

POTENTIALS OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN PROVIDING MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

Education is often perceived as both a process and product; the process, being what the teacher (transmitter) and student (receiver) do while the product is what the receiver is capable of doing as a consequence of what he has received during the processes of learning. Formal education takes place in schools and institutions manned by teachers based on planned curriculum. Curriculum designers may have an impressive school curriculum on the political philosophy of the nation; the people's socio-economic values; mores and national aspirations; it is incontrovertible that it is the teacher who in the final analysis translates policies into practices and programmes into actions (Ukeje, 1991). That means if education is to transmit worthwhile values involving knowledge and understanding, then the teacher's role becomes one of the most formidable determinants for the provision of manpower development. Teacher education will harmonize the realization of the national objectives and the philosophy of "Nigerian education through the activities and attitudes that will ensure self-realization, better human relationship, individual attitudes and national consciousness, national unity etc (NPE, 1998:1). Thus, the forgoing is intended to facilitate our appraisal of the teacher towards manpower development, hence, the topic potentials of teacher education in manpower development of Nigeria will therefore focus on formr.1 teacher education, its utilities and finally, the contribution of teachers towards manpower development will be highlighted.

Introduction

In any nation, the issue of nationalism and development rests squarely with the development of a formidable core of teachers.

When we talk of development, it is obvious that it cannot be accomplished without competent teachers and to train competent teachers require competent educators which in turn depend on the institutional development of the nation. There must be teachers who are dedicated to their profession and willing to sacrifice the attractions of wealth for gratification of another type.

There is certainly not by any stretch of the imagination accomplished without the strategical involvement of teacher and other segments of the educational profession. This is as a result of the fad that it is through the medium of education that the various categories of manpower are developed. It is the manpower resources that manipulate the available physical and financial resources to provide the services and functions that eventually bring about economic and national development (Malinson 1975:116; and Egbc, 1995:15).

Without well trained and well-developed manpower resources, no meaningful economic and national development can take place. Thus, Harbison and Myers (1964) have shown that there is positive correlation between composite index of human resources development and Gross National Product (GNP) per capita. This implies that the best means of developing human resources and human capital is through education. Within the context, or framework of education, teachers are at the fore; of any resources development and also the major agent through which the curriculum finds in fulfillment and actualization. That means teachers need to be highly productive if the immediate and long term objectives of education are to be achieved.

The critical importance of teachers as key agents of curriculum implementation has been recognized by the Federal Government of Nigeria in its National Policy on Education (1998:38), the teacher education will continue to be given a major emphasis in all our educational planning because "No educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers". At this point in time, one will look at the meanings of some key words that come into play in this paper.

Education

Education can be seen as the acquisition of knowledge, the aggregate of all the processes through which a person develops ability, attitudes and others forms of behaviours with positive values in the society in which he/she lives.

Fafunwa (1969) perceived education as all efforts conscious and direct, incidental and indirect, made by a given society to accomplish certain objectives that are considered desirable in terms of the individual's own needs as well as the society which education is based.

This entails that education can be acquired formally through the school system and informally in the family, on the job training, through apprenticeship, adult programme, various media and self improvement etc. These methods of acquisition are important but it is the end product that is most desirable. The desirable and the expected should be permanent change in behaviour which affects attitudes and skills of the recipient.

In Nigeria education is expected to lead to: -(i) The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity (ii) The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the

survival of the individual and the Nigerian society. (iii)The training of the mind in understanding of the world.

(iv)The acquisition of appropriate skills and abilities both mental and physical as an equipment with which the individual lives and contributes to the development of the society (NPE, .1998).

Who is a Teacher? Lassa (1993) posits that a teacher is:- "the initiator of the learning process, the facilitator of the learning skills, the assessor of the learning efficiency and indeed", the pivotal element in the entire educational development. If these assertions are sound, then, the question is where else best could the teachers acquire the competence and professional expertise with which to perform their roles, if there are no teacher education institutions with a true sense of aspirations.

Webster Dictionary (1978) in Adoga (2002) defined a teacher as: -One who teaches or instructs. One' who instructs in religion. One who preaches without ordination.

It further gives nine (9) broad synonyms of a teacher as instructor, preceptor, pedagogue, school master tutor¹, professor, educator, educationist, and school mistress. For the purpose of this paper, I will limit the meaning to one who stimulates learning and imparts knowledge formally in an organized school system.

Teacher Education

It is a type of education that prepares, or trains individuals to become teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for teaching and learning, (Adoga, 2002),

Teacher education will harmonize the realization of the national objectives and the philosophy of Nigerian education through activities and attitudes that will ensure self realization, better human relationship, individual and national consciousness, national unity as well as social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological progress (NPE 1981:1).

Teacher education in Nigeria is the type that will produce in adequate numbers and quality the teachers whose services will:

- (a) Produce a highly motivated, respected and rated professionalized service to be admired the world over.
- (b) Meet the manpower needs of the nation.
- (c) Transform Nigeria from consumer nation to a producer or industrial nation.
- (d) Enthroned order in the morally depraved society.
- (e) Help raise the standard of living of all Nigerians.
- (f) Help reduce crimes through moral and civic education.
- (g) Facilitate and sustain the unity, development and wealth of the nation,
- (h) Produce high standard at all levels of our educational system

(Lassa, 1998) in Kabiru et al (1998:106).

Organs Responsible for Teacher Education in Nigeria

Over the years, very many institutions were established to provide professional training needed for self and national development. Some of these organs saddled with the responsibility a providing manpower needs for the country are: - Grade II Teachers Colleges.

Advanced Teachers College.

Colleges of Education.

National Teacher Institute.

Faculties of Education in Nigerian Universities etc.

Some professional bodies such as: -

Curriculum Association of Nigeria. Educational Research Council.

National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) etc have engaged on programmes aimed at producing the needed manpower in this country.

.But it should be appreciated that the mission of teacher education in Nigeria is multi.-dimensional in scope. It pervades everything that could be said about the job of teaching and the production of professional teachers that would be well-adjusted, humane, self reliant, productive and conforming to the ethics of the teaching profession.

From the social importance of education to the survival of the nation, the critical role of teacher in education process is appreciated. On this premise therefore, Malinson (1975:116) in Kabin (1998) (ed.) suggested that the quality and caliber of teachers that serve the educational system of country could serve as a valid index of that country's development and progress. In a precise terra therefore; "as the school, so the society; as the teacher, so as the school". Therefore, teacher education in Nigeria should be the production of professionally oriented teachers who would actualize manpower services model of education. Kirts (1988) indicated th^teaching involves the mastery of an extensive repertoire of skills without which no matter how penetrating a person's intellectual capacities may be, he or she will be pedagogically inept. This means that teacher education should strive for excellence in the preparation of teachers that would be free from routine roles rather it should be equipped with knowledge in-depth in their special areas and technical strategies in responding to the dynamics of development in progressive Nigeria.

Education and National Development

National development is achieved through the acceleration 'of national planning. Nations, development involves socio-cultural reconstruction, economic development, political stability an national integration (Egbe, 1985:19).'

In order words, national development includes modernization, material improvement an advancement, industrialization, scientific and technological progress is through the acquisition a intellectual and manipulative skills. These skills are acquired by man through education and training hence the importance of human resource development or manpower development in the process o nation building.

The point there is that, it is through educational system of a country that agriculturists, administrators, technicians, architects, educationists, teachers, lawyers, doctors are produced through the able hands of teachers, hence the importance of teacher education. Various agents or expert mentioned above are change agents and generators of ideas that pilot the development of any nation Thus, the role of education in national development of any nation is seen in relation to the development found to be the quantity and quality of occupational skills in modern society.

Teacher Education and Manpower Development

Education is the process of building the knowledge, skills, the working abilities and innate capabilities of all people in the society (Harbison, 1964).

Manpower refers to the managerial, scientific, engineering, technical and other skills employed or which should be employed to design and develop organization and manage productive and service enterprise and economic institutions (Egbe, 1985). Manpower therefore is the development of talent, knowledge and the skills of the people for the production of goods and services.

Education is therefore an important aspect of manpower development piloted by teachers. The role education plays in production, economic growth is in the area of technical progress which is an input of physical capital, manpower and national resources.

The social, political, economic and technological growth of any nation are piloted by the various educated people like political leaders, lawyers, engineers, doctors etc. The training given to these experts require planning, investment and management of national education system which involves integrated learning processed and handled by agents of teacher education, hence their importance in manpower development. Since the educational system is large and complex and relate to other sub-sectors required for nation building, it should be taken into consideration in national planning. This entails that if teacher education in Nigeria would cope with the educational challenges of this new era to be an agent of manpower development.

Since the place of teacher education in manpower development cannot be divorced from education generally, the mission of teacher education should be to turn out teachers who are equipped to effectively face the challenges of the society where truth and justice prevail (Kabiru, 1998:109).

The educational challenges prevailing in contemporary Nigeria's socio-political outlook include among others population growth and technological development. In the case of population growth, teachers should be prepared to do with oversize classes; under-school aged pupils and thirdly high rate of delinquency and violence, drug abuse and cultism in schools.

In area of technological advancement, teacher educations and teachers should be prepared to face the challenges as: -

- (i) Smart and talented children of the (i) computer age and therefore prospective teachers may be required to be computer literate, (ii) Another challenge for teacher education is how to handle spill over of failed educational policies like education for all by the year 2000 remain a mere wish but not obtainable, (iii) Another crucial

challenge is the funding of teacher education and education generally plus the professional status of teacher need re-thinking if teachers should be an agents of manpower development. (iv) More importantly is the quality control right from the initial recruitment into Colleges of Education for the sustenance of standards. Our quest for true teacher education for manpower development should be a continuous one because we must seek for innovations through research and exploration of new realms of attaining excellence (Lassa, 1998).

Recommendations

Since teacher education has to do with everything about the teaching and the production of professional teachers, it should conform to the ethics of teaching profession. Some of the goals of 6-3-3-4 system of education are not within reach, primarily because of inadequate financial resources and the dearth of evaluated teachers. This translates to the need for the efforts over and above, the call of duty for those in the teacher training profession. For training the needed manpower in the country therefore teacher education programme must emphasise the production of the right quality teachers since the purpose of teacher education is educating the educators.

The need for definite policy of teacher education in the country. Changes in educational policy and practices have influenced the notion of teacher education. The brief account of the evaluation and practices in the training and supply teachers has shown that each time there is a crisis in the supply of teachers some adhoc arrangement was made. This did not and will not help matters if teachers should act as the vanguard for manpower development in Nigeria.

It should be noted that, the self and social image of teachers in the society should be redefined. There is need to harmonize the status of teachers to avoid discrimination in the method of recruitment, the content and methods of training, the goals and objectives of training, the salaries and other condition of services of teachers should be addressed. Teacher institutions responsible for the training of teachers for the purpose of manpower development in the country should emphasis training that is deep rooted in theoretical and applied knowledge thoroughly grounded in the subject matter, a good foundation in pedagogy of the subject matter, supervised internships in general school management, classroom training and organization of out of school activities (Adesina, 1985:215).

The recommendations above have their financial implications. This raises a question of: adequate funding of institutions responsible for the production of teachers in the country. That means institutions like the Colleges of Education should be strengthened in staff, physical facilities, equipment etc to enable them teach up to degree level to provide the needed manpower of Nigeria.

In precise term therefore, adequate teacher education scheme is essential for optimal human and national development.

Conclusion

An attempt has been made to highlight the importance of teacher education in national and manpower development in Nigeria. Various aspects of the topic are discussed and it is a known fact that teacher education is fundamental to the survival of any nation, hence the need for teacher education to produce highly qualified, committed and convinced professional teachers who could cope with the challenges of educating Nigerian children for a better tomorrow and in turn provide the needed manpower for the country.

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