TEACHER EDUCATION CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS IN INNOVATION IN NIGERIA EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Nasiru Adeyemi Buari

Abstract

The services rendered by teacher are indispensable to any nation because he influences the lives of the nation’s future either positively or negatively. Just as the wheel rotates around the hub, the educational system rotates around the teacher. Teacher education is therefore the form of education that is properly planned and systematically programmed and applied so as to produce those who teach and will teach. This paper therefore focuses on teacher education in Nigeria. It attempts to spell out the challenges and prospects in innovation in Nigerian Educational system and gives recommendations aimed at improving the situations.

Introduction

Education itself is a cooperative teaching-learning process of preparing an individual, from birth and all through his/her life, for happy and useful living in the society within the context of his/her culture and resources, Oyekan (1994). From all indications, a comprehensive education would inculcate relevant knowledge, refine the minds of the citizens and prepare them to a decent life and develop a virile society.

According to Oyekan (1994), functional education remains the veritable instrument and strength of positive change for sustainable human development. It is a sacred ingredient of development and a potent means of an enduring life. Education is the bedrock of economic development of any nation. The achievement of this depends largely on the quality of teacher education in the country. Eresimadu (1997) pointed out that no educational system rises above the quality of its teachers. This means that the quality of teachers in the system determines the quality of the educational system in any nation in the world. This shows that teachers’ education is very important to the educational system and nation building. Effective teaching and pleasant learning would produce active literate persons who can clearly read and write with required understanding and communicate thoughts without any ambiguity (Oyekan, 1994).

According to Eneasotor (1997) teacher education is a form of education, which is specially geared or tailored towards the production of people who will teach, essentially in the primary, secondary schools and tertiary institutions. Teacher education therefore is that aspect of formal education, which prepares people to become quality teachers, ranging from Teacher’s Grade Two certificate to Doctorate degree in education. It involves the production of teachers for all levels of education.

Teacher education is 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. Oyekan (1994). It is therefore vital that during their training, Farrant (1980) asserts, student teachers should be given time and opportunity to reflect on what the teacher’s task is; to discover that it is much more than applying methods to do a job or parroting right answers to pass an examination. Hence, there is a strong need to provide sufficient professional education and training, motivation, satisfactory remuneration package and conducive teaching-learning environment for the teacher-trainees. This could make them imbibe self-concept, diligence, honesty and commitment to teaching as a vehicle of continuous human engineering and innovation in the educational system in Nigeria.

The Concept of Teacher Education

Yahaya (1991) stated that the staff constitutes human resource which is the most important and the only active factor of production. The heartbeat of manpower development and training for innovation and prudent use and sustenance of resources in nation building is teacher education.
Hence, it is a process of imparting relevant knowledge, skills and value-orientations that would promote the production of efficient and effective teachers. The whole conduct, manner, attitude, action and personality of practicing teacher should gloriously radiate exemplary academic excellence and loving kindness with sympathetic understanding of the learners’ needs.

According to Cowan (1995), the work of an African teacher can be considered as that of a youth leader, a guide and a counselor of his people and their representatives in all dealings with Europeans. During the time of the colonial period three elements were identified as being necessary in the preparation of teachers and these include:

1. sound habit of thought and action common with every task and some natural aptitude for teaching;
2. knowledge of the subject to be taught and skill to be imparted; and
3. appreciation of the pupils and the community from which such pupils had come.

The provision of teacher education today aims at equipping teachers with opportunities to develop cognitive perspective. It makes the teachers to see the significance of changes and innovation when they come to assess what is best for particular groups of students in schools.

The Aims and Objectives of Teacher Education

According to National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004), the goals of Teacher Education are:

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

To this effect, the Federal Government of Nigeria through her National Policy on Education (2004) has considered education to be “an instrument per excellence” for innovation and effective national development. The policy also acknowledges the pivotal role of the teacher in education and the importance of quality Teacher Education in qualitative educational programme implementation.

Challenges of Teacher Education

One immediate challenge that confronts teacher education in Nigeria is lack of adequate planning for the future. If we are to cater for five million children in the next ten years, we should have by now adequate statistics on the number of schools and teachers needed for the next decade.

There is the prevailing crisis in education and society typified by underachievement, corruption, crime, indiscipline and underutilization of capacities in all facets of human life and national development which could be ascribed to the neglect of general education, teacher education and pitiable plight of the teachers.

There is also the problem of demand and supply. Due to lack of effective coordination of the work in the various Ministries of Education in Nigeria we have a blazairo situation on our hands. While one part of the country is seriously short of trained teachers another section has an apparent surplus of trained teachers it cannot absorb. This is particularly true of the Grade II teachers.

Taiwo (1980) notes that the major problems of teacher education, which have been confronting the country’s educational system has been persistent phenomenon of: (a) Low output of teachers, (b) the poor quality of teachers produced by the training institute and (c) the poor quality of instruction to the younger learners of primary and junior secondary schools resulting from the poor preparation of teachers training institutions.

The Phelps-Stocks Commission (1920) had identified other problems as (a) the absence of teaching-learning aids in schools; (b) the absence of professionally trained staff; (c) the problem of non-supervision/inspection of schools; (d) the problems of poor incentives to the teachers; (e) poor funding of schools; (f) lack of staff development programmes in most schools and colleges; (g) poor
research facilities and above all, the admission of those who are not actually interested in teaching career.

Because of these numerous problems or challenges, Ukeje (1992) therefore cautioned teacher trainers in Nigeria to ensure that they do not produce dunces in the name of letting the people to go as each of such dunces is surely-going to produce thousands of dunces, which will be detrimental to the national developmental aspiration.

The Prospect of Teacher Education

Despite the above staggering problems/challenges confronting teacher education, with task and determination, teacher education can still be salvage from its apparent impending collapse. The poor quality of teachers produced could result from lack of qualified teachers to teach learners.

The poor interpretation and implementation of syllable and lack of dedication to duty can bring about wrong teaching and poor quality of teachers produced. Taiwo (1980) and Joshua (1997) all agreed that instructional delivery personnel should possess certain minimum levels of competence in their chosen fields guarantee that the graduates of such programmes are properly taught and endowed with appropriate skills for the labour market. Adequate funding by government to teacher training institution will enhance adequate provision of funds for manpower development, good environment, and correct inspection of teacher training institutions.

Conclusion

This paper reviewed the challenges and prospects for innovation in Nigeria educational system of teacher education and their resultant effects on the quality and quantity of teacher education. To become an innovative teacher requires honesty, hard work, intelligence and ability to impart knowledge and ideas that will help in shaping the behaviours of its pupils towards the derived goals of the nation. This paper also highlighted the changing needs and role, which the new breed of Nigerian teachers must play in the education of the child. When a teacher is better remunerated for his services, his status will rise in the society as he become better trained and better remunerated. The role of academic qualification is essential because the teacher should be knowledgeable in what he is going to teach. These pupils must be able to learn from him so that after his influence they can demonstrate some skills in the development of the nation.

Recommendations

The work of the teacher is so important that it cannot be surely brushed aside if society is to make good innovation in Nigerian educational system.

1. Since no education system may rise above the quality of its teachers, teacher education shall continue to be given major emphasis in all educational planning and development.

2. In order to speed up teacher productions to reduce the incidence of low output of teachers in our institutions of learning more teacher-training institutions should be established, and the existing ones expanded to meet the needs of the people and the society.

3. The teacher is expected to examine the cultural values of the society, its dynamics and changes occurring within the system to uphold the goodwill and, ethics of the society and transmit such to the students for innovation in educational system of Nigeria.

4. The nation, according to Abu (2001), needs to keep abreast of modern technology therefore the teacher should improve the curriculum to meet the needs of the nation and that of his students. The teachers needs to effect constructive changes as the coordinator of educational activities as well as projects into the future to improve in innovation of the Nigerian educational system.

5. Professional teachers who are not only competent and skillful in their chosen fields of study should be replaced to train our would-be-teachers to ensure optimum productivity at all levels of education.

6. Government should provide adequate funds for the staff, provision of research grants and facilities for teacher education innovation in Nigeria educational system. That is to improve on their teaching professional status through in-service education.

7. To have an innovation in educational system of Nigeria, the teacher as the resources who can help students gain knowledge should therefore advocate learning that permits learners...
interest, attitudes and experiences to the kind of learning that will take place for the interest of
the educational system.

8. The National Policy on Education (2004) minimum qualification for entry into the teaching
profession should be maintained i.e. the Nigeria Certificate in Education.

References
Education, Ilorin.

presented at the National Association for the Advancement of Knowledge (NAFAK) at
Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma.


Eneasotor (1997). Teacher education: meaning, philosophy, purpose and relevance. In FNJ
Eresimadu and Arinze (Ed) Crucial Issues in Nigeria Teacher Education, Abuja: International
Academy Publishers.

Eresimadu, F.N.J. (1997). In service education of teaching personnel. In F.N.J. Eresimadu and
Arinze (Ed) Crucial Issues in Nigeria Teacher Education, Abuja: International Academy
Publishers.


Education.

In SJA Mgbekem (Ed) Nigerian Educational Journal

Dimension Publishers Co. Ltd.


Phelps-Stock Commission (1920-26).

Thomas Nelson (Nig.) Ltd.


Publishers Limited.