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REVOLUTIONISING TEACHER EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Revolutionizing teacher education for sustainable development begins with reimagining how teachers are prepared to respond to the rapidly changing world around them. Today's classrooms are shaped by environmental uncertainty, social inequalities, technological shifts, and economic pressures-realities that require teachers who can guide learners to think critically, act responsibly, and contribute meaningfully to their communities. This paper explores how teacher education can evolve by embracing the principles of education for sustainable development (ESD), reflective practice, and community-engaged learning to nurture empathy, collaboration, and problem-solving. However, this transformation faces several challenges. Many teacher education curricula remain outdated and rigid, offering little space for sustainability-focused learning. Teacher educators themselves often lack the training needed to model innovative practices, while institutions struggle with limited resources, weak partnerships, and assessment systems that still reward rote learning. Resistance to change and overloaded programs further complicate reform efforts. To overcome these barriers, the paper suggests a holistic approach that includes continuous capacity building for teacher educators, policy support that clearly priorities sustainability, and the integration of sustainability themes across courses rather than as add-ons. Strengthening digital infrastructure, fostering strong school-community partnerships, and redesigning assessment to emphasize creativity and real-world problem-solving are also essential.

Key Words: Revolutionizing, Teacher Education, Sustainable Development

Introduction

In education as in other fields of human endeavor, the need for revolutionizing teacher education for a sustainable development cannot be over emphasized in the process of building a unique educational system in Nigeria. The issue of revolutionizing teacher education for sustainable development has to do with transforming how educators are trained, so as to integrate sustainability strategies into the teaching and learning practices (Ekwuru, 2018). This involves a movement from traditional pedagogical approaches to a more dynamic and action-oriented method and techniques which can be achieved by equipping teachers with an action-oriented skills values and knowledge to resolve global challenges. It is a form of education, designed to produce teachers of desired quality and characteristics. Teacher education is the kind of training that deals with the art of acquiring competencies and professional growth (Mbakwem, 2017). Revolutionizing teacher education provides teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge that helps them carry out the teaching job and also builds their professional growth.

However, teacher education was introduced in Nigerian educational system to produce highly sensitive, motivated classroom teachers who will inculcate an organized knowledge to learners efficiently and professionally in other to achieve set educational goals (Ejiogu, 2015). It also involves integrating the process of sustainability across all levels of teacher training through improving teacher competencies, updating the curriculum and implementing innovative arts of science in teaching and learning which involves equipping teachers with interdisciplinary knowledge, practical skills for addressing socio environment challenges and the need to use technology and reflective practices to bring about life long professional development. The teacher plays an important role in the success of classroom delivery which contributes to national development. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014:39) is of the opinion that the quality of school teachers is imperative for the success of any educational system. However, teacher education remains a primary focus in our nation's educational system. It is important for teachers to be focused on delivering their civic responsibility, which is that of adequate teaching and learning to learners. In order to revolutionize teacher education for sustainable development.

Concept of Teacher Education

Teacher education serves the purpose of ensuring that every official action of an educational system is done in a distinctive way (Osokoya, 2017). However, teacher education can be referred as the dynamic processes, practices and programs prepared to train an individual or individuals for teaching and learning profession. The teacher education programs cover both the pre-service and in-service development. The main objective of the teacher education is to re-orient the teacher with the right attitudes, skills and knowledge needed to efficiently inculcate an organized knowledge to learners and in so doing the learners become useful to themselves and society at large, (Ekwuru, 2018). Teacher education are initiatives mostly by government that determines the direction of an educational system. In view of Awokoya (2001), teacher education is directed towards increasing the quality of teachers. He believes that the objective of any teacher education programme is to satisfy educational needs, values and interest in teaching and learning profession. According to Adewuyi (2012) defines teacher education as the provision of professional education

and specialized training to prepare individual to give young people into becoming responsible citizens.

Williams (2009) sees teacher education as a professional education of teachers, focusing on the development of desirable attitudes, skills and knowledge for effective teaching. It is a composite of two basic concepts "teacher and "education". It's a form of education designed to produce teachers of desired quality and characteristics.

Nevertheless, teacher education in Nigerian educational system is designed to produce highly motivated, sensitive, conscientious and successful classroom teacher who will handle learners effectively and professionally, so as to achieve set goals in education.

Concept of Sustainable Development

The term sustainable development in Nigerian educational system cannot be over emphasized as it has helped a long way to meet the needs of the present-day educational needs without compromising the abilities of the future generations to meet their own needs. This involves a balanced process that brings together three elements namely: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. Achieving sustainable development in teacher education involves a lot of task from the government, state and local to build a future that is inclusive, equitable and resilient for all citizens (Ken, 2020). It can also be said to be the process or practice of meeting today's needs and values without denying the future generation the opportunity to meet own needs (Ekwuru, 2015). Sustainable development is the concept of needs and limitations imposed by technology and society on the environments ability to meet the present and future needs. It can also be said to be a process of change on which the exploitation of resources, the direction investments, the orientation or technological development are in harmony and enhance both current and future potentials to meet human needs and aspirations. Sustainable development also requires meeting the basic needs of all deprived people in the world and extending to everyone, been able to satisfy their aspirations for a better life (Fatimah, 2013).

Education and Sustainable Development

The integration of sustainable development into Nigeria education system is imperative for building environmental protection, economic viability and social equity through informed and skilled citizens. This process builds individuals and learners with the necessary knowledge and values needed to make rational decision, manage, resources and contribute to the nation's general development. When learners are equipped with skills for employment and innovation, it promotes inclusive and sustainable economic growth and social well-being (Fatimah 2013). Sustainable educational system ensures all learners have access to quality education by promoting social equity, fighting poverty and discrimination. The aim of education for sustainable development in Nigeria is to ensure that everyone has the access to benefit from quality education in other to imbibe good values, positive behaviours and lifestyles necessary for a sustainable future (Duru, 2016).

Historical Perspective of Teacher Education

The historical perspective of teacher education is of a great importance. Teachers both in and beyond teacher education programmes are continual learners. As the society evolves, new

innovations and the challenges that are associated to it requires new learning. The teacher must continually adapt to development or challenges that affect world of work. It is an international programme that clarifies the purpose of initial (pre-service) teacher education and continuing professional development. Teacher education was formally rooted in Nigeria in 1896 with establishment of St. Andrews Teachers Training College, Oyo, to award grade III certificate. The college was later upgraded to award grade II and later, Advanced Teachers Colleges (ATC) were established beginning from 1961 following Ashby's commission report 1959 (Joshua, 2016), Advanced teachers' colleges later metamorphosed into college of Education (COEs). University Faculties/Institutes of education emerged and later there was the establishment of regulatory agencies and later multiplicity of regulatory/coordinating agencies e.g. National Teachers Institute (NTI) Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) and the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) (Ekwuru, 2003).

Challenges of Teacher Education

In the process of revolutionizing teacher education that would offer unique possibilities to Nigerian educational system, there are also a number of challenges that are of necessity that the government, educators and stakeholders in education must address for effective sustainable development in education.

(a) Inadequate Funding:

The funds allocated to education by the government is very low. Sometimes the allocation could be as low as 7% by the federal government. In some cases when funds are budgeted and released to education sector, the management of the released fund become difficult to the extent that the funds will not be used for what it has been appropriated for. It would be imperative if the government monitors the release and management of funds, in other to achieve predetermined goals in education.

(b) Infrastructure Deficit:

This refers to the gap between the current state of infrastructure e.g. school roads, water system, classroom building, teachers staff room, electricity and the level needed to meet societal needs. It highlights areas where the school experiences aging infrastructure. Insufficient training facilities like (Hardware, software and consumables which are lacking in schools, if provided by the government would go a long way to make the programme of teacher education more attractive to teacher trainees (Williams, 2019).

(c) Low Quality Trainers:

The issue of low-quality trainers in government schools has a significant implication on the quality of education that is inculcated to learners. Some trainers lack pedagogical skill that would enable them inculcate an organized knowledge to learners or trainee teachers. These trainers give little attention to continuous professional development, professional development update is imperative for trainers, so as to equip the trainer with basic knowledge and skills in other to do well in teaching and learning.

Brain Drain: This is a situation where most of our qualified teachers leave the country (Nigeria) for better opportunity abroad or are in other kind of trade which in so doing leads to shortage of

skilled educators in our educational system. The situation can be avoided, if the government makes it as a point of duty to engage qualified teachers in the school system in order not to allow them look for greener pasture outside the country (Ken, 2020).

Conclusion

From the literature reviewed, we can conclude that revolutionizing teacher education are constrained by the following:

- Inadequate funding which has led to lack of funds in Nigerian educational system.
- Low quality trainers have a significant implication on the quality of education that is inculcated to learners
- Facilities such as classroom, office, libraries, laboratories, workshops, poor and water are basic requirements in every educational organisation. These have been found to be inadequate in most school system in Nigeria.

Recommendations

There is a great need for the attention of the government to be drawn towards having a workable educational programme. It is for this reason that the following suggestions are advanced.

- It is imperative for the government to adequately fund programmes in Nigerian educational system which will go a long way to revolutionize teacher education.
- Most infrastructures in our educational institutions are in very bad sight and has led to poor teaching and learning. If repaired would improve organized learning in various schools.
- There is a great need to enhance training quality, increase practical experience, update teacher education curricula and support teacher well-being.

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