

Constraints in Teacher Education and Effects on Teaching and Learning of Home Economics in Primary Schools

Matilda James Igbemi

*Department of Home Economics, Federal College of Education (Technical),
Omoku, Rivers State, Nigeria*

Abstract Education is the key to successful or unsuccessful development of any nation. Rao (2008) noted that education gives the unity and solidarity of all existence, works for the happiness and welfare of all beings, and frees from disputations and contradictions, upholding the vision of harmony and tolerance. Based on this, there is need for quality teachers through which educational standards can be raised for effective manpower development. Primary education being the foundational level, upon which other educational levels are built, requires quality teachers for a sound educational background for children. Producing quality teachers requires every thing necessary to be provided. However, studies have shown that there are constraints in the production of quality teachers for primary schools. Therefore, this paper examined some of these constraints and recommended possible steps to be taken to improve the quality of teachers for effective teaching of home economics in primary schools. Some recommendations made included, (1) making adequate equipment and facilities available for effective teaching, (2) adequate funds to be made available for effective running of Colleges of Education, (3) review and update of entering requirements into teacher education programmes, (4) special screening tests to be conducted by Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria, etc.

Key Words: Constraints, Teacher, Effects, Teaching and Home Economics

Introduction

Every profession is important and prestigious but permits me to say that the most important and most prestigious is teaching profession because teaching profession can be seen as the mother of all profession. This is because every profession is born out of teaching. Also, the future of every individual and nation lies in the hands of the teacher. Ukeji (1986) in Ihua-Maduenyi (2002) confirmed this when he observed that if a doctor makes a mistake, perhaps one person might die, if a lawyer makes a mistake, perhaps, one person might go to jail, if an engineer makes a mistake, may be a bridge might collapse, but if a teacher makes a mistake, generations yet unborn will come to suffer the effect of that mistake. This explains the importance of a teacher in the society and in nation building. No wonder Nnubia (2001) quoted, Iroegbu(1993) as saying that no person ever argues that education and teacher are the life wire and mainstay of the nation. And in the National Policy on Education it is stated that, since no education system may rise above the quality of its teacher, teacher education shall continue to be given major emphasis in all educational planning and development. This is to say that the present quality of Nigerian education is the quality of Nigerian teacher.

Federal Government of Nigeria realizing this has it in her policy statement among others that the goal of teacher education shall be to produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system (FRN2004, p39). But contrary to the above policy, Awanbor (2001) observed that the training of teachers for the various educational sectors in Nigeria has never produced the much desired goals, first in terms of the number and latter in terms of quality. This failure to achieve the desired goal in teacher education might result from the implementation policy. Just like, Oni (2001) noted that in contemporary Nigeria, wide gap exists between policy formulation and policy implementation. He added that the disparity between these two, to a greater extent, leads to unwanted failure and disheartening consequence.

This problem of disparity between policy formulation and policy implementation has been experienced decades ago including periods of military regime. And not much seems to have been done to arrest the situation. Ihua Maduenyi (2002) noted that within this period of military intervention, the educational sector in

general experienced haphazard implementation of programme and policies as well as unfulfilled promises and abandon of projects by government, the result of which was decay of existing facilities. Here we are, still lamenting on falling standard of teacher education and low quality teacher production, expectation of the new millennium year notwithstanding. This is why Awanbor (2001) opined that the new millennium is on the lips of every one as if it is a new national anthem, yet not much and not enough is being done to re-orient teachers in their training to meet the challenges that the new millennium brings. If quality teachers must be produced for quality education in Nigeria in general and in primary schools in particular, the implementation of teacher education policy must be given proper attention it deserves.

Primary Education

Primary education is the education given in institutions for children aged 6 to 11 plus. Since the rest of the education system is built upon it, the primary level is the key to the success or failure of the whole system. The duration shall be six years (FRN2004:14).

The goals of primary education in Nigeria as stated in the National Policy on Education are as follow:

- (a) Inculcate permanent literacy and numeracy, and ability to communicate effectively;
- (b) Lay a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking;
- (c) Give citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society;
- (d) Mould the character and develop sound attitude and morals in the child;
- (e) Develop in the child the ability to adapt to the child's changing environment;
- (f) Give the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capacity;
- (g) Provide the child with basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality.

These goals are laudable but can only be met if quality teacher education is given adequate attention. It is on this note that Rao (2008) opined that improving the quality of education in the developing countries requires teacher training as a critical intervention process in the task of raising standard.

Quality Home Economics Teacher Education for Improved Teaching and Learning in Primary Schools

The good intension of the Federal Government of Nigeria for quality education is reflected in the National Policy on Education. In section 8 sub-section B (72), it is stated that Teacher Education Programme shall be structured to equip teachers for the effective performance of their duties. In the same section sub-section B (79), it is also stated that effort toward the improvement of quality education at the primary and secondary level shall include appointment of academically and professionally qualified persons as teachers and head teachers (FRN, 2004). Available records, according to Olusegun (2001) show that right from missionary era efforts have been made to produce professionally qualified teachers for the primary schools. For instance, the phasing out of grade 111 teacher colleges and later grade 11 teacher colleges were the steps taken to improve the quality of teachers in primary schools. This probably was as a result of low out-put of primary school teachers and the poor quality of teachers produced from the teacher colleges. Consequently, the National Certificate in Education [NCE] became the minimum teaching qualification for entry into teaching profession [FRN, 2004]. Introduction of Sandwich programmes, Associate Certificate Education [ACE] and Satellite campuses became necessary in order to help Grade III and Grade II teacher certificate holders to upgrade their knowledge and certificates and to be retained in teaching profession. Nevertheless, Olusegun (2001) maintained that all the efforts made so far at improving the quality of teachers at primary schools level have not been producing the much desired results. To improve the quality of teachers, particularly, Home Economics teachers in our schools, adequate steps need to be taken in the implementation of policy of

teacher education. Studies however, have revealed that there are many factors responsible for the production of poor quality teachers for primary schools in Nigeria. These factors are the constraints in the production of quality Home Economics teachers for quality primary education.

Constraints in Teacher Education and Effects on Teaching and Learning of Home Economics in Primary Schools

Constraints, according to Hornby [1998] are things that limits or restricts. Constraints in the context of this paper are those things that limit the production of quality teachers in teacher training programmes. Most things that aid production of highly qualified professional teachers are lacking in our educational system which result in producing poor quality teachers. Some of these constraints are:

Facilities and Equipment

Equipment and facilities are either lacking, inadequate or not enough for effective teaching in schools. Ikenga, Afolabi and Oru (2009) observed that even when some of these essential equipment or tools are available, they are not functioning or are obsolete.

Home Economics Education requires provision of functional equipment and facilities for production of quality teachers. Home Economics is a subject that needs to be taught well in primary schools so that the children can relate what they learn in schools to home situations for meaningful family living. Okejim (2008) said that lack of material resources for education especially at the basic level has untold consequences on the quality of education. Olusegun (2001) opined that it is often said that teachers teach the way they have been taught. Obidi (2001) advised that if primary schools are to attain the purpose for which they are established, in other words, if they are to succeed in helping pupils to acquire knowledge, understanding and skills, they should follow the curriculum activities enunciated in the National Policy on Education. It is only an efficient teacher that can follow the curriculum activities strictly. It is stated in the Policy that teaching at the primary educational level shall be by practical, exploratory and experimental methods. A Home Economics teacher who was not taught well will not be able to teach well, especially as a skill oriented subject, one that did not acquire basic skills in manipulation of equipment to produce certain goods and services will not be able to teach effectively even with adequate provision of equipment. Therefore, poor quality teacher will also produce poor quality pupils which will result to poor quality education. There is therefore, need for provision of adequate equipment and facilities in teacher training programmes for good quality education in Nigeria.

Funding

Colleges of Education are not adequately funded. This makes it difficult for the college managements to run the colleges properly. Enene (1999) noted that depressed economy and financial commitments of government in other sectors of their economy have resulted in grossly inadequate financial allocation to Colleges of Education. Oni (2001) gave an instance when he observed that poor funding manifests itself in every aspect of the school system, as a result, the seemingly poor performance of students in JAMB and SSCE science examination in recent times has been attributed to factors ranging from acute shortage of science teachers, lack of science laboratories, lack of Home Economics workshop, ill-equipped laboratories to lack of political will on the part of government to fund education. Ikenga, et al (2009) observed that because of this poor funding, basic equipment are disturbingly lacking in Nigerian schools. According to Awanbor (2001), the prevalent state of poor funding in institutions of learning has left them to contend with dilapidated and run-down structures, inadequate infrastructures and facilities most of which are outdated and obsolete.

Poor funding of education and consequent production of ill-equipped teachers, result to college graduates

loosing confidence and sheering away from teaching, resulting to lack of teachers in the school system, especially in primary schools where one teacher teaches all the subjects which is contrary to the education policy statement. The policy statement is that in pursuance of the goals of primary education that specialist teachers of particular subjects in which Home Economics is one shall be provided. Findings of the study by Nnubia (2001) revealed that a lot of factors are responsible for shifting of Home Economics teachers from the educational systems which include non-involvement of the teachers in management decision making, poor funding and poor societal perception of the course. It is believed that if teacher education programmes are properly funded and the National Policy on Education properly implemented, quality and conscientious Home Economics teachers will be produced which will in turn result to improved standard of Nigerian education.

Teachers Welfare

Teachers' welfare has never been taken as a priority by any government in Nigeria. The teachers are worst hit in welfare packages of public servants in this country. Enene (1999) noted that most staffers in colleges of education do not have decent accommodation neither do they have good office space to themselves. Ihua-Maduenyi (2002) observed that in 1999, teachers were owed over five months salary and schools closed down also for over months in Rivers State and several other states in the federation. Leave bonus and other legitimate claims due teachers were not paid for two years. Awanbor [2001] observed that teachers from primary level to tertiary, all work in largely similar conditions-poorly motivated, poorly paid and circumscribed socially and economically. A teacher who is not motivated to work can not put in his best. And a student teacher, seeing the condition under which his teacher works will not be interested in teaching. He will rather prefer seeking for a job elsewhere in a related area to his area of specialization where condition of service is better.

Entry Qualifications Into Teacher Training Programmes

One major problem in producing competent teachers for our schools is getting the right caliber, orientation and intelligent people who will take up teaching as a career and not just opting for it as a last resort. Colleges of education have become dumping grounds for frustrated JAMB candidates. Many students who find themselves in colleges of education particularly in technical colleges are there not because they are interested in teaching profession. They are there because they could not make it through JAMB to the university to read the career of their choice. To such students, colleges of education become the last resort. These students entered colleges of education through pre-NCE programme which has been an express way to NCE programme. These same students on graduation are employed to teach Home Economics in primary schools where children are supposed to be given a sound foundation education upon which their educational progress is built. Such students only produce there kinds. Even now that the pre-NCE students are required to write JAMB examination before proceeding to NCE programme, if not properly checked, the purpose will still not be achieved.

Crowded Classroom

As more students graduate from secondary schools so also the population of students in teacher programmes keeps increasing. This increase in students population poses serious problem in the teaching of Home Economics as the facilities and equipment available are neither enough nor adequate for teaching and learning. This is affecting acquisition of adequate skills by the student teachers. Large number of students in class also makes it difficult for the teacher to give adequate attention to slow learners. The students under this condition find it difficult to teach in primary schools on graduation, firstly, because they are not efficient and secondly, because primary school classes are always large, especially in urban areas. With these

conditions, pupils can not be taught well and the result will be a poorly laid foundation which leads to low standard of education.

Improving Teachers Education for Effective Teaching and Learning of Home Economics in Primary Schools.

The quality of teachers largely determines the quality of education in the society (Oni, 2001). This means that the present poor quality of education in Nigeria is a reflection of poor quality teachers. Therefore, for effective teaching to take place in primary schools, quality of teachers must be improved. The following are suggested:

1. Federal and state governments should endeavor to supply adequate and enough equipment, tools and facilities for effective training of teachers with the libraries equipped with current books
2. Adequate funds should be made available for smooth running and management of teacher training programmes
3. Teachers' salaries and claims should be paid promptly. New teachers' salary scheme should be implemented as soon as possible.
4. Adequate and descent accommodation should be provided for teachers, irrespective of level.
5. Entry requirements into teacher training programmes should be reviewed upward. There should be a special diagnostic assessment test properly conducted as a screening measure before admitting students into pre-NCE programme.
6. Teacher Registration Council (TRC) should take up the responsibility for admission of students into NCE programme.
7. A Board called Teachers Registration Examination Board (TREB) should be set up whose responsibility should be the conduction of examination called Teachers Selection Examination (TSE) to check and harmonize standard in admission policy of colleges of education. And any misconduct by the intending student /s observed before, during and after examination should attract outright expulsion.
8. Effort should be made to control students' population to avoid over crowded classrooms. There should be teacher-student ratio peculiar to teacher training programmes and which should be strictly be adhered to.
9. Adequate supervision of the teachers' activities and conducts should be made always at all levels.

Conclusion

There has been a drastic fall in the standard of education in Nigeria in recent times. Since education determines the level of development of any nation, there is an urgent need for the improvement of standard of education at all levels in Nigeria. It has been noted that improving quality education has to start with improving quality teachers. Therefore, special attention should be given to teachers' education by all stakeholders. Equipment, tools and facilities necessary for quality teacher production should be provided in all teacher institutions. And regular supervision of schools is very important and should be taken seriously.

References

- Awanbor, D. (2001). *Training, Retention and Utilization of Technology Teachers in Nigeria: Trends in Technology Teacher Education in Nigeria*, A Book of Readings, A publication of FCE(T) Omoku; 43-47
- Enene, G. (1999). Critical issues in Meeting Standard in Teachers Education, Unpublished Conference Paper of 4th National Conference of WICE 9th – 12th November 1999.
- FRN (2004). *National Policy on Education* (4th edition), Lagos: NERDC.
- Hornby, S.A. (1998). *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, Special Price Edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Ihua-Maduanyi, R. (2002). Prospects for Teacher Education in the 21st Century, *Omoku Journal of Women in Colleges of Education*, Maiden Edition, 242, 243.
- Ikenga, G.U, Afolabi, S.O. and Oru, P.O (2009). Technical Vocational Education: Challenges and Way Forward in the Present Day Nigeria, *Journal of Vocational Education*, 2(1), 50-55.
- Nnubia, U. (2001). Strategies for the Retention and Effective Utilization of Home Economics Teachers in Nigeria: Trends in Technology Teachers Education in Nigeria. *A Book of Reading*. A Publication of FCE (T), Omoku Rivers State, 326-335.
- Obidi, S.S. (2001). Enhancing the Quality of Primary Education for Future Benefits to the Nigerian Primary School Children, *Nigerian Journal of Education Philosophy*. VIII (1), Pg 42.
- Okejim, E.M. (2008). Resource for Education: Sharing the burden of Funding Basic Education in Nigeria, *Studies in Technical Teacher Education*, 8(1), 28-36.
- Olusegun, A. (2001). The Nigerian Primary School Teachers: Angels of Instruction Or Devil of Destruction? *Nigerian Journal of Education Philosophy*, VIII (1), 35- 40.
- Oni, A.A. (2001). Evolving A Paradigm for Teacher Education in the 21st Century, *Nigerian Journal of Education Philosophy* VIII (1), 47-53
- Rao, N. P. (2008). *Education and Human Resource Management*, New Delhi: A. P. H. Publishing Corporation.