

ROLE OF THE CURRICULUM TOWARDS VIABLE TEACHER EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY, PEACE AND UNITY OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examined role of the curriculum towards viable teacher education for sustainable democracy, peace and unity in Nigeria. The paper discussed briefly viable teacher education curriculum for democracy, peace and unity in Nigeria. The concept of teacher education, sustainable democracy, peace and unity in Nigeria, and curriculum were addressed. Also discussed were the development of teacher education curriculum for sustainable peace and unity in Nigeria, how to implement sustainable democracy, peace and unity curriculum in Nigeria. Furthermore, the requirement for a democratic and peaceful Nigeria was also enumerated. It was then concluded that teacher education with a curriculum that is functional is what the Nigerian nation needs now. It was then recommended that intending teacher-trainees should be willing to pay the price needed to bring about positive change for peace and unity in Nigeria, teacher educators should expose themselves to reading materials that can bring about reorientation of self and eventually their students, the teacher education institutions responsible for this assignment must be headed by individuals with impeccable character for adequate output, the government should arrest and prosecute every person who may act in a way to undermine its effort in rebranding and remolding the behaviour and minds of the populace, the government should ensure that adequate funding and any other support is given to the teacher education institutions to avert evil days.

Keywords: Teacher education, democracy, peace and unity and curriculum

Introduction

The concept viable simply connotes something that has the potential to produce results. It could mean a potential to be fruitful, productive or regenerative. Viability in the sense in which it is used here may mean an education type that has the capacity to achieve the objectives for which it was set out. In bringing this idea to teacher education, it may mean that teacher education process that is used for preparing teachers adequately to fit in properly in doing the job of teaching. The teacher development process would require a tool that would enable it to perform effectively and that tool is the curriculum. The curriculum is the tool for molding the behaviour of adherents (learners) to the determined and expected behaviour by the society they are to serve. Perhaps, the reason Dempsey (2017) describes a viable curriculum as that which is given to enough time for instructors to deliver the content to the learners and for the learners to be able to learn the content presented by the instructors. In this guise, it means that all the conditions which may be methodology, skills, techniques, strategies, mastery of subject matter that a teacher should possess and even the right attitude at the point of presenting the said content should be available as well as the content satisfying the interest of the learners, the mental and natural age of the learners to learn the content should be readily available, thus, the readiness of the learner is a sine qua non in this matter. This therefore, means that a viable teacher education is that which has all that is necessary for teachers to be able to

guide the students adequately and the needed underlining conditions to learn what is to be presented to them some of which are already stated above.

Section 8, subsection B and article 70 (a) of the national policy on education states “since no education may rise above the quality of its teachers, teacher education shall continue to be given a major emphasis in all educational planning and development” (FRN, 2013). This conveys to say that the quality observable from the education practices of a nation, a people, a system or a subsector is likened to a teacher education dependent on the quality of teachers that it has. Again, it becomes imperative that a lot of work and effort as well as asyielddnessis required on the part of the teacher educators and the teacher trainees in order to ensure the desired viability hoped for. This makes the responsibility of attaining viable teacher education double edged. Thus, when the idea of sustainability is added, it becomes more intricately tasking a role to play as the job does not just end with the present but also consider even the future attainments of stated objectives. According to Nwogbo and Okorji (2019), they affirm the assertion that quality teacher produces quality learning. In other words, these statements are twin inseparable circumstances required to develop and sustain a viable teacher education aimed at sustainable advancement in any area chosen by a society to pursue and in this case in pursuant of democracy, peace and unity of the nation Nigeria.

Thus, a viable teacher education for sustainable democracy may be that which has the capacity in utilizing quality teachers that can produce quality education in the learners with the future in mind at tilting towards a democratic, peaceful and unity bound society. The above definition calls to mind the question, why pursue democratic, peaceful and unity bound society? Again, FRN (2013) has it that the general philosophy of Nigerian education in section 1 number 2 is for Nigerian to “live in unity and harmony as one indivisible, indissoluble, democratic and sovereign nation founded on the principles of freedom, equality and justice. It went further to say that it is meant to promote inter-African solidarity and world peace through understanding. This would make it possible to align the essence of a viable teacher education for sustainable democracy, peace and unity in Nigeria with the objective of education of the young or inexperienced in Nigeria with philosophy already set out before now for the education path to tread. Moreso, it is pertinent to say that democracy has been defined by UNESCO (2021) as the free choice of government, in other words, it is a kind of governance that promotes equality and justice for all thus engrained deep down in the idea of democracy is peaceful co-existence. This means that democracy as a people’s government method has the capacity to result in peace and by extension producing unity among a people in a determined society but this would be impossible if there are no tool by which it would be brought about, again, the reason curriculum becomes a possible and inevitable instrument for simmering these ideas and lifestyle in people in the society since curriculum is the tool that education uses in attaining its objectives of awareness creation and transforming of the human mind for a better society. Peace and unity which are elements of democracy are achievable in a social structure if the curriculum is valid. Therefore, the fulcrum upon which a viable teacher education for sustainable democracy, peace and unity in Nigeria would need to take its root from the curriculum for developing the people into full functional members of the society. This is why Akor (2021) defined curriculum as that tool used in facilitating the permanent change in behaviour of the learner and for the advancement of the society. Therefore, the reason to do this study role of the curriculum in viable teacher education for sustainable democracy, peace and unity in Nigeria:

Concept of Teacher Education

Teacher Education is the process of preparing teachers for the work life of teaching in the future. It possibly entails exposing the teacher-trainee to processes, procedures, practices and policies that would enable them function in teaching in due time. According to the (STANDS4NETWORK, 2021), teacher education include the policies and procedures organized to build-up intending teachers with the needed knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that they require for school, classroom and wider society assignment. TTG(2021) says that teacher education is a continuous process of developing and sustaining as well as maintaining teacher-trainees and teachers throughout their

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professional life. These definitions present teacher education as that process of education that has lifelong learning embedded in it bearing in mind the fact that policies change due to the dynamic nature of the society, different administration of government also bring their perspective of change they think should happen at a particular point in time of a nation's life on board as they manage the affairs of a nation. Beside these, research findings are being churned out daily, thus, bringing about innovation and needed improvement for educational practice. This is perhaps the reason, Howey and Wideen (2001) say that teacher education experiences regular and constant evolution in order to improve and take-in better students, raise research standard, create new and more programs with far-reaching effort more than the previous ones in order to prepare teachers better for the responsibilities ahead of them.

Teacher education mainly has four elements: reforming general educational foundation of teacher trainees, increasing the knowledge and understanding of the subject they are meant to teach, development of teaching skills and awareness on learners and how they learn and the development and acquisition of practical skills and competencies. Though, there is no actual means of determining the balance between these elements as it varies in a prevailing situation (Perraton Creed & Robinson, 2010). These elements remain the main feature of both the pre-service and in-service training and education of learners (teacher-trainees). Teach Mint (2021) had argued that the level of political interference and output of such interferences defines the level of commitment that the government has as value for education and by extension value placed on the future generation. Thus the level of commitment shown towards teacher education definitely has its equivalent result on the educational practice and level of attainment of the philosophy of education in a nation. This conveys that when government burns the bridges in ensuring that teachers are well established, it means she wants her future generation and society to be better than the present one and circumstances. Therefore, a total commitment is coveted on the part of the Nigeria government in order to bequeath a strong and sustainable life and perhaps democracy to the younger generation.

Concept of Sustainable Democracy, Peace and Unity in Nigeria

Sustainability as a concept could be viewed as a way of preserving for future use a thing of value or what is considered an asset to be kept for reference or utility by the upcoming generation. Amadioha and Akor (2020) describe the concept of sustainability as an approach that the future development and advancement are received, carried out and meant to be continued yet ensuring that the present is not undermined nor the future shortchanged. Therefore, sustainable democracy may be idealized as that type of governance or leadership of today that ensures that the future is given utmost priority but that what is required for the present to succeed is also in place. Again, sustainable democracy is a type of self-leadership that is enthroned based on the opinion and support of the people in the society for the common good of all. According to (FES, 2017), they described sustainable democracy as that which demands establishment, trustworthy structures and participatory citizenship. This means that sustainable democracy is better described than defined. Systems that encourage growth and development of a society through active involvement of the people living in such a society may better describe sustainability. Ojoh (2008) stated unequivocally that sustainable democracy for Nigeria would warrant proper development of institutions etc. Democracy has been viewed as government of the people, by the people and for the people by the then president of the United States of America, Abraham Lincoln (EU, 2019). His perception is based on the fact that the system of government is a living system that is amenable to reinvention based on those who are applying it but this to a large extent has been elusive, perhaps, the call for sustainable democracy.

Some features that may be demanded for a sustainable development could include but not limited to these are: free and fair leadership enthronement, freedom of expression, faithful stewardship by the government officials, equal rights and participation in every affair of society towards development and equal sharing of resources to meet basic human needs. These demands when attained would ensure sustainability, entrench democracy as it would produce peace and unity of the nation.

Peace is a state of quietness, free from violence, uncertainties and confusion. This kind of environment is the aftermath of a society that gives equality and egalitarianism a chance. According to (FRN, 2013) the national policy on education stated clearly that this would be the hallmark of education and definitely the state of the Nigeria society. However, the above statement seemed to have only remained on papers considering the happenings in the nation at the moment. Among a few challenges that has bedeviled the nation are; ramshackle primary and secondary schools, higher institutions that teach theory and devoid of practical practices as well as industry-school disconnect observance, a higher education system that conduct researches most of which are funded from individual pockets and even when the findings are churned out there are places to use them and at other times research grants and funding remains an elusive factor to the society. This is also a place where people are trained, though highly equipped with knowledge and skills that could advance the course of the Nigeria nation but they are not able to find a place to exercise what they have acquired. A nation where the only people who are given jobs in recent times are those connected to the high and mighty in the society, governors and government officials hijack job slots even before such jobs are advertised. This cannot be a place where sustainable democracy for peace would have effect and not to mention unity. A balance to this situation is needed now.

Unity represents oneness, state of being undivided. Unity as a concept can only more or less be described than defined. Unity is a product of perhaps sustainable democracy and peace but unfortunately because currently in the Nigerian nation there is no certainty to sustainable democracy and peace, unity has become elusive too considering the voice of division resonating from different parts of the country on daily basis. In the South there is the Niger Delta Avengers, in the West there is clamor for the Yoruba nation, in North Central the Middle Belt Forum is speaking vehemently and in the North-West and North-East, Banditry, ISWAP, Boko Haram and Killer Herdsmen are on rampage. Therefore there is a need to concoct something that has the capacity to bring about this change required and that element is the curriculum.

Concept of Curriculum

Curriculum is that tool used to bring about a change in the behavior of a learner for a better society. The curriculum is that instrument used in helping people discover themselves and to apply the discovery of self to personal and societal development. It is like enabling people know that there is wealth embedded in them and to help them create more wealth. Esu (2010) had described the curriculum as the bridge that the school uses to connect itself to the society. Igbokwe, (2009) sees the curriculum as both planned and unplanned experiences to develop and become better people. This shows that the curriculum could be formal or informal. However, what is vital is that the curriculum should be able to leave its recipients as better people and society than before it was introduced. It means by implication that the teacher education curriculum possesses the potential to transform the individuals exposed to it and by implication, the society in which the programme is taking place.

According to Akor (2021) teacher education curriculum is valued for a lot of reasons among which are

1. National growth, stability and quality school leavers
2. National wealth creation and competence building
3. Improvement in the lifestyle of people
4. Curbing insecurity, inferiority and superiority complexes
5. Sustained food production e.t.c.

These attributes of teacher education curriculum shows that it has the potential if maximized to bring about sustained democracy, peace and unity of Nigeria.

Curriculum of Teacher Education for Sustainable Peace and Unity in Nigeria

The basic step to solving a problem that is prevailing is to first of all identify its immediate and remote causes. For Nigeria, a lot of factors have been pointed out as being responsible for the

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level of violence and turbulence that the nation currently experiences, but one key factor has been conspicuous among them all. And that factor is bad governance (Ojoh, 2017; Nwogbo&Okorji, 2019). More so, the evidence of lack of federal character in appointments and lopsided job offering by Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of government as pointed out by the National Assembly is a thing to worry about (Umoru, 2020)

Therefore, the needed steps would demand that situational analysis of the present state of the Nigeria state be brought to the purview and properly diagnosed. This diagnosis may include factors like:

1. What is the present state of the Nigeria populace?
2. What environmental factors brought the populace to where it is?
3. What type of school/curriculum would be suitable to tackle this present challenge?
4. Do we have adequate knowledge to be harnessed to solve the problem?
5. How should teachers be prepared to pass the needed knowledge to the populace?
6. What sort of teaching process and procedures would get us faster to attaining desired goals?
7. When should the knowledge transfer begin?

These questions are coined in line with the situational analysis process propounded by Taba (1962) and elaborated on by Offorma (2002). After these steps have been taken, the next crucial thing to do would be to particularly review the activities of step 5 above, to determine the quantity of knowledge available in the teacher education curriculum as well as its quality relative to the objectives to be pursued at the moment.

A teacher education curriculum that can bring about the change needed in the present day Nigerian society and that which would pursue democracy that can ensure peace and unity ought to possess the following features:

1. It must be able to ensure personality and character change of the teacher-trainees
2. It must display exemplary democratic leadership for the teacher-trainee to emulate from its custodians
3. It must teach self-reliance and industry to the teacher trainee
4. It must encourage the teacher-trainees to enjoy the full benefit of place of residence rather than state of origin
5. It must engender school-industry linkage or partnership
6. It must encourage value reorientation that are practicable such like avoidance of get rich quick schemes
7. It must encourage utilization of local resources for wealth creation
8. It must create room for access to revolving funds for start-up capital or grants provided
9. It must ensure that innovations put forward are adaptable or adopted
10. It must give priority to research and implementation of research findings etc (Ayozie 2002; Akor 2021)

How to Implement Teacher Education Curriculum for Sustainable Democracy, Peace and Unity in Nigeria

These are requirements in order to ensure for effective implementation of teacher education curriculum that can make for sustainable democracy, peace and unity in Nigeria.

1. Regular training and retraining programmes for teacher education educators
2. Expedite the transmission and dissemination of innovations and research findings
3. Inclusion of critical thinking strategies in the curriculum content
4. Learning content should be real to life; that is, capture social reality and the ideals.
5. Cooperative utilization of multiple intelligence approaches
6. Project method of curriculum implementation that is arranged for groups would suffice
7. Use of indigenously produced instructional materials to build confidence in the trainees
8. Exposure to ICT knowledge and skills to build global mind set
9. Adequate administrative support system

10. Active evaluation mechanism should be in place for quick feedback

Conclusion

Teacher education is fundamental to the transformation of a nation but much more importantly is the curriculum that such teachers or the trainees are exposed to. The said curriculum should have potential for awareness creation and transformation of the human mind. Considering that no nation can rise above its education, it becomes expedient the individuals equipped to teach the populace are those whose knowledge, skills and competence as well as philosophy of life is unquestionable bearing in mind that the present Boko Haram group use to be under the tutorage of a radical who has now turned its adherents to be people without conscience as they could kill a fellow man who does not agree with their ideology without a second thought. So, care is required in preparing people to teach the curriculum that would bring about sustainable peace and unity in Nigeria by ensuring that philosophy of life and the idea of the indivisibility of the Nigerian nation are held dearly in hearts, an indication calling for the entrenchment of a functional curriculum.

Recommendations

The following are the suggestions guiding this study:

1. Intending teacher should be willing to pay the price needed to bring about positive change for peace and unity in Nigeria
2. Teacher educators should expose themselves to reading materials that can bring about reorientation of self and eventually their students
3. The teacher education institutions responsible for this assignment must be headed by individuals with impeccable character for adequate output
4. The government should arrest and prosecute every person who may act in a way to undermine its effort in rebranding and remolding the behavior and minds of the populace
5. The government should ensure that adequate funding and any other support is given to the teacher education institutions otherwise, the nation may return to the evil days again.

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