

ADMINISTRATION OF TEACHER EDUCATION FOR SKILLS ACQUISITION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The Federal Government of Nigeria is committed to the course of Teacher Education financially and in all ramifications, in view of the roles it plays in skills acquisition and national development. The recognition that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers has posed a serious challenge to the federal government. In view of the above statement, the paper examines the concepts of administration, teacher education and skills acquisition. Furthermore, the paper also examines the national objectives of teacher education, its problems as well as its prospects for skill acquisition in Nigeria. In conclusion, the paper recommends improved funding, adequate supply of qualified teachers, attractive conditions of service, constant review of the curriculum of teacher education as a panacea to the problems of teacher education in Nigeria.

Introduction

The role of teacher education for skills acquisition by the recipients and for national development cannot be overemphasized. This presupposes that, teacher education provides the necessary pedagogy for the teacher through adequate training to be able to perform his functions properly. The major function of the teacher is to impart knowledge using acceptable teaching method and instructional materials in a classroom situation. The teacher has to be properly trained to acquire professional skills in order to successfully carry out these functions.

One of the problems of teacher education in Nigeria today is associated with poor preparation of the teacher for the challenges of

teaching. This means that the quality of teacher education determines the quality of the teachers that are produced to teach in our schools. Therefore, if the nation aspires to produce the quality of teachers who are skillful for the challenges of imparting knowledge, then the quality of our teacher education needs to be-improved.

For the purpose of this paper, administration has been viewed as effective coordination of educational facilities, finance and human efforts to achieve educational goals. In-the same vein, teacher education is the training given to the would-be-teacher in an educational institution to prepare him or her for the challenges of imparting knowledge through teaching and learning. While skills acquisition may be viewed as physical and mental enablement acquired by going through a training programme in a well established institution to perform a particular function.

The Objectives of Teacher Education in Nigeria

The National objectives of teacher education as stated in the National Policy on Education (2004) are as follows:

- a) To produce highly motivated conscientious and efficient classroom teacher for all levels of our educational system;
- b) To encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
- c) To help teachers to fit into social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals;

- d) To provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to changing situations; and
- e) To enhance teachers commitment to the teaching profession.

In order to achieve the above national objectives of teacher education, the National Policy on Education (2004) emphasizes that all teachers in our educational institutions shall be professionally trained, and that teacher education programmes shall be structured to equip teachers for the effective performance of their duties. In spite of this promising policy statement, there are certain administrative problems militating against teacher education for skills acquisition in Nigeria.

Problems of Teacher Education for Skills Acquisition in Nigeria

Through empirical study, Ojo (1999) identified inadequate funding as a bane to effective teacher education programmes in Nigeria. According to him, inadequate funding that affects education sector in general also affects teacher education in Nigeria. Education is capital intensive and therefore substantial amount of money is required to pay teacher salary, procure educational facilities, expand existing facilities, embark on education research and to provide enabling environment for effective teaching and learning for skills acquisition in Nigeria.

Another problem of teacher education identified by Dare (2006) in another study is inadequate supply of educational facilities. Educational facilities in quantity and quality are required to prepare the teacher for skills acquisition for effective performance of their duties are often in short supply. As a result of this shortcoming, teaching and learning in most teacher education institutions has become more of theoretical than practical. The resultant effect of this is that, most teachers in training lack the

required teaching skills to carry out their duties effectively.

Ukeje (1999) in an empirical study also identified poor conditions of service as a bane to effective teacher education for skills acquisition in Nigeria. According to his finding, the teacher teaching in the teacher education institutions are not properly remunerated like their counterparts in similar establishments. This situation often dampens the morale of the teacher in putting in their best.

Bake (2000) in a study identified lack of interest on the part of the entrants into teacher education institutions as a factor for lack of skills acquisition. According to his finding, most of the entrants into teacher education institutions do not have genuine interest in the teaching profession. It must be mentioned that interest is a pre-requisite for skills acquisition in any educational programme.

Massazi (1998) also identified decline in education research as a problem facing teacher education for skills acquisition in Nigeria. According to the finding of his study, productive education research which is expected to identify likely problems for the achievement of the objectives of teacher education has declined as a result of unavailability of funds. Such education research which is also expected to continuously review the curriculum of teacher education to take care of the emerging social needs, the saturated labour market as well as the high rate of unemployment in the country is not put in place.

Teacher Education for Skills Acquisition in Nigeria

The commitment of the federal government of Nigeria to teacher education for skills acquisition is being demonstrated in practical terms in the areas of funding and administration. This is as a result of the recognition of teacher education as the producer of quality teachers and other professionals.

In spite of the various efforts made by the federal government, more fanatic efforts need to be advanced to improve teacher education for skills acquisition. These efforts include:

- a) Adequate funding
- b) Adequate supply of educational facilities
- c) Admission of right entrants
- d) Teacher preparation
- e) Teachers remuneration
- f) Training and re-training of teachers.

Adequate Funding

Adequate funding is a necessary pre-requisite to the administration of teacher education for skills acquisition. This according to Ojo (1999) will foster and facilitate prompt payment of teachers' salary, purchase of educational facilities, maintenance of the existing facilities, and to embark on education research. Federal government should increase educational funding and also sensitize other stakeholders in the education sector to contribute generously to education ventures. The federal government should take a bold step to comply with the 26% budgetary allocation to education as proposed by United Nation Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Adequate Supply of Educational Facilities

Coupled with the issue of adequate funding is also the importance of adequate supply of educational facilities. Supply of educational facilities in quality and quantity is very paramount to the acquisition of skills in the teacher education programmes. Adequate supply of educational facilities will make teaching more practical than theoretical. It must be mentioned at this point that practical teaching leads to skills acquisition not only in the teacher education institutions, but also in other educational institutions.

Admission of Right Entrants

Admission into the teacher education institutions should consider candidates who have the entry qualifications and interests. This is so because some people consider teacher education as a stepping stone for a better profession. Such people enter teacher institution because they have no other alternative at that particular point in time. Education administrator should include psychological test items in the JAMB examination which will be administered to all prospective candidates seeking admission into the teacher education institutions. The outcome of such qualifying examination will reflect those who wish to enter teacher education institution genuinely and with interest. It should be mentioned at this point that interest is an important tendency for skills acquisition in any educational programmes.

Teacher Preparation

The training of the teacher in the teacher education institutions should cover a wide range of experiences and not only the aspect of teaching and learning in the classroom. Teaching in the teacher education institutions should be more practical oriented than theoretical. This means that there should be more practical aspects of teaching and learning. Similarly, teaching practice exercise which is a major source for practical skills acquisition needs to be intensified. For effective skills acquisition, the teaching practice exercise should cover a period of one academic session just like the practice in other professions like the law and medicine.

Teacher Remuneration

The conditions of service of teachers should be reviewed from time to time to be in line with that their counterparts working in other establishments. The popular saying that teachers rewards are in heaven has come of age. Teachers' conditions of service should be

improved to attract able bodied men and women to the teaching professions for skills acquisition.

Training and Re-training of Teachers

The various newer concepts which have been introduced into the curriculum of teacher education pose challenges to the teacher. In order to cope with this new technology the teacher needs to be trained and re-trained to acquire new skills of teaching those newer concepts. In view of these challenges, the teacher needs to be encouraged to go on further studies, attend professional conferences, seminars and workshops periodically to acquire new skills and to update their knowledge. These various educational programmes will assist the teacher to be conversant with modern teaching skills required for effective performance of his duties.

Conclusion

Teacher education is very important for the educational development of any country. In order to make it skill acquisition oriented institution, adequate funding, supply of educational facilities, admission of the right entrants, effective teacher preparation, good teacher remuneration and training and re-training of teachers are necessary requirements that should be available to all teacher training institutions in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the discussion on the administration of teacher education for skills acquisition in Nigeria, the following recommendations are advanced as the way forward.

- 1) Federal Government should increase (he-funding of teacher education for the attainment of national objectives.
- 2) Federal Government in collaboration with other stakeholders in the education sector should ensure adequate supply of educational facilities, qualified and

- 3) competent personnel to teacher training institutions in *Nigeria*,
There is a need for improved conditions of service for teachers like their counterparts in similar establishments
- 4) The authority concerned needs to screen the would-be-teacher to ensure that only those that are qualified and interested are admitted into teacher education institutions.
- 5) Teacher education curriculum should be reviewed to take care of (he emerging social needs, saturated labour market as well as the high rate of unemployment in the country.

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