RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT ISSUES IN NIGERIA TEACHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Abstract

The focus of this paper is on the impact of research and development in educational programmes on teacher education. Teacher education has been viewed as the type of training or education given to teacher-trainees to enable them impact knowledge effectively to the learner. In this process, research plays an important role. Research is regarded as sine-qua-non to the development of educational theories and practices that will soundly equip the student teacher for this onerous task of preparing an adjusted and normalized leader of tomorrow. The need therefore for the student teacher to be equipped with the skills of educational research and to understand its concept and processes were thoroughly examined. It is the position of this paper that these issues will enable teachers fit squarely into the classroom situation. The paper argues that the realization of these goals depends to a large extent on the consideration of certain factors which include the provision of adequate funds.

Introduction

Education is the springboard to socio-economic growth and development of every nation. It prepares an individual to live in a dynamic or constantly changing society and contributes to such changes and constantly promotes the survival, growth and development of the society.

Education is the most powerful instrument in the world because no nation has ever attained fame or a particular height in terms of development without education as its bedrock, which is engendered by sound educational ideals. Thus Onwumere (2006), sees education as the springboard for socio-political, economic and cultural development that enhances the production of skilled manpower for national development. But the laudable goals of education cannot be achieved in the absence of research and development in teacher educational programme.

As stated in the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1977 which was revised in (FRN) 1981, no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers. Thus, teachers are the hub on which the education system rotates. They are the key instruments in achieving sustainable...
national development. Teacher education is the fundamental form of education that should be functional, solid and concrete in all ramifications in order to meet the current challenges of the individual and the nation at large.

Okere (2008) states that there is high increase in the demand for education at all levels in Nigeria due to the increased awareness of its importance, increased population need for critical skill for survival in the society. Thus, there is urgent need for more qualified teachers to bridge the gap between the high growing student population and the number of qualified teachers in the education system. It is on record that quality of teachers determines the standard of education in any country. Hence, there is the need to train skilled teaching manpower that can effectively handle the educational system in the country.

The Concept of Teacher Education

Teacher education is that type of education which prepares people to become qualified and competent teachers. It also depicts a conscious effort geared towards the production of individuals with commitment for human capital production. The training of teaching manpower takes into cognizance research and development in human management as research is the systematic search and investigation for increasing the sum of knowledge, development of new and improved products, services and industrial processes of capital development which have emerged to occupy the main center stage in the activities of teachers’ education.

This is understandable because research development has become the most enduring and effective means of boosting sustainable economic development and reinforcing competitiveness in the face of rapid growth taking place between teachers.

There is ample evidence to show that research and development generated by higher education more than anything else, has contributed to the rise and expansion of the world knowledge, economy and the establishment once again of teachers knowledge in the on-going process of globalization and its uneven development.

Denga (2001) opined that teacher education is the process of preparing or developing individuals with the necessary knowledge that will enable them to effectively direct learning situation. Nwana (2006) sees teacher education as the aspect of education, which produces teachers through professional training. Okafor (1988) sees teacher education as the formal, systematic and organized training programme geared towards the production of a crop of required teaching manpower to implement the planning and develop the curriculum of schools in the society.

The Role of Research in Teachers Education Programme

The writer is of the view that research development plays an important role in teacher education programme. Research generally plays an important role in human existence. It is an undeniable fact that the improved conditions in teacher education today have been made possible by the enquiry of the researcher in teacher
education programmes. Some of the roles which education research plays include:

1. The advancement of knowledge through research. The frontiers of knowledge in the discipline of education are extended. Much of human knowledge today is drawn from conclusions of researches accumulated over the years; each investigation produces some results which are tentative. The rate at which research is expanding the frontiers of knowledge in every discipline is astonishing.

2. Increasing understanding of educational phenomena. Research in education plays a vital role in increasing our awareness and understanding of educational phenomena. Findings from educational research lead to the development and refinement of educational theories. These theories help in explaining certain educational phenomena thereby increasing our knowledge and understanding of such phenomena. Through research, teachers will understand very well the educational effects of certain processes such as reinforcement, enquiry, learning techniques, mastery learning and continuous assessment. Research has similarly increased our understanding of appropriate pedagogical skills and methods, good classroom organization and management techniques, specific teacher behaviours which make for

3. Providing solutions to educational problems. One of the fundamental roles that educational research plays is to help teachers in solving educational problems. The major motivation for understanding any research in education is to solve an identified educational problem. Such a problem may relate to the administration of educational programmes, evaluation of instructional outcomes, curriculum materials, and abnormality in the behavioural patterns of students.

4. Improvement of educational practices. Research leads to better and improved practices in teachers’ education. Results of educational research reveal those instructional materials, techniques and methods that prove to be more effective and at the same time indict those that seem to be ineffective. The mass of improved instructional materials and techniques made possible through research has been a source of enhanced teachers. Improvements in curriculum designing, classroom management and control, instructional supervision, management of all sorts of deviant student behaviours, handling of exceptional children as well as evaluation practices have all been made possible by research in teacher education.
5. Bringing about overall development and progress. Educational research brings about overall development and progress in the field of education. Development and progress come as a result of advances and accomplishments in a particular field. Every now and then, research breaks new grounds which help to bring about development and progress to teachers in training. Serious attention should be given to research, if teacher education in Nigeria hopes to get anywhere near the heights so far attained by the developed nations. To do this, the serious problems which plague research undertaking in these field of teacher education must first be tackled and the problems include the following:

Problems of Research Development in Teacher Education Programme

1. Inadequate funding of research projects: Research projects in teachers’ educational programmes are hardly properly funded. This is because of the lack of commitment on the part of the governments to research. In our colleges, the situation has assumed crises dimension. Research has almost come to a halt because of lack of funds. The days of research grants are almost over. There are academic staff that have stayed as much as ten years without any publications for promotion.

2. Lack of equipment, facilities and materials. This is particularly the case in the sciences where many teachers cannot find a single microscope in good working condition. They have either become obsolete or are in a very bad state.

3. Unattractive working conditions for research workers. One other problem that militates against research in the teacher educational programme is the pitiable conditions under which research workers operate. Teachers are not well paid and apart from their meager salaries, there are little or no incentives for them. The few who reside in official quarters live in miserable conditions while the majority who are forced to live inside the town suffer all sorts of hardships. A bundle of family problems serves as potent sources of distraction even to the best brains.

4. Attitude of the government and society. The government and society in general seem to have a poor attitude to research. The various governments in the developing countries tend not to be very enthusiastic about promoting teachers research. They castigate research workers who are operating under very harsh and hard conditions for not producing immediate results. They seem not to realize that research is a painstaking exercise which
requires a long time before results could produce practical effects.

6. The attitude of teachers to research. The teachers are complacent about research. Most teachers do not see why money and time should be “wasted” on something that does not contribute immediately to their material well being. This attitude prevails even among the teachers in our society. Certainly the role of research with respect to overall development is not fully appreciated.

Importance of Research Development in Teacher Education

According to Nwara (2006), the importance of research development in teacher education is as follows:

- Research in teacher education programme helps to bridge the gap between theory and practice.
- Research brings about an Effective Education.
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Research Brings about an Effective Education.

Research in teacher education programmes is a magnetic pole from which all planning about education must invariably take their bearings.

Research in teacher education help to enhance the standard of education because the survival of teachers depends in a large extent on the quality and adequacy of the education. It provides the teachers the pivot of educational process.

Research in teacher educational programmes help in the implementation of the educational curriculum.

The Goals of Research in Teacher Education Programme

The writer is strongly of the view that if development is to be achieved in teacher educational programme, then the goals of research should be as follows:

1. To produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teacher for all the levels in Nigeria educational system.
2. To help further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers.
3. To help the teachers to fit into social life of the community and the society at large and change their commitment to national goals.
4. To help provide teachers with intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and make them adapted to changing situation.
5. To help enhance teachers’ commitment to the teaching profession.

The National Policy on Education also stipulated that the minimum qualification for entry into the teaching profession shall be the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE), that all teachers shall be professionally trained, that all teachers shall continue to take cognizance of change in the methodology and in the curriculum and that teachers shall regularly be exposed to innovation in their profession.
Conclusion

In the above discussion, an attempt was made to trace the concept of teacher education and why research development which featured prominently has systematically declined to a point of collapse, ironically in the midst of mass proliferation of research centers in the country.

Research is the only source for generating and advancing the frontiers of knowledge, skills, training and expertise for education and is the single most important factor which facilitates and accelerates economic development and improved living conditions in society.

One major problem arising from the paradigm that emphasizes teaching and education with corresponding research is of course the cumulative but yet growing mismatch between produced teachers and the actual needs of the national and global economics. This is evidenced not only in teaching but also in learning methods. The crux of the matter is that while the traditional non-knowledge based economic sectors have continued to progressively shrink, the knowledge based industries have not been growing and expanding due particularly to the collapse of research development in research centers.

Currently, Nigeria is rated to have the greatest problems of graduate unemployment, greatest need of knowledge based industries for economic expansion and experiences the biggest crises of stagnation and symbolic expansion within its higher education, which could be attributed to nonchalant attitude to building up research capacity, research and scientific community and investing handsomely in research development for socio-economic development.

Recommendation

Having critically examined the issues and trend in research development as it relates to teacher education programme, the writer is strongly of the opinion that if the following recommendation is adhered to by the appropriate authorities and stakeholders, there should be a lot of success to be achieved.

1. There is dire need to raise the consciousness of the teachers about the strategic importance of research development as the most important component of teacher education in today’s global world knowledge economy for where research centers should be properly necessitated, realigned and funded to produce and utilize it for the development of education.

2. National Research Centers should be established in the country. This will help to develop priority and agenda for today’s development and a national strategic research plan for the millennium. There must be a national legislation to back up and support research as part of national economic reform for development, in which the State, Private sector and Communities in collaboration with the Colleges of Education and research centers should be made to work together and produce results for their benefits.
3. The creation of Research institutional framework and research centers. It is proposed that they should have a research teaching ratio of 60 to 40 in their academic activities, time, engagement, staff recruitment, resource allocation, etc.

4. There should be a national core research and scientific community that can be called the country’s knowledge community; a collection of about 20,000 teachers and research civil servants, who have not yet developed associations between and among themselves beyond trade-union level.

5. There should be a decisive shift of funding for research to be generated by the public and private sectors in the country. Both should be made to commit a specific percentage of their expenditure on research and development.

6. Another crucial level of paradigmatic shift should be in the conduct and functions of research itself. Research as purely an affair of acquiring higher degrees by students and promotions for teachers should cease and be subordinated to national research priorities and goals. There is no way research development can emerge and become a social affair unless it is treated as a developmental affair, to the extent of replacing the mode of accumulation based on looting and misappropriation. Research knowledge-based mode of accumulation should be the fastest, developmentally most influential and currently most competitive in the teachers education programme.

References


