

IMPROVING QUALITY TEACHER EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

An educated populace is quite a great asset to the overall nation's development. A nation can only develop meaningfully, professionally, and be globally outstanding through a good teacher education programme. Teacher education is important if the nation is to realize its potential and be placed among the committee of nations with clear-cut educational policies geared

towards sustainable national development.

Quality teachers are the dream of every nation due to their extensive roles in making meaningful contributions towards the fulfillment of goals, aspirations, and objectives of the country. Increased awareness, sustainable economic development, and technological advancement are possible through capable, responsible teachers. This paper examines

improving quality teacher education as an instrument for revamping the African economy for better national security and development, particularly in Nigeria, where there is a serious threat to achieving its desired national goals. Thus, the paper x-rayed the role of teacher education for national security and sustainable development, measures for improving the quality of teacher education in Nigeria, hindrances for improving teacher education, conclusion and recommendations made to include curriculum reviewed to meet present aspirations, capacity building of teachers, fostering national integration for meaningful nation development among others.

Keywords: Teacher Education, Security, National Development, Quality teacher

Introduction

The concept of teacher education can be conceived as a formal process of making the teacher a professional by acquiring the right pedagogy from a relevant, recognized body that is charged with the responsibility of training effective and efficient teachers. Onyebu (2013) noted that "education is the all-important vehicle for a conscious and deliberate effort, providing the intellectual yeast needed to ferment the nation's social, political, economic, and technical

development." The process of education involves the molding of individuals to become an integrated part of the society in which they live. Through education, people are trained to acquire knowledge, useful skills, desirable values, attitudes, and actions to adjust themselves to the changing conditions of the world in which they live. Also, Gyot and Padung (2025) put it that the mission of Nigerian education is to use it as a tool for fostering development of all Nigerian citizens to their potentials in promotion of a strong democratic, egalitarian, prosperous, indivisible, and indissoluble sovereign nation.

Teacher education, which involves the education of those individuals directly responsible for the education of pupils or students, is a crucial instrument for achieving national goals, particularly in light of the country's growing insecurity. These are the young minds of tomorrow, and the aphorism "catch them young" is best applicable. This is because through education, the aspirations of nations are preserved and inculcated in the young, including the adults. In short, to create awareness among the masses could be conscious of government policies as a condition for the overall improvement in their living conditions. It is the contention of

this paper that well-prepared and equipped with sound and quality training by improving on teacher education programme should serve as the best instrument to sustain national security and development.

This paper is hinged on the Human Capital Theory postulated by Becker, (1964) which argues that investment in people through education and training improves productivity and national development. Quality teacher education produces competent teachers, competent teachers produce skilled students, and a skilled and enlightened population promotes **economic growth**, reduces **unemployment**, and minimizes **security threats** linked to poverty and ignorance, which is the reason for this work. Teacher education is a core driver of national development and long-term security. Therefore the paper will look at what teacher education means, national security, role of teacher education for national security and sustainable development, hindrances to improve teacher education, measures for improving the quality of teacher education in Nigeria, and recommendations to improve the quality of teacher education and sustainable national security and development in Nigeria.

Teacher Education

The world of education is a complex tapestry, woven with threads of learning, growth, and community. At its heart lies the school, a vibrant hub where young minds are nurtured, and futures are shaped. The concept of education has been defined and viewed from different perspectives by various scholars. According to Onyebu (2012), education is “the total process of human learning by which knowledge is imparted, faculties trained and skills, attitudes and competencies developed. Aristotle, cited by Rowe (2002), sees education as the process of creating a sound mind in a sound body and believes. That is to say, that education develops the physical capacities of an individual and the mind, which implies intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual capacities. Education is, therefore, an effort to change a person’s behaviour into a way of thinking and believing as well as into core norms, values, skills, and techniques considered desirable for development purposes in society (Federal Government of Nigeria:2013). These goals of education could be achieved through providing good education to the citizenry. Quality, functional, and sustainable education

ideally is geared towards the promotion of unity, national security, and the enhancement of structural development for the nation

The conception of qualitative education, especially for teachers, allows for an understanding of education as a complex system embedded in a political, cultural, and economic context (Salawu 2011). The Federal Government of Nigeria (National Policy on Education, 2013) stated that National education goal as inculcation of national consciousness and unity; the inculcation of the values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigeria society; the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; the acquisition of skills abilities and competencies both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live and contribute to the development of his / her society.

Teacher education is part of the education process or training that involves the art of acquiring skills in the teaching profession, the right pedagogy from a recognized body charged with the responsibilities of training teachers for effective and efficient performance. Teacher education also refers to the education of persons who are directly responsible for performing their

tasks effectively in the classroom, schools, and the community at large. Basically, teacher education is used to describe the process of professional preparation of those persons who are, by nature of their functions, designated as teachers (Ugwuanyi, Musa, & Naswem, 2002). Recently, there has been an increased emphasis on teacher education more especially among developing nations, concerning efficiency in skills of teaching and learning.

Teacher education should be considered in every phase of developmental efforts in our society, be it economic, political, or social spheres of activities; trained manpower is needed. Adequate training cannot take place without competent and efficient teachers to handle the programme. For instance, in the area of formal education, competent teachers are needed for nursery schools, primary and secondary schools, technical and vocational education, teachers' colleges, university education and adult education with its many facets (literacy campaign, extension services, continuing education, extra-mural work, in- service and pre-service training, training on-the-job, training within industry aswell as general education for personal satisfaction.

In realization of the importance of teacher education in sustaining standards, FGN (2013) states that no nation can rise above the quality of its teachers and suggests that all teachers in our educational institutions (pre-primary to the university) must be professionally trained. FGN (2013) also listed ~~the~~ objectives of teacher education as follows

1. To produce highly motivated, conscientious, and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of the education system;
2. To encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
3. To help teachers fit into the social life of the community and society at large, and to enhance commitment to national objectives.
4. To provide teachers with an intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to any changing situation, not only in the life of their country, but in the wider world; and
5. To enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

FGN (2013) further stated that teacher education will continue to be given emphasis on educational planning. This suggests that teacher education should continuously be in the minds of educational planners, especially in the area of educational innovations, and to ensure that teachers from pre-primary to university levels are properly trained. Onyebu (2018) describes teacher education as a form of education that is properly planned and a systemically tailored experience to be imbibed. Onyebu continues that while the education of professionals like medical doctors and engineers is to a great extent similar all over the world, the nature of teacher education is strongly dependent on the level of economic development and social context of the country concerned. In other words, teacher education in any society cannot be fully understood or meaningfully interpreted, for it is deeply influenced by the local culture and history

National Security

Security is the protection or defense of people against all forms of victimization, which include protection from external aggression, economic want, poverty,

illiteracy, disease or ill-health, political exclusion, social exploitation, and criminality, among others (Odekunle, 2012). Security encompasses the socio-economic well-being of individuals, enabling the mutual coexistence of all development agents to work peacefully, which should ultimately enhance each agent's ability to contribute its quota to sustainable development. National security, therefore, means the totality of measures instituted by the government to protect the territorial integrity and cherish the values and the interests of people as well as guarantee freedom of the citizenry from anxiety, threats to life and property, and their safety from natural or man-made disasters (Odekunle 2012). Presently, the issue of security in Nigeria is a major concern for citizens. Nigerians live in immeasurable fear of being killed. The critical security condition confronting Nigeria manifests in different forms as Boko Haram, kidnapping banditry, socio-economic agitations (ENDSARS), boundary disputes, cultism, corruption, all manner of robbery, including pen robbery, looting of the national treasury by some public officials, election conflict, and anarchy. People cannot easily travel on Nigerian roads now,

especially in the Northern part, because one can either be robbed or kidnapped for a ransom or may be killed when the ransom is not forthcoming as expected. National security and sustainable development cannot be achieved in a chaotic atmosphere; it must be in an enabling functional environment

Role of Teacher Education for National Security and Sustainable Development

The continuous and seemingly increasing insecurity, wanton loss of human lives and properties characterized by insurgency, terrorism, armed robbery, kidnapping, violent crimes, herders and farmers crises, Boko Haram attacks, banditry displacement of indigenous population from their traditional homes, assassinations, cattle rustlings, violent protests, police recklessness and intimidations, among others, calls for deep reflection and corrective/collective actions to arrest the cataclysmic situation that hamper sustainable national development (Udoye, 2021).

The role of the teacher in achieving success in national goals and values cannot be overemphasized. Teachers implement and translate every policy on education into action at the classroom level. In the words of Fafunwa (1985), a

good teacher education programme must seek to assist the individual teacher to grow and develop as a person, provide him with the necessary skills to stand the test of time as it adjusts or undergoes innovations in response to the traditional nature of the culture. The teacher is supposed to be the facilitator of any instruction in educational programmes. Presently, the dramatic changes in social, political, economic, and technological spheres globally have seriously changed personnel and national goals, values, social relations, and economic mode of production (Onyebu 2013).

The world has now become a global village, such that communication barriers have disappeared. Hence, human mobility, communication, and business across international borders are now very easy. The dramatic changes have a great impact on nations, communities, and individuals. Since the traditional role of education is to provide answers to national problems, goals, and needs, education should also change to complement new changes at the international, national, community, and personal levels. It is believed that the quality of education in any society is a function, among other things, of the quality of its teaching personnel.

According to the National Policy of Education (FGN 2013), education is expected to serve two main purposes: one is the preservation of the cultural heritage of the society, and the second is the transformation of that heritage. However, the business of preserving the heritage is much easier than the task of transformation, yet the teacher has to be a transformer of society because education is an important agent of change, and teachers are the major instruments of any educational change. As the philosophy and the value orientation of the society change, so does the system of education, which has to realize these values.

The scope of teacher education is enlarging and is an open ended study which is all embracing and accommodating new areas of human endeavors as history of education, comparative education, philosophy of education, educational psychology, sociology of education, educational planning and administration, educational technology, educational statistic, educational research guidance and counseling curriculum and instruction, measurement and evaluation, economics of education and politics of education (NPE 2013) among others, these areas

expose the teachers to learning experiences that enable them to acquire knowledge and skills required to play their roles in the society efficiently and professionally. Teacher education provides opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary for efficient teaching and learning. Through education, citizens acquire the necessary skills, knowledge, and behaviour that assist them to become useful to themselves and the society at large.

Teacher education is the most important machinery for progress, societal and national development; its role in achieving national security and sustainable development can never be overemphasized. This is because the prosperity of a country depends not only on its natural resources but rather on the quality of its human resources. Hence, the level of society's development is largely commensurate with its level of education. An educated society is likely to be more developed than an ignorant one. For instance, politics, especially in developing countries where political stability is in jeopardy, a well-educated, literate society would be easier to govern and readily contribute to the integration and developmental efforts of the government

than an uneducated and illiterate one. For nations including Nigeria, to attain sustainable national security and sustainable development, there is a need to recognize teacher education for their populace, since it helps to develop creativity, improve the scientific and technological literacy of citizens, for an active contribution towards their society. This is because, with teacher education in place, society can transform ideas and their raw materials into consumable goods and services. Indeed, society can progress even without natural resources, provided it possesses the right type of education, but it is difficult for a society to progress and meet the challenges of globalization without an appropriate education, even if it has abundant natural resources. Onyebu (2007) stressed that teacher education can further the process of socio-cultural integration and unity, as Nigeria is a multi-ethno-cultural society with diverse languages and religious affiliations; she needs a sound education for its citizens that would help to build national loyalties and identities, and homogenize norms and values, forge inter-group understanding, as well as install a spirit of patriotism. Thus, patriotism and national unity enhance the sense of belonging among

citizens for easy attainment of a desired sustainability.

Since the teacher transmits knowledge, directs, guides, and influences pupils' behaviour, teacher education is not only a tool for inculcating the right values in a society, but a means of economic development and self-reliance. Teacher education as a multidisciplinary field of study ensures employment opportunities, a reduction in poverty level, and drug abuse. Thus, improvement in the living standards of the individual in the country is largely dependent upon the quality of teacher education, as the teacher plays a complex set of roles in sustaining national integration and development.

Hindrances to Improve Teacher Education

These intricate hindrances to teacher education in Nigeria encompass a diverse range, including, among others:

1. The unavailability of enough professional teachers, especially in ~~sci~~ and technical education, became glaring.

1. Recruitment of non-professional teachers to train teachers. Most of our lecturers 2. in the teacher training institutions are not professional

teachers, these also affect the quality of the products.

3. Poor remuneration or job motivation, and satisfaction among teachers. Teachers from the primary school up to the tertiary institution are poorly remunerated. These are seen where schools are been closed for months as a result of industrial action by the unions.

4. Poor Funding of education institutions has been a disturbing issue because it is a capital-intensive kind of social service. Most of our teacher training institution lack equip laboratories, lecture halls, ICT centers, among others.

5. Poor capacity building of teacher's right from pre-primary to the university level. Seminars, conferences and other refresher courses are hardly organized by the management of the schools to update teachers' knowledge.

6. Non-conducive environment for teaching and learning activities in various educational institutions, with the non-availability of internet services, inadequate modern instructional

material. These had hindered research and innovations in schools.

7. Poor commitment to national issues. Strong political and financial commitments are very necessary to realize the goals of teacher education as a means of national security and sustainable development.

8. Inadequate community/individual participation in teacher production. Most people take the teaching profession as a last resort. Commitment to teacher training by individuals is never taken seriously (Ugwuanyi, etall 2002).

Measures for Improving Quality of Teacher Education in Nigeria.

Focusing on how to improve the quality of teacher education for sustainable national security and development in Nigeria, certain issues need to be considered.

1. Curriculum innovation in teacher education to reflect

real national security challenges in the country, Rufai (2013) identified reform of the education system as the solution to the security challenge confronting the nation; Rufai continues that a total overhaul of the curriculum at all levels of Nigeria education system to provide its recipients broad based education in the development of the mind and body; and in comprehending the environment, development of appropriate attitudes, skills, abilities and competences to co-exist with and contribute to the development of the society. Thus, a synergy between

liberal education, vocational and entrepreneurship education, and the intensification of the emphasis on vocation and entrepreneurial education will equip graduates with occupational survival skills that ensure meaningful employment upon graduation for enhanced sustainable development.

2. Provision of education to the disadvantaged areas and groups in the country, such as the handicapped, discriminated and neglected, and underdeveloped groups who are unproductive and abandoned in society.

Teacher education institutions in the country should endeavour to establish a department of special education for the gifted children and the underprivileged people in the society. Also, as the country becomes more modernized, industrialized, and urbanized, the number of destitute, beggars, and illiterates increases if left unattended without being incorporated into the mainstream of societal life through education might become deviants and criminals posing a security threat to the society.

3. Quality assurance should be pursued. School administrators of teacher education have a lot to do for schools to achieve their goal of ensuring national security and sustainable development. Quality assurance is the ability of educational institutions to meet the needs of the use of manpower in relation to the quality of skills acquired by their products. To establish and maintain high quality standards in our teacher education institution, school administrators, NCCE, and the NUC have a shared responsibility in addressing the issues of maintaining minimum academic standards, accreditation, carrying capacity and admission quota, visitation/supervision, impact assessment, research and development, and structures, infrastructure, and utilities.

Conclusion

The first premise is that education is more often conceived in very functional and

instrumental senses, as a means to restore security, increase productivity, and sustain development, among others. While this is no doubt true, education has an intrinsic value in terms of empowering individuals and communities for effective citizenship, consolidating democratic government, promoting creativity, and a culture of peace definitely results in sustainable national development. From the discussion so far, to ensure an improved quality teacher education, quality assurance measures have to be put in place, which will involve school managers of all levels of educational institutions in Nigeria, with particular emphasis on teacher education.

Moreover, the task of bringing qualitative change in the teacher education system in Nigeria in itself is huge and challenging. Improving teacher education revolves around the quality of infrastructure and supporting services, teacher characteristics and teacher motivation, pre-service and in-service education of teachers, curriculum and teaching-learning materials, classroom processes, pupil evaluation, monitoring and supervision, among others. The reconstruction of teacher education curricula has become a pressing need now

to inculcate the challenging issues threatening national security and development. By implementing the strategies outlined in this paper, Nigeria can improve the quality of its teacher education system and lay the foundation for a more secure, prosperous future for its citizens.

Recommendations

Based on the above discussions, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. Full training of teachers in the area of sciences and technical education in the teacher training institutions for self-employment after graduation.
2. Full professionalization of teaching in the country to set a standard under which a qualified well well-trained teacher must operate is highly imperative.
3. Subjects of special relevance to national security, such as civic and moral education, citizenship education, and social studies, should be compulsory in primary and secondary education to enlighten students about the cultural diversity of the Nigerian nation and build in them the spirit of tolerance and respect for one another in appreciation of Nigerian cultural heritage.
4. Teacher education institutions should be properly funded to boost the morale of teachers and to meet the expectations of society in terms of increased productivity.
5. Capacity building of teachers should be encouraged right from pre-primary school to the university level, to update their knowledge, and hence become more effective in discharging their duties.
6. There is a great need for a conducive environment, adequate and modern instructional materials, as well as internet service to all educational institutions in the country. This would enable them to connect to the global world community.
7. Entrepreneurship education that provides functional skills acquisition should be free and available at all levels of education to discourage idleness for sustainable development

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