

TEACHER EDUCATION AND NATION-BUILDING

Obi, Catherine Ngozi

Abstract

This paper focused on the importance of teacher education programme in producing right quantity and quality teachers in Nigeria schools for the attainment of nation building. It also looked into the evolving contributions of trained teachers to the development of the country. Suggestions to enable teacher education institutions to contribute to the development in Nigeria were made vis-a-vis, provision of need-based curriculum and government financial help to the programme among others.

Introduction

Generally, educational programme is a conscious attempt and effort by the nation to see that there is a positive change in its organizational set-up with a view to bringing about the economic, social and political growth, which in turn will reduce the condition of inequality and poverty in that nation. Going by the above perspective, such education programme must be a reflection of the national philosophy and objectives as well as needs and aspirations of the individuals and the society at large.

In view of that, there is a continuous need in the nation for well informed and critical teaching professionals who are knowledgeable, skillful, competent and committed enough to make that laudable venture a success. This assertion gains support in Elegbe (1969) when he holds that "education is what teachers make it and a competent devoted and professionally spirited body of teachers is the essential foundation for a good educational system".

Based on the foregoing composition therefore, the importance of teacher education to the nation building should not be overstated. Such educational programme should aim at reforming the nation through the production of effective teachers who will then effect national development through their services to the citizens, parents, employers, communities and nation at large.

Therefore, special priority should be given to teacher education in Nigeria as a very crucial relevance venture in the educational system which on the other hand an investment towards nation building. Afe (1990) amplifies this by stating that "teacher education is the bed rock for national development".

Concept of Teacher Education

Teacher education is that formal and special education designed and articulated for the purpose of producing professional teachers who are involved in the promotion of education system by teaching in all levels of schooling. Okafor (1988), revealed that teacher education is: "The form of education which is applied for (he cultivation of those who teach or will teach particularly, but not exclusively in primary and post primary level of schooling. Teacher education also embraces the preparation of administrators, supervisors and guidance counselors within the same frame of reference.

In a more broad sense, teacher education encompasses the following: production of teachers at all levels of schooling, continuing education for teacher development, and preparation of administrators, supervisors and guidance counselors. It also involves all educational activities vis-avis policies and practices and various education programmes for teacher formation experiences and teacher motivation and reformation.

Categories of Teacher Education Institutions in Nigeria

Following the need to meet up with the demand for teacher supply in the country's education system is the establishment of various teacher education intuitions, which include:

1. Teacher Training Colleges for the award of Teacher Grade II Certificate (T. C. II) for primary school. These institutions are now being gradually phased out as a result of producing low quality teachers with low academic background. These teachers appear no more competent with the changes in the society.

2. College of Education for the award of Nigerian Certificate in Education (N.C.E.) for both primary and post-primary schools.
3. Universities, through their faculties and institutes of education, for the award of the following certificates:
 - Bachelor of Education (B. Ed.; B. Sc. Ed. and B. A. Ed.) for both post primary and Colleges of Education.
 - Masters of Education (M. Ed., M. Sc. Ed and M. A. Ed.) for higher institutions.
 - Doctorate Degree (Ph.D.) for higher institutions.
 - " Post graduate Diploma in Education (P.O. D. E.) and
 - Associate Certificate in Education (A. C. E.)

The last two are for the non-professional teachers in the teaching field.

Curriculum

In order to produce efficient and effective teachers, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (N.P.E. 1998) directed that teacher education curriculum models will contain the following:-

- (i) General education to expose the teachers to the society and the world so as to be enabled to prepare their pupils for life in the society and the world at large. Subjects under this include Social Studies, Natural Science, Religion, Humanities and Social Sciences.
- (ii) Specialized knowledge and skills to acquaint the teachers with their specialized subject-matter to teach on graduation. Teachers must have good knowledge of sociology, psychology, principles and practice of education with a view to exposing them to human growth and development, learning theories, teaching methods and skills, skills in group process, communication, conflict management of facilities and equipment. They will also be able to care for pupils' emotional and intellectual development.
- (iii) Practice in teaching to expose teachers to sufficient period of planned and supervised teaching practice and philosophy of education.

Efforts Towards Producing Effective Teachers

An effective teacher is believed to possess the following:

- (a) A sound measure of teaching competence;
 - (b) A good question ability, lesson planning and preparation, working skills of the epistemology of the subject matter, decision-making role and classroom management
 - (c) To control pupils' emotional and social feelings, welcome their ideas and reinforce as well as encourage them.
- (d) To create and instill a lasting impact on the learners, exhibit a high measure of commitment, responsibility, dedication and accountability and help pupils acquire social, political and economic values that will make them useful citizens in the country.

Going by the foregoing; teachers are very crucial input in the educational system. Due attention must be given to the quality and quantity of teachers being produced in the area of education since no education system can rise above the quality of teachers. Thus the exclusive responsibility of teacher education becomes the cultivation and preparation of teachers for rapid and directed social and economic change in the nation. It is against this background that the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1998) summarizes the purpose of teacher education as:

- (i) To produce highly motivational, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers at all levels of education system;
- (ii) To encourage the spirit of inquiry and creativity in the teacher;
- (iii) To help teachers to fit into the social life of the community and society and to enhance their commitment to national objectives;
- (iv) To provide to the teachers the intellectual and professional background for their assignment as

- well as adaptable to any changing situation in their lives and the wider world;
- (v) To enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

These and some others are the objectives, which, if achieved, would make Nigerian teacher education programme a noble, rewarding, promising and productive venture.

But observation showed that the programme is dwindling in terms of issues affecting the teacher, students and the national teacher education objectives/ Such issues are the deteriorating quality and quantity of candidates admitted and to be admitted into the institution, selection of appropriate teaching methods, stating and maintaining time duration for the programme, subjects to be taught and relevant curriculum content, co-ordination and production of teachers' certificate, quality and quantity of teachers needed, reliable data for students' transition rates, funding, teaching facilities, entry requirement, etc.

Quantitatively, the programme is poor as it is based on the theoretical and academic education, which aims at the possession of certificates by tackling competitive public and external written examinations. Thus the education alienated the students from the relevant attitudes, values, skills knowledge etc for effective teaching and adequate exposure to the subject matter concepts. To further add to the above statement, Gidado (1995) in Odigbo (2000) noted that:

Many authorities believe that teacher education and programme in this country are not competency based, in which performance goals are clearly specified ahead of time with the deliberate intention to infuse responsibility and accountability on the part of the learner, the teacher, the institution, and the relevant regulatory agency of government.

Role of Teachers in Nation-Building

Trained and educated teachers will be enabled to improve their ideas, socio-cultural status and increase their productive abilities so as to discharge their professional responsibilities as effectively and efficiently as teachers, managers of knowledge, facilitators of learning, disciplinarians, organizers, socialisers, guidance counselors and judges. The socio-economic condition of the country is as a result of many responsibilities shouldered by the teachers. In this aspect, the number of lawyers, engineers, doctors, teachers, technicians, journalists, clergymen, accountants, etc they nurtured and produced in the society are counted for. Afe (1991) as cited in Odigbo (2000) viewed effective teachers as ones who inspire good qualities in students and teach effectively.

Training/education improves teachers standards of living by making them more comfortable at work, generating greater efficiency in their attitude to work and towards their pupils and employers. In essence, teachers are able to acquire desired competency and efficiency in the understanding of the society where they work in order to be adequately informed about their specific roles in the society with a view to preparing their pupils for life in the society and the world at large.

Education as an investment in human resources production, inculcate in teachers:

- (i) The skill and knowledge in their subject areas;
- (ii) Sound and better command of pedagogy needed for imparting these skills and knowledge to the educates;
- (iii) Better knowledge of their pupils and an ability to determine their limit of educability. Byrne (1992) stated that a teacher equipped with both professional orientation and commitment is sure to create perfect teaching-learning atmosphere in the classroom.

Training helps to eliminate and reduce in the teachers the inhibiting factors to their professional duties such as ignorance, poverty, superstition, inferiority complex, social misfit, impractical idealism and half education. It rather develops in their minds quicker perception, spirit of inquiry, experimentation, creativity and innovation in the building of valuable concepts, relevant" generalizations, understanding of the world and the acquisition of the desirable ability and relevant balance knowledge of facts about societal and global issues.

Adequate training of teachers makes teaching more effective and learning more productive since teachers are facilitators of learning who are capable of assisting pupils to achieve optimum skills

and knowledge needed for desired behaviour. Teachers are supposed to be models whose personalities and personal conducts influence the pupils' morality and ethical standard of behaviour. For instance, teachers who are believed to be virtuous must demonstrate a sound knowledge of virtues and vices so as to qualify to teach these virtues to the students.

The foregoing implies that the acquired skills, attitudes, values and knowledge by the teachers are transferred to the young citizens. And these make them potential manpower in the process of nation building. Ukeje (1991) confirmed the above statements by stating that what the teacher knows and does can make a great difference, and what he does not know and cannot do or fails to do can be an irreparable loss to the child.

Recommendations and Conclusion

This paper has presented the image of teachers in Nigeria through which it pointed out some factors hindering the effective and meaningful teacher education and calls for special attention towards that in view of its importance to the nation. Furthermore, the paper highlighted some benefits and roles of teacher education in the nation building. Finally, some suggestions were made on how to improve teacher education in Nigeria among which are the need-based curriculum and government intervention in the programme with a view to removing factors hindering the smooth running of the programme for the interest of education in particular and the nation building in general.

In view of the foregoing the paper recommended the following:-

- (1) Teacher education curriculum should be made broad enough as to encompass all teaching occupation courses in education.
- (2) There is need for concurrent course approach whereby teachers are exposed to their teaching subjects and management contents.
- (3) Teacher education programme should emphasize skills and techniques as well as on dynamics of misbehaviour.
- (4) Effort should be intensified in management of teacher education programme in order to arrest shortfalls in anywhere and any way such as poor funding, poor discharge of duties, brain-drain syndrome, dearth of teachers, bureaucratic deficiencies, poor teaching condition and facilities with a view to establishing, regulating and improving standard of the programme.
- (5) For the interest of the new innovations in education system, the government should establish special and continuation programmes for defective teachers to adjust and correct their teaching deficiency problems. Such programme includes: up-grade courses, in-service teacher training, sandwich, distance learning, conferences, seminars and workshops.

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