

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURE: THE WAY FORWARD

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Abstract

Resources in the education enterprise constitute one of the basic requirements for the achievement of effective teaching and learning. This is true of all levels of the educational system. Resources needed for the achievement of effective teaching and learning include human, material, fiscal and time. This paper focuses on human resources development. This is because the human resource combines other resources among others in the performance and achievement of stated goals in the educational system. The inadequacy of resources in both quantity and quality has been one of the greatest challenges to the achievement of stated goals for the educational system in Nigeria. Thus, this paper focuses on teacher education programme and recommends that private-public partnership (PPP) be encouraged in the area of human capital development, funding, provision of infrastructural and instructional facilities. Improvement on the availability of these resources would enhance quality teaching and learning and production of quality and quantity teachers for the teacher education programme.

Education is one of the essential social services which is also recognised to be the most powerful instrument of socioeconomic development. The important role that education plays in economic growth has continued overtime with the quest for technological and scientific development.

In order for the natural resources of a nation to be exploited to increase the nation's wealth, the human agent required must be found and made available. These human agents have to

be trained in the skills required for the processing, manufacturing, etc of these resources.

This paper focuses on the sustainability of teacher education programme in the production of quality human resources for the nation's educational system. It also examines the concept of teacher education, human development, sustainability of quality products of the system and the way forward in ensuring that quality is not compromised in the area of admission of qualified inputs for the system. Some of the recommendations made include that oral examination be conducted on those seeking admission into the teacher education programme so as to admit candidates who are qualified both on paper and in spoken english and train the trainers exercise be encouraged as a way of developing the human resources in the system.

The Concept of Teacher Education

Teacher education is a programme that focuses on the preparation and production of teachers both in quality and quantity for the different levels of the education system. In Nigeria, teacher education is given major emphasis in all educational planning and development since the federal government of Nigeria in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria-FRN, 2004) believes that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers. To further buttress this statement, the minimum qualification for entry into the teaching profession is the Nigeria Certificate in Education (N.C.E) which is

clearly emphasized in the national policy on education (FRN, 2004:33).

In the pursuance of this policy, five goals are stated for the achievement and preparation of quality teachers in Nigeria. These goals are the guide post around which the programme revolves. They are:

- a. Production of highly motivated conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system;
- b. Encouraging further, the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers
- c. Helping teachers to fit into social life of the community and the society at large and enhancing their commitment to national goals.
- d. Providing teachers with the intellectual and professional backgrounds, adequate for the assignment and making them adaptable to changing situations and
- e. Enhancing teachers commitment to the teaching profession.

These goals are further translated to workable documents in form of the curriculum in the various institutions where the teacher education programme is practised. The subjects cover core courses in the pedagogy, general studies in education (GSE) and also courses in different disciplines such as sciences, arts and social sciences, vocational education and in languages. To be able to carry out effective teaching and learning, quality manpower in form of academic and non academic staff is required in these institutions.

The institutions approved for the training of professional teachers in Nigeria include:

- a. Colleges of education (federal, state and private)

- b. Faculties of education in the universities
- c. Institutes of education in the universities
- d. National teachers institute
- e. Schools of education in the polytechnics
- f. National institutes for Nigeria languages
- g. National mathematical centres (NMC) (FRN, 2004:34).

It is worthy of note that sustainable development is not a fixed notion, but rather a process of change in the relationship between social, economic and natural system and processes. These interrelationships according to Ginken (1998), present a challenge to any nation in reconciling economic and social progress with safeguarding the global life support systems. This challenge relates then to the role of universities and all institutions of higher education, in increasing understanding of the issues at stake including that of production and sustenance of human resource development and thus calls for the institutions to lead and develop consistent future scenario and to increase awareness of problems and solutions in their educational programmes. Thus, there is the need to close the gap between theory and practice, ideals and reality in preparing coming generations for a sustainable future.

Building a Sustainable Future

Education, as an important tool for national development which is universally acclaimed can only be vigorously pursued and attained by the teacher as a key actor. Thus, teacher education programme needs to change the ways of thinking, linking the disciplines taught therein, providing the knowledge base, transmitting new skills so as to sustain the production of quality teachers for the nation's educational system. This fact is supported by Ospina (1998) who pointed out in a keynote address he delivered that higher education bears a particular important responsibility not only for generating the skills needed to find gainful

employment but to contribute constructively to the building of a sustainable future.

Therefore, the new vision of teacher education in Nigeria should be that of ethics and values. This will go a long way in instilling discipline and necessary virtues in the learners so as to move the country forward.

Factors that Enhance Sustainability of Human Resource Development

There are certain key factors that enhance the attainment of human resource development globally. These key factors as identified by Heller (1998) include increasing urbanization of countries including developing countries; globalization influenced by information technology; and the devolution of power in terms of decentralization and regionalization.

Additionally, chronic problems of poverty, consumerism, malnutrition, unemployment and illiteracy drive human actions in the direction of the non-sustainable use of resources. In this context, he saw investment in people, community learning and the participatory creation and design of systems as keys to sustainability.

In contributing to sustainability of the future, Dam-Mieras (1998) opined that whatever is taught in the higher institutions should reflect on the role in society, both at the local and global levels. This implies that students should be environmentally literate, capable of taking action in favour of sustainable development from their own discipline. Furthermore, institutions of learning should transmit knowledge to policy and decision makers and take a leading role in communication to the public. They should also train people to deal with complex social relations and bring a global, inter-cultural dimension to education; create a brain-storming scenario whereby the learners can brain storm and find solutions to problems collectively. This aspect is

in line with the goals of teacher education in Nigeria which also plays the role of shaping future capacities, innovations and attitudes.

Human Resource Development for Sustainable Future

Human resources in the educational institutions are the workforce which include the teaching personnel, non-teaching or ancillary personnel, consultants, resource persons, etc (Aliyu, 2012). However, the human resource along with the physical, material and financial resources are the inputs that all levels of the educational system require and process to produce the product of such institutions to help develop various sectors of the country's economy.

Nations of the world, including Nigeria, accept the fact that the growth of any nation depends largely on the available resources (human and material), effective and efficient use and proper management of these resources. This statement is supported by Yusuf (2010) when he posited that Nigeria is endowed with abundant human resources (abilities, capabilities, skills and competencies) which if properly harnessed and used effectively can lead to the achievement of the laudable national developmental goals.

Development on the other hand refers to the gradual changes that result in sustained improvement in the general well being of the citizens of any society. It has to do with the progression of the social, economic, political and cultural conditions of people (Asiyai, 2012). This implies sustained enhancement of the living and economic, mental and physical well being. It also involves equitable and sustainable access to quality healthcare, education, gainful employment, good sanitation, social participation, economic freedom including those of choice of religion, association and human rights. In the words of Scott and Gough (2004), development connotes the transformation of man

from the lower echelon of social organization to the highly advanced level in the society which is correspondingly qualitative and quantitative.

Sustainable development has been defined by several researchers. Notably among them is Asiyai (2012) who saw sustainable development as development that enables individuals to satisfy present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Zubaff and Maxim (2004) in their own contribution viewed sustainable development as a long lasting improvement; sustainable development is development that is intergenerational and that does not only generate economic growth but distributes its benefits equally, empowers people rather than marginalizes them. Its emphasis is on giving priority to the poor, enlarging their choices and opportunities and providing for their participation in decisions affecting them.

The basic tenets of sustainable human development are co-operation, empowerment, equity, justice, security and sustainability. It is therefore stable, consistent and lasting. From the on-going discussion, it can be inferred that human beings are at the center of concerns for sustainable development, hence, human resource development for sustainable future.

Teachers are the main actors in the teacher education programme in all institutions that practice it. Thus, the quality and quantity of teachers produced need not be compromised if the programme is to be in line with the tenets of sustainable development. The realization of sustainable development for teacher education programme like the universal basic education [UBE] is very embracing, requiring high active participation of parents, of the teachers, communities, private sectors, philanthropists, Non-Governmental Organisations [NGO's] state and federal governments in the management of the programme. Cudos to the National

Commission for Colleges of Education [NCCE] and Tertiary Education Trust Fund [TETFUND] intervention through sponsorship of staff of higher institutions of learning for conferences, workshops, further studies within and outside the country.

Conclusion

This paper has posited the importance of human resource as highly essential in the achievement of stated organizational goals including that of teacher education programme. The goals of teacher education programme as stated in the national policy on education (FRN, 2004) were visited and the production of quality and quantity teachers for the attainment of these goals was equally discussed.

Sustainable development which aims at satisfying the present needs without compromising the future needs was also discussed. For the sustainability of quality and quantity teacher production for any level of the education system in Nigeria, quality of admission requirement and quality of teachers employed must not be lowered nor compromised.

The Way Forward

In view of the importance of teacher education in the realisation of sustainable development in Nigeria, the writer is of the opinion that quality and quantity of production of teachers be upheld. In the area of admission of candidates, there should be no compromise in the area of entry requirement. Further more, teacher education programme should not be regarded as a dumping ground for failed candidates or those who cannot access university or polytechnic admission.

Public-private-participation should be encouraged in the funding and management of teacher education institutions. Since no learner can rise above the quality of his teachers, quality teachers should be employed for the programme.

Teachers should also serve as models and indeed professionalism should be adhered to. Teachers should also be accorded the utmost respect and recognition they deserve.

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