

REQUIRED INNOVATIONS IN TEACHER EDUCATION FOR THE SUCCESS OF UBE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Teachers are the cornerstone and the implementers of all policies and programmes in the nation's educational system. Investment in teachers education is investment in qualitative education. As such, they must be educated and trained in quality, knowledge and character for the success of the nation's educational programme like the Universal Basic Education (UBE). The quality of any nation's educational system depends on the quality of teachers operating the system. This paper focused on teacher education, the UBE programme in Nigeria, its goals, achieving UBE success through teacher's motivation, funding, provision of instructional materials, infrastructure developments etc. The prospects of UBE were highlighted such as that of eradicating illiteracy through the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeric, manipulative and communicative skills as well as enrolling the nation in the list of developed countries in the world. Conclusion was drawn stating that teacher education remain imperative for the success and achievement of UBE goals. Recommendations were made for recruitment of teachers in quality and quantity at all levels of the basic education programme.

Education is one of the biggest industries in Nigeria that touches every human endeavour. The indispensable role played by education in every nation's economic, social, political and technological development has been acknowledged without dispute in today's world. Nigeria inherited the colonial system of education without much consideration for the environment and socio-cultural background of Nigerian society. In Nigerian educational system, after students, teachers constitute the largest and the most crucial inputs. The teacher is the central factor in the process of quality and equality of education.

In modern society, college training has become the major criterion for stratifying occupations of high and low occupational skills, income and social prestige. Teaching as an occupation has organized and developed techniques for selecting and training its members within educational institutions to fill occupational positions. Well trained and experienced teachers are the real growth points within the UBE and the teaching profession. Generally, teaching profession is one of the most important categories of highly educated and qualified manpower. To realise effective teacher education, the following institutions have been mandated by the Federal Ministry of Education (FME, 2003) to provide professional training for teachers. They are:

1. colleges of education
2. faculties of education in universities
3. Institutes of education
4. school of education in the polytechnics
5. National teachers' institute (NTI)
6. National mathematical centre (NMC)

7. National institute for Nigerian languages (NINLAN)

The above list are supposed to prepare teachers in quality and quantity for UBE scheme. The UBE scheme launched in September, 1999 by the Obasanjo regime is a laudable programme that has come to stay. Its specific provision is to provide education for all or equal educational opportunity for all where one's deficiency in one area (say formal education) cannot be an excuse for that person not to venture into other areas (formal or informal) so as to achieve his life ambitions. The UBE for the first time in the history of education in Nigeria, makes provisions for pre-primary education for the Nigerian child among others. It is a scheme meant to alleviate Nigeria of its literacy and technological problems. The scheme is hoped to place the nation on the path to achieving industrialisation and commercialisation when implemented. The UBE scheme seems to be a precautionary programme built on the failed Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme. Education is a tool for self and national growth. To Idumange (2007), education is an instrument for development and national integration. Education is described as an instrument "par excellence" for effecting national development. (FRN 2004). As such, UBE in Nigeria must first focus on teacher education in readiness for the challenges of the new innovations taken into cognizance that the teacher is the pillar upon which rests the success of any innovation in education.

The Concept of Teacher Education

Teacher education is an important aspect of education where teachers are given pre-service teacher preparation, upgrading of academic qualification and in-service

continuing professional development in particular subjects, content areas and instruction methods. According to Osagiede and Idiaqhe (2009: 36), "teacher education is the formal systematic and organized training programme geared towards production of a crop of required manpower (teachers) to implement the planned and developed curriculum of schools in a society."

In the same vein, Okafor (1991: 30) defined Teacher Education as

that form of education which is properly planned and systematically tailored and applied for the cultivation of those who teach or will teach, particularly but not exclusively in primary levels of schooling. In its extended dimension, it encompasses also the preparation of administrators, supervisors and guidance counselors within the same frame of reference.

Succinctly, Afe (2002: 208) defined teacher education as "that components of any educational system charged with the educational and training of teachers to acquire the competencies and skills of teaching for the improvement in the quality of teachers for the school system."

To Whawo (1994), teacher education can be divided into two stages – pre-service and in-service education.

1. Pre-service education to him embraces all the stages of education and training to teach in a school system.
2. While in-service education refers to the education and training the teacher receives after the person has been employed into the teaching job.

Realising the importance of teacher education, the FRN (2004: 39) loudly stated that "since no education 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 is why teacher education is considered to be the engine that will drive the UBE programme to success or failure.

Objectives of Teacher Education in Nigeria

The central figure in education has been the teacher. This explains why every educational scheme/programme that aims to succeed does not overlook the professional advancement of the teacher. The objectives or major purpose of teacher education in Nigeria as contained in the *National Policy on Education* (FRN, 2004) were 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 the 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.

Elucidating further, it stated that all teachers in educational institutions shall be professionally trained. Teacher education programmes shall be structured to equip teachers for the effective performance of their duties. The Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) was stated as the minimum qualification for entry into the Nigerian teaching profession (FRN, 2004: 39).

Conceptual View of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria

Universal Basic Education (UBE) is the transmission of fundamental knowledge to all facets of the Nigerian society from generation to generation. UBE has three components: universal basic and education. In this discourse, "universal" means the entire people. It connotes a programme that is meant for all the facets of the society – the rich, the poor, the physically fit and unfit; children – the brilliant, the dull, the average intellect, the regular school students, the drop outs, and every other individual that is ready to acquire knowledge.

"Basic" signifies that on which anything rests, the base, the root, the fundamental, foundation and a springboard from which other parts get support. Education then is the act of bringing up or training a child through teaching and learning so as to strengthen his powers of body and mind to understand his environment and culture in knowledge and character. The UBE came in place to improve on the limitations of the failed Universal Primary Education (UPE) of the 1970s.

The Goals of Universal Basic Education

UBE is an ambitious educational programme which was launched and executed by the government and people of Nigeria to eradicate ignorance and poverty as well as stimulate and accelerate national development, consciousness and integration. In the spirit of the above, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2002:6) lists the following as the objectives of UBE in Nigeria –

- Developing in the entire citizenry consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.
- The provision of free universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school-going age.
- Reducing drastically the incident of drop out from the formal school system (through improved relevance, quality and efficiency).
- Catering for young persons who for one reason or another have had to interrupt their schooling as well as other out of school children/adolescent, through
- appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education.
- Ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as a solid foundation for life long learning.

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However, this paper is focuses more on basic education for all children of school-going age, and the concern is for teacher education that will oversee and ensure the realization of the goal. To avoid the shortfalls that marred previous innovations in education, the UBE and FRN adopted new approaches for effective realization of the noble objectives of the programme which include:-

- a. public enlightenment and social mobilization.
- b. planning, monitoring and evaluation.
- c. teachers – their recruitment, education and training.
- d. infrastructural facilities.
- e. enriched curricular.
- f. textbooks an infrastructural materials.
- g. improved funding
- h. management of the entire process.

(UBEC 2002: 6)

Unlike UPE, the UBE exceeds beyond the provision of primary education. It accommodates people who dropped out of the regular school system due to circumstances to continue later in life. It provides apprenticeship scheme for learners whose aptitudes and skills are best fit for such, and education for the nomadic population. For the first time in the history of education in Nigeria, UBE makes provisions for the pre-primary education for the Nigerian child among others. UBE programme is a comprehensive and holistic education programme through which the government wishes to establish quantitative, qualitative and functional education for her citizenry.

The Teacher and the Universal Basic Education

The UBE is “universal”, “free” and “compulsory”. This implies that adequate and appropriate types of opportunities to basic education will be provided to every Nigerian child of school-going age, and that parents have an obligation to ensure that their children and wards avail themselves of this opportunities. Hence, appropriate sanctions will be meted out on persons, societies or institutions that prevent children adolescents and youths from benefiting from the scheme (UBE) (FME 2000).

The programme has taken-off with huge sums of money being expended in the provision of classroom, offices, desks, books, boards, computers, lunch for children (implemented in Kano State) employment of teachers, etc. Among the variables, the teacher is the key player in the actualization of the programme. He uses his professional knowledge and skills to act on these other educational inputs to process the learners to get the desired change. The school facilities will ever remain in a state of inertia if the teacher does not activate them.

In cognisance of the position and roles of the teacher in the successful implementation of UBE programmes; there is an urgent need to review and transform teacher education programme, to prepare and produce viable, relevant, competent and current teachers in order to meet up with the demands of UBE programme. Teacher should be aware that Universal aspect of UBE entails:

inclusiveness which demands that all persons in all manners and conditions of physical, spatial and psychological existence will benefit from the programme; special attention to special groups with special need encouragement of the provision of facilities for early childhood care and socialization (Asiabaka and Emenalo 2011: 16).

The vision of UBE is that at the end of nine years of continuous education – six years primary education and three-year junior secondary school, every child that passes through the system will acquire

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appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, communicative, manipulative and life skills, able to present ethical, moral and civic values will be employable.

Innovations in teacher education programmes should take cognizant steps into such areas like the pedagogic skills, methodology, strategies, material resources, practical oriented, competencies, basic skills, aptitude etc. Inculcating these to teachers will enable school children in turn acquire the necessary skills that will ensure the realization of UBE goals.

Teacher Education for the UBE

Teacher education shall continue to be the corner stone to educational development, for without quality trained cadre of teachers, the implementation and

realization of UBE objectives will remain a mirage. Teacher education is required to provide teachers with the necessary skills, knowledge and professional background adequate for their assignment. For UBE implementation, there is an urgent need for teachers to be adequately reformed and repositioned. Teaching must be dynamic and innovative to meet up with the challenges of modern time created by the scientific and technological development as well as globalization. This entails encouraging further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers and enhancing their commitment and aptitude to the teaching profession.

First of all, the entry requirements for teacher education need to be raised to minimize the influx of drop-outs and unwilling candidates into the programme. This will ensure that only those that are genuinely interested in teaching will be admitted and not those whose results are not good enough to give them places in their first choice of studying medicine, law, engineering, accountancy, etc; who take teacher education as a last resort (Afe, 2002). It is pertinent that teacher education curricular in all relevant teacher education institution be broadened to accommodate new areas of knowledge such as computer education, information communication technology, family life HIV/AIDS, sex education, entrepreneurial skills, early child-education, primary education, adult and non-formal education and nomadic education studies. This will empower the teachers to ensure that the various scopes of UBE programme are properly implemented. An ideal teacher education needs to have adequate and teachers/instructors/lecturers to mould the future teachers. A situation where non-professional teachers are engaged in teaching student-teachers is not acceptable because one can hardly give out what he/she does not have.

It has been noted (Nwaokugha, 2012) that over 60% of the poor quality teachers in Nigeria go through sandwich programmes, part-time programme and evening programme, which accommodate in-built weakness. Teacher education in Nigeria has always been a lip-service and a game of expansion by addition of new programmes, over population of students far beyond the benchmark on what the faculties can reasonably cope with. The effect of these is that education students who turn out to become future teachers lack basic knowledge of subject matter and professional skills for effective practice to meet UBE expectations. To Nwankwo in Nwaokugha, quality is lacking in the present teachers from colleges of education. Re-iterating, Nwaokugha (2012) stated that the fraud and extent of compromise and academic laxity in most National Teachers' Institute study centres nationwide has become sources of concern. He further stated that most of the participants and facilitators hail naturally from the same place, thus no one wants to 'hurt' the other academically, given rise to the practice of the principle of 'let my people go' syndrome.

People often seem to overlook the importance of proper training of teachers and it is obvious that mistakes made by teachers take a long time to produce visible effects on the

society. But at long-run such mistakes have more devastation effects on the society than either the mistakes of a physician, a lawyer or an engineer. It is noted that when a surgeon makes a mistake during surgical operation, the patient may die. If a lawyer make a mistake, justice may be miscarried. But if a teacher makes a mistake in the upbringing of the child, the entire society and sometimes generation yet

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unborn may suffer the consequences for years. This is in consonance with the axiom that teachers are the builders of tomorrow and poor teachers will no doubt build a poor tomorrow. This is why teachers are the greatest resources in the present Universal Basic Education programme in Nigeria. For the implementation and achievement of UBE programme Osam (2012: 258) asserted that:

The teacher should be a role model, a facilitator and a helper. He should create enabling environment for the activity in the classroom. He should in addition facilitate the action to bring about a desirable change in behaviour. The teacher should have indepth knowledge about the needs and psychology of the learners.

In consonance with Osam's assertions, Okeke (2004) presented code of conduct and guidelines which all members of the teaching staff are expected to abide as follows:

1. teachers shall set example for their students particularly in the way they dress, in their manners, in their speech and in the way they perform their duties;
2. teachers must be loyal to the school, the principal/headmaster and their colleagues. They shall respect one another especially in the presence of the students;
3. teachers shall live within their means and avoid financial embarrassment; and,
4. teachers shall do nothing to bring shame or dishonor to their persons and the profession

Elucidating further, he maintained that the following specific regulations must be observed, thus:-

- a. confidential school matters shall be kept secret;
- b. teachers shall be punctual to school and to classes. This shall be checked by the use of the time-book and the vigilance of the headteacher;
- c. no teacher shall under normal circumstance, be absent from school without the express permission of the principal/head teacher. All such absence shall be noted in the log book;
- d. teachers shall keep up-to-date all relevant school records for which they are responsible. These include attendance register, scheme of work, diaries, lesson notes etc. These documents shall be available in the school for scrutiny at any time;
- e. teachers shall participate actively in co-curricula activities.

- f. activities unrelated to normal school duties shall not be undertaken by teachers during school hours except with the permission of the principal/head teacher;

- g. teachers shall consider it their duty to attend all professional conferences that are relevant to their work when officially required to do so;
- h. teachers shall not exploit their students;
- i. if corporal punishment must be administered, it must be done in accordance with prevailing rules and regulations;
- j. teachers shall not misappropriate funds. They shall neither take bribe nor engage in corruption in any shape or form;
- k. teachers shall not reveal examination questions whether internal or external to anyone. In marking the scripts, they shall be fair to all students. In addition, they shall not condone or connive at examination malpractices;
- l. a teacher shall not have carnal knowledge of any person he knows to be a pupil/student of a school or be involved in any indecent relationship with such a person;
- m. during school hours, teachers shall not take any form of alcoholic drinks;
- n. no teacher shall participate in, condone or encourage acts of indiscipline in any school; and,
- o. on no account shall teachers use their position to further their political aspirations or spread the ideology of any political party.

(Okeke, 2004: 201)

It is undoubtable that no sooner than when teachers are trained, educated, reformed, repositioned, transformed in knowledge, character and abide by the stated code of conduct and guidelines for teachers, the laudable welcomed UBE programme implementations shall be assured.

Factors Necessary for Achieving UBE Success

In order to ensure success of the UBE programme, certain factors cannot be overlooked such as:

- trained teachers in quality and quantity.
- instructional materials
- teacher motivation
- funding
- library development
- out-of-school youths
- infrastructure development etc.

Trained Teachers

Teachers are the cornerstone of a quality education at any level of educational system. By implication, the quality of any educational system depends to a great extent on the quality of output from teachers in terms of their primary function. To Okeke (2004), training and education are of greater benefits to teachers thus:

- i. It enables teachers to obtain academic and professional qualifications.
- ii. It helps teachers acquire more conceptual and technical knowledge and pedagogy in order to improve their efficiency of classroom instruction.
- iii. It improves social and academic status of teachers in the society.
- iv. It helps teachers keep in touch with their counterparts within and outside the country in terms of intellectual mobility.

Therefore, there is the need to train/retrain teachers in order to eliminate mediocrity and have high caliber teaching personnel for qualitative and productive education. Succinctly, a programme of continuing in-service education and training should be integrated into teacher education programmes.

Instructional Materials

Effective teaching and learning demand certain materials for proper understanding and internalization. Adequate instructional materials should be available in teacher education programmes so that the products will be familiar with their use, and enhance their pedagogical skills. To Obanya (2002), inadequate provision of instructional materials affect school job negatively. There is therefore, the need for adequate provision of books, computers, curriculum modules, charts, flannel graphs, television sets, film slides, toys for nursery, etc. Adequate instructional materials will no doubt make UBE programme more meaningful. Accordingly, Izuagba (2006) outlines the following :

1. Instructional materials save the teachers' time, the use of a lot of words, efforts and captures learners' interest.
2. They facilitate the learning of verbalized context, and help effective retention learned subject matter.
3. They clarify complex concepts and keep learners busy and active.
4. The materials concretize the abstract and stimulate the imagination.

Funding

Funding of education has actually improved in budgetary allocations of state and federal governments. However, a gigantic programme like UBE is still under-funded. The cost of the programme is quite high. Inadequate funding is an impediment militating

against the provision of quality education. This is because it adversely affects provision of the necessary infrastructural materials and the needed number of teachers. Poor funding is a threat to the realization of the objectives of UBE.

Prospects of UBE Programme

The UBE programme in Nigeria, has the prospect of enrolling the country in the list of developed countries in the world whenever its goals, aims and objectives are achieved. UBE programme has also the prospect of eradicating illiteracy through the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeric, manipulative and communicative skills as well as the ethical, moral, civic values and religious imbalances that can uproot a nation.

Conclusion

Teachers are the major input and the executor of any successful educational system. Education, which has become the biggest industries in the globe and which touches virtually all fabrics of human endeavour, lies in the hands of teachers. Therefore, teacher education remains imperative for the success and achievement of UBE programme goals. The global mission and vision of UBE is to eradicate illiteracy among the populace with the intent of achieving a literate society. To achieve this, teachers who are professionally and ethical, trained well, groomed and educated in knowledge and character are needed in quality and quantity. They must be motivated and equipped with professional artistry – (materials, equipment, facilities) – technological and scientific gadgets so as to propel UBE programme to the changing needs of the children and the global world.

Recommendations

1. There must be recruitment of teachers in quality and quantity at all levels.
2. The teacher must use his teaching and professional code of conduct to inspire his/her pupils/students bearing in mind that it is not only the surgeons and engineers mistakes alone that can lead to serious disaster and death. It could do so too in the education process of the child.
3. Government should prioritize teacher motivation strategies as this will empower them to perform in full capacity to achieve the goals of Universal Basic Education.
4. Attention should be paid to teacher education; reforming and reviewing it in order to meet up with the challenges from the children and the technological world.
5. Adequate equipment and facilities should be provided at all teacher training institutions and classrooms. This will capture learners' attention, retention of

subject matter, clarify complex concepts, stimulate imagination and concretize the abstract.

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