

Staff Development Programme for Primary Education Teachers in Nigeria: Challenges and Ways Forwards

Ogunode Niyi Jacob¹⁾, Adah Samuel²⁾, Audu Elizabeth I³⁾, Wama Pajo⁴⁾

^{1), 4)}Federal University Wukari, Nigeria

²⁾NSCDC Abuja, Nigeria

³⁾University of Abuja, Nigeria

Email: Ogunodejacob@gmail.com¹⁾, Samadadouguy4@gmail.com²⁾, Auduelizabeth6@gmail.com³⁾, Wamazando@gmail.com⁴⁾

Abstract

The article discussed the challenges facing the staff development programme for primary school teachers in Nigeria. Secondary data was used to support the points raised in the article. The secondary data were sourced from print material and online publication by recognized institutions and individual author. There are many challenges facing the staff development programme for primary school teachers in Nigeria. Some of the challenges include; inadequate funding, lack of strategic plans, poor implementation of staff development policies, institutional corruption, poor internal school administration of staff development programme for teachers, unstable educational policies, political instability and lack of data/information on training need gaps of schools. To solve these challenges, it was recommended that: the government should embark on need training assessment of basic schools, develop an action plans, develop a financial plan for implementation, set up effective monitoring and evaluation system, ensure policies continuity and fight all institutional corruption in the ministries.

Keyword: Challenges, Development, Staff, School, Primary, Teachers

1. Introduction

Nigeria has a federal system of government with 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja. Within the states, there are 744 local governments in total. The country is multilingual, and home to more than 250 different ethnic groups. The languages of the three largest groups, the Yoruba, the Ibo, and the Hausa, are the language of instruction in the earliest years of basic instruction; they are replaced by English in Grade 4. Education is administered by the federal, state and local governments. The Federal Ministry of Education is responsible for overall policy formation and ensuring quality control, but is primarily involved with tertiary education. School education is largely the responsibility of state (secondary) and local (elementary) governments. Nigeria's education system encompasses three different sectors: basic education (nine years), post-basic/senior secondary education (three years), and tertiary education (four to six years, depending on the program of study). According to Nigeria's latest National Policy on Education (2004), basic education covers nine years of formal (compulsory) schooling consisting of six years of elementary and three years of junior secondary education. Post-basic education includes three years of senior secondary education (WENR, 2017).

The primary school education covers grades one through six. The curriculum of primary school education includes: English, Mathematics, Nigerian language, basic science and technology, religion and national values, and cultural and creative arts, Arabic language (optional). Pre-vocational studies (home economics, agriculture, and entrepreneurship) and French language are introduced in grade 4.

The National Policy on Education (2004) stated the objectives of primary education as follows:

- a. The inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively.
- b. The laying of a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking;
- c. Citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society.
- d. Character and moral training and the development of sound attitudes;
- e. Developing in the child the ability to adapt to his changing environment;
- f. Giving the child opportunity for developing manipulative skills that will enable him function effectively in the society within the limits of his capacity and;
- g. Providing basic tools for further educational advancement including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality.

The realization of the primary school objectives depends on the quality of teachers in the country.

Teachers play important roles in the teaching-learning process, especially at primary school level where the foundation of education is laid. Noun (2009) cited Atanda and Lameed (2006) they submitted that it is possible for learning to take place without a particular teacher (that is, who directly or consciously organises instruction), but teaching as a process cannot take place without a teacher. Teachers are responsible for finding ways to educate all children. If teachers are going to do justice to their expected role, they are expected to possess the following qualities.

- a. Mastery of their subject: Subject matter mastery is very important if teachers are going to deliver instruction as expected.
- b. Knowledge of diverse methods of Instruction: An excellent teacher in the content mastery with good Certificate (that is Nigeria Certificate in Education or Bachelor's degree in Education) might be the least teacher in the delivery of instruction. Therefore, knowledge of different techniques of disseminating instruction baring set of learners in class is required.
- c. Tolerance: As a substitute for parents during school hours, a good teacher is expected to be tolerant. Students are bound to exhibit abnormal behaviour, but a good teacher has to handle matters with maturity.
- d. Friendliness: A good teacher could achieve excellence in the class if he/she is a friend to all but a special friend to none.
- e. Sympathy: A good teacher should be sensitive to all that happens to students in the classroom. Attention is given to cases to avoid their negative effect on effective teaching.
- f. Optimism: Teachers are expected to be optimistic. Good teachers are not pessimists. They should be interested in the success of their students. Their utterances motivate and encourage learners.
- g. Enthusiasm: Good teachers derive pleasure in teaching as their profession.
- h. They never regret taking up teaching as their career. Scholarship: Good teachers are not satisfied with what they have already known in their field of study. They press further to be current. Based on quest for additional knowledge, they have new ideas, facts and information to teach their students. They see it as their duty to participate in professional development activities that foster their responsibility (Noun, 2009).

The effectiveness of teachers depends on the constant development programme they are exposed to. Thus, it can be deduced that training and development of teachers in a technological changing society has become a matter of urgency and the need to manage the training programmes so that the desired results can be obtained. Teachers are made not born. If teachers are to be made, then they have to undergo certain training, usually teachers' institutes/colleges prescribed by the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004). In the NPE, a statement was made to this effect. 'All teachers in our educational institutions, from pre-primary to university will be professionally trained.' the training process, teachers are expected to study prescribed courses that will enable them to know the subject matter to teach, methodology of teaching and how to evaluate the attainment of the prescribed objectives. The quality of teachers' instruction is enhanced at school level by the following:

- a. Participating in professional development activities that foster their responsibility.
- b. Becoming familiar with current research on student achievement.
- c. Networking with colleagues to learn more about teaching expertise.
- d. Practicing a differentiated instruction, data driven instruction and identifying areas of weakness in students are crucial to developing the quality of classroom instruction.
- e. Taking cognizance of external characteristics, such as student socioeconomic status and parental educational attainment that impact on achievement of students (Ballard and Befes 2008; Gallaher, 2002).

Osiesi, (2020) cited Ekpela (2005) who acknowledged that the causes of poor quality output of teachers include: inability to attending workshops, seminars and conferences, unpreparedness in terms of skills update. He upheld that teachers should be motivated towards attending professional development programmes as to enhance teacher quality outputs. Therefore, making available opportunities for teachers' intensive and continuous professional development programme at all levels of education (primary school teachers, most especially) will enhance quality teaching and learning. The primary school teachers in Nigeria do not enjoy staff development programme as panned by the federal, states and local government authorities due to many challenges. This article is aimed to discuss the challenges preventing the primary school teachers' development programme in Nigeria.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Concept of Staff Development Programme

Effective professional development as defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (Osiesi, 2020, OECD, 2005) is an on-going process that comprises training, practice and feedback, and offers sufficient time and follow-up support. Staff development programme involves training. Alao (2010) saw training as "a specialized process through which one learns to perform direct tasks of varying complexity and acquire expected job behaviours". Training can be used to improve workers efficiency and gives them the opportunity to acquire advance skills and knowledge needed in executing job tasks in the organization. As an organised process, it modifies the attitude, skills and the behaviour of workers by learning experience to effectively perform various duties of the organization (Osborne, 1996). The features of effective professional development include: integrates active learning; utilises adult learning theory; it is content focused; uses models and modeling of effective practice; supports collaboration, typically in job-embedded contexts; offers opportunities for feedback and reflection; provides coaching and expert support and is of sustained duration (Osiesi, 2020, Darling-Hammond, Hyler & Gardner, 2017).

- a. Staff development programme is designed to increase the quality and quantity of output per unit production in an organization.
- b. Staff development programme helps to updates teachers with the new development in the society in the area of new knowledge and skills.
- c. Staff development programme averts future death of manpower need of an organization.
- d. Staff development programme helps equips an individual teacher with new skills and technical know-how in handling new teaching strategies and methodologies.
- e. Staff development programme helps schools to achieve its goals and objective
- f. School administrators with the help of staff development programme handle situation more technically so as to enhance continuous existence of the school.

In the educational institution, we have teachers' professional development programme which still aimed at the same objectives. Osiesi, (2020) observed that teacher Professional development programmes can be regarded as the on-the job training for teachers that is aimed at improving and enhancing teachers' competency skills. It is the provision of avenues for the continuous updating of teachers' competency, effectiveness and efficiency in skills and knowledge, a lifelong learning process which results from a meaningful interaction between these teachers and the professional environment. Teachers' competence which can be facilitated by professional development is the ability of teachers in coping with specific school learning activities. It can be defined more so, as the complex combinations of knowledge, values and attitudes leading to effective action in classroom situations (Osiesi, 2020, European Commission, 2012). Osiesi, (2020) observed that teacher Professional development programmes avenues for the continuous updating of teachers' competency, effectiveness and efficiency in skills and knowledge, a lifelong learning process which results from a meaningful interaction between these teachers and the professional environment. Creating opportunities for a focused and sustained professional development programme for primary school teachers will ultimately enhance quality teaching and learning. Teachers' Professional development programmes is a special programme designed for the teachers to help them improve their teaching capacity and performance.

2.1.1 The Objectives of Primary School Teachers Development

The development of teachers beyond their initial training (trainings obtained from colleges of education and universities) can serve a number of objectives, including:

- a. To update individuals' skills, attitudes and approaches in light of the development of new teaching techniques and objectives, new circumstances and new educational research;
- b. To update individuals' knowledge of a subject in light of recent advances in the area;
- c. To help weaker teachers become more effective.
- d. To exchange information and expertise among teachers and others, e.g. academics, industrialists;
- e. To enable schools to develop and apply new strategies concerning the curriculum and other aspects of teaching practice; and
- f. To enable individuals to apply changes made to curricula or other aspects of teaching practice (Osiesi, (2020).

Osiesi, (2020) listed the importance of teacher development especially for primary school teachers are:

- a. It enhances teachers' competence in carrying out their job effectively through knowledge and skills acquisition;
- b. Reform teachers' behaviour through learning experiences;
- c. Provides teachers' with knowledge on how to perform current jobs;
- d. Updating teachers' knowledge to cope with educational reforms and curriculum changes;
- e. Increases teachers' confidence, motivation and commitment;
- f. Enhancing teachers' responsibility;
- g. Ensures satisfaction of staff;
- h. Improves the quality of teaching staff, which inadvertently improves the quality of the non-teaching staff; and
- i. Keeping up-to-date with ICT/Technologies at large.

Forms of Professional Development Programmes Available to Primary School Teachers

- a. Workshops/ courses (e.g. on subject matter or methods and/or other education-related topics);
- b. Educational Seminars/conferences (at which teachers and/or researchers present their research results and discuss education problems);
- c. Qualification programmes (e.g. degree, PGDE programmes etc.);
- d. Teachers observation visits to other schools;
- e. Participation in a network of teachers formed specifically for the purpose of professional development;
- f. Individual or cooperative research on a topic of professional interest; and
- g. Mentoring and/or peer observation and coaching, as part of a formal school arrangement.

Bernadette, Ukaegbu, OtuEkpeyong (2017) cited Armstrong, (2006) listed the gains of training as follows: Firstly, training can provide an effective channel for two ways communication especially if workshops are used to bring managers and employees together to discuss organizational issues and develop plans jointly to deal with them. Secondly, training can contribute to the satisfaction of people's needs for achievement and recognition; for example, to be singled out to attend a course can be a very powerful motivation. Thirdly, training can enable people exercise greater responsibility and can enlarge their portfolio of skills that they can use both to their own advantage and that of the company/ organization. Fourthly, education and training are essential ingredients in change management programme.

2.1.2 Types of Training and Development Programme

According to Bernadette, Ukaegbu, OtuEkpeyong (2017) there are several types of training and development programmes are in existence. The particular method to be chosen by an organisation depends on the cost and time available, number of trainees, depth of knowledge

and the background of trainees. Studies have shown that many workers fail in organizational expectations due to lack of training. Development may help to build confidence in the workers and improve efficiency at work. This process is referred to as Human Resource development. Broadly speaking, Human Resource Development is an organized learning activities arranged within an organization in order to improve performance and/or personal growth for the purpose of improving the job, the individual, and/or the organisation (Bernadette, Ukaegbu, OtuEkpeyong 2017, Rouda and Kusy, 1995). This includes the areas of training and development, career development, and organizational development. Employees need to learn new skills and develop new abilities, to respond to these changes in workplace. There are two major types of training namely: induction, on-the-job training and off-the-job training

a. Induction

This is basically training and development programmes organised for new workers (Bernadette, Ukaegbu, OtuEkpeyong 2017, Ngu, 2006) with the aim of providing the history and objectives of the organization and clearly define line of responsibility and authority of a role and provide a guide to understanding the working principles, mode of operations and procedure of an organisation

b. On-the-Job Training:

This is an internal or in-service type of training usually carried out by supervisors, follow workers, managers or mentors to help employees adapt and acquire the right skills on a new job.

Bernadette, Ukaegbu, OtuEkpeyong (2017) cited Armstrong, (2006) who argues that on-the-job training may consist of teaching by a highly experienced resource people or trainers at the desk or at the bench. According to Armstrong, on-the-job training is the only way to develop and practice the specific managerial, team leading, technical, selling, manual, and administrative skills needed by the organization and it has the advantages of actual and immediacy as the individual works learns and develops expertise at the same time. He further emphasized that a disadvantages of this type of training is that the effectiveness of the learning is strongly influenced by the quality of the guidance and coaching provided on the job. Secondly, the learner might be distracted by the environment and find it difficult to acquire basic skill faster.

c. Off-the-Job Training

Off-the-job training include lecture, vestibule training, role playing, case study, discussion and simulation. Bernadette, Ukaegbu, OtuEkpeyong (2017) cited Armstrong, (2006) that listed group exercises, team building, distance learning, outdoor and workshops as part of off-the-job training where the use of external education consultants or guest speakers.

Osiesi, (2020) listed the following as forms of Professional Development Programmes Available to Primary School Teachers

- a. Workshops/ courses (e.g. on subject matter or methods and/or other education-related topics);
- b. Educational Seminars/conferences (at which teachers and/or researchers present their research results and discuss education problems);

- c. Qualification programmes (e.g. degree, PGDE programmes etc.);
- d. Teachers observation visits to other schools;
- e. Participation in a network of teachers formed specifically for the purpose of professional development;
- f. Individual or cooperative research on a topic of professional interest; and
- g. Mentoring and/or peer observation and coaching, as part of a formal school arrangement.

3. Methodology

The objectives of this article is to discuss challenges facing the staff development programme for primary school teachers in Nigeria and specifically to proper suggestions on how it can be improved. The researchers employed the used of secondary data which was sourced from articles, papers and reports. The researcher sourced their data from CEON, Elsevier, Hindawi, IEEE, JSTOR, LearnTechlib, Nebraska, Springer and SAGE, amongst others. Content Analysis was adopted for this study. The data collected were organized, collected and analyzed from the relevant secondary sources. The scope of the finding was limited to challenges facing the staff development programme for primary school teachers in Nigeria and how the identified problems could be overcome. This study has chosen content analysis method by selecting the relevant content of the various literatures related to this study; and the literature review enable the overall development of the study which ordinarily centered on theoretical and conceptual exploration.

4. Staff Development Programme for Primary Education Teachers in Nigeria: Challenges

There are many challenges facing the staff development programme for primary school teachers in Nigeria. Some of the challenges include; inadequate funding, lack of strategic plans, poor implementation of staff development programme policies, institutional corruption, poor internal school administration of staff development programme for teachers, unstable educational policies, political instability and lack of data/information on training need gaps of schools.

4.1 Inadequate Funding

Inadequate funding is one of the major problem preventing effective implementation of staff development programme for primary schools teachers in Nigeria. The inadequate funding of education in Nigeria is responsible for many problems affecting the educational development in the country. Staff development programme is one of the programme that the government of Nigeria have not showed much commitment. The annual budgetary allocation for staff development programme in the ministries of education across the three tier of government have been grossly inadequate. Grants released by the government to Secondary schools education are far below expectation. The reason for this is not farfetched, because different sectors are competing with education. What government allocates to education falls short of UNESCO's recommendation of 26% of a country's national budget. John (2017) opined that the funds from the federal government to the education sector and basic schools in specific are not enough. A break-down of Nigerian education budget for decade revealed the following:

Years	Education Budget	%	Naira
2010	N234.8billion	5.10	N4.6trillion

2011	N306.3billion	6.20	N4.972trillion
2012	N400.15billion	8.43	8.43 N4.749trillion
2013	N426.53billion	8.60	N4.987trillion
2014	N493billion	10.70	N4.69trillion
2015	N392.2billion	8.91	N4.4trillion
2016	N369.6billion	6.01	N6.1trillion
2017	N448.01billion	6.00	N7.3trillion
2018	N605.8billion	7.04	N8.3trillion
2019	N620.5bn	7.05	8.83 trillion-
2020	N652.94bn	6.9	N10.50 trillion.

Where by other developing country like Ghana; in the last 10 years, they have never budgeted less than 20 per cent for education. There is South Africa, Egypt, among others. The staff development programme for all the educational institutions in the country is been affected because of inadequate funding of education.

4.2 Lack of Strategic Plans

Lack of strategic action plans for effective staff development programme for the primary school education is another problem affecting effective staff development programme for teachers teaching at the primary schools in Nigeria. There have not been an action plan designed purposely to achieve the objective of staff development programme for teachers of basic schools education in Nigeria. The inability of the government to developed strategic plans or road map for teachers' development at the basic schools is responsible for poor teachers' development at the basic schools across the country.

4.2 Poor Implementation of Staff Development Programme Policies

Poor implementation of the various teachers' development programme policies is also responsible for ineffective teacher development programme. The Nigerian government in bide to ensure quality education in all the basic schools across the country have developed and formulated differences policies on teachers development but due to inadequate funding, ineffective planning and lack of political will, the implementation of such policies are poorly done. Nigeria is rich in policies formulation and development but always lack the political will to fully implement such policies.

4.3 Institutional Corruption

Institutional corruption is another factor responsible for poor implementation of teachers' development programme at the basic schools across the federation. Funds allocated for implementation of teachers' development programme are been diverted by the official, administrators and political officeholders in the some ministries, agencies and department of

education in the country. Corruption practices have penetrated some ministries, agencies and department of education in the country. This development is affecting the development of education in the country because fraction of funds allocated for programmes like staff development, planning of education, consultancy services and other services are been diverted into private pocket.

4.4 Poor Internal School Administration of Staff Development Programme for Teachers

Another problem facing the teachers' development programme in the basic schools across the country is the poor internal school administration of staff development programme. Some school administrators do not have plans for effective staff development programme. School administrators appoints people that are closed to them to go for the programme whenever the opportunities comes for the schools to select who should go. Some particularly teachers keeping going every years because they are closed to the school administrators. Selection process for teachers are not based on due process or based on training need or gap but based on nepotism and partiality or favoritism.

4.5 Unstable Educational Policies

Unstable educational policies refers to a situation whereby educational policies are changed often without any positive reason but political reasons. It is the continuous changes in the educational policies of a local government, states and country as a whole. Unstable educational policies is one of the features of third world countries like Nigeria. Unstable educational policies is a problem preventing effective implementation of teachers' development programme at the primary schools education in Nigeria. Nigerian government is known for changing of educational policies.

4.6 Political Instability

Political instability refers to the changes of government or authority in power often. Political instability also means the situation whereby country changes its political leaders continuously. Political instability is another challenge facing effective implementation of teachers' development programme in Nigerian basic schools. Nigeria is known for practicing democracy which implies that every four four years new government or administration comes on board while other are leaving. Every government or administration have it political agenda to pursue for four years. Some political party agenda favour capacity development for staff. Policies and programme are developed to implement such policies and plans on capacity development for staff across the federation but when such party loss or are voted out of office, the new government discontinue such policies and plans and introduce new programme.

4.7 Lack of Data/Information on Training Need Gaps for Teacher at Basic schools

Lack of data/information on training need gaps for teacher at basic schools is another major problem affecting the implementation of teachers' development programme at the basic schools across the country. There are no data/information of training need gap for basic schools across the country. There are no information on subject teachers training needs or training gap for almost all subjects in the country. There are no also accurate data and information on those who have been trained for one decades across the local government, states and at the federation as a whole.

Osiesi, (2020) observed that the quality of an effective professional development programme for teachers; especially at the primary school level, requires high level of initiatives and implementation which will in the long run has implications for the overall effectiveness of such programmes. Many a time, there are barriers that impede or serve a barrier to the effective implementation of these programmes. These barriers include:

- a. Inadequate necessary curriculum resources/materials;
- b. Lack of technical know-how on what high-quality instruction entails;
- c. Short time allocated to teaching a particular subject as the teacher is restricted and unable to implement new instructional approaches within the allotted time;
- d. Failure to align with state and local policies toward a coherent set of instructional practices;
- e. Negative school cultures; and
- f. Inability to track and assess the quality of professional development;
- g. Poor or lack of funding for teachers professional development;
- h. Facilitators or tutors who are to train these teachers are selected or contracted on the basis of tribalism, ethnicity, religion, nepotism and political affiliations; not on merit or qualification; and
- i. Lack or inadequate teachers' evaluation and monitoring officers.
- j. Lack of information and communication technology, and e-learning platforms.

5. Ways Forwards

Staff development programme for primary school teachers should be encouraged and funded because it will help in the realization of the objectives of primary school education in Nigeria. The government should ensure all challenges preventing effective implementation of the staff development programme for primary school teachers are solved. Osiesi, (2020) listed the following recommendations:

- a. The Nigerian teachers who are practicing especially at the primary schools, should be encouraged to attend professional development programmes for capacity building and growth at least twice a year; this can be achieved easily when governments seriously commit to teachers' professional development and providing incentives (monetarily or otherwise) for teachers who attend.
- b. Vivid policy statement, backed by political will, should be enacted to ensure that every primary school practicing teacher undergoes a minimum of two professional development programmes in an academic session as part of their promotion assessment criteria.
- c. Government should recruit more teachers with M.Ed minimum teaching qualification, as they could serve as trainers and mentors for teachers at the school levels.
- d. Inspectors from the Ministry of Education should frequently visit, monitor and appraise primary school teachers in order to know those who should be trained or retrained.

This paper recommended that: the government should embark on need training assessment of basic schools, develop an action plan, develop a financial plan for implementation, set up effective monitoring and evaluation system, ensure policies continuity and fight all institutional corruption in the ministries.

5.1 Training Needs Assessment

The government should embark on need training assessment of basic schools across the country to identify training needs of basic schools teachers for all subject offering in the primary school education. This will help the government to have clear knowledge of basic teachers' training needs in the country.

5.2 Develop an Action Plan

The government should develop an actions plans for teachers' development programme. The actions plan should clearly state how many basic schools teachers would be trained in a years. Where, when and on what subjects should be stated

5.3 Develop a Financial Plan for Implementation

Financial plans is very important in the implementation of educational programme. So, the government should designed and formulate the financial plan to implement the teachers' development training programme yearly for easy implementation of the programme.

5.4 Set Up Effective Monitoring and Evaluation System

The government should set up effective monitoring and evaluation system for the teachers' development programme in the country to ensure effective monitoring of funds and implementation of the programme.

5.5 Ensure Policies Continuity

Policies continuity is one of the key to the development of educational programme and policies. So, the government should ensure that all stakeholders in the country are involved in designing and formulating educational policies so that any government that comes on power will see the need to continue the policies since they are involved in the process of it designing and formulation.

Fight all Institutional Corruption in the Ministries

5.6 Institutional corruption is responsible for the poor quality of education in the country. Corruption have done more harm to the educational sector. So, the government should direct its anti-corruption agencies to monitor the funds administration and management in all the ministries, agencies and department of education in the country. This will help to reduce the incidence of funds diversion.

6. Conclusion

This article discussed the challenges facing the staff development programme for primary school teachers in Nigeria. The paper identified the challenges facing the staff development programme for primary school teachers in Nigeria to include; inadequate funding, lack of strategic plans, poor implementation of staff development programme policies, institutional corruption, poor internal school administration of staff development programme for teachers, ,unstable educational policies, political instability and lack of data/information on training need gaps of schools. To solve these challenges, the recommended that: the government should

embark on need training assessment of basic schools, develop an action plan, develop a financial plan for implementation, set up effective monitoring and evaluation system, ensure policies continuity and fight all institutional corruption in the ministries

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