

## RE-STRUCTURING NATIONAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION (NCE) PROGRAMMES FOR EMPLOYMENT AND SELF- PRODUCTIVITY IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

Education has remained a social process in capacity building, and maintenance of society, for decades. It is a weapon for acquiring skills, relevant knowledge and habits for surviving in the changing world. Any nation that intends to move higher to a greater height, must ensure that its teachers are professionally competent, as they are the vehicle through whom the learners would acquire the rightful knowledge, skills and capability required for employment. However, the quality of a teacher produced, depends to a large extent on the quality of professional preparation programme they are exposed to. It is in this realm that the paper examined ways teacher education can be productive through re- structuring the National Certificate of Education (NCE) programme in Nigeria, in order to achieve its objective of making the learners employable and self-productive in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Re-structuring, employment, self productivity, National Certificate of Education

### Introduction

Education is a veritable means for socio-cultural, political and economic growth in a nation. It is the bedrock of any society and no society can grow beyond its level of educational attainment. Education has remained a social process in capacity building and maintenance of society for decades. According to Ogwudire (2012) Education is a weapon for acquiring skills, relevant knowledge and habits for surviving in the changing world. All over the world, education is seen and assumed to be the most potent instrument of change, as any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution. The fulfillment of this role lies on an efficient education of which the teacher education has a great role to play. However, the (NPE, 2004) has clearly stated that no nation can rise above the quality of its teachers. The quality needed by teachers to be able to effectively perform their job efficiently, can only be obtained from the type of training the teacher is exposed to. A professional teacher requires specialized knowledge of the content and methodology to be able to perform their job very well. In order words, the quality of a teachers produced depends to a large extent on the quality of professional preparation programme they are exposed to.

It is in the realm of making teachers education to be productive, that there is a call for a re-structuring in the national certificate of education in Nigeria, with a view to re-structuring it to achieve its objective of making the learners employed after school

### Objective of Teachers Education in Nigeria

Teachers have an indispensable role to play in every education system and teachers education as a panacea for achieving the national education goals. Adeniye (2012) points out that National policy on education (NPE, 2005) argued that teacher education will continue to be given a major emphasis in all our educational planning because no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers. Therefore,

the objective of teachers' education should be:

- i. To produce motivated, conscious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system.
- ii. To encourage further, the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers.
- iii. To help teachers to fit into the social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment of national objectives.
- iv. To produce teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to any changing situation not only in the life of their country, but the wider world.
- v. To enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession
- vi. All teachers in our educational institutions from pre-primary to university to be professionally trained.

It is therefore important that teacher education should be restructured to enable teachers' meet the stated objectives thereby producing competent, sufficient, dedicated, positively, motivated as well as quality service delivery teachers for all levels of our education system. On completion of the teachers training, student-teachers are expected to be:

- Effective and useful members of their communities.
- Loyal citizens of the nation.
- People of good moral conduct.
- Knowledgeable, progressing and effective teachers' who will inspire pupils' and challenge them to learn and
- Assist the child to adapt to his environment as well as development of skills useful to the child and his environment (Udo, 2019).

However, to achieve the expected outcomes of teachers training as stated above, will be determined during their pre-service training. Adeniyi (2012) opined that the roles of teachers are determined when it comes to determining the quality of education in the system. While Lassa (2003), says the role of teachers includes: the initiator of the learning process, facilitator of the learning skills, coordinator of the learning sequence, assessor of the learning efficiency, and indeed, the pivotal element in the entire educational development. In addition, to perform the roles mentioned efficiently, the student-teachers training institutions with appropriately structured programmes and services.

### **The National Certificate of Education (NCE) and its Challenges**

The National Certificate of Education (NCE) was an outcome of the Ashby commission report published in 1960, Afolayan (1982). It was an offshoot of the earliest Advanced Teachers College (ATC). The Ashby commission actually recommended a two year grade 1 teacher college, however the government then modified by the Ashby recommendation to qualification will give teachers the professional requirement to be effective in their job.

### **Challenges**

It is quite unfortunate that the NCE programme has not been able to meet the objective of which it was established. This is due to;

First, the quality of students admitted into the programme. The admission policy allows students with three or five (3 or 5) credits and passes to be admitted into NCE 1, while some of the students denied

admission into the universities because of their poor grades in SSCE/JAMB are accepted into the colleges of education, and some of the students, have little or no interest in the courses they are given in colleges of education.

More so, the introduction of the pre-NCE programmes in Colleges of Education, is another problem because students with only one credit pass in SSCE are admitted into the pre - NCE programmes then after that, will be given admission into NCE 1 programme these poor quality students pass through the system and eventually find their way into the primary schools as teachers. Lawal (2008), identified that the course combination offered at NCE programmes cannot adequately prepare the students to face the challenges in the primary schools. This is because the teacher is only trained in two subjects combination, and will have to find himself teaching more than eight different subjects as a primary school class teacher, and many of these teachers have little or no knowledge of these subjects they are expected to teach as a result of their training and the end result is poor quality teaching.

**Table 1: Course Combination of NCE Programme according to their School**

Schools	Subject Combination
Arts and Social Science	Hausa/SOS, English/SOS, CRS/History, Geo/Hist, Igbo/SOS, Hausa/IRS, Arabic/ISS, Fulfulde/ISS, Hausa/Hist, CRS/SOS etc
Languages	French/SOS, Yoruba/SOS, Igbo/Hist, Eng/Geo, Eng/ISS, Eng/CRS, Igbo/Yoruba etc.
Sciences	Bio/Geo, Bio/Chem, Bio/Int, Chem/Int.Sci, Geo/Hist, Computer/Maths, Maths/Geo, Maths/Int.Sci etc
Vocations	Agric, Fine Arts, Home Econs, Bus. Edu (All Double Major) etc
Education	PES/SOS, PES/Eng, PES/Hausa, Early Child Care Edu, etc.

**Source: FCE Kano Course Combination List (2024)**

The above table shows the course combination and looking at these combinations, the combination will not confidently prepare students to effectively teach all subjects, in the primary schools. And the end result is poor quality teaching which in turn, led to poor quality education in the primary schools. And this is common in Nigeria primary schools today.

### **Re-structuring NCE Programmes in Nigeria**

Having gone through the course combination of NCE programmes, it is certain that this combination is not standard enough for the students to teach perfectly in primary schools. To this, there is need to re-structure the NCE programme in Nigeria colleges of Education, this will help to improve the quality of teachers produced, which will in turn improve the standard and quality of education in the College of Education. The following areas should be re-structured:

1. The criteria for admission into NCE in Colleges of Education in Nigeria should be a minimum of five credits including English and Mathematics, especially in their own choice of course.
2. All admission into NCE programme should be through JAMB and there must be a general cut-off mark for entry into colleges of education.
3. Before a student in pre-NCE programmes leaves into the NCE 1 programmes, such student must have five (5) credits including English and mathematics.
4. Primary Education Studies (PES) should be made compulsory for NCE students, since their content covers primary English, Mathematics and science which help to prepare the teachers

effectively to teach in primary schools. This means that all courses in College of Education should include primary education studies to their courses.

5. That the courses should also be expanded to include Junior Secondary School courses, since this is another area where NCE teachers teacher.
6. PES courses should be introduced to degree and postgraduate programmes, this will help train lecturers that will carry the PES NCE programmes along.
7. There is need for teaching profession to be professionalized, this will help to build the prestige and integrity of the teaching profession, since teaching is a profession the society looks down on and that is why students run away from the profession.
8. With the establishment of the Teachers Registration Council (TRC), Teachers retention will be high and increase societal prestige. The Teachers Registration Council (TRC) will ensure high quality delivery and restrict entry into the profession.
9. Teacher-student Ratio: Inadequate manpower and physical facilities in some Colleges of Education, due to increase in enrolment figure yearly, students are seen hinging round the windows to receive lecture in College of Education. For instance, the Kano State Federal College of Education shows a ratio of 1:100, and minimum standard is not adhered to which hinders teaching and learning to take place.
10. The teaching practice programmes are ineffective some lecturers have been observed to carry out the arm chair supervision, instead of on the field supervision. Sometimes, cooperating schools are also in-competent because they see the student teachers as a relief of employing qualified teachers, and some Colleges of Education don't even have time to visit the co-operating schools even before and during the TP, in order to know how the student teachers are performing.

## Conclusion

Finally, the goal of every profession is to produce competence professionals, successful educational programmes require competent and effectively trained teachers, and the teachers must effectively master the programmes. For the existing programmes to be able to meet with the challenges of the primary education in Nigeria, there is need to re-structure the programmes by the NCCE (National Commission of Colleges of Education) in Nigeria. However, if the areas mentioned are not re-structured, the Colleges of Education will not have the right capacity of both human and material resources to produce the right species of teachers for effective service delivery.

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