
SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Peer Reviewed Book Chapter

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8

TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT, ACHIEVEMENTS, AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract

This chapter examined the development of teacher education in Nigeria with emphasis on its historical evolution, objectives, achievements, and persistent challenges. The chapter traced the origin of teacher education from the missionary era to the post-independence period when formal teacher preparation institutions were expanded by the Nigerian government. It highlighted the role of teacher education in producing qualified manpower for the educational sector and national development. The chapter also discussed major achievements recorded in teacher education, including expansion of teacher training institutions, professionalization of teaching, improvement in curriculum development, and increased access to teacher preparation programmes. Despite these achievements, the chapter observed that teacher education in Nigeria continues to face serious challenges such as inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, shortage of qualified teacher educators, policy inconsistency, weak teaching practice supervision, low professional status of teachers, and brain drain. The chapter concluded that sustainable educational development in Nigeria depends largely on effective teacher preparation and professional development. It therefore recommended increased funding, policy stability, improved staff welfare, infrastructural development, and stronger quality assurance mechanisms for teacher education institutions.

Keywords: Teacher education, Nigeria, educational development, teacher training, professionalization

8.0. Introduction

Teacher education occupies a central position in the development of every nation because teachers serve as the foundation upon which the educational system is built. No educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers, as clearly stated in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2013). This explains why nations across the world invest heavily in teacher preparation and professional development programmes. The history of teacher education in Nigeria dates back to the missionary era in the nineteenth century. Christian missionaries who introduced Western education into Nigeria quickly realized the need for trained indigenous teachers who could assist in expanding formal education. According to Fafunwa (1974), the early missionaries established teacher training institutions primarily to produce catechists and classroom instructors for mission schools. One of the earliest teacher training institutions in Nigeria was the Training Institution established in Abeokuta in 1859 by the Church Missionary Society.

During the colonial period, teacher education expanded gradually as the colonial government began to participate in educational administration. Teacher preparation during this period focused mainly on elementary teacher training through Grade III and Grade II teacher colleges. These institutions were responsible for producing teachers for primary schools across the country. Taiwo (1980) notes that the colonial administration introduced regulations and syllabuses to standardize teacher training in Nigeria. Following Nigeria's independence in 1960, the demand for qualified teachers increased significantly due to the rapid expansion of educational institutions. Government at both federal and regional levels established additional teacher training colleges, colleges of education, and faculties of education in universities to meet the growing demand for trained teachers. The Ashby Commission Report of 1960 also contributed significantly to the expansion of teacher education by recommending the establishment of advanced teacher training programmes and higher institutions.

The introduction of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme in 1976 further increased the need for qualified teachers in Nigeria. To address the shortage of teachers, the government strengthened teacher education institutions and upgraded many teacher training colleges. The Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) was later adopted as the minimum teaching qualification for primary school teachers in Nigeria (FRN, 2013). Teacher education in Nigeria has recorded several achievements over the years. One of the major achievements is the expansion of teacher training institutions across the federation. Today, Nigeria has numerous colleges of education, faculties of education, and institutes responsible for teacher preparation. Another important achievement is the professionalization of teaching through the establishment of the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), which regulates teacher certification and professional standards.

Teacher education has also contributed immensely to manpower development and literacy improvement in Nigeria. Through the production of trained teachers, the sector has supported the expansion of primary, secondary, and tertiary education across the country. In addition,



curriculum reforms in teacher education have introduced courses in educational technology, guidance and counselling, special education, and entrepreneurship education to improve teacher effectiveness. Despite these achievements, teacher education in Nigeria continues to face numerous challenges that affect its effectiveness and quality. Many teacher education institutions operate with inadequate infrastructure, insufficient funding, and shortage of qualified academic staff. Poor remuneration and declining social perception of the teaching profession have also discouraged talented individuals from pursuing teaching careers. Inconsistent government policies and weak supervision mechanisms further undermine the quality of teacher preparation programmes.

The justification for this chapter therefore lies in the critical importance of teacher education to national development and educational quality. Since teachers are responsible for implementing educational policies and curriculum objectives, weaknesses in teacher preparation inevitably affect the entire educational system. This chapter is therefore necessary to provide a deeper understanding of the development, achievements, and challenges of teacher education in Nigeria with the aim of identifying measures for improvement.

8.1. Conceptual Terms

Concept of Teacher Education

Teacher education refers to the professional preparation and training given to individuals who are expected to teach in schools and other educational institutions. It involves the acquisition of pedagogical knowledge, teaching skills, professional ethics, and subject mastery necessary for effective classroom instruction and educational development. According to the National Commission for Colleges of Education (2012), teacher education is the process of preparing professional educators with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviour, and skills required for effective teaching and national development. Fafunwa (1974) defines teacher education as the systematic training and development of teachers for the purpose of improving the quality of instruction in schools and promoting educational advancement in society.

Teacher education is a special education designed for the production of professional teachers. There are many teacher education institutions in Nigeria. The various teacher education institutions have been producing various professional teachers that are presently working in various educational institutions in Nigeria. Teacher education in Nigeria is included in the tertiary education (Ogunode, Azarema, & Ukozor, 2024). Teacher education is an organized education planned and designed purposely for training, developing and producing professional teachers in all field of education (Umeora, & Ogunode 2020). Teacher education is the programme of education designed and planned for the production of professional teachers for the various educational institutions in the country. Teacher education is a special education programme designed for the production of middle manpower in the educational institutions across the country. Teacher education is the education programme formulated and implemented for the training, retraining and development of teaching and researching in the teaching



profession. Teacher education is the education provided for those who want to engage and develop career in the teaching profession (Ogunode, & Agwor, 2020).

Teacher education as a programme that is related to the development of the proficiency and competence of teachers for the purpose of empowering them to meet the requirements of the profession and face the challenges therein. It encompasses teaching skills, sound pedagogical theory and professional skills (Babatunde & Braimoh, 2018). Mukhtari (2015) observed that 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. Mukhtari (2015) defined teacher education is the professional training that teacher receive for them to be classified as professionals. Teacher education refers to policies and procedures intended to equip teachers with the skills, information, attitudes and behaviours they required to execute their tasks successfully and efficiently in discharging their functions in the classroom and school in general. It is the dedicated intellectual and functional training given to trainee teacher in a formal school system for the purposes of certification to perform their professional roles or functions efficiently in the classroom (Achuonye 2010).

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 (Okafor 1988). UNESCO (2015) views teacher education as organized programmes and policies designed to equip teachers with professional competence, instructional methods, and ethical standards for classroom effectiveness. Nakpodia (2011) describes teacher education as the totality of experiences through which prospective and serving teachers acquire the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary for effective teaching and learning.

The objectives of teacher education in Nigeria are clearly stated in the National Policy on Education and other educational policy documents. Major objectives include: To produce highly motivated, conscientious, and efficient classroom teachers; To encourage the spirit of inquiry, creativity, and innovation among teachers; To help teachers fit effectively into the social life of the community and society at large; To provide teachers with intellectual and professional background adequate for teaching tasks and To enhance teachers' commitment to national goals and educational development. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) emphasizes that teacher education should produce competent teachers capable of supporting national development and improving educational quality.

8.2. Results and Discussion: Challenges Facing Teacher Education in Nigeria

i. Inadequate Funding

Inadequate funding is a major problem that has affected the development of teacher education in Nigeria. Majorities of the teacher education in Nigeria appear to be underfunded because of the inability of the federal/state government to implement the UNESCO 15%-20% recommendation for the budgetary allocation for education annually. Ogunode and Ahaotu,



(2023) noted that the financial predicaments faced by government and the competing demands for resources is affecting the budgetary allocation usually set aside for staff development programmes by the various institutions of learning. The situation is even worst at the Basic and Secondary levels where staff development depends largely on private initiative. Federal and state teacher institutions in Nigeria drives their allocation from the government. Poor funding remains one of the major problems confronting teacher education in Nigeria. Colleges of education and faculties of education in universities often operate with inadequate financial resources, making it difficult to provide quality training facilities and instructional materials. Ofojebe (2009) observes that inadequate funding has negatively affected the quality of teacher preparation programmes in Nigeria. Many colleges of education lack modern libraries, functional laboratories, and ICT facilities required for effective teacher training. For example, some colleges of education still depend on outdated teaching materials and overcrowded classrooms, thereby limiting practical teaching experiences for student-teachers.

ii. Shortage of Qualified Teacher Educators

Nigerian teacher education institutions are faced with the problem of inadequate academic staff. Academic staff are the professional responsible for the implementation of teaching, research and provision of community service in the tertiary institutions. The academic staff are the engine room of the higher institutions because of the critically roles they are playing in the attainment of tertiary institutions goals. Ogunode and Ayeni (2024) observed that due to federal and state government policies and embargo on recruitment, this has left many teacher education institutions with shortage of staff. Inadequate academic staff according to Ogunode, Ayeni and Ogwuche (2024) is a general problem facing tertiary institutions in Nigeria. For instance, Punch (2022) as captured in National Universities Commission data indicated that federal universities in Nigeria suffer a shortage of full-time professors. According to the data, no federal university scored up to 50 per cent in the ranking of full professors. This implies that no federal university has the required number of full professors. Some of the federal universities ranked in the top 10 are the Usmanu Dan-Fodiyo University, Sokoto, with 36.44 percent; Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, 35.80 percent; Federal University of Technology, Akure, 27.28 percent; Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, 27.25 percent; the University of Abuja, 25.33 percent; the University of Benin, 23.26 percent; University of Port Harcourt, 21.26 percent; the University of Calabar, 21.20 percent; and the University of Ilorin, 21.12 percent. The shortage of manpower in the various teacher education has affected teaching, learning. Research and community services. The shortage of academic staff has led to poor quality of education in the teacher education. The shortage of experienced and professionally trained teacher educators has continued to weaken teacher education programmes. According to Nakpodia (2011), many institutions responsible for teacher preparation face shortages of specialists in curriculum studies, educational psychology, and instructional technology. In some Nigerian colleges of education, lecturers handle excessive workloads due to inadequate staffing. This reduces effective supervision of teaching practice and weakens mentorship opportunities for trainee teachers.



iii. Poor Infrastructure

Teacher education institutions in Nigeria suffer serious infrastructural deficits. UNESCO (2017) states that effective teacher preparation requires adequate classrooms, laboratories, workshops, and digital learning facilities. However, many teacher training institutions in Nigeria operate in deteriorating physical environments. In some institutions, lecture halls are overcrowded, hostels are inadequate, and educational technology centres are poorly equipped. This situation negatively affects the quality of learning and practical training. Shortage of infrastructure facilities is also constituting a major challenges in the development of teacher education in Nigeria. (Umeora and Ogunode 2020) listed infrastructural facilities to include classrooms, offices, exam halls, laboratories, tables, chairs, desks, power supply, water, good roads network within the schools etc. Infrastructural facilities like physical plants are required to deliver effective teaching, learning and research. They include classrooms, laboratories, workshops, staff offices and libraries, hostels (in residential institutions), staff quarters, students and staff recreational facilities, sports and games facilities. They also include roads, electricity and water supplies. The adequate provision of the infrastructural facilities favour delivering of quality education and their absent affects delivering of academic services. Ogunode (2020) and Ayeni (2018) opined that infrastructure facilities are aiding implementation of teaching, learning, research and provision of community services. It helps to improves teachers' job performance and students' academic performance in the tertiary institutions.

iv. Frequent Changes in Educational Policies

Policy instability has become a major challenge to teacher education development in Nigeria. Frequent changes in admission requirements, curriculum structure, and certification standards often create confusion among institutions and trainees. Ajayi and Ekundayo (2011) argue that inconsistent education policies disrupt effective planning and programme implementation in higher institutions. For example, repeated reforms concerning the status of the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) and teacher licensing policies have affected long-term institutional planning.

v. Low Social Status of Teachers

The teaching profession in Nigeria has experienced declining public respect and recognition. According to Fafunwa (1974), societal attitudes toward teachers significantly influence the attractiveness of teacher education programmes. Many young people avoid teacher education because of poor remuneration and limited career incentives associated with the profession. Consequently, some teacher training institutions admit candidates who originally intended to study other courses. This affects motivation and commitment among trainee teachers.

vi. Weak Teaching Practice Supervision

Teaching practice is one of the most important components of teacher education because it exposes trainee teachers to real classroom situations. However, weak supervision and



inadequate monitoring have reduced its effectiveness. Afe (2002) explains that insufficient supervision during teaching practice weakens professional competence and classroom management skills among trainee teachers. In many cases, supervisors are unable to adequately monitor students due to transportation problems and insufficient funding.

vii. Brain Drain and Teacher Migration

Nigeria continues to lose qualified teachers and teacher educators to other countries due to poor working conditions and low salaries. This migration has affected the quality and stability of teacher education programmes. Many professionals are moving out of the teacher institutions due to poor motivation and welfare packages. Ogunode, Jegede and Musa (2021) noted that brain-drain another problem that has militated against the development teacher institution. Brain-drain refers to the movement of professionals from developing countries to developed countries for a better job offers (Ogunode 2020). Brain-drain is a situation whereby professional individuals are migrating from their countries to another country to seek greener pasture. Many lecturers and researchers are leaving public universities in Nigeria to other part of African countries and Europe for a better job offer and conducive working environment (Awodiji, 2018; Ayeni, & Nwaorgu 2018). According to World Bank (2020), migration of skilled educational personnel weakens institutional capacity and reduces educational quality in developing countries. Many experienced teacher educators leave Nigerian institutions for opportunities in Europe, the Middle East, and other African countries where conditions of service are better.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Teacher education remains one of the most important components of the Nigerian educational system because it determines the quality of teachers produced for schools and other learning institutions. The historical development of teacher education in Nigeria reflects the country's effort to strengthen educational development and national growth through manpower preparation. Although the sector has achieved notable progress in institutional expansion, curriculum development, and professionalization of teaching, several challenges continue to hinder its effectiveness. Problems such as inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, shortage of qualified teacher educators, weak supervision, and policy instability have reduced the quality of teacher preparation in Nigeria. Based on the findings, the chapter recommend the following:

- 1) Government should increase funding allocation to teacher education institutions to improve infrastructure and instructional resources.
- 2) Teacher educators should receive improved remuneration and welfare packages to reduce brain drain and enhance productivity.
- 3) Modern teaching technologies and digital learning facilities should be provided in colleges of education and faculties of education.
- 4) Government should ensure policy consistency in teacher education to support long-term institutional planning and development.



- 5) Teaching practice supervision should be strengthened through adequate funding and regular monitoring mechanisms.
- 6) Professional development programmes such as workshops, seminars, and conferences should be organized regularly for teachers and teacher educators.
- 7) Public awareness campaigns should be intensified to restore the dignity and social status of the teaching profession in Nigeria.

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Concluding Synthesis

This volume on *Sustainable Education in Nigeria* contributes significantly to contemporary discourse on educational transformation by examining the policies, practices, innovations, and challenges shaping the Nigerian educational landscape. The chapters collectively demonstrate that sustainable education extends beyond improving access to schooling; it encompasses the creation of resilient, inclusive, equitable, and future-oriented learning systems capable of responding effectively to socio-economic, technological, and environmental changes.

A synthesis of the contributions reveals that sustainable education in Nigeria requires a holistic approach that integrates governance reforms, technological advancement, infrastructure development, teacher capacity building, curriculum modernization, and stakeholder engagement. The studies presented in this volume underscore the importance of aligning educational policies with national development priorities while ensuring responsiveness to global educational trends and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4).

The volume highlights the transformative potential of digital technologies in expanding educational opportunities, particularly in underserved and rural communities. Emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, learning management systems, educational data analytics, and digital content delivery platforms, present opportunities to improve teaching effectiveness, learner engagement, and administrative efficiency. However, their successful implementation depends on reliable infrastructure, adequate funding, digital literacy, and supportive policy frameworks.

The contributions further identify persistent challenges confronting the Nigerian education sector, including inadequate funding, infrastructure deficits, teacher shortages, policy discontinuity, regional disparities, insecurity, and socio-economic inequalities. These interconnected challenges continue to undermine educational quality and limit the realization of sustainable development objectives.

Importantly, the volume repositions education as a strategic instrument for national development, social mobility, economic competitiveness, innovation, and nation-building. Sustainable education is presented not merely as a sectoral concern but as a foundational pillar for achieving broader national aspirations, including poverty reduction, employment generation, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability.

Ultimately, this volume advances scholarly understanding and policy discussions by offering multidisciplinary perspectives and evidence-based insights into the future of education in Nigeria. It serves as a valuable resource for policymakers, researchers, educational leaders, development

practitioners, and other stakeholders committed to fostering educational systems that are resilient, inclusive, innovative, and sustainable.

Implications for Practice

Drawing from the collective findings and recommendations presented throughout this volume, the following strategic implications are proposed for policymakers, educational administrators, practitioners, researchers, and development partners:

Policy Reform and Strategic Governance

Governments at federal, state, and local levels should strengthen educational governance through evidence-based policymaking, institutional accountability, policy continuity, and effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Sustainable educational development requires long-term planning that transcends political transitions and administrative changes.

Digital Transformation and Technology Integration

There is an urgent need to expand investments in educational technology infrastructure, internet connectivity, digital learning resources, and teacher digital competencies. Schools and higher education institutions should leverage emerging technologies to improve access, instructional quality, learner engagement, and administrative efficiency.

Sustainable Education Financing

Alternative and innovative funding mechanisms should complement public expenditure on education. Public-private partnerships, donor-supported initiatives, educational endowments, corporate social responsibility investments, and community participation can contribute to sustainable financing and improved educational outcomes.

Teacher Development and Professional Capacity Building

Continuous professional development should become an integral component of educational reform. Teachers must be equipped with contemporary pedagogical skills, technological competencies, research capabilities, and learner-centered instructional approaches necessary for twenty-first-century education.

Equity, Inclusion, and Access

Educational policies and interventions should prioritize disadvantaged populations, including learners in rural communities, girls, persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons, and

economically vulnerable groups. Sustainable education requires ensuring that no learner is excluded from quality educational opportunities.

Research, Innovation, and Data-Driven Decision Making

Educational institutions should strengthen research culture and promote evidence-based decision-making. Reliable educational data systems are essential for planning, resource allocation, performance assessment, and policy evaluation.

Infrastructure Development and Learning Environment Improvement

Governments and stakeholders should prioritize investments in school infrastructure, including classrooms, laboratories, libraries, digital facilities, sanitation systems, and renewable energy solutions. Safe and conducive learning environments are critical for educational sustainability.

Institutional Resilience and Crisis Preparedness

Educational systems should develop adaptive capacities to withstand disruptions arising from pandemics, economic crises, natural disasters, and security challenges. Flexible learning models, blended education approaches, and emergency response frameworks should be integrated into educational planning.

Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

The sustainable transformation of education in Nigeria requires collaborative engagement among government agencies, educational institutions, private sector organizations, civil society groups, communities, and international development partners. Effective partnerships can mobilize resources, expertise, and innovation necessary for long-term educational advancement.

Editors' Note

The editors are pleased to present this volume on *Sustainable Education in Nigeria*, a scholarly contribution designed to address critical issues shaping the future of education within the country.

We express our sincere gratitude to the contributing authors whose research and professional insights have enriched this publication. Their diverse perspectives provide valuable understanding of the opportunities, challenges, and emerging trends influencing educational development in Nigeria.

We also acknowledge the dedicated efforts of peer reviewers, editorial board members, and institutional partners whose commitment to academic excellence has enhanced the quality, credibility, and relevance of this volume. Their contributions have ensured that the publication meets the highest standards of scholarly rigor and professional integrity.

This volume is intended to serve not only as an academic resource but also as a practical guide for policymakers, educational leaders, practitioners, researchers, and development organizations seeking innovative solutions to contemporary educational challenges.

It is our hope that the ideas, findings, and recommendations presented herein will stimulate further research, inform policy formulation, encourage collaboration, and inspire transformative action toward building an educational system that is equitable, innovative, resilient, and sustainable.

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