



Teacher Education Programme and Employability: Issues, Challenges and the Way Forward

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ABSTRACT

Every nation strives towards provision of quality education for its citizens in order to consider the nations development. However, achieving quality education will be a dream if teacher education programme and employability are not in good shape. Commendable efforts have been made yet much need to be desired more importantly in the curricular delivery and employment of efficient skillful teachers for the 21st century challenges. Based on these, the paper examined the concept of teachers education programme, issues in teacher education programme in Nigeria, present position of teacher education policy, teacher education and integration of 21st century skills. Challenges facing teachers education programme in Nigeria includes: poor funding, inadequate information and communication technology (ICT) facilities available in some school. Lack of motivation and teachers commitment among others. It was recommended as a way forward that adequate funding should be made to provide and upgrade the necessary resources. Admission policy to teacher education institution should be based on the availability of facilities and curriculum should be redesigned to better prepare the teacher trainees for life and work in the 21st century challenges.

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INTRODUCTION

Teacher education programme is a pre-service and in-service programme meant to produce professionally qualified teacher and to enhance the quality of teachers already in service. The federal Republic of Nigeria describes teachers' education programme as the professional training given to teachers entering or already in the teaching profession either as part of secondary education or of higher education (FRN, 2013). For many years the government have been investing in teachers in schools for various global challenges. Preparing for the challenges is the first step towards stability, consistency, progress and

relevance in education industry. Teachers are regarded as builders of many nations of the world. Obierika and Nwachokor (2011) noted that the teacher tailors the citizens of the nation to be well informed, know their rights, duties, obligation, responsibilities and contributions towards their societies and nation at large. In another development teachers should be equipped with the necessary experiences skills, attitudes and knowledge that are necessary for moral and aesthetic needs of the society (NERDC, 2012). Thus, it is only when the teachers are well and prepared that they can face the 21st century challenges. Consequently, upon this, the future of any nation to a large extent



depends on teachers' output and curriculum delivery considering the trends of activities in the Nigerian society especially in the socio-political landscape, which can be techno-digital advancement, it is pertinent to note that teacher education programme needs improvement to meet with the 21st century challenges. However, what makes a good system of education depends on the quality of teachers available in the system. Ibukun (2004) noted that the quality of human resources inform of teachers often dictates the extent of the effectiveness of the educational programmes. In order to achieve the purpose of teacher education programme for a better employability of 21st century teachers, there is the dire need for qualified teachers who are equipped with the desired, skills, competence and commitments to be empowered in order to perform their tasks professionally. This paper therefore examined the teacher education programme in Nigeria, identifies the weakness of current education system hence call for maximize human resources, equip teachers with updated skills for the 21st century challenges.

CONCEPT OF TEACHER EDUCATION

It is well known that the quality and extent of learners' achievement are determined primarily by teacher competence, sensitivity and teacher motivation. Teacher education is defined as a form of education which is carefully designed to prepare and groom teachers or those who will teach or provide relevant professional service to the school. It can also be described as a set of educational activities design to equip a prospective teacher with the appropriate skills, competence, knowledge that will help him to develop his personality towards making him a competent teacher. In line with that, Federal Government described teacher education as the professional training given to teacher entering or already in the teaching

profession either on part of secondary education of higher education (NPE, 2008). Teacher education helps in the development of teaching skills in their professional institutions. They require specialized teacher training inputs for the function which he/she is expected to perform at each state. It is the aspect of education which deals with the acquisition of practice and applied skills in teaching profession (Apeh, 2012). However, Kolawole (2015), is of the view that teacher education programme in Nigeria has developed over the year from what it was during the missionary era when both the curriculum and practice were informed by the need to produce teacher for evangelism. Today teacher education programme has advanced in philosophy, content, quality and practice with a view of meeting the demands of the nation and the challenge of the global world.

Approaches to Teacher Education

This refers to the pattern or mode by which the assignment of educating teachers is undertaken. One can take "Pattern or mode" of Teacher Education to refers to one or the other of pre-service or in-service teacher education.

Pre-service teacher education refers to the education for teaching undertaken prior to first appointment into teaching. Pre-service teacher education provides the initial and fundamental knowledge of teaching as well as the basic certificate that earns the individual the title "Teacher". In-service teacher education on the other hand provide basis for upgrading the teacher (Kanu, 1994).

In-service teacher education on the other hand refers to teacher education received while already in the teaching service.

Another understanding of the term "pattern" or "mode" of teacher education refers to the various forms under which the



education of teachers is undertaken. These forms include:

- i. Apprenticeship or on the job teacher education
- ii. Pupil-teacher system of teacher education
- iii. Institutionalized teacher education
- iv. Correspondence teacher education; and
- v. Distance learning system teacher education

The National Teacher Education Policy

The National Teacher Education Policy (2009) contains the least articulation of the vision, aims and objective of teacher education in Nigeria. The policy states that the vision of teacher education in Nigeria is to produce quality, highly skilled, competent, knowledgeable and creative teacher based on explicit performance standard through pre-service and in-service programme that can be able to raise generation of learners who can stand to compete globally. The goal of teacher education according to the Policy is to ensure that teachers are trained and oriented to teach world class learners and to continue to develop their knowledge and competence in their choice of career. The Policy itemized the objective of teacher education which include:

- i. Create adequate incentives to attract competent people into the teaching profession;
- ii. Ensure rigorous admission and graduation requirements and apply them consistently;
- iii. Ensure that teacher education institutions are well equipped both in human and non-human resources;
- iv. Ensure that teachers have sufficient mastery of content and varied methods of teaching that are

- v. subject specific including teachers for special needs of learning;
- v. Ensure structured effective and supporting supervision of teaching practice and induction as well as certification and licensing.
- vi. Produce sufficiently trained teacher educators capable of imparting knowledge and attitude
- vii. Motivate teachers and provide opportunities for their continuing professional development, retention, advancement and improvement in the chosen career; and
- viii. Ensure that teachers constantly upgrade their skills in order to remain competent and relevant

TEACHERS EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN NIGERIA

The goal of teacher education in Nigeria includes among others; the encouragement of the spirit of enquiring and creativity in teachers and to provide them with the well actual and professional background that will be adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to changing situation (FRN, 2012). The policy noted that teacher education programme shall continue to take delivery and teachers be regularly exposed to innovations in their professions. The policy therefore stipulates that professional training of teachers is in two types, i.e. pre-service and in-service training. Certain institutions were charged with the responsibilities of its implementation which includes:

1. Faculties and institutes of education of universities: they train teachers for Bachelor of Education degree programmes.
2. Colleges of education: Offers post-secondary (NCE) programmes, i.e. train teachers for basic education level of education. This according to the National Policy on Education, has



- become the minimum teaching qualification. Some of the colleges also offer NCE pre-primary courses in order to produce teachers at the pre-primary level of education. This qualification represents a classic design of teacher education in Nigeria.
3. The National teachers Institute: Its was established to provide refresher and upgrade courses for practicing teachers; organize workshops, seminars and conferences as well as formulate and initiate policies and programmes that will lead to improvement in the quality of education in Nigeria. In line with these, the institute is responsible in training and retraining programmes to help unqualified primary school teachers, also entered NCE programme through Distance Learning System (DLS) provide training for Pivotal Teachers Training Programme (PTTP) introduced 2002 by means of producing teachers to fill the gap in the supply of teachers for Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme.
 4. School of Education in the Polytechnics: They offer diploma courses/programmes for the production of teachers for vocational and technical schools. The pre-service training prepares the prospective teacher to participate effectively in the system in exposure to varied concepts of teaching/learning content of different subject areas depending on the area of specialization. The three (3) years NCE programme covers:
 - a) General Studies: Use of English, Introduction to Computers etc.
 - b) Study of the main Element of education: Philosophy, Sociology, Psychology, Theory and Practice of Education, Comparative Education, School and Administration, Principles and Methods etc.
 - c) Studies in areas of specialization

- d) Practical teaching and other curricular activities
- e) Conducting a research project in an area of instructional practices form issues observed.

At the end of their trainings, trainees are awarded degrees, according to the institutions attended and their overall academic performance will qualify them to teach at the level of education trained for. They are also required to register with the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria which is a body responsible of licensing of teachers.

ISSUES ON TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN NIGERIA

Preparation of teacher education programme for the 21st Century has been reviewed by a number of studies. According to Ololube (2006), Teacher training institution have been critiqued for their inability to produce teachers who are properly grounded in pedagogy and content as well as having the ability to collaborate professionally in a working environment. It has also been observed that the transition from academic theories in universities to classroom practice have often been very sharp and that students' teachers are not often properly groomed to put into practice current pedagogy and interactive skills that have been theoretically learnt.

(ESSPIN) Input Visit report 2010 highlighted a rundown issue on teacher education programme as follows:

1. There is gap between the curriculum taught to teacher trainees and the reality that exists schools. Such includes dilapidated school buildings, inadequate instructional materials, and overcrowded classrooms.
2. Teacher training curriculum in the country does not fully acknowledge the new age environment in schools and classrooms in terms of constructivist learning, learning centered instructions



- and integrating technology into the teaching/earning process.
3. There is also the quantity and quality of input for teacher training programmes. Most teachers are not motivated to teach, and often opt for teaching as last resort i.e. after failing to secure admission into a lucrative course therefore, these who opt for teaching are not academically sound.
 4. Emphasis on content delivery, examination and certification over real learning is a threat to quality.
 5. The current system of teaching and evaluation does not allow creativity, innovation and research which are important tools for lifelong learning.
 6. Primary education studies (PES) is the only course in the NCE curriculum that explicitly set out to prepare students for teaching in the primary school in an integrated and focused manner. However only 10% of enrolment in the colleges offers PES while the remaining 90% offer single or double major courses. This leaves a dearth of qualified teachers at the primary school level.
 7. Poor preparation and poor recruitment of lecturers, results in a lack of professional development opportunities for lecturers. Also, in-service training for basic education teachers, consists primarily of programme to provide upgrading and certification through distance "sandwich" courses.

TEACHER EDUCATION AND INTEGRATION OF 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

Future changes within the society will have to result in new educational content and configurations of educational programs. Changes in program configurations should be based solidly on curriculum considerations. That is the form of education will should tally with the functions to be served. According to Sankon

in Saliom, (1981) futurism play an important role in the management of education, more important in curriculum development. Thus, the image of the future will largely determine the type of curriculum to be planned.

There is increasingly availability of a wider range of technology that has the potential to support and enhance the curriculum of 21st century. Learners are expected to use technology for their learning, but this requires the development of information and digital literacy skills to maximize the potential learning opportunities. Learning resources will be increasingly delivered by a variety of mobile devices and also through different immersive and virtual learning environments. Mobile devices and web 2.0 technology provide opportunities for learners to create their own deep and personalized learning experiences that are relevant for future professional practice. Teachers have a crucial guidance and support role for the effective use of technology for learning. There is a little evidence based to support the impact on learning for many of the potential scenarios and further research is urgently required.

Hammon & Linda (2008) pointed out contents and skills necessary for the curriculum delivery of the 21st century to be able to produce students with the following skills:

1. Critical thinkers
2. Problem solvers
3. Good communicators
4. Good collaborators
5. Information and technology literature
6. Flexible and adaptable
7. Innovative and creative
8. Globally competent
9. Financially literate

Therefore vision 21st century curriculum through teacher education can be based on these skills which is geared toward students mastery of the 21st century



skills and should be recognized as one of the most critical outcome of the teaching and learning. Therefore, it is necessary to develop and implement curriculum and instructional strategies that by design enhance these skills through teacher education programme to be able to face the future trends.

The world is changing, so also the curriculum, therefore, it is worth saying that teacher education programme should be ready to provide the needs that will improve the future of the nation. For the best approaches to use for instruction to meeting up with the present and future needs of the society Olusda and Ekundayo (2012) illustrated that the teacher of the 21st Century is a facilitator who will model the “how” of integrating the ‘who’, “what”, “when” and “why” into a coherent whole, stir up interest by presenting challenging question requiring the use of higher order thinking skills and be resource person for the various groups in the classrooms. Consequently, curriculum of teacher education needs to be injected with the skills of creativity and innovation for the 21st Century needs. The post-modern world being an age of information explosion and techno-digitalization requires the programme of teacher education to be abreast and competent in techno-digital manipulations. In line with this, Nwachokor (2011) noted that, interest literacy will help to equip the teacher with the skills needed to surf the net, navigate the web and be the interest for survival in the ever-changing world.

CHALLENGES FACING TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN NIGERIA

For many decades and now Nigerians have been weeping about the falling standards of education. It was also established that low quality teacher competence is adversely affecting the academic standard of our nation. According

to Tambuwal (2008), falling standard of education in Nigeria are as a result of the following challenges of teacher education:

- i. Insufficient infrastructures and other relevant materials such as information communication technology especially by correspondence course and long vacation training programme;
- ii. Poor funding: teacher education programme is poorly funded by the government for example teachers are poorly remunerated and are delayed to get their salaries;
- iii. Inadequate professional qualification: This challenge makes it difficult for the teachers to contribute effectively to teaching and learning process since they may be professionally deficient.
- iv. Many people are in the teaching training institute because they cannot secure admission into universities’
- v. Similarly, many teachers on the job are there because they cannot get job elsewhere and instead of doing nothing they take up teaching appointment as the last resort;
- vi. There are some practices in teacher’s recruitment and retention in Nigeria that are not in support of ensuring quality teaching man power in Nigeria schools. Teachers’ recruitment policy in Nigerian never emphasize professionalism. For many years, the teaching profession served as dumping ground for all kinds of professionals;
- vii. Curriculum content of teacher educator seems not to reflect how to cater for tomorrow’s need.
- viii. Cost implication in terms of developing the future curriculum as well as the delivery is one of the major constraints in education industry.
- ix. There is general lack of proper organization, adequate resources and clear guidelines for all teacher



- education program to be able to make proper planning and delivery of the curriculum for the 21st century.
- x. Lack of uniformity in the operation of the system thereby creating potholes for a unified approach to strategically check its utility for the delivery of the present and future curriculum.
 - xi. Non participation of teacher to partake in curricular development, instructional design, theoretical inquiry, technical planning, policy making etc.

CONCLUSION

For any nation or human endeavor to resound success in all spheres of life, adequate preparation needs to be made through its education via the curriculum delivery. The importance of teacher towards this transformation and changes and also his responsibilities toward the attainment of the educational goals is enormous. Hence, teacher education programme need to massively prepare teacher for the great challenge ahead through various learning approaches and strategies, so that the teacher should be able to deliver the curriculum to attain the future educational goal it is design to serve. However, the importance of this preparation for the 21st century curriculum delivery seems to be given less attention in Nigeria as most of the content seems not to reflect Nigeria's future aspiration. It is expected that urgent need to reorganize the current education programme on the proper educational strategies to achieve the set target of the 21st century challenges in teaching and learning process.

WAY FORWARD

If teachers are prepared to work effectively and efficiently in the classroom, schools and in the society in general, there will be coherent and more functional approach to professional development. In

view of the need for the appropriate action to address the challenges aforementioned to enhance proper provision of teacher education in Nigeria, the following recommendations are made to tackle these challenges:

1. Adequate funding should be provided to upgrading necessary teaching and laboratory materials and other tools;
2. Steps should be taken to improve teaching methods to make them current and relevant to present needs;
3. Admission of students into teacher education institution should be based on the availability of facilities that can support the students;
4. Motivate teachers and provide opportunities for their continuing professional development;
5. Training and re-training of teachers should be given a priority to ensure effective and efficient performance;
6. External support from some private individuals should be encourage to cater for some of the anticipated problems, through collaboration from private sectors or organization and other external bodies a lot can be achieved
7. Information and communication technology facilities should be made available in all teachers training institutions including distance learning programmes. Teachers training institution should check the admission and graduation process; and
8. The current practice of promoting teachers using year of graduation is unacceptable in contemporary era of globalization. Also the reward system should be related to individual teachers that have demonstrated high sense of commitment to his duty and to the profession.
9. Ensure that teacher education institutions are well equipped both in human and material resources;



10. Create adequate incentives to attract and retain capable teachers;
11. Admission into colleges of education should be as strict as that of law, medicine, pharmacy and other professions;
12. People that could not meet up requirement into colleges of education should not be admitted;
13. People that are professionally qualified should be recruited;
14. There should be a well-structured supervisory and monitoring body to supervise teaching practice exercise;
15. Raise the professional status of teaching higher to attract more people and develop teaching as a knowledge based profession;
16. Re-design the school curriculum to better prepare student for life work in 21st century and ahead;
17. Promoting flexible learning arrangements in schools to better meet the needs of the individual learners related to future aspirations.
18. Producing enough high quality assessment to meet the needs of a system as large and diverse as Nigeria;
19. Stakeholders in education should understand and import of making curriculum of the teachers education to reflect the challenges posed by the nature of 21st century learners whose future and that of the nation may be hampered if such is neglected;
20. Teacher education institutions, induction teachers in collaboration with teachers' professional associations should join hands by affording opportunities through the training programme or mandatory continuing programme to constant update their knowledge and skills through different innovative approaches that will cater for the 21st Century.

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