

TEACHER PREPARATION AT COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA BEYOND 2020

By

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Abstract

This paper examined teacher preparation at the College of Education level and Development in Nigeria beyond 2020. Objectives of teacher education as indicated in National Policy on Education (2013) and National Commission for Colleges of Education Minimum Standards (2012) were enumerated. Relevance of teacher preparation at College of Education level was discussed. Ways of achieving development through preparation of teachers in college of education beyond 2020 were highlighted. Problems militating against effective teacher preparation in college of education in Nigeria were identified to include: mode of entry and resource utilization. The preferred way forward emphasized that admission requirement should be strictly restricted to minimum requirements of five credits including English Language and Mathematics with three credits in areas relevant to the field of study. Government should set up a monitoring team to monitor the judicious use of the resources allotted to Colleges of Education. Orientation and re-orientation programmes should be organized by quality assurance unit in the college to acquaint the lecturers and students with the rules and regulations governing the conduct of teaching and learning.

Development in Nigeria beyond 2020 is a necessary and, there is every need to prepare teachers who are major agents for effecting change and development. That is why emphasis is laid on effective preparation of teachers especially at the college of education level. Teacher preparation is necessary because as Ciwar (2005) rightly observed, any educational advancement that needs to be made depends on the teacher.

This paper, therefore, focuses on teacher preparation at the College of Education level and development in Nigeria beyond 2020 and it will be discussed under the following subheadings:

1. Objectives of Teacher Education as indicated in National Policy on Education (2013) and National Commission for Colleges of Education, Nigeria Certificate in Education Minimum Standard (2012)
2. Importance of Teacher preparation at the College of Education level.
3. Ways of achieving Development through preparation of teachers in College of Education beyond (2020).
4. Problems militating against effective teacher preparation in Colleges of Education in Nigeria
5. Conclusion
6. The way forward

Objectives of Teacher Education as Indicated in National Policy on Education (2013)

Teacher education belongs to tertiary education. Accordingly to, Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN 2013: 27). National Policy on Education, the goals of Teacher education are to:

- produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of the educational system;
- further encourage the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
- help teachers fit into the social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals;
- provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to changing situations; and
- enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

In line with the objectives of teacher education in FRN (2013), National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) Curriculum Implementation framework for Nigerian Certificate in Education (2011) stated viz:

- Teachers exhibit professional knowledge and competency regarding how learners learn and how to teach effectively;
- Teachers have professional skills to plan for and access effective learning
- Teachers provide and maintain conducive learning environment

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NCCE further highlighted the objectives to be achieved in the NCCE Minimum standards (2012:2). By the end of the NCE programmes, the students should be able to:

- a. discuss intelligently the main ideas that have affected and still affect the development and practice of education generally, and in Nigeria in particular;
- b. examine the main psychological, health and socio-economic factors that may help or hinder a child's educational performance;
- c. study learner's appropriately to determine the most effective ways of relating to them to ensure their maximum achievement;
- d. professionally combine use of conventional and ICT or other innovational instructional/learning strategies in generating, and imparting knowledge, attitudes and skills at basic education level;
- e. develop, select and effectively use appropriate curriculum processes, teaching strategies, instructional materials and methods for maximum learner achievement;
- f. broaden their intellectual perspective through the General Studies Education programme for Basic Education
- g. demonstrate desirable attributes in moral and character development;
- h. discuss intelligently major issues affecting teacher education and teaching profession in Nigeria;
- i. Identify major problems of education in Nigeria, and their outcomes as well as in carrying out appropriate research on educational problems in Nigeria particularly at Basic Education level.

In order to ensure full achievement of objectives of Teacher Education and maintenance of standards and observe NCCE minimum standards, the relevance of preparing teachers has to be noted and duly actualized.

Importance of Teacher Preparation at College of Education Level and Development Beyond 2020

Relevance of teacher preparation at College of Education level beyond 2020 cannot be under-estimated.

This paper interalia emphasizes the point that Colleges of Education are charged with the mandate of producing teachers that will teach at the Basic Education level, that is, Primary and Junior Secondary Schools. It is equally a well known fact that the period covers the formative stage in the life of all human beings. Precisely, it covers the childhood and adolescent stages of life.

The achievement of these goals can only be realized through in-depth laying of foundation in educational attainment through teacher preparation at tertiary education. When teachers are well prepared, the national economy will develop. Preparation of teachers is of great relevance because as Onyeachu (2007:158) earlier observed "for any nation to develop rapidly, there must be teacher that does the work of educating its citizens". Mkpa (1987) stressed that there can be no meaningful formal education in the

absence of the teachers. Also, Ciwar (2005) remarked that education is nothing without quality teachers. Realizing the need to produce quality teachers, (FRN, 2013:27), National Policy on Education recommends that “teacher education shall continue to be given major emphasis in all educational planning and developments”. Teacher preparation is very necessary because when teachers are well prepared, they (teachers) will move the society forward in the right direction. Preparation of teachers depends on the extent to which they have acquired the basic teaching skills. Emphasizes the need for teachers to acquire the basic teaching skills, Kanno (2004) remarked, that qualitative and quantitative system of teacher education can be attained if priorities are laid towards the inculcation of basic teaching skills, strategies and techniques. The basic teaching skills are acquired through teacher education programme. It is a well known fact that trained teachers contribute immensely to the present and future developments of any country by educating the citizens therein. If teachers contribute effectively in the country, future development will definitely go beyond 2020.

In further appreciation of the relevance of teacher preparation, Ipaye (2002) maintained that in order not to allow sustainable educational system to be broken, every society should aspire to maintain good teacher quality. This is because, if teachers are not well prepared, education system will be disorganized, Ipaye (2002) observed that the teacher maintains and improves educational content and context. The teacher equally innovates the curriculum and this gives it a new look, thereby making it more relevant to the needs of the society. Since teacher improves and maintains educational standards of the nation, it then becomes necessary to ensure production of quality teachers in Nigeria by Institutions meant for production of teachers. This task, therefore, brings to fore the relevance of College of Education in teacher preparation.

Appreciating the relevance of teacher education, Ojoga and Oyearore (2008) stressed that the destiny of a nation is shaped in its classroom and it is the teacher who is a very important instrument in designing and molding that destiny. The teacher is the key factor in curriculum implementation and the main agent for translating society’s educational institution into realities. When teachers are well prepared in Colleges of Education, they respond to and reflect changes that occur in education and society. Ojoga and Oyearane (2008) therefore, stressed that it is mandatory that if education is to meet the elements of the time; teachers must be adequately trained and continuously upgraded. When teachers are trained, they (teachers) carry the society along in development. To this effect, Onyeachu and Maduewesi (2009) remarked that education is the spring board on which all other sectors of the economy revolve for growth and national development.

Teacher education is very paramount to national development since the quality of teachers determines the quality of human resources in all other sectors of the labour market. It is the pivot of all levels of education and the hub upon which a nation’s economy revolves.

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There is dire need for quality teacher education in the country since the teacher occupies the centre stage of educational process. What he/she knows makes a lot of difference and what he/she does not know and cannot know becomes an irreparable loss not only to the children but also to the nation and indeed posterity.

Thus, the teacher becomes the factory that manufactures the modern people and status of society. Teaching is one of the most vital and strategic professions for national development. The quality of the teacher depends on the extent the teacher is trained. For instant, poorly trained teachers are most likely to produce poor engineers, quack medical doctors unregistrable lawyers/ architects/ nurses and teachers. A nation without quality and registered cum registrable teachers is doomed. According to Nkang (2009), the cumulative effort of incompetent teachers would be more of non-development than development, and a times national retrogression instead of progress and advancement.

All aspects of the development of a nation depend on the nature of its teachers. That means that when teachers are well prepared, starting from Colleges of Education where the minimum qualification for one to become a teacher is acquired, there will be all-round development in the country.

Ways of Achieving Development through Preparation of Teachers in Colleges of Education

There are so many ways of achieving development through preparation of teachers in Colleges of Education. These include maintenance of (NCCE), (2011) guidelines which are summarized thus:

- Elaborate organization of curriculum workshop geared towards effective implementation of curriculum.
- Wide participation of stake-holders
- Regular curriculum review
- Regular maintenance of quality assurance mechanism of the Colleges of Education
- Scrutinizing moderators report from the institutions
- Accreditation/endorsement of Academic Awards made by institutions.
- Regulation that Colleges of Education lecturers must have at least a minimum of Masters Degree in his/her subject area and a professional teaching qualification not below NCE.

These guidelines are very pertinent for efficiency in teacher preparation.

Problems Militating Against Effect Teacher Preparation in colleges of Education in Nigeria

1. Mode of Entry into College of Education

Mode of entry into College of Education is one of the greatest problem militating against preparation of teachers at College of Education level. It has been observed with dismay that in most cases, students found in teacher training institutions are weak students

rejected by other institutions. For instance, Nkang (2009) indicated that the NCE programmes in Colleges of Education draw their intakes from less bright secondary school leavers who would in no way get admission into tertiary institutions because of poor academic performance. The few above-average students found in teacher training institutions are there because they had no admission elsewhere, not because they considered education as their first choice.

2. Inadequate facilities

Inadequate facility is another major problem militating against teacher preparation in Colleges of Education. It is disheartening to note that in most Colleges of Education, facilities needed are inadequate, The intervention of Tertiary Education Trust Fund to improve human resources and harness material resources is thus very apt and useful.

3. Inadequate ICT facilities

Information and Communication Technology facilities are inadequate. Modern technology requires the use of computer in teaching and learning, accessing information through the internet, e-library, in teaching. All these identified good ideas are not the problem, the problem is that the essential facilities needed for practice and implementation are not there for teachers and students use. To ameliorate the problem, TETFUND intervened by providing needed facilities to institutions. The extent to which students and staff practice in ICT laboratories, to that extent will that college of education record success.

4. Inadequate time for effective teaching practice exercise

The disruption in school calendar largely caused by industrial unrest has caused some difficulties in allotting adequate time for teaching practice exercise for teacher interns. Ideally, teaching practice is supposed to last eighteen weeks. Normally of academic calendar and industrial peace are very necessary.

5. Non utilization of quality assurance mechanism

Non utilization of quality assurance mechanism is a problem that militates against preparation of teachers in Colleges of Education. Quality assurance mechanism is one of the ways of maintaining discipline and sustained standard in tertiary institutions. Colleges of education therefore need to adopt measures of ensuring that lecturers teach and cover the courses and administer the examination at the appropriate time. Students equally have to attend lectures punctually and regularly. Industrial peace and harmony are paramount as indicated earlier.

The Way Forward

For improved achievement of national development in Nigeria using effective preparation of teachers, the following way forward are provided:

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Admission policy of five credits including English Language and Mathematics and three credits in relevant area should be maintained. Seminar and public lectures in the society can be employed to make children and youth develop interest in education. There should be due emphasis in proper utilization of facilities and adherence to TETFUND guidelines.

Provision of facilities should be by combined efforts of the Federal and State Government as well as parents, alumni, and non-governmental organizations.

Directors of Quality Assurance Units should ensure that standard is maintained by keeping all the rules and regulations as stipulated in the college. For instance, lecturers should avail course outlines to students on time and adhere to lecture and examination timetables. Seminar on examinations ethnics should be conducted regularly per semester per session.

School administrators in Colleges of Education should make use of lecturers in their colleges during accreditation, if they do not have enough, such institutions should employ more lecturers.

School administrators should sustain orientation programme organized at the beginning of every first semester to acquaint the students with the pattern of teaching and learning, attendance to lectures and conduct of examination before commencement of lectures and examinations. This is to make the students to be law abiding and serious in their academic exercise.

Conclusion

Since the standard has been set by National NCCE and Federal Republic of Nigeria through National Policy on Education, its maintenance will lead to rapid development beyond 2020. This is because, since training of Primary and Junior secondary school pupils and students lie in the hands of prepared teachers, all hands should be on deck to ensure that all the necessary resources needed for preparing teachers are put in place. That means the Federal Government, State and Local Governments, and non-governmental organizations ensure that students in Colleges of Education are well prepared for effective performance of their duties because effective performance of their duties leads to national development beyond 2020.

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