
Education For All: Challenges for Teacher Education in Nigeria

By

OSAGIEDE MERCY AFE, Ph.D

*Department of Primary Education Studies,
College of Education,
Agbor.*

And

DR. J. E. IDIAGHE

*Department of Primary Education Studies,
College of Education,
Agbor.*

Abstract

Education has been accepted as a major tool for national socio-Economic development and for individual socio-economic empowerment and poverty reduction. The success of any educational enterprise particularly in terms of quality depends to a large extent on the quality and quantity of teachers. In full recognition of the role of teachers in achieving the vision “Education for all” the paper highlighted the role teacher education has played in achieving this vision, it also highlighted the major challenges faced by the current teacher education programme in Nigeria and recommended measures through which a functional teacher education programme can help Nigeria join other nations to achieve the vision education for all by the year 2015.

Education has often been described as the bed rock for national development and it is globally acknowledged as a vital element for social development and economic growth. It has in fact come to occupy a strategic position as the central dominant of economic, political, social and cultural facets of the society. Two aspects of education are especially relevant in the global perspective; these are “quality” and “access”. Everybody deserves an opportunity to education regardless of his social standing,

gender, ethnicity, individual abilities or disabilities. It is a basic human right like all human rights; it is universally an inalienable right. Everyone, regardless of gender, religion ethnicity or economic status has right to it.

Education for all (EFA) is an international endeavour to which Nigeria is committed. It foresees quality basic education for all by the year 2015. It also foresees the provision of opportunities for lifelong learning for all citizens, young, old, in and out of school. Education for all includes pre-school, attention to young children and adult literacy programmes, and focuses on equality.

“Education for all” requires good teachers and well- designed institutions. In addition to imparting important skills to individual persons, capacity building is essential for better management of the education sector for the sake of quality control and performance-based human resource management.

Education for All

Education for all (EFA) is a global movement led by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization(UNESCO) which aims to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015.UNESCO has been mandated to lead the movement and coordinate the international efforts to reach education for all. Governments, development agencies, civil society, non- governmental organizations and the media are some of the partners working towards reaching the goals of this vision (Qian,2013).It includes pre-school; attention to young children and adult literacy programmes and focuses on equality.The EFA goals also contribute to the global pursuit of the eight millennium development Goals (MDGs) especially MDG2 on universal primary education and MDG3 on gender equality in education, by 2015.

An international conference termed the World conference on education for all(Jomtien, 1990)was held and representatives of the international community (155 countries, as well as representatives from some 150 organizations) agreed to “universalize primary education and massively reduce illiteracy by the end of the decade”. After that conference, the world declaration on education for all was adopted, which stressed that education is a fundamental human right and pushed countries to strengthen their efforts to improve education in order to ensure that the basic learning needs for all were met. The framework for Action to meet the basic learning needs established six goals against the year 2000:

- Goal 1: Universal access to learning
- Goal 2: A focus on equity
- Goal 3: Emphasis on learning outcomes
- Goal 4: Broadening the means and the scope of basic education

Education For All: Challenges for Teacher Education in Nigeria

Goal 5: Enhancing the environment for learning

Goal 6: Strengthening the partnership by 2000

(**Source-** Education International (2009))

Ten years later, in the year 2000, the World Education forum was convened in Dakar- Senegal, an event which drew 1,100 participants. The forum took stock of the fact that many countries were far from reaching the goals established at the World Conference on Education for All by the year 2015, and identified six key measurable education goals which aim to meet the learning needs for all children, youths and adults by 2015.

In addition, the forum reaffirmed UNESCO'S role as the lead organization with the overall responsibility of co-coordinating other agencies and organizations in the attempts to achieve these goals. The six goals of Education for All as enshrined in the historic Dakar Framework for Action are:

Goal 1: Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and Education

Goal 2: Provide free and compulsory primary education for all.

Goal 3: Promote learning and life skills for young people and adults

Goal 4: Increase adult literacy by 50 percent.

Goal 5: Achieve gender parity by 2005, gender equality by 2015.

Goal 6: Improve the quality of education.

(**Source-** Education International)

As part of the Education for All (EFA) initiative, a broad coalition of governments, NGOS and development agencies committed themselves to six goals aimed at providing education to every citizen in every society thus:

1. Expanding and improving early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable children.
2. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015.
3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.
4. Achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and offering equitable access to basic and continuing education to all adult.
5. Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence.

(**Source-** Education International 2009)

Underlying these goals is a realization that mere access to education is not sufficient but the quality and duration of education is equally important. In many developing countries, less than 60 percent of primary school pupils who enroll in first

grade reach the last grade of schooling. Children must not only enroll in school; they must complete it and human rights values and principles must be the guiding force in the class room.

Achieving education for all will require a truly global commitment by governments, civil societies, development agencies, the media and all stakeholders must work together to help every child in every country in the world to realize his or her inalienable right to quality education. A look at the vision of EFA shows that the realization of the set goals need the attention and renewed body of knowledge and creation of inquiry in the attainment of the goals hence, the focus of this paper on the role of teacher Education in meeting the challenges of EFA in Nigeria.

Teacher Education in Nigeria

Teacher education is the pivot around which the entire education system revolves .It is the component of any educational system charged with the education and training of teachers to acquire the competencies and skills of teaching for the improvement in the quality of teachers in the school system. Teacher Education is an education process or training that deals with the art of acquiring skills in the teaching profession.

Umar (2005) viewed teacher education as the provision of professional education and specialized training within a specified period for the preparation of individuals who intend to develop and nurture the young ones into responsible and productive citizens.

It is a well-known education maxim that no educational programme can be better than the teachers who spread its gospel. Therefore, an important ingredient for the success of Education for All (EFA) in Nigeria would be full scale teacher involvement at all levels of the education system for Nigeria to march comfortably forward and achieve Education for all by the year 2015.

The educational system is vital because, it produces the personnel that are required to function in various facets of national life and development process. The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) document (2004:35) noted that “the goals of wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction and value re-orientation can be effectively pursued, attained and sustained only through on efficient, relevant and functional education system. The above however has left a major challenge for the educational system in contemporary Nigeria to be able to produce qualified teachers to teach at the various levels of the educational system in sufficient numbers to help achieve the “Vision of Education for All”.

Historical Background of Teacher Education Programme in Nigeria

Teacher Education program in Nigeria was introduced as far back as 1896 by the Christian missionary society (C.M.S) at St Andrews College Oyo. It took off with students who were to be trained as teachers in the service of C.M.S. Yoruba missions. (Polycarp, 2005).

Teaching in Nigerian communities was a responsibility of every mentally healthy adult for the transmission of the traditions and ideals of the society as well as the wisdom and knowledge of the more enlightened ones to the less enlightened ones. Teaching eventually became a vocation in Nigeria with the intention to produce enlightened citizens for the reading and interpretation of the Bible and catechism. According to Fafunwa (1980:81)“the primary objective of the early Christian missionaries was to convert the heathen or benighted Africans to Christianity via Education”. The early missionaries appreciated the importance of education in order to produce clergymen, catechists, lay readers and pious teachers.

The training of teachers was not initially considered necessary because it was thought that everyone that reads or writes could teach. This was the trend till the middle of the nineteenth century. The first teacher training college in Nigeria was established by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in 1859 in Abeokuta and it was called “The training Institution” (Fafunwa, 1980).

Goals of Teachers Education Programmes in Nigeria

According to the National Policy on education (FRN, 2004:39), the goal of teacher education shall be to:

- a. Produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system.
- b. Encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers.
- c. Help teachers to fit into social life of the community and society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals.
- d. Provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to changing situations.
- e. Enhance teachers’ commitment to the teaching profession.

The importance of teacher education is recognized worldwide because the teacher is the brain box of all educational activities and his position and activities are quite inevitable in fostering educational affairs. His exit from the field of teaching and learning will create some kind of paralysis to the endeavour of those who intend to learn.

The Federal Government realized the important position of the teacher in the education system in the National Policy on Education (NPE 2004:39) asserted that, since no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers, teacher education shall continue to be given major emphasis in all educational planning and development.

This policy statement is an indication that the teacher is an indispensable quantity in educational planning and development in Nigeria. Thus, the teacher education is inevitable for the proper championing of the activities pertaining to teaching and learning as well as the general transfer of knowledge.

According to Ukeje (1999), if education is the door that leads to modernization and development, it is the teacher that holds the key that unlocks the door. The quality of teachers is predicated on the quality or type of pre-service training available to entrants into the profession. For this reason, teacher education needs to be reinvigorated in order to equip teachers to deliver to the students what is required for the Nigerian citizens to face the global challenges. This is because no meaningful desirable change can take place in the education industry if programmes of change neglect the teacher.

Challenges of Teacher Education in Achieving Education for All

In this century which is the age of globalization, teacher education faces a lot of challenges especially of ability to meet with the challenges of education for all. Some of these challenges include:

- (a) Available statistics indicate the gross inadequacy of teachers in the Nigerian educational system for instance, the national figures on the ratio of teacher to students is contrary to the recommended ratio of 1:28 at the primary school level,
- (b) Another major challenge facing teaching education in Nigeria is the poor recognition for teachers.
- (c) Teacher motivation is another major challenge facing teacher education in Nigeria today. Motivation is not only conceptualized in monetary terms but in terms of provision of social amenities, good school environment, recognition for good work and other facilities for career progression and professional development. A look at the present position of teacher education in Nigeria shows that these facilities are lacking. Also, the core issues of remuneration, wages and salaries for teachers are poor.
- (d) Information and communication technology is one major challenge facing teacher education in Nigeria. In most teacher education institutions, ICT projects are over politicized and poorly developed. These challenges have negative impact on curriculum delivery and quality assurance.

Education For All: Challenges for Teacher Education in Nigeria

- (e) Teacher quality is a major challenge facing teacher education in Nigeria. There is a strong belief that input determines output. The greatest challenge facing teacher education programme in Nigeria is that teaching has not really attracted vibrant students who have interest in the training of the future generation. This is because those who find it difficult to gain admission in universities for courses of their choice opt for teacher education programmes as the last resort.
- (f) Under funding has contributed to the decline in teacher education in Nigeria. The way education is financed largely determines who will be educated and in what fashion.

The Role of the Teacher in Achieving Education for All (EFA)

Basically the role of the teacher is to help pupils/students learn by imparting knowledge to them and setting up a situation in which learners can and will learn effectively. However teachers play complex set of roles which vary from one society to another. A teacher's role involves more than simply standing in front of a classroom and lecturing or teaching. Even though a teacher spends the majority of a day in the classroom, the actual teaching component is only a part of the job. An effective teacher understands that teaching involves wearing multiple hats to ensure that the school day runs smoothly and all learners receive quality education.

The teacher has a crucial role to play in sensitizing parents and making them aware of the importance of education in the life of every child.

Some of the crucial roles teachers play to achieve positive changes in the behavior of learners are those of:

- a) Mediators of learning
- b) Confidant to students
- c) Parents in locus
- d) Disciplinarian or controller of students' behaviour
- e) Judge of achievement
- f) Organizer of curriculum
- g) Agent of social change
- h) Expert in some area of knowledge/skills.

For the teacher to be able to perform the above roles and then be the life wire for social and intellectual progress, his own quality training is inevitable and uncompromising.

Conclusion

The paper critically examined the challenges of teacher education in achieving education for all in the nearest future. The challenges were attributed to various factors

including poor remuneration and recognition of teachers. If Nigeria is to join other nations to achieve the vision of EFA, Nigeria is required by the international community to face all these teacher conditions for promoting teaching and learning and other conditions seriously so as to become a member of the African union and global community of the 21st century. This will enable her attain the vision of education for all.

Recommendations and the Way Forward in Meeting the Challenges of Teacher Education to Enable Her Achieve the Vision of EFA in Nigeria

In view of the importance of the teacher in the transmission of knowledge and in view of the fact that input determines output, the following recommendations are made to enable Nigeria achieve education for all.

1. Regular review of the curriculum for it to meet up with the demands of EFA
2. Commitment to teacher quality
3. Continuous teaching and learning improvement
4. Academic mentoring process
5. Quality Admission
6. ICT
7. Staff motivation
8. Increased funding by government

References

- Education International (E.I) (2009). *Education for all by the year 2015*. Retrieved July, 3 from <http://www/ei.org/docs/IRISDocuments/edu>
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2004.) *National Policy on Education*. Lagos: NERDC
- National Planning commission (2004). *National Economic Empowerment and Development strategy (NEEDS) Abuja*: National Planning Commission.
- Polycap, D.Y. (2005). The challenges of Teacher Education in the 21st century in Democratic Nigeria. *Azare Journal of Education*. 5, (1) 54 -68.
- Qian, T. (2013) *Education beyond 2015*. retrieved July from www.unesco.org/new/en/edu/themes/leading_the_international_agenda/education_for_all

Education For All: Challenges for Teacher Education in Nigeria

- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2010). Early childhood. Retrieved September, 2010 from <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/early-childhood>
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2010). *Education for All*. Retrieved September, 2010 from <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/efa/development-index>
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2010). Gender parity. Retrieved September, 2010 from www.unesco.org/en/efa/efa-goals/gender-parity
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2010). *Lifelong learning*. Retrieved September, 2010 from <http://www.unesco.org/en/efa/efa-goals/lifelong-learning>
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2010). *Primary Education*. Retrieved II September, 2010 from <http://www.unesco.org/en/efa/efa-goals/primaryeducation>
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and cultural organization (UNESCO) (1990). *World conference on Education for All*. Retrieved II September, 2010 from www.unesco.org/en/efa/world-conference-on-efa-jomtiem-1990.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization (2010). *Education for All movement*. Retrieved II September, 2010 from <http://www.unesco.org/en/efa/the-efa-movement>.