

## Quality Teacher Education in Nigeria: A Veritable Tool in Promoting Quality Education for National Development

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### Abstract

Among all the indices being used in measuring the level or degree of development of any nation, education is undoubtedly considered to be the most veritable tool. National progress depends on the quality of education provided to its citizens. Education directs and sustains both human and material development in any nation. Thus, any nation whose leaders are in their senses take education as the priority of all priorities. The teacher is the heart and soul of the education sector. Teachers, therefore, play a pivotal role in a school's instructional mission. No wonder the saying: "No educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers". Therefore, for Nigeria to have the type of professional teachers that will actualize Nigeria educational objectives, quality teacher education becomes very paramount. A look back at Nigeria's history of teacher education is attempted in this study. Nigeria's teacher education and educational aims are also examined. In Nigeria, teacher education has a significant function and a significant position. In this section, you'll learn about the characteristics of a good instructor. Nigeria's quality and quality education are also examined in the report. Nigeria's teacher education system is also discussed. At the same time, it demonstrates the need of reorienting Nigerian teacher training. Additionally, the study discusses Nigeria's efforts to improve teacher education. The article finishes with a set of suggestions to guarantee that Nigerian teacher education is of the highest quality.

### **Background to the Study**

Education is and has always been a strong feature of human societies, and the teacher is and has always been considered as an important dispensing element of education. As a result, the ability of a country to grow via education is heavily dependent on the quality of its educational infrastructure. Moreso, Quality teachers must have undergone approved Professional training in Education at appropriate levels. This was noted by Agu and Eya (2011) that the quality of teacher education programmes is directly related to the quality of instruction in the classroom. The National Policy on Education (FRN:2013) Stipulate that all teachers in the educational institutions shall be professionally trained and that, teachers education programmes shall be structured to equip teachers for the effective performance at their duties.

It is an undisputable fact that for Nigeria to have an effective, workable educational system, there is need for quality teacher education. This is because the quality of teacher education programme available determines the plausibility of attaining the desired education goals. Ojojan and Oyedrene in Mbachu (2011), argued that "if education is the door that leads to modernization and development, it is the teacher that holds the key that unlocks that door" (Mbachu 2011:193). A country's future is molded in the classroom, and the teacher plays a crucial role in this process.

Because of the importance of teachers, it is well-known that many desirable educational initiatives have met with failure. It is an acceptable fact that for Nigeria to conveniently and comfortably live and compete favorably with other countries of the world is this 21<sup>st</sup> century, Nigeria needs adequately trained, contentious, devoted, committed teachers. This however, can only be achieved through quality teacher education programmes.

### **History of Teacher Education in Nigeria**

According to Fafunwa (2004), the first teacher training college in Nigeria was built in Abeokuta by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in 1859. "The Training Institute" was the name given to the college at the time. Later, it was relocated to Lagos before being brought back to Oyo, where it became St. Andrew's College of Education, Oyo. Ogbomoso Baptist Training College was established in 1897 by the Baptist Mission.

It was in 1905 that the Wesleyan Methodist Mission Society built an institution in Ibadan for the training of Catechists and teachers. The school's enrollment had grown to twenty by 1918, at which point it was renamed Wesley College Ibadan. To that end, the Missions in the Eastern portion of Nigeria used the apprenticeship system to provide unofficial training for this occupation type. To prepare teachers and preachers, the Prebysterian Church of Scotland established the Hope Wadel (Training) Institute in 1892, which was designed for both purposes.

The government established the Nassarawa School in northern Nigeria in 1909, under the guidance of Hanns Vischer, the director for northern Nigeria at the time, to educate teachers.

As would-be catechists were expected to teach certain courses and be evangelists or catechists, the early training institutions included theology and teaching techniques into their curriculum. Hence it included New Testament critique, Christian faith and belief, school technique and management, preaching, theology and hygiene, as well as English and other local languages as well as carpentry and masonry in addition to geography. The apprenticeship system of teacher –or preacher-training emphasized on the job training under the watchful eye of the master teacher Cum Pastor. The purpose of teacher education as at that time was evangelism and was quite relevant to the people concerned. Candidates for admission to the Colleges must have finished Standard Six, worked as a pupil-teacher for two years, and passed the pupil-teacher test.

By 1929, the then Colonial Advisory Committee on native education in Nigeria directed that Elementary Training Centers (ETC) be established for lower primary School Teachers and Senior Primary School Teachers. Training in both centres were to last for two years each, but while the Elementary Training Centre awarded the Grade III Teachers Certificate, the Higher Elementary Training Centres awarded the Grade II Teachers Certificate.

These pioneer Institution trained teachers for the primary schools. Effects were made on the training of teachers for the intermediate and higher level of education, and that was through the introduction of three-year course for teachers in Yaba Higher College in 1932. In 1957, a one year Diploma in Education Course was in University College Ibadan. A one-year associateship program for teachers in grades two and three was also launched by the University College in 1961.

In the 1960s, the government stepped up efforts to prepare teachers for higher education by providing more funding for teacher education programs. Qualitative training for teachers is an essential step in achieving quality education, according to the Ashby Commission established in 1959, which recognized that the basis for a high-quality college and university education should be formed in elementary and secondary schools. The commission recommended that about 7,000 graduate teachers be trained to teach in the secondary schools between 1960 and 1970.

According to experts, the universities should introduce a BA(Ed) degree in the field of education. In 1961, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka hosted a conference, recommended a three-year degree programme leading to combined honour degree of Bachelor of Arts and Science in Education. University of Nsukka was the first to launch the programme. Other Universities later followed. (Fafunwa 2004:227-232).

### **Teacher Education and Goals of Teacher Education in Nigeria**

Teacher Education is the type of tertiary Educaiton that is responsible for the production and training of School or College graduates who can function with the right type of attitudes and skills for the survival of the individuals and the society. It is an institution for training the trainers. The purpose of Teacher Education is specifically to produce or

train competent teachers who are expected to impart the right values, knowledge and skills to the younger ones. Qualitative education according to Anikweze in Mtsen and Aghi (2000) is rather reflected in observable behaviours and performances of the products of the educational system.

### **Goals of Teacher Education**

According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013), "In recognition of the pivotal role of qualified teachers in the provision of quality education at all levels, teacher education should continue to be stressed in educational planning and development.

The Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) will be the minimal requirement for admission into the teaching profession (NCE). As a result, it states that teacher education's objectives should be.

1. Produce highly motivated, diligent and efficient classroom instructors for all educational levels.
2. Teachers should be encouraged to cultivate a spirit of inquiry and innovation.
3. Enhance teachers' commitment to national objectives by helping them integrate into the community and society at large.
4. Assist educators in developing the intellectual and professional skills necessary to perform their duties and to be flexible in the face of changing circumstances.
5. Enhance teachers' dedication to the profession of teaching (FRN, 2013:56).

### **The Role of Teacher Education in Nigeria**

All instructors in educational institutions must be properly educated, according to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013), which emphasizes the importance of teacher education. Teacher training programs should be designed to help teachers become more successful in their roles. Teaching methods and curricula are always evolving, and teacher education must keep up with these changes. Teachers should be kept up to date on the latest developments in their field on a regular basis. All newly hired instructors are required to go through a rigorous induction procedure.

TRCN will continue to register teachers and oversee the profession and practice of teaching in Nigeria. All instructors must be certified and registered to teach at all levels. A one-year internship is required of newly trained instructors.

Teacher education is required to meet high standards in the following ways:

1. Appointing and retaining educators and school administrators who are both intellectually and professionally prepared.
2. Teachers' long-term professional development may be improved and regulated by offering a broad choice of programs and numerous routes that provide them frequent opportunity to improve their knowledge and abilities.
3. Providing better working conditions and rewards for educators in order to encourage them and make teaching a more appealing profession.
4. Setting professional standards for teacher educators who educate new teachers.
5. Reforming the curriculum and training for teachers. (FRN 2013:58).

### **Who is a Teacher/Qualities of a Teacher**

In many African countries, there is this erroneous belief that anybody can teach as long as the person has an academic qualification. Mbachu (2011), stated clearly that before the new education policy, there existed two levels of teachers, namely, auxiliary teachers, they include those teaching with or without GCE and University graduate teachers teaching in tertiary institutions, but do not possess any teaching qualifications. Trained teachers, they are professionals who are trained and are directly involved in the task of promoting teaching and learning.

Imogie is the name of the game (2010), This individual believes that teachers are unique people who are subject to the laws of their country, the Education Law and other rules created under it, and the teaching ethics of their profession. To him, anybody who spends at least 50 percent of his time daily or routinely working with students in schools, colleges, universities etc, imparting knowledge in accordance with relevant laws of the land is regarded as a teacher. Mbachu (201), defined a teacher as one who exerts some interpersonal influence on another so as to make him change his behavior. A professional teacher is a person who has acquired teaching pedagogical skills and uses such skills to further impart more skills and knowledge to the learner.

### **Qualities of a Professional Teacher**

A professional teacher is expected to possess the following qualities as listed by Mbachu (2021), Mbachu and Soberekon (2017)

1. Possessing in-depth knowledge of both the material to be taught and the best practice for doing so is essential for a successful teacher.
2. Knowledge of the Pupils - A professional teacher must have the ability to understand learners, their interest, abilities, capabilities and their characteristics.
3. Knowledge of the various teaching methods - How to use them and when to use them.
4. Ability to access and use different instructional learning materials to arouse the interest of the learners when teaching.
5. Learner motivation - A good professional teacher must have the ability to motivate learners to learn.
6. Kind demeanor and a designated area - As a teacher, you must be approachable and patient with your students in order to be a good one.
7. A good professional teacher must be able to create conducive learning environment for quality learning to take place.

### **Concept of Quality and Quality Education**

The term quality is defined as "The degree of goodness or worth" of something. Mbachu and Benwari (2017), referred to quality as something which distinguishes a person or thing. It's impossible to get a good education if you don't have the caliber of instruction, the caliber of support services, and the caliber of leadership. Standards of relevance, importance, and efficiency are all important components of quality education (the products). As a result, a strong educational program is one that teaches students how to

adapt to any environment by allowing them to experience the topic first-hand via do-it-yourself projects and experiments.

Quality in Education as explained by Obanya in Mbachu and Benwari (2017), is a three dimensional concept. Quality inputs (responsive policy, efficient management at the system level, adequate funding, qualified and competent leaders in adequate number, adequate infrastructure and teaching learning facilities) combined with quality processing (efficient management at the best in the learner) keep to produce quality outcomes. (positive change in learners and satisfaction in the larger society. Obanya (2004), explained that quality in education is a multi-dimensional concept. It is not a fruit to be reaped at the tail end of a process, but a seed that is sown, built into, and nurtured in the cause of all the phases and all facets of education development endeavor to ensure that the right type of fruits are reaped all long, and in a sustainable manner.

### **Challenges of Teacher Education in Nigeria**

The downward trend in the evolution of the status of the teacher over the years has resulted in a situation in which teaching has become a low-status occupation. The entire education system has suffered untold neglect in all ramifications. Teacher Education is not left out of the problems that have bedeviled the entire educational sector.

Mbachu (2011), penned that some of the challenges of Teacher Education in Nigeria include:

1. Curriculum/Programme Specification. According to her, the review of the programmes of Teaching in the elementary and junior secondary levels has not been adequately addressed by colleges of education. That notwithstanding the revised curricular standards, pre-service NCE instructors remain unprepared to meet the challenges posed by these new specifications, according to Obioma in Mbachu (2011). Presently, in primary schools, a teacher is assigned to teach all subjects to a particular class with about 10-11 subjects, thus making it very difficult for teachers to cope with the work load of teaching all the subjects. Invariably, this results to ineffective teaching and learning leading to lack of laying the necessary foundation for evolving comparative human capital.
2. The negative effect of the low position of teaching in the hierarchy of profession by the society has indeed posed a challenge to the teaching profession. Obanya (2009), frowns that this has tended to be a residue for not quite brilliant, the not-quite willing to teach and persons from the lower social strata of society. This has created a low self-esteem among teachers.
3. Non-Professionalization of teaching: Professionalization of teaching has not received full boosting as indicted in Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) stated under decree No. 31 of 1993. This is very glaring especially at the tertiary level of Education where everybody who enters the lecture room to deliver lecture claims to be a teacher.
4. Mbachu, (2021), argues that the lack of interest on the part of most instructors is fostered by pay that do not compare with the levels abroad, hence, most ambitious and clever young men and women do not want to be teachers at any level. We

- have seen the scenario in Nigeria today where persons that were taught by a teacher soon overtook him socially, economically and politically, and earns far much better than the person that taught him. Such situation is quiet demoralizing.
5. Short duration of student-teacher training: The practices were student-teachers spend a short period of few months to qualify as professional teachers has been criticized as being inadequate. The short period does not in any way prepare them with necessary skills that will make them competent teachers as expected.
  6. Inadequate funding: Funding the education sector has always been a serious challenge. There is no way we can achieve quality in Teacher Education and the education sector in general without proper funding. Money as we all know, answers all things and make the educational system more functional and at the same time, educational objectives more achievable.

### **Need for Quality Teacher Education in Nigeria**

Education, particularly teacher education is expected to be of good quality, this is because teacher education entails or rather it is an institution for "training the trainers". According to Azubuikwe in Mbachu (2021), "task forces can be formed, the National Council of education can function like a war council, and students of all ages can be mobilized into the school, but if nothing is done to raise the morale of teachers and increase their dedication, the effort to deliver high-quality curriculum will be a mirage. "

Again, Education for All (EFA) is an international endeavour to which Nigeria is committed. It focuses on the provision of opportunities for lifelong learning for all citizens both young and old, in and out of school. Teacher Education needs to be of good quality in order to equip the teachers to deliver to the students what is required, to enable them face the global challenges. Nigeria youths ought to be equipped with relevant skills in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Such relevant skills as list by Obanya (2004), includes:

- i. A broad knowledge base, a refusal to be a narrow specialist, the ability to see life as a connect whole and not as a set of disconnected realities.
- ii. Information Technology: taking every step to become and to remain IT fluent.
- iii. Team playing; the capacity to work with other persons and to contribute meaningfully to the attainment of group goals.
- iv. Creativity; using the spirit of inquiry, the zeal to learn on a continuous basis, the capacity for analysis and logical reasoning to evolve novel ideas for novel solution to problems.

Due to fast technological and communication advances, Nigeria has been "struck" with increasing force by other areas of the globe with the aim that Nigeria would be better able to decide on its own what to accept, alter or reject. Teacher education must thus be of high quality.

Professionalism: this is another reason why teacher education needs to be of good quality. Teacher professionalism in Nigeria has not attained the expected status, with an educational system saturated with unqualified and unenthusiastic teachers that would

facilitate national development. The situation will be that of unmet yearning for national development with an educational system devoid of capable teachers to deliver the goods.

### **Strategies to enhance quality in Teacher Education**

For the enhancement of quality in Teacher Education in Nigeria, Obanya (2009), opines that there is need for a holistic comprehensive strategy that should begin at the very beginning-from level zero, this is to ensure that we do the-right things first and do them well. He therefore advocates for seven clusters of variables that ought to be imputed into any programme of education that aims at a quality. To him, society is the ultimate beneficiary of an education programme, the society thus becomes number one cluster. Other variables are; policy, management frame work, curriculum, teachers, infrastructure, materials and finally funds.

These are well known determinants of the success of an education programme. Obanya is of the opinion that for an education programme to be successful, there should be society's full ownership of the programme, a well-motivated teaching force and a self-regenerating education programme (in the context of a more all-embracing view of educational outcomes). They indicate the ultimate goals to which the development of education programme should aim. Obanya (2009), named it "tripartite model of quality in education".

The tripartite strategic model of quality in education, focusing on teacher education is illustrated in the table below;



**Table 1.**

S/N	Inputs	Process	Outcomes
1.	Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proper involvement in implementation (all facets)</li> <li>• Wholesale society acceptance of the programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful learning</li> <li>• Acquisition of socially desirable intellectual and non-intellectual skills</li> </ul>
2.	Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptability to policy local conditions.</li> <li>• Democratic policy. Making and review process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued interest in learning</li> </ul>
3.	Management frame work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decentralization/development of powers and responsibilities to the grassroots level</li> <li>• Empowerment for operators down the line</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full-fledge societal support</li> <li>• Permanent societal interest in the promotion of education</li> </ul>
4.	Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsive to individual and societal needs.</li> <li>• Comprehensive coverage of the 3Hs (Head, Heart and Hands).</li> <li>• Adaptability to changing times needs, conditions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A well motivated teaching force.</li> <li>• Teachers fully devoted to continuous self improvement for concerned promotion of education.</li> </ul>
5.	Teaching force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quantitatively adequate</li> <li>• Adequately and professionally prepared</li> <li>• Pedagogically skilled</li> <li>• Well motivated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A well motivated teaching force.</li> <li>• Teachers fully devoted to continuous self improvement for concerned promotion of education.</li> </ul>
6.	Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quantitatively, aesthetically and spatially adequate</li> <li>• Learner and teacher friendly</li> <li>• Friendly learning environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A self regenerating</li> </ul>
7.	Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quantitatively adequate</li> <li>• User friendly, easily exploitable and challenging both to teachers and students</li> <li>• Closing related to the curriculum</li> </ul>	
8.	Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In quantum (adequate) of funds</li> <li>• Targeting funds to those things that would really make a difference</li> </ul>	

**Source:** (Mbachu & Benwari, 2017: 82-83)

### Conclusion

The focus of this paper is to ensure that quality in teacher education is achieved. It is worthy to note that the training of teachers should be one of the most important concerns of any society for teachers to influence and affect every facet of the community they are found, this is because the teacher is not just a leader, a reformer, transformer, remolder of character, but a trainer of leaders of tomorrow. Thus, ensuring quality in teacher education becomes very paramount and should be number one priority for any nation that wants to develop to the fullest and at a rapid speed.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations should be considered if quality is expected to be achieved in Teacher Education:

1. Review and restructure the curriculum of teacher education.
2. Reduce the workload of teacher, especially at the primary level. Teachers should teach based on their areas of specialization.

3. Teachers' welfare should be improved to make teaching more attractive, especially the best brain.
4. Ensure that only teachers with teaching qualification are allowed to teach in the classroom.
5. Ensure that teaching attains to full professionalism as in the case of other professions like; medicine, law, architecture etc, to ensure quacks are not allowed into the classroom.

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