SUSTAINING QUALITY TEACHER EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

By

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Abstract
Teacher education in particular and education in general is to prepare students for participation in every aspect of life endeavour. Then if education in Nigeria is to meet this need and continue to play a vital role in the promotion of cognitive, affective and practical competence in this country and ensure the preservation of our cultural values, it is important therefore that the teachers who are responsible for helping the students to acquire the needed knowledge, skill and practical orientation essential for self actualization as well as for national development and sustainable growth should be effectively trained. Also the teachers as the pivot of all aspect of education need to be adequately motivated so that teacher education can respond to the changing vistas of disciplinary knowledge and skills as well as the school claim of the 21st century. The purpose of this paper therefore is to highlight the urgent need to improve the training of teachers in Nigeria and also to vividly highlight the importance of teacher education to the overall development of the nation. The paper also highlighted the various ways, teachers could be motivated in their Jobs by the government and other stakeholders, so as to achieve the set goals of the purpose of teacher education as enshrined in the National Policy on Education (NPF 2013). Nevertheless, the paper also explained how great, clear and convincing the value of teacher education is to the nation for sustainable growth and development.

Keywords: Teacher Education, Quality, Growth, Development and Sustainable.

Education can be defined as production and reproduction of knowledge of people’s ways of life (i.e. their culture) with the aim of preserving and maintaining the social structure that will be able to guarantee social order and changes in the society (Olamosu, 2000). Other explanation on this drives the point home, that education is one of the basic means of human and cultural self-realization as well as a means of realizing.
the productive power of a nation. Since culture differs from one society to another, every society ultimately has its own system for training and educating its youth. Accordingly, the goal of education and the method of approach may differ from place to place, nation to nation and people to people.

Education has always been and will continue to be one of the greatest hopes of any developing nation such as Nigeria. There is no wonder therefore that since Nigeria achieved her political independence; education has become a huge government venture which has witnessed a progressive evolution of government’s complete and dynamic intervention and active participation. The federal government as well as various state governments in Nigeria has adopted education as an instrument for achieving socio-economic and political development (NPF, 2013). It is in realization of this great hope that the various Nigerian governments have always tried to allocate substantial portion of their annual budgets on education.

Today, the only visible sign of government financial investments on education is represented by phenomenal increases in the number of educational institutions as well as student’s enrolments in all the states of the country. This, it is common to say today that within the last few years, the number of educational institutions have doubled or tripled in some cases while at the same time, student enrolments have increased upward of about 100 percent and above in some cases. In fact the development of education in Nigeria lies in the fact that the Federal Government has stated that education will continue to be given a major emphasis in all our educational planning because no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers (NPF 2013).

Moreover, no one in Nigeria today, would think of abolishing the country’s educational system. Its values to individuals and society are great clear and convincing. Education according to Bowen (1980) as quoted by Idogho (2002), is intended to help students develop as persons in three respects:

1. Cognitive learning by expanding their knowledge and intellectual powers.
2. Affective development by enhancing their moral, religious and emotional interests and sensibilities; and
3. Practical citizenship, work, family life and other practical affairs.

This is the opinion of Bowen (1980) as quoted Idogho (2002), who writes that education is to equip students to view their own society with some detachment, to compare it with other societies to discover discrepancies between its aspiration and its realities, to gain perspective on its social problems and shortcomings and to acquire the will as well as the political and technical skills needed to work for change. If education in Nigeria is to survive and continue to play a vital role in the promotion of cognitive, affective and practical competence in individuals and ensure the preservation of our cultural values, it is important that the teachers who are responsible for helping the students to acquire the knowledge, skill and practical orientation essential for self as well as for national development should be effectively trained and motivated. The purpose of the paper, therefore, is to highlight the urgent need to improve the quality of teachers at all levels and so show how teachers should be trained and motivated in their jobs by the government and other interested bodies.
Teacher Education in Nigeria

Teacher education is a program related with teacher proficiency and competence that would make them competent enough to face new challenges in the education (Gajpal 2014). Now a days the field of education is not only limited with books but has broadened in various now horizons. Development and challenges in education have affected teacher educations necessitating review and reforms. It demands understanding with investigating minds, assimilating the required transformations, accommodating and responding to the universal needs. Therefore, the nation needs to train teachers with new perspectives as the outer world is in the classroom and schools are opening to the world.

According to Gajpal (2014), a teacher is the most important element in any educational program. He plays a central role in implementation of educational process at any stage. The level of achievement of a learner is determined by teacher competence. So the quality of education basically depends on the quality of teachers. As Kothari Commission (1998) said of Indian and quoted by Gajpal (2014) “The destiny of the nation is being shaped in its classrooms”. This assertion is also applicable to Nigeria. As the population of Nigeria is growing very rapidly day by day the need for well qualified and professionally trained teachers will also increase in the coming years. So lots of efforts should be made to improve teacher education. Today there are new expectations for education where the focus is on having teachers to be futurist leaders to ensure sustainable education.

According to Fafunwa (1970) as quoted by Esan (1993), of all the educational problems that beset the African countries today none is as persistent and as agonizing as the one relating to the training of the competent teachers. The point has been fully made that there can be no meaningful quantitative and / or qualitative education, even in the midst of relevant curricula, adequate infrastructural facilities and instructional materials without the aid of competent teachers produced by a well designed teacher education programmed. In general teacher education is usually related to the ever recurring problem of trained manpower needs to handle the educational programme in the society. Thus the purpose of teacher education in Nigeria as enshrine in the National Policy on Education includes: -

(a) To produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system.
(b) To encourage further the spirit of enquiring and creativity in teachers.
(c) To help teachers 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 backgrounds adequate for their assignment and to make them adoptable to any changing situation not only in the life of their country, but in the wider world,
(e) To enhance teachers commitment to teaching profession.

The hope however, is that all teachers in Nigeria education institutions will be professionally trained so that the nation will have quality teachers. The task of
providing the much required professional teacher training has been assigned to the following institutions in Nigeria;

1. Colleges of education
2. National teacher institute
3. Institute of education
4. University faculty of education

Indeed, the foregoing institutions have always played a leading role in the training of teachers for the various educational institutions in Nigeria. But as was expected educational system is dynamic, so there is need to step up the mode of training teachers to meet the challenges of the new world order. This is the only antidote to sustain quality teacher education for sustainable growth and development in Nigeria. Education is the springboard for development; hence Onwamere (2006) describes education as the springboard for social-political, economic and cultural development that enhances the production of skilled manpower for national development. However, this cannot be achieved without well trained, knowledgeable and highly motivated teachers. Since no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers as recognized by the national policy on education (NPF 2013) the teacher becomes the hub on which the education system rotates. Therefore, teachers are the key elements in achieving sustainable national development. This implies that teacher education is a fundamental form of education that should be functional and solid in all ramifications, so as to meet the present challenges of the 21st century.

Qualifications for Teaching

Teacher education or teacher training refers to the policies, procedures, and provision designed to equip (prospective) teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviourss, and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school and wider community (Wikipedia 2017). However all over Africa and in the world over, government are faced with growing numbers of students without comparable increases in the numbers of trained teachers.

A teacher cannot enlighten his pupils if he himself is ignorant. It is important therefore that a good deal of emphasis should be given during training to make the student a well informed teacher. After school and throughout his career he should always be learning and improving himself. He must have an active mind and he must keep it sharp by constant activity. This is done through private study, discussion with others on topic that exercise the intellect and by developing habits of mental activity. If a teacher ceases to learn, his mind will become a blind leader of the blind.

According to Wikipedia “A teaching qualification is one of a number of academic and professional degrees that enables a person to become a registered teacher. Examples of teaching qualification include the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), the Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) and the Bachelor of Education (B.ed)” Also at lower level in Nigeria there is the National Certificate in Education (NCE). Incidentally, these are the various categories of teachers in the Nigerian school system. A brief history of teacher education in Nigeria revealed that
there was no formal training for early teachers. They started as catechists performing many functions, such as teaching catechism or giving religious instruction to children. Well, since the establishment of schools by the missionaries in Nigeria efforts have been made to give adequate training to men and women upon whom the education of the natives’ children rested. This is because the proprietors of these schools realized that for quality of instruction in this schools systems, men and women serving as teachers within the system must first be properly trained, both in academics and otherwise.

The training of the teacher is very paramount in the educational system of any nation. However, not just half hazard and in uncoordinated and unstructured programmed for teachers, but a well structured, functional and highly motivated teacher programmed to meet the challenges of the present technological age. Since teachers are the only audio-visual aids that appear in every lesson and they are memorable because they are frequently associated with some emotional experience. What will students remember about teachers when they have forgotten the lesson? Will they not remember whether the teacher is kind, honest, fair, strict, proud, etc? So, besides, academic qualifications teacher need to develop human qualities of personality and character that will make him/her a better teacher.

Below are some of the main qualities which make a successful teacher.

1. **Physical energy** – The teacher who burns himself up in his own affairs will have no fire left for his teaching.
2. **Perseverance** - Teachers often have to face opposition from other teachers. Perseverance takes them along the course towards their goal despite opposition. It is intelligent resolve to follow what is the right course despite every obstacle.
3. **Responsibility** – A sense of responsibility requires that he should be aware of what has been entrusted to him and that he should always work in the best interest of the students.
4. **Initiative** – The teacher with initiative will never be a dull teacher. The best teachers possess great initiative.
5. **Self – Control** – If a teacher is unable to control himself, he is not likely to be a suitable person to control others.
6. **Decisiveness** – Students respect the teacher who is business like, knows what he wants and means what he says.
7. **Sincerity** – It means doing a thorough job in the classroom, not just to impress others, but to achieve sound results.
8. **Honour** – Honour shows itself in pleasantness, cheerfulness, friendliness, a sympathetic understanding manner with students and a balance attitude towards events both good and bad. This is an asset, because it makes the teacher approachable.
9. **Loyalty** – Loyalty to a person or organization means doing the best you can for them. Loyalty requires a high sense of duty often involving self-sacrifice.
10. **Leadership** – The teacher by the nature of his job is a leader. Whether you lead well or badly depend on yourself. Your followers must see you as an image worthy of their respect.
When a teacher loses half of these qualities, no matter the certificate you possess for teaching, he/she loses the respect of his students, his most valuable qualification for teaching.

Motivating Teachers in Sustaining Quality Education in Nigeria

There are various reasons why teachers should be motivated in their work. There is an adage, which say, a hungry man is an angry man’. What then is Motivation? According to International Dictionary of Management (1990) as quoted by Idogho (2002), motivation is the process or factors that cause people to act or behave in certain ways. From this definition, motivation is concerned both with identifying the triggers for behaviour and understanding how and why human beings behave in certain ways in given circumstances.

Therefore, educational standard to improve the quality assurance for the overall development and sustainable growth in Nigeria teachers need to be motivated. Education is the key that unlocks the door to modernization, but it is the teacher who holds the key to the door. The teacher when motivated is alive to his/her responsibilities and raises his output. With his new knowledge, ideas, modern skills, he raises his work output and updates his student’s knowledge. Adequate motivation of the teachers makes them to develop the traits of honesty, sincerity and a conducive atmosphere in their places of work. They are just and fair in their dealings with their students. They are quick to admit their faults and weakness and readily accept corrections from their superior. They are eager to adapt to change introduced to better the lot of the students and the institution. So, to sustain quality education in Nigeria, teachers who are the key molders of education need to be highly motivated.

Nevertheless, the best way of motivating teachers is to put in place a comprehensive welfare package designed to better their lot not only as teachers but also as members of the society in which they live. Some of the ways to motivate teachers to enhance and sustain quality education are as follows;

1. Recognition: Teachers need recognition. Their efforts in teaching students should be recognized and appreciated.

2. Regular and Prompt Payment of Salaries and Allowances: Irregular and overdue payment of salaries and allowances for teachers have been a thorny issue in the work and life of the teacher in this country. This irregularity in the payment of salaries can dampen the efforts of teachers.

3. Responsibility: Teachers should be given responsibility and authority that are commensurate with the assigned responsibility.

4. Promotion of Teachers: They should be promoted as and when due. Regular promotion should be part of the fruits of their labour, which enhances and sustains productivity.

5. In-Service Training: In-service training is needed by the teachers to update their knowledge of the subjects they teach and to be self-actualized.

6. Sponsored Conference, Seminars and Workshops: Teachers should be sponsored to attend conferences, seminars and workshop at least once a year. This will
give them the opportunity to rub minds with other educationist thereby keeping them at breast of modern trends in education.

However, when teachers are motivated in the desired manner, they become contented. Unethical conduct will be reduced or eliminated. They will be satisfied with the much they get knowing full well why and how they get what they get and knowing what to expect as their dues in future. This will make them to be considerate, dependable, committed to their work and induce trust and caring attitude, which are specific workplace behaviour, Cherniss (2001). The student will naturally try to reciprocate this by putting in their best in turn raises the moral and academic tone of the nation’s intuitions, thereby promoting development and sustainable growth. As Okojie (2009), put it, rewards even in tokens have general motivating influence on normal human beings to put their best. Nigeria has already institutionalized the culture of National Awards. It is strongly suggested that “Teacher of the Year” should be rewarded as an incentive for other teachers to improve their productivity. In the same way, the best-managed schools could be indentified and the heads of such schools duly rewarded.

**Conclusion**

However the importance of quality teacher to the nation cannot be underestimated. In view of this, Ipaye (2002) says “the spinal cord of every educational system at every level is the teacher when and if the teacher becomes broken; education becomes derelict and broken too”. This means that in order not to allow the educational system to be broken, every society should aspire to maintain teacher quality. Ipaye (2002) also notes that the teacher maintains and improves educational standards, gives educational content and context the desired and expected propagation, innovates the curriculum and gives it a new look, makes it more relevant to the needs of the society and makes education meet the expectations of the nation, get it to truly reflect the philosophy of the nation and make it transmit the culture of the people. Since a teacher improves and maintains educational standards for the nation, it then becomes necessary to assure production of quality teachers in Nigeria by institutions meant for production of teachers. No nation can rise above the standards set and taught by its intellectuals. Therefore, the quality of education provided in any society and the nature of the change effected by that education are both dependent on the quality of teachers and the effectiveness of their teaching in schools. If teachers are apathetic, uncommitted, uninspired, lazy and unmotivated, the whole nation is doomed.

**Recommendation**

Human capacity building and the brainpower are a major capital assert of any country and the possibility of economic transformation to the tertiary and knowledge based stage is a function of well trained teachers of the society. So, for the nation to actualize the dream of sustainable growth and development, the production of quality teacher for our education of system is very paramount, hence the following recommendation.
1. There is need for partnership among the governments, communities and community organization, individuals, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector in the training of Teachers. This will help to create the necessary environment for achieving the set goal of having quality teachers.

2. Co-operate bodies in the private sector should take more interest in funding programmes pertaining to education in educational institutions, such as procurement of equipment, award of scholarships to education students etc.

3. Professional organizations and educational institutions should sponsor periodic seminars, conferences and workshop for teachers.

4. Goals setting strategies should be used in the training of teachers. The goal of teacher educations as contained in the national policy in education (NPF 2013) should be redefined, restated, prioritizes and recalculated among the stakeholders in education in Nigeria.

References


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