

TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: PROGRAMMES AND GOALS FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The problem of good and quality education in Nigeria is traceable to underfunding by all levels of government which in turn hindered sustainable development. Teacher education is the process which train prospective teachers updates qualified teachers knowledge and skills. To actualize this task, the goals of teacher education should be adhered strictly. This paper x rayed the goals of teacher education and professionalization of teacher education in Nigeria. It also highlighted the problems of teacher education in Nigeria as well as how to promote sustainable national development through teacher education. The paper recommended that government and stakeholders should fund teacher education adequately, teacher education curriculum should be reviewed and teachers union should assist to enforce code of ethics of the teaching profession.

Keywords: Development, Education, School, Teachers

The importance of education to human existence cannot be overemphasized. Generally, education is regarded as a human right that should be accorded to all humans that is why numerous international human right organizations considered education as a fundamental human right. However, the problem of good quality education in Nigeria is

traceable to inadequate funding at all levels of government which has in turn hindered sustainable national development.

Teaching involves the use of wide range of knowledge about a subject matter being taught. Teachers who are in centre of teaching and the educational system are very important in the general development of the nation. Teacher education is the process which train prospective teachers and updates qualified teachers knowledge and skills in the form of continuous professional development (Nnokem and Sule,2017).

Osuji, (2009) opined that teacher education is the professional education of teachers towards attainment of attitudes, skills and knowledge that will make them efficient and effective in their work in accordance with the need of the society at any point in time. In a nutshell, teacher education is an organized institution programmed for the professional training and development of those in the art and science of teaching which includes pre-service and in-service programme. Teacher education is also regarded as the policies and procedures designed to equip teachers with the knowledge, attitudes and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom and the wider society.

Umar (2003) defined teacher education as pre-service and in-service programmes meant to produce professionally qualified teachers and enhance the quality of teachers already in service.

On the basis of the understanding of teacher education, this paper focuses on teacher education in Nigeria: programmes and goals for sustainable national development. The paper x-rayed the goals of teacher education, professionalization of teacher education, problems of teacher education and promoting sustainable national development through teacher education.

Goals of Teacher Education

The National Policy on Education (2004) outlined the goals of teacher education as follows;

1. To produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our education system.
2. To encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teacher.
3. To help teachers to fit into the social life of the community and society at large and to enhance their commitment of national goals.
4. To provide teachers with 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, and
5. To enhance teachers commitment to the teaching profession.

From the above mentioned goals of teacher education, the National Policy on Education (2004) emphasized that all teachers in our educational institutions should be professionally trained and teacher education programmes should be structured to equip teachers for effective performance in their duties.

Professionalization of Teacher Education

The teaching profession has metamorphosed from one level to another over the years. Oluremi (2015) stated that from inception, to teach in primary schools, the Grade 11 Teachers Certificate is required. But this was eliminated in 1998 when the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) became the required qualification for all primary and junior secondary school teachers. In order to upgrade those with Grade 11 teachers Certificate, the government established the National Teachers Institute (NTI) to organize programmes that would upgrade teachers' qualification to the NCE level. Also, a Bachelor of Education programme with the NTI received endorsement of the government at the end of 2000. Ozano (2013) stated that these were aimed in upgrading and professionalizing the teaching profession.

Yusuf, Afolabi and Oyetayo (2014) stated the strategies to be adopted by the government to fully professionalize teaching. They suggested that government should ensure immediate commencement of work by the Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) to be assisted by the State Teacher Registration Council in every state of the federation to be charged with the responsibility of teachers' registration, accreditation, certification, promotion, development, discipline and making regulations to control the practice of teaching as a profession.

Also, government should make genuine effort towards modernizing teacher education programme. Computer science, instructional technology, classroom management, media and other communication courses should be included in the teacher education programme to promote capacity building, improvisation and utilization of resources for effective teaching and learning in the classroom.

Lastly, the teachers organization like the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) should be fully represented and be active to safeguard the teaching profession. They should enforce members' compliance with code of ethics, inspire members to develop and maintain professional culture. They should assist the government in the provision of developmental programmes and equally restrict entry into the teaching profession (Yusuf, Afolabi and Oyetayo, 2014)

Problems of Teacher Education in Nigeria

Over the years, teacher education has been faced with challenges resulting from socio-economic, political and technological advancement. Below are some of the problems;

1. **Poor funding:** Ojo(1999) identified inadequate funding as a bane to effective teacher education programme. Education is capital intensive, therefore sustainable amount of fund is required to pay teachers emolument, procure educational facilities, expand existing facilities, embark on education research and provide enabling environment for effective teaching and learning.
2. **Inadequate educational facilities:** Another problem as identified by Dare (2006) is inadequate supply of educational facilities. Education facilities in quantity and quality required to prepare teacher for effective performance of duties are often in short supply. This has resulted in theoretical teaching rather than practical work in most teacher education institution. The effect of this is that most teachers in training lack the required teaching skills to function effectively.
3. **Attitude of Entrants:** Bake (2000) in a study identified lack of interest on the part of the entrants into teacher education institutions. According to him, most of the entrants into teacher education institution do not have genuine interest in the teaching profession.
4. **Teaching Practice:** Teaching practice is an important part of teacher education programme. However, little attention is given to the effective organization of teaching practice in the teacher training institution. There is indeed a wide variation in the amount of time that teacher trainees spent on teaching practice. Some institutions organize teaching practice for a whole term, some six weeks and some in a whole year. These differences affect standard and invariably quality of teacher education generally. In addition, teaching practice supervisor is susceptible to enormous biasing factors (Edumen and Osagie-Obazee, 2016). Also, some teaching practice assessment instrument are subjective and interpreted in various ways depending on the supervisors orientation, training and disposition.
5. **The Quality of Teacher Education Programme:** The quality of teacher education in Nigeria is very much in doubt. Teacher education has not been innovative in relation to instructional methods. Outdated textbook and teaching methods are still very much in use. The curriculum practices are theory oriented rather than actual practice in the world of work. In addition, the quality of the programme is also largely determined by those who teach the teachers. However, it is shocking that most teacher educators cannot be described as professional teachers since they possess degree such as B. A (Hon), B,Sc (Hon) etc in single subject discipline

without educational background. The resultant effect on teacher education is declining in standard and quality. Okolo(2013) noted that the purpose of establishing the National Commission of Colleges of Education (NCCE), Nigeria Universities Commission (NUC) etc which have supervisory functions over teacher education in the respective institution is to institutionalize quality assurance and evaluation. For these reasons, these agencies have solely utilized the accreditation approach than the more dynamic approaches of holistic stakeholders' evaluation and peer-review mechanism for teacher education (Nnoken and Sule, 2017). The later approach ensures more of the institutionalization of quality assurance and evaluation for both pre service and in –service teacher education programmes.

Promoting Sustainable National Development in Nigeria through Teacher Education

Teacher education is an indispensable tool to national development. Okemakinde, Adewuyi and Alabi (2013) noted that for national development to be attained there is need to give priority to investment in human capacity through teacher education. If individuals are well educated, they will engage themselves effectively in profitable ventures which in turn enhance the development of the society. It is important to note that the vital instructional mechanism for developing human skills and knowledge is the formal educational system through teacher education. A teacher encourage, support and facilitate teaching/learning situation that enable learners to discover their talents, to realize their physical and intellectual potentials to the fullest, to develop characters and desirable social and human value to function as responsible citizens.

Education has increasingly become important to the success of both individuals and nations. Growing evidence demonstrates that among all educational resources, teacher's abilities are especially critical contributions to students' learning and consequently the success of a nation to advance in its economic, social and political spheres Throughout the world, reform and innovation initiatives by nations have triggered much decision about the structures of teacher education and training programs If the child is the centre of educational system, teachers are the hub of the educational process. For it is upon their number, their education and training, their quality and devotion to duty, their effectiveness and efficiency and their competence and their productivity depend on the effectiveness, the capability and the possibilities of the entire educational system and enterprise. The realization of the potentialities of organized education as a veritable instrument for change and national development depends largely on the teachers. Excellent educational policies are meaningless unless there are equally

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excellent teachers to see to their realization. Various governments may vote sufficient funds as enabling resource for education, adequate materials resources may be procured, but unless the teachers are properly prepared and positively motivated, little productivity will occur.

The services of the teacher towards modernization and sustainable development cannot be overemphasized. It is therefore, understandable that no profession and adequate manpower for the education sector can be successful without competent teachers to handle the training programme. Hence, teacher education deserves the highest priority in the training and education of teachers. According to Okolo(2013) education is the main stay of human capital development. Therefore, no national development can take place without an obvious human capital agenda. Human capital development is a function of education at all levels. Education itself can only be human capital development oriented if it is functional, qualitative and knowledge economy driven, a service that can only be done by teachers produced from a dynamic and innovative teacher education system.

Nnoken and Sule (2017) asserted that of all instrument to national development, functional and quality education remain the most potent tool, but the system must be subject to reforms and repositioning as static teacher education systems do not develop societies. Hence, education can only be engineered and utilized for national development if teacher education is equally re-planned and up-scaled to serve the purpose. In a nutshell, teacher education has to be refocused in several respects to be of utility value to national development.

Conclusion

Teacher education is very important for sustainable national development. This paper has discussed teacher education: programmes, goals for sustainable national development. It highlighted the goals of teacher education, need to effectively professionalized teacher education. The problems of teacher education were discussed and how sustainable national development can be promoted through teacher education.

Recommendations.

From the foregoing discussions the following recommendations were made.

1. The federal government and other stakeholders should increase funding of teacher education as well as ensure adequate supply of educational facilities, qualified and competent personnel to teacher training institution in Nigeria. This will help in the attainment of national goals.

2. Teacher education curriculum should be reviewed to take care of the emerging social needs.
3. There is need to re-organize the Teacher Registration Council TRCN as presently constituted to be more proactive in enforcing code of ethics and standard of the teaching profession.
4. Government need to be committed to the welfare of teachers through regular payment of emolument and allowances, improved condition of service, regular promotion and recognition of teachers in decision making process on matters affecting their profession.

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