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Impact of Colleges of Education on Teacher Education in Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper highlighted on the impact of Colleges of Education on Teacher Education in Nigeria. Teacher Education is the form of education which is planned and systematically tailored and applied for the cultivation of those who teach or will teach particularly but not exclusively, in primary and post primary levels of schooling. The objectives of Teacher Education were discussed. The advent of National Commission for Colleges of Education and its roles, so also the Impact of Colleges of Education were also discussed in the paper. Based on the discussion some recommendations were offered like NCCE should stop the act of establishing private COEs without proper accreditations, all private COEs without proper accreditation should be closed, politics should not be a criteria for employing teachers at all levels of education.

Key Words: NCE, NCCE, Impact, Teacher Education, COEs

Introduction

One of the basic truths in education is that the quality of education depends largely upon the quality of the teacher. Whether the teacher is in ordinary classroom using traditional methods, or whether the teacher is in the best equipped classroom, whether the teacher is on a television screen that is viewed by a large number of students; whether the teacher is what is seen in computer programmes or programmed text books, there is the likelihood that the students will not get quality education unless the teacher is qualitative.

Therefore, whatever input is made into an educational system in respect of management, resources, facilities and array of instructional materials, will be of little avail if the teacher is unskilled, poorly trained, or even ignorant. This view is shared by Nelson, Polansky &Carlson, (2000) and many specialties in teaching today, with their wide range of required skills and knowledge meant that teachers need to be well prepared to a degree for the vastly different nature of teaching functions, challenges and tasks therein. This point to the fact that for effectiveness, teachers need to be given a professional education that will qualify them thus, as well as enable them to effectively perform the task of giving the appropriate support towards enhancing a virile and qualitative system of education in any nation. Teacher education is the foundation of quality in the educational system and this is the key to unlock all facets of development. This is very relevant in nations that look up to education as a vehicle for attaining the desired development in all sectors of national life. The concern of teacher education world over is the training and preparing would be teachers for effective functioning at the school. Teacher education has therefore been defined severally. Ishyaku (2000) has defined teacher education to mean the form of education which is planned and systematically tailored and applied for the cultivation of those who teach or will teach particularly but not exclusively, in primary and post primary levels of schooling.(Mukhtari, 2022).

Teaching is indeed a challenging profession and the teacher is the most important factor in the learning environment, according to Peretomode (1992) in Mukhtari (2022). Thus, teacher preparation is of utmost important in any society. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) rightly points out that no education can rise above the quality of its teachers, thus, there is need to place major emphasis on educational planning and development. The implication of this is that the success or failure of any educational system depends greatly on the teacher. So, teacher preparedness must be of utmost importance to any nation. This is why, according to the National Policy on Education, Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) is considered the minimum qualification for entering into the teaching profession in Nigeria. Enughe (2005) in (Ekeng, 2022). Explicitly said that the ultimate goal or destination of education in Nigeria is quality assurance. One. She went on to say that, because education does not occur in a vacuum (and not transmitted through vacuum), the importance of a teacher becomes obvious in the attainment of educational goals. For education therefore to be qualitative and assuring, the teacher who is the instrument and chief character in the classroom must first be qualitatively and assumingly equipped to perform for qualitative and assuring results. (Ekeng, 2022). Sadly, this is not the case in Nigeria. Ureubu (2006) posits that, equally worrisome is that most of our teacher education institutions turn out teachers that are deficient in content and methodology, thus are unable to handle teaching effectively. Based on the above expressions the success or failure of any nation depend on the education with Nigerian contest, our education is continuously going down. The educational institutions are ill equipped with required teaching and learning materials, as the products of such institutions are half bake, and thereby contributed to the down fall of education, economy and the nation in general.

The Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) programme was created in line with the Ashby Report on Education in 1959, which emphasized the need for the training of middle level manpower for our educational institutions. Initially, graduands from Colleges of Education, that is to say, NCE holders were employed to teach in secondary schools (both junior and senior secondary), but with the abolition of Teacher Training Colleges (who hitherto produced teachers for primary schools), NCE holders were thus redirected to teach mainly in the Basic Education years (primary and junior secondary schools). Colleges of Education (C.O.E.) as the name suggest are meant for those who want to go into teaching line. C.O.E. usually award Nigeria Certificate in Education. From the name, it is a certificate that will be recognized in any part of the country. N.C.E. serves two main purposes: one can use it to apply for teaching job, especially in primary and junior secondary schools, and the certificate can be used for admission into 200 level in degree awarding institutions.

According to Otunuyi (2013) the NCE curriculum is designed in such a way that student teachers are expected to specialize in different levels of the Universal Basic Education. Teacher resourcefulness is operationally conceptualized in terms of the teacher to utilize the appropriate language, method, and available instructional materials to bring the best results from the learners (Banj, 1999 as cited in Asiegbu & Okpala, 2019). Teachers are said to be resourceful if they are able to apply all the requisite skills, competences and abilities to maximize learning outcomes and achievements, such that the results are observable in practical terms through the behavior and performance of the learner. The NCE programme helps in developing teachers' resourcefulness by exposing them to the various elements and courses in their area of specialization, in addition to the above they are to take courses in general education which focuses on philosophy, sociology and psychology of education, curriculum and instructions, methods of teaching, instructional materials lesson planning and teaching practice among others (NCCE, 2012). NCE programmes in Colleges of Education where teachers are produced occupy important positions in any educational system. This is because as has often been noted, the quality of teachers mirrors the quality of education in a nation (Onuekwusi, Onyeka and Dara, 2021). In (Luka, Musa and Emmanuel, 2023).

The Concept of Teacher Education

The growing number teachers in teaching today, with their wide range of required skills and knowledge meant that teachers need to be well prepared to a degree for the vastly different nature of teaching functions, challenges and tasks therein. This point to the fact that for effectiveness, teachers need to be given a professional education that will qualify them thus, as well as enable them to effectively perform the task of giving the appropriate support towards enhancing a virile and qualitative system of education in any nation. Teacher education is the foundation of quality in the educational system and this is the key to unlock all facets of development. This is very relevant in nations that look up to education as a vehicle for attaining the desired development in all sectors of national life. The concern of teacher education world over is the training and preparing would be teachers for effective functioning at the school.

Teacher education has therefore been defined severally. Ishyaku (2000) defined teacher education to mean the form of education which is planned and systematically tailored and applied for the cultivation of those who teach or will teach particularly but not exclusively, in primary and post primary levels of schooling. Teacher education is the professional training that teachers receive for them to be classified as professionals. Being the training arm of the teaching profession, teacher education according to Ipaye (1996) is charged with the task of developing knowledge and skills as basis for practice, with preparing personnel entry into the teaching profession(preservice) and with contributing to the on going development of practicing professionals(in- service). Teacher education is therefore to function by equipping teachers with the wherewith; both ethical, intellectual competencies and skills, dispositions, emotional and so forth, that will enable them develop and imbue in their students the requisite educational and societal dispositions. The quality of any educational system therefore solely depends on the quality of the teachers one finds in the school system.

Objectives of Teacher Education in Nigeria

The Nigerian National Policy on education is the document that states the philosophy of Nigerian education. The same document also stated the goals of other components of the Nigerian educational system including teacher education. The National Policy gave the following as the goals of teacher education as follows;

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 fit into social life of the community and 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. The policy went further to state that, all teachers in educational institutions shall be professionally trained. Teacher education shall be structured to equip teachers for the effective performance of their duties. Since no education system may raise above the quality its teachers, the policy pegged the minimum qualification for entry into teaching profession to be the NCE (FGN, 2004).

With the above stated objectives of teacher education as spelled out by the National Policy on Education and looking into the conditions of our teacher education institutions, the objective are there theoretically. By taking primary schools and secondary as examples the government continuously employing ill equipped staff that are politically based leaving the qualified ones on ground. With this act of political bias our educational level will no longer progress.

Origin and Growth of Colleges of Education in Nigeria

The origin of Colleges of Education in Nigeria is traceable to the Ashby Report (1960:16) called "Investment in Education". The Commission recommended the establishment of

Teachers‟ Grade One Colleges, which would offer a two-year teacher programme based on a school certificate. As a result of the modification of the Report five Advanced Teachers‟ Training Colleges were established in 1962 by the Federal and Regional governments with the aid of UNESCO. The programme is a three-year course open to candidates who had completed a Grade II Teachers‟ course or secondary education with required credit passes. The five Advanced Teachers‟ Training Colleges were established at Lagos. Ibadan and Zaria in 1962. That of Ibadan was latter transferred to Ondo in 1964. The College is now known as Adeyemi College of Education. Other Advanced Teachers Training Colleges were established at Owerri in 1963, Kano in 1964 and Abraka in 1968. All the Advanced Teachers‟ Training Colleges were co-educational with sponsorship from either the Federal or Regional governments. Some of the Advanced Teachers‟ Training Colleges were elevated to the status of Colleges of Education because of their high standards and the reputation of their products. In 1973, the number of the Advanced Teachers‟ Training Colleges and Colleges of Education in Nigeria rose to 13. Until the establishment of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) in Nigeria in 1989, all the Advanced Teachers‟ Training Colleges and Colleges of Education in Nigeria numbering about 43, were affiliates of institutes/faculties of education in Nigerian Universities. Today, there are 57 Colleges of Education in Nigerian with uniform minimum standards as provided by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE). The setting up of the uniform minimum standards by the commission was necessitated, among other things, by the discriminatory admission policies of the universities in favour of the candidates from ATTCs/Colleges of Education that were affiliated to them. The commission argues further that: The necessity for harmonization of the different standards becomes even more compelling with the recognition that is producing for the same market.

Since the establishment of the National Commission for Colleges of Education in Nigeria, the Academic Programmes of all the Colleges of Education in Nigeria have been accredited from time to time as stipulated in section 5 (c) and (d) of Decree 3 of 1989 that set up the Commission. The Decree states that; the Commission shall: (c) Lay down minimum standards for all programmes of teacher education and accredit their certificates and other academic awards, (d) Approve guidelines setting out criteria for accreditation of all Colleges of Education in Nigeria.

The purpose of accreditation and re-accreditation exercise is to ensure the maintenance of minimum standards in all the Colleges of Education in Nigeria.

The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) was born to create the conditions for the harmonization of the different standards of academics, staffing, instruction, and learning facilities in the Colleges of Education (NCCE,1994, 1995). The NCCE was set up by the Federal Government of Nigeria and backed by the provision of section 5 (c) and (d) of Decree Number 3 of 1989. The NCCE is charged with;

(a) Make recommendation on the national policy necessary for the full development of teacher education and the training of teachers;

(b) Determine the qualified teacher needs of the country for the purpose of planning training facilities and in particular, prepare periodic master plans for the balanced co-coordinated development of Colleges of Education;

(c) Enquire into and advise the Federal Government on the financial needs of the colleges and receive block grants from the Government and allocate to the Colleges based on approved formula;

(d) Lay down minimum standards for all programmes of teacher education and accredit their certificates and their academic awards;

(e) Undertake periodic review of terms and conditions of service of personnel in the Colleges of Education and make recommendations thereon to the Government;

(f) Collate, analyse and put together information relating to teacher education in the country; and

(g) Make recommendations on the development of Pre- Vocational, Technical, Agricultural, Business and Home Economics Education in all our Primary and Junior Secondary Schools and advise Government as to the necessary facilities for them, the course requirements, the relative contribution of government and industry and how to ensure that women take full part in the programmes (NCCE, 1996).

The commission, currently, is overseeing 146 colleges of education that award National Certificate in Education (NCE). The breakdown shows that 21 are federal institutions, 47 belongs to state government, while 55 are privately owned. In addition to this, there are 14 other institutions awarding NCE, while nine polytechnics, across the country are offering NCE programmes in their various institutions. (2024 Vanguard)

NCCE is just mere regulating body of Colleges of Education in Nigeria today, because the rapid growing of private colleges of education anywhere in Nigeria has adveserly down grade our prestigious Colleges of Education as well as the certificates they are awarding. One may argue the presence and roles of NCCE in Nigeria. Definitely this act of establishing private colleges without proper accreditation will no longer solve our educational problems but contribute to its failure and in turn the failure of the nation in general. The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) says it has identified over 200 illegal institutions awarding Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) without approval. Executive Secretary of the Commission, Professor Paulinus C. Okwelle, disclosed this during an interview at a capacity-building programme organized by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) for Beneficiary Colleges of Education (CoE) in collaboration with NCCE.

In a report by Daily Post stated that, Bauchi State revokes licenses of private Colleges of Education in a move aimed at curbing proliferation of private Colleges of Education in the state, Bauchi state government said out of the over 60 private NCE awarding institutions in the state 45 are operating illegally and are banned. Saying that only 15 NCE awarding institutions across the state met the requirements of NCCE. The State Government has revoked the licences of all private National Certificate of Education (NCE) awarding institutions across

the state with immediate effect. The revocation was contained in a circular signed by the Acting Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, stated that the decision was taken with a view to ensuring that quality education was provided to the citizens as well as restoring the lost glory of education in the state.

Recently, researchers observed there are challenges facing the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) in Nigeria and these challenges is affecting the mandate of supervising colleges of education in charge of teacher production for Basic education in Nigeria. Two challenges were identified namely internal and external challenges as facing National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) in term of teacher production for Basic education. The internal challenges includes; lack of review in the act of National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), poor funding of National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), inadequate data and duplication of Teacher Education Quality Management as the internal challenges facing the Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) in relation to teacher production for Basic education in Nigeria while the external challenges include; inadequate funding, poor implementation of visitation panel and NEED report of 2014, inadequate infrastructural facilities, brain-drain, shortage of lecturers, strike action and low motivation.

The Impact of Colleges of Education in Nigeria

Colleges of Education in Nigeria have played a vital role, especially in the education sector. The teaching function of colleges of education in Nigeria for instance, has contributed immensely to national development particularly in the development of middle-level manpower for the nation‟s primary and junior secondary schools. They Contributed significantly to meeting needs in numerical terms, the recurrent and expanding needs of a highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for primary and lower secondary levels of education (Basic education years: Primary 1-6, and JSS1-3). Over the years, colleges of education have produced a large number of non-graduate professional (NCE) teachers that teach in our primary and junior secondary schools, thus alleviating the manpower problems of the nation at those levels.

These teachers have also laid the foundation of whatever formal education that is received later in life by different forms of students that serves as accountants, teachers, lawyers, economists, engineer, doctors, agriculturalists, architects, etc. The ideas of these people put into productive use has enhanced the nation‟s development.

Colleges of Education in Nigeria have plan waded into the task area of producing professionally trained teachers for our vocational and technical secondary schools in order to meet the nation‟s requirements for technological take-off as provided in the National Policy on Education (1981). Another aspect of the role of Colleges of Education is their ability to adapt quickly to the educational needs of their immediate environment. Pre-occupation with universal academic, cultures, scholarships, research and international acceptability often inhibit Nigerian universities from responding promptly and appropriately to the local needs

and demands. Standing at the middle as they are, Colleges of Education are often called upon to mount flexible programmes that can be tailored to the urgent requirements of the primary and junior secondary schools.

Another contribution of Colleges of Education is collaborating and organising public lectures, seminars, workshops, conference, inter-collegiate sports competition and the implementation of their curriculum, especially in General Studies Courses like Citizenship Education, they have raised the level of national unity, and national consciousness, sense of oneness, common citizenship and common purpose amongst Nigerians, thus enhancing the development of the nation. In addition, they provide in-service courses, extra-mural classes and sandwich programmes to raise the literacy level of the members of the communities around them.

Another vital area of their contribution is in the area of research. Their research results enable the educational planners to formulate appropriate education policies for the nation‟s development.

Finally, they have assisted by providing agricultural extension services and other vocational skill acquisition to the communities around them through consultancy services to boost the economic activities of the communities around them, while the agricultural extension services enhance the improvement of agriculture.

Conclusion

Based on the highlight of the paper if National Commission for Colleges of Education will performed its duties according to the provisions and laws that established the body, Colleges of Education in Nigeria will contributes immensely to the development of Teacher Education as well as addressed the falling standard of education in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were proposed based on the discussion of issues in the paper.

1. NCCE should stop the act of establishing private COEs without proper accreditations
2. All private COEs without proper accreditation should be closed
3. Politics should not be a criteria for employing teachers at all levels of education
4. All teachers without proper teaching qualifications should immediately send back to teacher education training institutions to acquired teaching professional skills.
5. Students teaching practice should be reviewed right from micro teaching process and procedures in our schools.

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