

## PROBLEMS OF TEACHER QUALITY IN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME

BY

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### ABSTRACT

*This problem of teacher quality and the teaching profession has contributed no small measures to the falling standard of education in Nigeria today. The teacher is an indicator and determiner of the quality of her education. The quality of any educational programme therefore is a function of the quality of the teacher. Teacher education is designed to produce a highly motivated, sensitive, conscientious and successful classroom teacher who will handle students effectively for a better educational achievement. One of the problems of teacher education in Nigeria today is in the quality of the teachers produced. This paper highlights some of the problems affecting teacher quality education and suggests ways for minimizing the problems surrounding teacher quality education in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** *Teacher, Teacher Education, Problems of teachers, Quality education*

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### INTRODUCTION

Education is the indisputable answer to human problems in a fast-changing world. It is an established fact that it is the key to the development of both human and natural resources of a nation. For education to be meaningful, it must be qualitative.

We live in a dynamic world ever-increasing knowledge, ideas and sophisticated techniques and amazing inventions soon becoming outdated in a matter of years, hence, the need for continuing training of teachers if qualitative education is to be maintained in institutions. For present-day teachers to remain relevant to their students, they must keep abreast of the new innovations in learning styles and methodologies.

This paper therefore, explains the concept of teacher education, objectives of teacher education, problems affecting quality teacher education and suggest how to minimize the problems surrounding teacher education quality in Nigeria.

With rapid advancement in technology and high rate of obsolescence of ideas and techniques, the need for dynamic and responsive teacher training is more acute today. It is pertinent to note Fafunwa's observation that *one of the educational problems that besets Nigeria today is a persistent and agonizing one which relates to training competent teachers*. Since teacher is the most crucial factor in educational system, it is necessary to examine the problems of teacher quality in Nigeria.

### Concept of Teacher Education

According to UNESCO (1992) teacher education is the training of those persons who are directly responsible for the education of pupil or students. It is further explained that the term is used to describe the process of professional preparation of those persons who are by the nature of their functions designated as teachers. From this definition, a person who has undergone a professional training on how to handle the teaching of children at tender age when they need special attention. The teacher is able to respond to learners' various needs such as educational, vocational, personal, psychological, emotional and moral.

Teacher education, on the other hand, is the process of training those persons, who after undergoing a pre-service training and graduation from teacher training institutes, will be saddled with the responsibility of training the young in all tiers of educational system. Kolo (1991) states that *teacher education is a continuous process of pre-service teacher undertaken by institutions of higher learning with departments in charge of education in Nigerian universities or as a continuous and deliberate effort intended to improve the efficiency of those to be charged with the responsibility of training children in schools.*

Abdulsalam (2003) defines teacher education as aspect of education, which deals with the acquisition of practical and applied skills in teaching profession. It is also that aspect of education, which provides academic and professional orientation to would-be teachers or student teachers and other categories of teachers (both trained and untrained) so that they can become efficient in discharging their teaching responsibilities.

Abba (1992) on the other hand defines *teacher education simply as a means of creating an enabling environment so that one can impart through different ways, appropriate knowledge and skills to someone who is willing to be a teacher or someone who is already a teacher but wishes to enhance his or her capacity in discharging those teaching functions effectively.*

### **Objectives of Teacher Education**

According to the National Policy on Education revised (2004) *all teachers in our educational institutions from pre-primary up to the university will be professionally trained.* The policy also outlined the following objectives of teacher education in Nigeria.

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

The policy shows that education would continue to be given a major emphasis in our educational planning and is free for any intending teacher. It was further explained that the minimum qualification for entry into teaching profession would be Nigeria Certificate Education (NCE). The foregoing discussion is a testimony that teacher education in Nigeria is highly regarded at least at the policy making level which aimed at quality in teacher education and the educational standard of the country since teachers are determinants of educational quality. But the realization of these objectives still remains a dream.

### **Quality Teacher Education**

The teacher holds the key to nation-building. This is for the fact that the aspiration of any nation to transform into a great country can only be possible if there are competent and dedicated teachers to impart the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes. According to Oguntimehin (2004), quality in education deals with the issues of relevance, validity, functionalism, excellence and efficiency in the achievement of educational goals and priorities. It then follows that country that operates poor quality teacher education will perpetually remain underdeveloped and thus suffer results of underdevelopment as a nation. Imparting qualitative education to the teachers who will in turn impart the required

knowledge, skills and morals to the young generation to meet up with the challenges of the modern world of science and technology requires constant re-training of teachers.

There is no doubt that the current Federal Minister of Education is trying very hard to see to productivity in the educational sector but more needs to be done to revive the standard of Nigerian education at all levels. To rescue the teaching profession from further decay, training and retraining of teachers must be adhered to. The objectives of qualitative and functional education necessitate more qualitative teacher education based on re-designed and articulated teacher education programmes.

Practicing teachers are the ones saddled with the responsibility of implementing educational innovations and bringing about desired changes. Indeed, teacher is the pivot on which any educational development hangs, so any attempt to improve quality education must involve a well-articulated teacher education programme.

The teacher is the foundation of the whole educational process had long been recognized. For instance, in Plato's 'Republic', Lassa (1996) stressed *teaching was described as a noble act undertaken by noble citizens for the purpose of building a state with knowledgeable people*. This therefore means that unlike in other professions; the mistakes of a teacher have more devastating effects on the nation, and hence the emphasis on effective teacher education programme for national development.

Fafunwa (1979:79) observes that a good teacher education programme must seek to assist the individual teacher to grow and develop as a person, provide him with necessary skills and professional abilities that will help him become an effective teacher and a community leader. However, no adequate training programme; consequently, teacher education must come at the top of every list of priorities concerned with education and training, because the services of a teacher are indispensable to any nation.

### **Problems affecting quality teacher education**

Teacher is the key in the entire education programme in the world. A good teacher education programme therefore must seek to assist individual teacher to grow and develop as a person, provide him with necessary skills and professional abilities that will help him become an effective teacher.

The problem to be tackled is inadequate planning. The education of teacher must as of necessity be adequate planned as an integral part of national development.

Combe (1998) argued that *the abiding focus of the educational planning effort, the magnetic pole from which it invariably takes its bearing is the classroom practitioner, meaning the teacher and the activities which must concern educational planning first and last is the transaction between teacher and learner*. He further maintained that if teaching and learning are the beginning of the educational process, then all matters that bear on welfare, professional development and effectiveness of teacher must be of prime importance.

Various scholars and researchers are of the view that motivating teachers and improving conditions of their service determine the quality of the system and help in sustaining the best brains in the system. Lassa (1996:5) rightly observed, professionals tend to keep their jobs when they are highly motivated and when their conditions of service guarantee job satisfaction and security. In teaching profession, Lassa further maintained that these conditions seem to be lacking hence getting sufficient students who are motivated to enter Colleges of Education has been the greatest problems. This clearly shows that there is still a long way to go in Nigeria to make the impact of the reason why the best opt for medicine, engineering, accountancy, etc that provide the esteem required by individuals.

On the competencies acquired during pre-service training. Ukeje (1992) observed what the teacher knows and does can be irreparable loss to a child. His observation supports the content of the Bagauda seminar of September 1980 in NERDC (1980), that *the teacher is the determinant of quality of any education system*. This therefore, supports the assertion that the teacher is the first in the educational process and always stands on the side of any educative process. Quality control measures must be put in place in teacher education in order to have quality teaches. This is because the teacher is the 'engine proper' of the educational process. The status of teacher in Nigeria is raised only at the policy level as stated in the National Policy on Education revised (2004::4) *that no educational system can raise above the quality of its teachers*. The emphasis placed as teacher education at the policy level in Nigeria is rooted on the importance of teacher to the development of the individuals and to the overall national development.

Nigeria seems to have adequate number of colleges of education, polytechnics, and faculties of education in the universities to train the required teachers, but certain factors hinder achieving this laudable objective.

- i. Most of the colleges of education courses, which are not appropriate or relevant to the levels and needs of most primary school teachers. In fact, the curriculum of the colleges of education rather than preparing teaching for primary education, actually prepared them for teaching at junior secondary level. The only component of the curriculum, which prepares teachers, for primary education is the primary education studies. Experience has shown that most students do not take this course. The implication is that the junior secondary level is being adequately catered for, while the primary level is insufficiently satisfied.
- ii. Enrolment into colleges of education, polytechnics and other tertiary institutions training teachers is dropping at an alarming rate. There is a serious brain-drain from the teaching profession into the lucrative sectors of the economy. In other words, the teaching profession is used as a stepping stone to other professions, hence affecting quality teacher education in teacher education programme.
- iii. The low status ascribe to the profession in society; the teacher trains the engineers, he builds accountants, instructs the politicians, makes a doctor and so on, but he is the last person to be recognized. The benefits of success accrued to others are not so to him, who does the training and ensures success. But that teachers reward are in heaven, so people shun teaching because they are not sure of getting to heaven. The problems mentioned above have serious implication for the development of teacher education.

### Suggestions

In order to ensure teacher quality education programme and ensure its success the following suggestions may be adopted.

1. Teachers should be given adequate training in order to train the teeming Nigerian youths today for a better tomorrow.
2. The necessary infrastructure for teacher training should be put in place in order for the teacher to meet up with the current technological development in every aspect of formal education.
3. Competent, efficient and highly motivated teachers should be employed to teach would-be teachers and should be employed based on their area of specialization.

4. Teacher career development programmes should be encouraged through in-service teacher training to improve professional skills.
5. All tiers of government should pay teacher salaries and allowances regularly as a motivating factor.
6. Those on the job, who have not received teacher training education should be encouraged to go back to the basics in order to be productive.
7. Modern equipment should be made available to the teacher.

### Conclusion

It is beyond reasonable doubt that no nation can progress without effective educational programmes for its teachers. The Nigerian government therefore should see to it that teachers are trained and re-trained continually in order to update themselves and showcase the quality in them. If only teachers in the country are catered for so that they could realistically translate the policy of education into practice, standard of education in Nigeria would have been different by now. For, the success of the whole teacher quality education depends both on human and material resources.

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