education as a movement from ignorance to knowledge, from foolishness to wisdom, from darkness to light. This implies the training of the mind and character to achieve social competence and individual growth under controlled situations.

Similarly, Fafunwa (1974) perceived education as the aggregate of all the processes by which a child develops his abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviors that are of positive value to the society in which an individual lives.

Yusuf (1996) considered education as the development of broad knowledge and understanding in the child according to what the society believes to be valuable.

An overview of the definitions above portray that education is a means for the total transformation of the minds of individuals through the training of valuable skills, knowledge and attitudes for social progress.

Baikie (2002) asserted that education is Nigerian's biggest industry and it touches on every fabric of human endeavour. Thus, it is seen as a vehicle for national development.

Education is the building block for progress in the modern world. The countries that have invested heavily in education have experienced stable and sustainable growth. It may not be surprising to say that Nigeria lags behind many developing nations because of its failure to invest in its human capital. The decline in education in Nigeria comes from a systematic failure brought about by the inability of our leaders to evolve a coherent policy for education and develop the strategies for achieving set goals and objectives.

Education is a universal process which allows all human societies develop the requisite knowledge, experience and skills for self preservation and growth.

The Nigerian society has recognized the deficiencies of the educational system. Some factors advanced for these deficiencies are issues of teachers' effectiveness and poor student performance. In connection to this, the National Policy on Education (2004) states that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers. The quality of teachers determines the quality of an educational system which in turn influences the quality of learning outcomes and of course the quality of manpower thus produced.

The poor state of educational development in Nigeria today can therefore be traced to the issue of quality of teachers vis-a vis the teaching and learning process. The teacher at any level is an important factor in teaching- learning process. Teaching is a process of imparting knowledge, beliefs, opinion of a particular person or group to the younger ones for the sustainability of societal norms, values, etc. in teaching, ideas which the nation holds concerning societal norms, values, culture, religion, etc are passed on the younger ones for sustainability, growth and development. Teaching is very useful and essential in any society. The teacher at any level is an important factor in the teaching- learning process.

Awomolo, (1994) has argued that teacher's effectiveness could be defined in terms of teacher characteristics. These include his experiences, cognitive and effective properties, the conditions to which he has to adjust the characteristics of the school classroom and the student/learner. The extent of ability, skills, knowledge and entire personality of the teacher to a large extent influence the learners and the learning activities.

Osho (1991) also showed a significant relationship between teacher's qualities and academic performance or achievement. These findings showed that the teacher's quality has a direct impact on learning outcomes. The short and long term effects of poor quality teaching- learning are very visible in the Nigerian society today. It has been said by many scholars, that no education can rise above the quality of its teachers.

Teacher and Teacher Education

Teaching has been defined in several ways. First, teaching can be defined as the work we do, and by means of which we earn our living, that is an occupation.

Secondly, it can be defined as a cluster of activities that we engage in during some specific time periods. Thirdly, teaching may be defined as an act of a particular kind i.e. movement of the body or parts of the body, talking, pausing, explaining, reading, etc.

It is also important to note that the aim of learning is to change or modify the behavior of someone through interaction with another person or with devices and materials. Awotu- Efebo (1999) defined teaching as an interaction between a teacher and a student in order to bring about an expected change in the students behavior.

Teaching also involves a series of planned activities which take place over time. The activities may be planned from simple to complex or in a progressive manner so that the learner can cope. Davis (1977) teaching takes place when information is communicated, from teacher to pupils or students. If there is no communication, there is no teaching.

Bamisiaye (1987) said that if teaching is to be possible, there must be personal and environmental conditions. Personal factors include the intellectual ability of the teacher that is his level of educational attainment and his psychological attitude to teaching. The environment of the teacher and learner. These make for learner-friendly classrooms.

On the other hand, teacher education is an important aspect of education where teachers are given pre-service teacher preparatory training for professional development in an area of specialization. It could be seen as a programme or programmes put in place for the training of teachers for the realization of the educational needs of a country.

Okefor (1988), defines teacher education "as the formal systematic and organized training programme geared towards product of a crop required man power (teachers) to implement the planned

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and developed curriculum of school in a society". Umar (2003), opined that teacher education is pre-service and in-service programs meant to produce professionally qualified teachers and to enhance the quality of teachers already in service.

It is that aspect of education which deals with acquisition of practical and applied skills in the teaching job. It entails theoretical and practical knowledge acquired in the process of becoming a teacher.

The Federal Government on the realization of the importance of teacher education had specified in the National Policy on Education (2004 revised), that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers.

Also it maintains that:

- a. All teachers in educational institutions shall be professionally trained;
- b. Teacher education shall continue to take cognizance of change in methodology and in curriculum;
- c. Teacher education programme shall be structure to equip teachers for the effective performance of their duties;
- d. Teachers shall be regularly exposed to innovations in their profession;
- e. In service raining shall be created to allow for professional growth at each level and,
- f. Effort will be made towards the improvement of the quality of education at the primary and secondary levels (N.P.E, 2004 revised).

The goals of teacher education according to National Policy on Education (2004 revised) shall be to:

1. Produce highly motivated conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of educational system;
2. Encourage further, the spirit of enquiry and credibility in teachers.
3. Help teachers to fit into social life of the community and society at large and enhance their commitment to National goals.
4. Provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to changing situations, and
5. Enhance teacher's commitment to the teaching profession.

The aims and objectives of education cannot be achieved without the role of teachers. There is hardly any sector of the economy and sphere of development that does not require the expertise of an educated person. An educated person is someone who possesses a body of knowledge and understanding principles of transformation, commitment and care and who can develop principles for the transfer of learning.

Quality Teaching

There are no, single definition of quality. It may mean different things to different people or organizations especially in the area of education. According to Oxford concise Dictionary (1999), quality means general excellence.

Ramon Yusuf (2005) defines quality 'fitness for purpose'. Therefore quality connotes peak performance or state of affairs. It describes a near perfect scenario. Quality is seen by many parents as related to the learning outcomes, particularly end of circle, examination results of their respective child. For school/inspector, quality may embrace improved general standards of reading, handwriting, etc, for the classroom teacher quality is linked closely to improved condition of service. In addition, quality incorporates, respect for individual rights, improved equity of access of learning outcomes.

Adegoke (1998) described quality of teaching as worthwhile, efficiency, excellence, conformance, relevance, literacy, numeracy and morality, conferred on individuals exposed to education through teaching and learning situation.

There are five fundamental points to bear in mind about quality teaching.

These are:

1. Quality can be observable and tangible and its effect can be easily felt.
2. Quality is not a one dimensional construct, but a tripartite affairs, with its input, process and output dimensions.
3. Quality in teaching can be specifically targeted.
4. Quality is not something you will wait until the end of the process to see, but something which is built into all phases of the development of an educational programme.

Ways of Achieving Quality Teaching

1. Professional Development

Teacher is the foundation upon the entire educational lies. He occupies the centre of the education industry. In support of this, Fafunwa (1972) said that the success or failure of the best education programme will fail if the teacher is not professionally developed or equipped to operate the programme. For the teacher to effectively perform this role, he must be professionally trained and developed. The development of any nation depends on the human resources the nation is endowed with, and the quality of the human resources is tied to the quality of teaching dispensed by the teachers. Thus, quality is the yardstick to measure the development of a nation.

2. Restoring the Glory of the Teaching Profession :

Over the years, there has been serious erosion on teachers' respect at all levels of education. Some take teaching appointment as a last resort, when they did not get any appointment elsewhere. Since quality and relevant education depend on what teachers do with learners, there is a need to restore the dignity of teaching by:

- a. Making entry to the profession competitive
- b. Emphasizing general, broad based education to ensure a solid base for professional education.
- c. Ensuring rigor in the professional education programme of teachers to make them real masters in their trade.

3. Funding

There should be an improvement on funding education in order to enhance the quality of teaching.

4. Regular Inspection/Monitoring

There should be constant supervision and monitoring of schools by the government in order to ensure that policy and programmes are being implemented.

Problems Facing Teaching in Nigeria

Teaching is considered as the medium to produce highly motivated skilled. professional and competent human resources for national development. However, the problems facing teaching have drawn back the mission of teaching, thereby producing half- baked teachers who cannot bring about any meaningful development. Some of these problems include the following:

1. Lack of Enough Funds

The Federal and State Government should be more serious in funding education, for the purpose of accomplishing educational goals, Government subvention and allocations should be increased to meet up the expenditure for the payment of teaching and non teaching staff, salaries and allowances and purchase of other educational goods and services.

2. Poor Educational Planning

A good educational planning is necessary to know the statistics of teaching and non-teaching personnel required within a projected period. Planning helps the administrators to cope with changes.

3. Poor Facilities and Equipment

Lack of infrastructural facilities like buildings, equipments and instructional materials is one of the problems of education. Inadequate provision and maintenance of instructional facilities like classrooms, office equipment, furniture, etc make the children to sit under trees or in open places for instructional purposes.

4. Problems of Supervision and Monitoring

Where regular inspection by the inspectorate is lacking, some teachers may turn into quick money generating activities like farming petty trading and so on during school hours.

5. Examination Malpractice

Examination malpractice has grown into a monster in various institutions of higher learning. Onyeche (2008) said “examination malpractice is no longer master of indiscretion involving students, it has metamorphosed into organized crime controlled by syndicates whose members include staff of education ministries, education institutions, agencies and examination boards”.

Development

The term development has been given different interpretations by different scholars over the years. Friedman in Kadiri (2010) sees development as an innovative process leading to the structural transformation of the social system. Development in terms of people, communities and societies implies quantitative and qualitative enrichment of the various aspects of life. Development can be described as the application of new ideas to practical problems.

Rodney (1972) conceptualized development at two different levels, the individual and social group levels. At the individual level, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self discipline, responsibility and material well being. At the level of social group, it implies an increasing capacity to regulate both internal and external relations.

National Development

National development according to Kazi (1999) in Olobou (2008) is the advancement from low level to a higher level of various aspects of a nation as an organized and matured society. It involves a process of progressively creating conditions in which citizens are able to exercise and utilize under the rule of law, all their rights socially, politically and economically. In another explanation, national development means a nation's planned effort to raise the living standards of its people through the development and effective utilization of its human and material resources.

Njoku (2004) developments at the national level is when there is the ability to control, influence or deal with our environment through the scientific process, and independently apply the technological manpower to increase productivity.

This means that development is a collective effort initiated and continually sustained by the people who are committed to the national purpose.

Education and National Development

Education is a means for the total transformation of the minds, of individuals through the training of valuable skills, knowledge and attitudes for social progress. Education is Nigeria's biggest industry and it touches on every fabric of human endeavour. It is seen as a vehicle for National Development. In

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support of this, the National Policy on Education (2004 revised) noted that not only is education the greatest force that can be used to bring about redness, it is also the greatest investment that the nation can make for the quick development of its economic, political, sociological and human resources.

Education is the basis for achieving vision 2020. It plays a prominent role in the determination of the level of participation of people in any development process, because it exposes them to new skills and ideas, and this enhances their efficiency, quality of life and productivity.

Socially, education brings out enlightenment. It plays a vital role in socialization, occupational preparation and selection as well as the development of self- conception. It also brings change in attitude, motivation and in initiation. Education also plays a vital role in the structural integration of a plural society by equalizing occupational, economic, and political opportunities, responsibility, rationality, loyalty, cooperation, a sense of coexistence, fair play and understanding. Most importantly education instills discipline and engenders honesty, hard work and morality.

Education also leads to cultural development, that is, it makes culture dynamic. A dynamic culture is crucial for development, because it demands that those cultural values that are not important to modernity are transformed or removed, while those that are positive are emphasized.

When people are educated, cultural transformation takes place and this is necessary for the achievement of the MDGS and vision 2020.

Again education raises the productivity of a society because it empowers its recipients with skills and techniques that help to raise their productivity, creativity and innovation necessary for the achievement of economic breakthrough in the modern world. This makes educated people society's agents of development because the skills and competences they have harness resources for socio-economic development.

Moreover, the teacher is the producer of all other professionals that are needed in various sectors of the society. Such professionals include Lawyers, Doctors, Nurses, Pharmacists, Engineers, Architects, Accountants to mention but a few. These professionals work in various sectors of the society and make meaningful contribution to national development.

A good teacher therefore, dispenses good teaching, which in turn produces good quality workforce like medical doctors, engineers, etc, all working towards the achievement of national goals that is national development. conversely, the consequence of poorly trained teachers is the production of half-baked medical doctors, who cannot treat the mildest ailment, engineers who cannot match theory with practice.

Conclusion

No nation can develop in any meaningful way without sound education system driven by highly skilled and committed teachers. This is only possible through teacher education which is the only foundation in any formal education. In support of this, the National Policy on Education (2004 revised) said that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers. For Nigeria to be among the 20 greatest economies in the world by 2020 we have to take the education of all Nigerians very serious.

Recommendations

To ensure quality in teaching profession, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. Teaching profession has to be given desired attention, so as to position it for teaching that could bring nation building.

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2. Adequate attention should be given to the training and re-training of teachers who will in turn dispense quality teaching at all levels.
3. Education share of the budget of both Federal and State governments should be increased, because education is a social venture that demands proper funding and adequate provision of materials.
4. There should be adequate provision of modern facilities like computers, multi- medias, modern buildings, etc in order to make learning conducive.
5. Seminars, workshops should be organized for all categories of teachers in order to help them to be abreast with new findings in the field of teaching and to keep them abreast of new developments and innovations in education.
6. There should be regular supervision/ inspection of educational institutions by government or supervisory agencies.

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