

# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIVERSAL BASIC PROGRAMME IN NIGERIA

<sup>1</sup>NWAHAM Caroline Obioma & <sup>2</sup>AJUDEONU Helen Ihieonyemolor

<sup>1&2</sup>Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Foundations,  
University of Delta, Agbor.

## Abstract

*This paper examines the significance of teacher education in implementing the basic education programme in Nigeria. It explores the objectives of teacher education, strategies for strengthening teacher education, and the challenges faced in teacher education for basic education implementation. Additionally, it discusses the benefits and impact of effective teacher education in basic education, as well as the role of teachers in promoting quality education. Furthermore, it highlights effective teacher training methods, curriculum, and teaching strategies for basic education. The importance of basic education in Nigeria and an overview of the basic education programme are also discussed. Lastly, the paper addresses the challenges of teacher motivation and retention in rural areas and provides recommendations to strengthen teacher education and promote effective implementation of the basic education programme. By recognizing the significance of teacher education and implementing the suggested recommendations, Nigeria can improve the quality of education, enhance student outcomes, and contribute to the overall development of the nation.*

**Keywords:** Significance, Teacher education, Basic education, implementation, Programme.

## Introduction

Basic education plays a critical role in shaping the future of any nation, and Nigeria is no exception. With its vast population and diverse communities, ensuring access to quality education for all children in Nigeria is both a necessity and a fundamental right. However, the successful implementation of a comprehensive basic education programme requires more than just well-designed policies and resources; it hinges on the competence and effectiveness of the teachers who guide and inspire young minds. (Ferguson-Patrick, et al 2018). This is where teacher education steps in as a pivotal factor in the process.

Teacher education holds immense significance in the implementation of Nigeria's basic education programme. (Zarif, 2018). It equips educators with the knowledge, skills, and pedagogical techniques necessary to deliver high-quality instruction, foster inclusive classrooms, and promote holistic student development. A well-prepared and

competent teacher workforce not only ensures the successful execution of the program but also contributes to the broader socio-economic development of the nation. By understanding the importance of teacher education and addressing the challenges it faces, Nigeria can establish a robust foundation for basic education and pave the way for a brighter future for its children. It is through the investment in teacher education that we can empower educators, nurture young minds, and ensure the holistic development of the Nation. (Koskela, & Kärkkäinen, 2021).

## What is teacher education?

Teacher education refers to the process of preparing individuals to become teachers. It encompasses the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to effectively teach and support student learning in formal educational settings (Vovk, et al 2019). Teacher education programs aim to equip aspiring teachers with the pedagogical knowledge, subject

matter expertise, classroom management strategies, and instructional techniques required to meet the diverse needs of students.

Teacher education can be categorized into two main phases: pre-service education and in-service education. (Yada, et al, 2021). Pre-service teacher education: This occurs before individuals become licensed or certified teachers and typically takes place at universities, colleges, or specialized teacher training institutions. Pre-service teacher education programs focus on developing a strong foundation in pedagogy, subject-specific content, educational psychology, assessment methods, and teaching strategies. These programmes often include supervised teaching experiences, such as student teaching or practicum placements, where prospective teachers gain practical classroom experience under the guidance of experienced mentors. In-service education refers to professional development and training opportunities provided to teachers who are already in the profession. (Ajani, 2018). These programs aim to enhance teachers' existing skills, update their knowledge, and support their continuous professional growth. In-service education can take various forms, including workshops, seminars, conferences, online courses, mentoring programs, and collaborative learning communities. The goal is to keep teachers updated on the latest educational research, pedagogical approaches, curriculum changes, and educational technologies, enabling them to adapt their teaching practices to meet evolving student needs.

Teacher education goes beyond the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and pedagogical skills. It also emphasizes the development of key attributes and dispositions, such as effective communication, empathy, cultural competence, and a commitment to lifelong learning. Teachers are not only conveyors of knowledge but also role models,

facilitators of learning, and advocates for their students' well-being.

### **Objectives of teacher education**

The objectives of teacher education can vary depending on the specific context and goals of the education system. However, some common objectives of teacher education include:

- The primary objective of teacher education is to equip aspiring teachers with the pedagogical knowledge and skills needed to effectively plan, deliver, and assess instruction.
- Teacher education aims to deepen teachers' understanding of the subject areas they will be teaching.
- Teacher education seeks to cultivate a habit of reflective practice, encouraging teachers to critically evaluate their teaching methods, classroom interactions, and student learning outcomes.
- Teacher education programs emphasize the importance of creating inclusive classrooms that accommodate the diverse needs, abilities, and backgrounds of all students. (Lübke, et al 2021).
- Teacher education instills a sense of professionalism, ethical conduct, and responsibility among educators.
- Teacher education programs focus on equipping teachers with effective classroom management strategies.
- Teacher education encourages teachers to embrace a lifelong learning mindset, emphasizing the importance of staying updated with current research, educational trends, and advancements in pedagogy.
- Teacher education programs foster collaborative skills, enabling teachers to work effectively with colleagues, administrators, and other stakeholders (Bellibas, et al 2020).

### **Strategies for strengthening teacher education in Nigeria.**

Strategies for strengthening teacher education in Nigeria should be put into place, including hiring highly educated and experienced people, offering thorough training, and making investments in suitable infrastructure and resources. (N Student-centered, interactive, and experiential learning strategies are crucial, and the curriculum should be in accordance with current regulations, standards, and best practices. The advancement of innovation and evidence-based practices should be supported through research efforts. Collaboration is essential for knowledge sharing and professional growth between institutions, schools, and educational research institutions. The growth of teacher preparation programmes can be helped by forming alliances with international organizations, educational networks, and development organizations. It is crucial to have a strong regulatory environment and quality control methods, including accreditation procedures, monitoring programmes, and recurring assessments. For growth and success, in-service teachers must engage in ongoing professional development. Government assistance. (Kovalchuck, & Vorotnykova, 2017)

### **What is universal basic education?**

Universal Basic Education (UBE) refers to a system of education that aims to provide free, equitable, and compulsory education for all children within a specific age range. The concept of UBE emphasizes the importance of ensuring that every child has access to quality education, regardless of their socio-economic background, gender, ethnicity, or disability. (Kusimo, et al 2019). UBE typically covers the foundational years of education, including primary and junior secondary levels. The age range for UBE may vary from country to country, but it generally encompasses children between the ages of 6 to 15 or 6 to 12.

### **What are the objectives of UBE?**

The objectives of Universal Basic Education (UBE) include. (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013) & (Oladele, 2018).

- One of the primary objectives of UBE is to ensure that every child has access to free and compulsory education.
- UBE aims to promote equity in education by addressing disparities and providing equal opportunities for all children, regardless of their socio-economic background, gender, ethnicity, or disability.
- UBE emphasizes the provision of quality education that meets defined standards.
- UBE recognizes the importance of holistic development and aims to nurture the physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and moral development of children.
- UBE aims to reduce dropout rates and ensure high rates of completion of the basic education cycle.
- UBE recognizes the importance of community involvement in education. It aims to foster partnerships between schools, families, communities, and other stakeholders to ensure collective responsibility and active participation in supporting children's education.
- UBE promotes a culture of lifelong learning and aims to equip learners with skills necessary for personal development, employability, and active citizenship.

### **Importance of basic education in Nigeria**

Basic education holds significant importance in Nigeria for several reasons: Basic education provides a foundation for lifelong learning and sets the stage for further education and skill development. It equips individuals with essential literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills that are fundamental for personal growth, employability, and active participation in society. Basic education plays a crucial role in poverty

reduction and socioeconomic development (Yang, & Guo, 2020). It empowers individuals with knowledge and skills necessary to secure better job opportunities, earn higher incomes, and improve their overall standard of living. A well-educated population contributes to economic productivity, innovation, and competitiveness, leading to sustainable development and improved living conditions for individuals and communities. Basic education empowers individuals, particularly those from marginalized or disadvantaged backgrounds, by providing them with equal opportunities for education and upward social mobility. It helps bridge socioeconomic gaps, promote social inclusion, and break the cycle of intergenerational poverty. Basic education can enable individuals to overcome barriers and pursue higher education, vocational training, entrepreneurship, or other pathways to achieve their aspirations. Basic education has a direct impact on health and well-being. It promotes awareness and knowledge about hygiene, nutrition, disease prevention, and reproductive health, leading to improved health practices and reduced mortality rates. Basic education also enables individuals to make informed decisions regarding their own health and that of their families, contributing to overall well-being and the development of healthy communities.

### **The role of teacher education in implementing the basic education programme**

Teacher education is crucial for implementing the Basic Education Programme in Nigeria, preparing competent and qualified teachers to effectively deliver the curriculum and meet students' learning needs. These programs equip teachers with pedagogical knowledge, teaching skills, and subject expertise to deliver quality education. They focus on student-centered teaching methods, active learning techniques, assessment practices, classroom

management, and differentiated instruction, enabling teachers to create engaging and inclusive learning environments. Teacher education programmes also emphasize inclusive education principles, providing training on inclusive instructional strategies, adapting teaching materials, and fostering an inclusive classroom environment. Effective classroom management is essential for creating a conducive learning environment. Teacher education programs support ongoing professional development, enabling teachers to refine instructional techniques, incorporate innovative methods, and respond to changing student needs. Mentoring and support systems can assist new teachers in their early years of teaching. (Lofthouse, 2018) Teacher education programmes also contribute to the development and review of the curriculum, ensuring alignment with educational goals, research, best practices, and student needs.

### **Teacher education Challenges and the implementation of Basic education**

Implementing basic education in Nigeria faces several challenges related to teacher education. Some of these challenges include.

- Many aspiring teachers in Nigeria face challenges in accessing quality teacher education programs. Limited availability of teacher education institutions, especially in rural areas, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient resources hinder the preparation of a sufficient number of well-trained teachers.
- The quality of teacher education programs and professional development opportunities for in-service teachers can vary. Some teachers receive inadequate training in pedagogical methods, subject knowledge, and classroom management strategies. (Ajani, (2008) & (Kyaruzi, et al (2019). Insufficient opportunities for continuous professional development

can hinder teachers' ability to keep up with evolving educational practices and research.

- Nigeria faces the shortage of qualified and competent teachers, particularly in the rural and remote areas. The demand for teachers often exceeds the supply, resulting in overburdened classrooms and high student-to-teacher ratios. The shortage of teachers undermines the quality of education and affects personalized attention and support for students.
- There is an unequal distribution of teachers across regions, with urban areas having a higher concentration of qualified teachers compared to rural areas. This disparity in teacher distribution further exacerbates educational inequalities and limits access to quality education for children in remote and marginalized communities.
- Teacher education programmes may not adequately prepare teachers with specialized subject knowledge, especially in subjects like mathematics, science, and technical education. This can affect the quality of instruction and hinder students' understanding and performance in these areas.
- Some teachers may rely on traditional and teacher-centered instructional methods, which may not be conducive to active learning and critical thinking. The use of outdated pedagogical approaches can limit students' engagement and hinder their development of essential skills.
- Inadequate availability of teaching materials, textbooks, technology, and other educational resources pose challenges to effective teaching and learning. Limited access to update and relevant teaching materials hampers teachers' ability to deliver quality education and engage students effectively.
- Inclusive education, catering to the needs of diverse learners, requires

specialized training and support for teachers. Some teachers may lack the necessary skills and resources to effectively teach students with disabilities, learners from disadvantaged backgrounds, and those with diverse learning styles.

- Low teacher motivation and inadequate remuneration affect the morale and commitment of teachers. Teachers who are not properly motivated and compensated may be less inclined to put in the necessary effort to deliver quality education.
- Collaborative networks, mentoring programmes, and support systems for teachers are crucial for their professional growth and development. However, such systems may be limited, leaving teachers with limited opportunities for peer collaboration, sharing best practices, and receiving ongoing support.

### **Benefits and impact of quality teacher education in basic education**

Quality teacher education in basic education has numerous benefits and a significant impact on students, schools, and the education system. Here are some key benefits and impacts. (Carneiro, et al, 2012). Quality teacher education equips teachers with the necessary pedagogical skills, subject knowledge, and instructional strategies to deliver quality education. Well-prepared teachers can effectively engage students, promote active learning, and facilitate deeper understanding of concepts. This leads to improved student learning outcomes, including higher academic achievement, increased retention rates, and better overall educational attainment. Improved Teacher education programs provide opportunities for teachers to develop and refine their teaching practices. By learning about evidence-based instructional methods, assessment techniques, and classroom management strategies, teachers can enhance their effectiveness in the classroom. Quality

teacher education encourages reflective practice, enabling teachers to critically analyze their teaching approaches and make informed decisions to improve their instructional practices. A well-designed teacher education program can help build teachers' confidence in their abilities to meet the diverse needs of students. Through training and support, teachers gain the knowledge, skills, and resources to handle various challenges in the classroom. Quality teacher education emphasizes inclusive practices and equips teachers with the skills to support the diverse learning needs of students. Teachers learn strategies to create inclusive classroom environments, adapt instruction for students with disabilities, address cultural and linguistic diversity, and foster a sense of belonging for all learners. This promotes equity, diversity, and inclusion in education, ensuring that every student receives a quality education. Teacher education programmes provide opportunities for continuous professional development, allowing teachers to stay updated with research, best practices, and innovations in education.

### **The role of teachers in promoting quality education**

By creating interesting classes, defining clear learning objectives, and using efficient teaching techniques, teachers play a crucial role in advancing high standards in education. They encourage engaged learning, critical thinking, problem-solving, and the acquisition of fundamental knowledge. Teachers make sure the curriculum is compatible with holistic development, relevant to students' lives, and in line with educational standards. They monitor students' progress, carry out formative and summative evaluations, and foster a welcoming learning atmosphere. To satisfy each student's unique learning needs, teachers foster critical thinking, intellectual curiosity, and offer individualized support.

### **Effective teacher training methods**

Effective teacher training methods are crucial for preparing educators to excel in their roles. Here are some widely recognized and effective teacher training methods:

- Teacher training programmes should incorporate active learning strategies that engage participants in hands-on, experiential learning.
- Encouraging collaboration among trainees fosters a supportive learning community. .
- Teacher training programmes should include opportunities for trainees to observe expert teachers in action.
- Pairing novice teachers with experienced mentors or coaches is a powerful method for on-the-job support and guidance.
- Microteaching involves practicing teaching skills in a controlled setting with a small group of peers or mentors. Trainees deliver short lessons, receive feedback, and engage in self-reflection (Adhikari, 2020). This approach allows teachers to refine their instructional techniques, experiment with different strategies, and gain confidence in their abilities.
- Presenting trainees with real or hypothetical classroom scenarios and challenging situations promotes critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Incorporating technology into teacher training can enhance engagement and provide opportunities for exploration and practice.
- Reflective practice involves encouraging trainees to reflect on their teaching experiences, analyze their actions, and identify areas for improvement. Journaling, group discussions, and structured reflective exercises facilitate this process.
- Creating professional learning communities among teachers promotes ongoing collaboration, sharing of best practices, and professional growth.

- Effective teacher training should be complemented by long-term support and follow-up.

### **Curriculum and teaching strategies for basic education**

Basic education curricula and teaching strategies should support holistic development, maintain student interest, and ease the learning of facts, abilities, and attitudes. Language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and other fundamental subjects should all be included in a well-rounded curriculum. Definitions of learning objectives that prepare students for future challenges should be part of a balanced curriculum. Through practical experiments, cooperative learning, problem-solving activities, project-based learning, and inquiry-based learning, teaching strategies should promote student engagement and active learning. To accommodate different learning styles, abilities, interests, and cultural backgrounds, multiple education approaches should be used.

### **Conclusion**

The success of Nigeria's basic education programme depends on the preparation of teachers, who then have the information, knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes necessary to provide high-quality instruction and encourage holistic development. Instructional practices are improved by effective training techniques like active learning, teamwork, and reflective practice. Through initiatives like commensurate and regular salary, professional development opportunities, supportive work environments, community engagement, and appreciation for teachers' contributions, issues including limited resources, infrastructure, and remote locations can be addressed. Nigeria can make sure teachers are equipped, motivated, and empowered to deliver high-quality instruction, close educational disparities, and contribute to the growth and

prosperity of the country by funding teacher education and offering continuous support.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the role of teacher education in implementing the basic education programme in Nigeria, and considering the challenges and importance of basic education, here are some recommendations to strengthen teacher education and promote effective implementation of the basic education programme:

- Continuously improve teacher training programmes by incorporating modern teaching methodologies, technology integration, and practical experiences.
- Expand access to quality teacher education programmes, particularly in rural and underserved areas.
- Implement a comprehensive and continuous professional development framework for teachers that includes workshops, seminars, conferences, and access to online resources.
- Collaborate with educational experts, stakeholders, and teachers to regularly review and update the curriculum for basic education.
- Implement supportive policies that address the challenges faced by teachers, particularly in rural areas. Allocate sufficient funds for teacher training, provision of classroom resources, infrastructural development, and technology integration.
- Foster partnerships and collaboration among schools, communities, and parents to support the implementation of the basic education programme.
- Establish a robust system for monitoring and evaluating teacher performance to ensure accountability and quality assurance.
- Encourage research in the field of education which is specifically focused on teacher education and the implementation of the basic education program.

- Foster collaboration and knowledge sharing among teacher training institutions, schools, and educational organizations.
- Advocate for the rights and welfare of teachers at the policy level. Work towards improving teachers' salaries, benefits, and working conditions to attract and retain highly qualified educators.

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