

Revitalizing Teacher Training Colleges in Nigeria. Issues and Challenges

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Abstract

This study is concerned with methods of revitalizing teacher training colleges in Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study. A questionnaire on 'Revitalizing Teacher Training Colleges' (RTTC) was used to collect data which was analysed using the simple descriptive statistics. The instrument was administered to 1,244 respondents, which include 480 university lecturers, 782 teachers in the colleges of education and 84 Teachers' Grade Two holders. The result shows that a greater percentage of the respondents are of the opinion that the Teachers Grade Two Programme should be revived and revitalised. The colleges of education are not attractive enough to meet up with the manpower needs in Nigeria. The university students are not concentrated to look at teaching as a noble profession. Several recommendations were made such as the provision of adequate infrastructures, payment of allowances and special incentives to deserving students. Revitalizing the teacher training colleges to be attractive to all students.

Introduction

When Western education was introduced in Nigeria by the missionaries, there was the need to train the teachers to handle this all important aspect of knowledge dissemination. Okafor (2008) described 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 in primary or post primary levels of schooling. It is the academic curricular designed solely for professional preparation of teachers, school administrators and supervisors as well as school guidance counsellors. The teacher therefore is the main plant in any educational enterprise.

The purpose of teacher education are clearly stated in the National Policy on Education (2004):

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

In Nigeria today, these are the three tiers system of teacher education in Nigeria.

1. The Grade II Teachers Colleges,
2. The three years post secondary school education course organized in the Colleges of Education or erstwhile Advanced Teacher' Colleges leading to the award of Nigeria Certificate of Education (NCE).
3. The University degree in Education (B.D. (ed) B.Sc (ed) or B.ed).

However, the National Policy on Education (2004) recognized the following existing institutions as where teachers are to trained professionally in Nigeria. They include:

1. Grade II Teachers Colleges
2. Advance Teachers' Colleges
3. Colleges of Education
4. Institutes of Education
5. National Teachers' Institute
6. Teachers' Centre
7. Faculties of Education in the Universities.

The history of teacher education in Nigeria could be described as a chequessed one (Isyaku 2003). It all started with the introduction of formal education by Mission Voluntary Agencies. There was no formal training for the early teachers. They started as catechists performing many functions, such as; teaching, catechism, or giving religions instructions to children. Some of the enthusiastic converts became literate and were utilized as interpreters and were given some classes to teach at the Sunday school. These literate interpreters and catechists

were however encouraged to complete their elementary education. The graduates of the elementary schools known as standard IV were recruited to teach in the elementary schools. Even some intelligent pupils in standard V and VI were also used to teach in the infant classes. They were classified as school master, assistant teacher and pupil teacher.

A lot of problems faced teacher education and production then. Aleyideino (2000) explained that the dearth of teacher training institutions (as Hope Waddell Training Institute, Calabar had to admit students from all over West Africa). Professional examinations were not standardized even as training institutions stressed quality. There was absence of broad-based secular education policy for the entire colonial territory of Nigeria. There was no data-base for the estimated needs from the schools.

Isyaku (2003) noted that in the Southern Nigeria, there was a collaborative pattern of teacher production between the missions and the government. In 1896, the first teacher training college was established as St. Andrews College, Oyo. This gave an improvement to the quality of teachers who were hitherto standard six certificate holders. Grade III teachers were then being produced. With time, many teachers training colleges were established and were awarding teachers Grade II Certificates which eventually made Grade III obsolete. Baptist Training College, Ogbomosho in 1897, St. Paul's Training College, Awka in 1904, Oron Training Institute Oron in 1905, Wesleyan Training Institute, Ibadan in 1928, and St. Charles Training College, Onitsha in 1929 (Ogunsaju 2003). The government was directly involved in the funding and managing of teachers colleges in the Northern Nigeria at this time. The Teachers Training College Katsina and Toro Teachers' Training College, Toro are clear examples. The elementary school graduates became pioneers of the Grade III teachers' certificate. The Grade III teachers were eligible to enroll for a two year Grade II certificate programme which qualifies them to teach up to standard VI or primary six (Ogunsaju 2003). The Grade I teachers required the passing of written examination and teaching practice administered by the Federal Department of Education. The Grade II teachers are those who have passed beyond Grade II teachers' certificate with two subjects at the Advance level together with teaching practice.

The pivotal teachers are people or teachers holding Grade II teachers certificate with additional passes in three subjects at the school certificate G.C.E. ordinary level. There was the need to upgrade the status of teachers. The Yaha Higher College was established to serve as the most notable academic and training institution for the production of intermediate manpower needs for engineering, medicine, and the training of teachers for the secondary schools. The Ashby Commission's report (FRN 1960) recommended massive expansion of "intermediate education" of teachers aimed at upgrading the existing teaching force in the primary schools and the supply of trained teachers for the expansion of secondary education (Isyaku 2003). This report however gave birth to the first four Advanced Teachers Colleges by the early 60's to produce holders of the Nigeria certificate. In Education NCE/ a non-degree but highly qualitative professional diploma in education. This was the outcome of government's reaction to the Ashby Commission. The Advanced Teachers' Colleges thus became the progenitors of the current colleges of Education (COES). The original concept of their NCE programme was to strengthen the teaching force at both the primary and secondary levels.

Still in line with the Ashby Commission's report, in 1961, the new degree programme was started at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. By 1964, the first batch of education graduates holding the B.A or B.Sc education came out of the university. In 1962, the University of Ibadan started B.Ed degree programme in Education. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, University of Lagos and Obatemi Awolowo University, Ife established the B.A./B.Sc Education degrees. Other graduates intending to become professional teachers do take a one-year post Graduate Diploma (PGDE) in education.

Teacher education has become an issue in development of human capital in Nigeria. A team of experts were drawn from a wide range of interest groups within Nigeria, to assess and re-assess the education industry in Nigeria. The policy document widely acclaimed as the National Policy on Education Stated clearly that no nation can rise above the quality of its teachers and so teacher education would continue to be given major emphasis in all educational planning and development.

The policy document accepts the minimum qualification for entry into the teaching profession to be the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). Since this policy statement came into being, the Colleges of Education in Nigeria have received a boost to improve upon their curriculum and design it in line with the challenges facing the primary and secondary education in Nigeria.

Most of the Teacher's Grade II Colleges received the touch of the missionaries, the early teachers, infrastructures, books, etc were provided by the missionaries. The government owned colleges were properly monitored and managed. Adesina (2004) noted that the Teachers Grade Two programme was well designed to cater for the primary education of every average Nigerian child. The curriculum was well designed and the trainees were also enthusiastic. A Grade Two teacher then was often full of pride and sense of achievement. He is a professional, public letters writer, and the eye of the community. Teachers were alive to their duties.

Improvisation and team work especially during Physical Training classes in the open field was the pride of most parents.

The NCE programme took over the Teacher's Grade Two Colleges, Obalayo (2004) stated that the NCE programme is filled with students who never initially wanted to be teachers, but because of lack of admission to the university, they decided to opt for the colleges of education with the hope of getting direct admission into the university after three years. So, the students are not prepared to take teaching as a profession but just to obtain the certificate as a sure way to the university, Ogunlowo (2003) noted that there is low commitment to duty and the curriculum is so broad that it does not address the needs of the primary school child. Osbinowo (2001) observed that the graduates of education from the various universities take to teaching as the last resort.

To make teacher education to be an interesting venture, there is the need to revitalize the Teacher Training Colleges in terms of making the college attractive to would-be-teachers. The Teacher Training College is expected to be like any training institute with all the necessary training gadgets and well qualified instructors. A soldier that has undergone the necessary military training comes out better refined and determined. Ojo (2003) stated that if the teacher training colleges are not attractive, the products will not be proud of it.

Objective

The primary objective of this study is to determine the ways in which the Teacher Training Colleges can be revitalized such that the products from such schools will be proud of their alma-master and the profession. The study intends to answer the following questions.

1. Is the Grade Two Teachers College still necessary in the present day Nigeria?
2. Are the colleges of education attractive enough in meeting up with the manpower needs of the present Nigeria?
3. Are the students in the faculties of education concentrated to appreciate teaching as a profession?

Methodology

The population of this study comprised all the teacher training colleges in the federal republic of Nigeria. Using the stratified sampling method, 1,244 teachers were randomly selected from the various teacher training colleges in Nigeria. 782 teachers in the colleges of education, 84, teachers in the TC II, programmes (NTI) and 480 lecturers in the faculties of education were randomly selected.

A questionnaire titled "Revitalising Teacher Training Colleges" was drawn by the researcher. This was validated by experts in school administration. The instrument was further tested for reliability using the test-retest method. The reliability co-efficient was established at 0.87. This shows that the instrument is reliable. The questionnaire were administered by the researcher with the help of ten research assistants. The questionnaire were collected on the spot hence the 100% rate of return. The data were analysed using the simple descriptive statistics.

Result

Research Question 1: Is the Grade Two Teachers College still necessary in the present day Nigeria?

This research question was answered with items 1-5 in the questionnaire.

Table 1: Necessity of the Teachers Grade Two Colleges

	VN	NN	NVN	Total
University Lecturers	370 (77.1%)	10(2.1%)	100(20.8%)	480
Colleges of Education Teachers	610(78.0%)	10(12.8%)	72(9.2%)	782
TC II holders	84(100%)	-	-	84
				1244

(VN = Very Necessary, NN = Not Necessary, NVN = Not Very Necessary).

Table 1 shows that 77.1% of the University lecturers believe that the TC II colleges are still Very Necessary while 78% of the teachers in the colleges of education also believed that the Teachers Grade Two Colleges are very Necessary. However, 100% Teachers Grade TC holders are of the view that the Teachers Grade Two Colleges are still Very Necessary.

Research Question 2: Are the Colleges of education attractive enough in meeting up with the manpower needs of the present Nigeria?

Items 6-10 in the questionnaire answered the research question.

Table 2: Attractiveness of the Colleges of education in meeting up with manpower need.

	VA	NA	NVA	Total
University Lecturers	100 (20.9%)	320(66.7%)	60(12.4%)	480
Colleges of education teachers	42(5.4%)	700(89.5%)	40(5.1%)	782
TC II holders	2(2.4%)	80(95.2%)	2(2.4%)	84

(VA = Very attractive, NA = Not attractive, NVA = Not Very attractive).

Table 2 shows that 66.7% of the university lecturers are of the view that the colleges of education are not attractive enough to meet up with the manpower need in the country. This view was also supported by 89.5% of the teachers in the colleges of education and 95.2% of the TC II, holders.

Research Question 3: Are the students in the faculties of education concentrated to appreciate teaching as a profession.

Items 11-15 of the questionnaire answered the research question.

Table 3: Extent of concentration of university students.

	C	NC	NVC	Total
University Lecturers	70 (14.6%)	340(70.8%)	70(14.6%)	480
College of Education teachers	50(6.4%)	720(92.0%)	12(1.5%)	782
TC II holders	5(6.0%)	74(88.0%)	5(6.0%)	84
				1244

(Concentrated, NC = Not Concentrated, NVC = Not Very Concentrated)

The table shows that 70.8% of the university lecturers believe that university students in the faculty of education are not properly concentrated. This view was also supported by 92.0% of the colleges of education teachers and 88.0% of the TC II holders.

Discussion

A greater percentage of the respondents believe that the Teacher's Grade Two Colleges should be revived and revitalized. Obalayo (2004) stated clearly that the bedrock of teacher education is the TC II, programme. The curriculum are specially designed to face the challenges of the primary education in Nigeria.

The colleges of education are not attractive enough to entice students to go in for NCE programmes. Ladoke (2003) observed that the campuses especially the privately owned colleges of education do not possess any aesthetic quality to entice students. The old colleges of education apart from the Federal Colleges of education still parade old and dilapidating structures. Apart from the fact that some students are only in the college to be able get admission into the universities, there are no programmes organized by the school to properly educate the students on the usefulness of the noble profession. Bursary and other incentives like allowances for teaching practice are not paid. Hostel accommodation and power supply are epileptic. The teachers are not adequate to meet the manpower need.

The university students are not concentrated to love the profession. Special induction ceremonies by the Teachers Registration Council are not often organized. Special programmes that will make education students to be outstanding is not often organized. Students and lecturers in the optional courses often regard the education students as being inferior. Oshinowo (2001) stated that most graduates of the faculties of education take to teaching as the last resort.

Findings

The findings of the study are:

1. The TC II programme is essential for primary education in Nigeria.
2. The colleges of education are not attractive enough to meet with the manpower need of teachers in Nigeria.
3. Students in the faculties of education are not concentrated to embrace teaching as a noble profession.

Recommendations

The study therefore recommends that:

1. The Teacher Grade Two programme should be revived and revitalized by providing good infrastructures, qualified teachers and special incentives to staff and students.
2. The colleges of education should be properly funded by the government and supervised by the appropriate agencies.
3. Good infrastructures should be provided in the various colleges of education.
4. Programmes like special induction ceremonies, allowances and special incentive to be provided to students in the various colleges of education.
5. Private colleges to be properly supervised and monitored by the ministry of education and National Commission for colleges of education.
6. Teaching practice allowances be paid to all students.
7. Inter-college visitation to be encouraged by the various school administrators.
8. The university students to be given special allowances.
9. Teaching practices period to be reviewed and allowances paid to deserving students.
10. All teacher training colleges to be made attractive by the stakeholders.

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