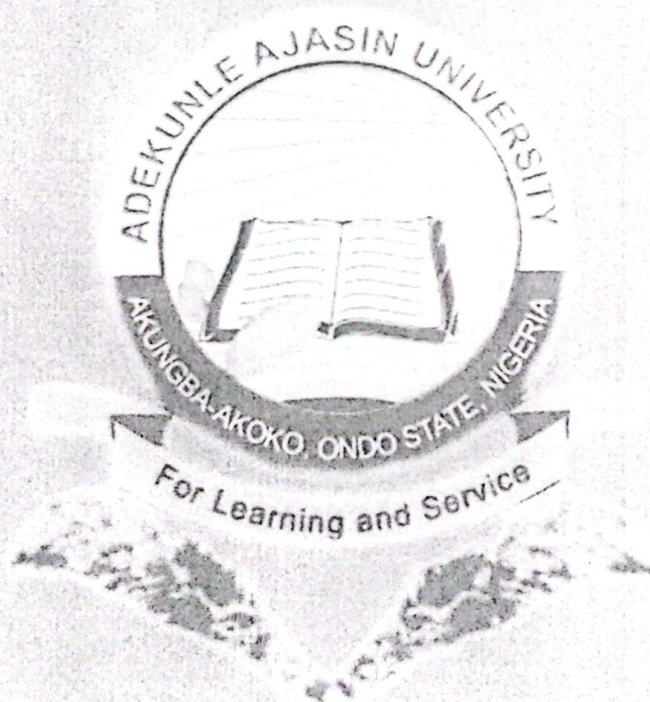


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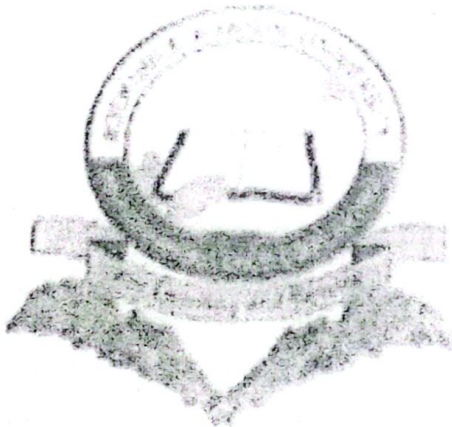
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TEACHER EDUCATION: TRENDS IN POLICY, REFORMS, AND CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA FROM 1960 to 2019

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Abstract

This study examined the historical trajectory of teacher education in Nigeria, focusing on the trends in policy, reforms, and the persistent challenges from 1960 to 2019. Drawing upon key educational reforms and government initiatives, the findings reveal a progressive yet uneven development of teacher education. Significant milestones include the post-independence expansion of teacher training colleges, the implementation of the Ashby Commission recommendations, the establishment of Colleges of Education and the National Teachers' Institute (NTI), and the introduction of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme and the 6-3-3-4 educational system. These policies reflect the government's commitment to enhancing teacher quality and educational access. However, the sector continues to face critical challenges such as inadequate funding, shortage of qualified educators, outdated curricula, poor infrastructure, low teacher morale, and systemic corruption. Additionally, the declining appeal of the teaching profession and limited integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) further hinder its progress. The study concludes that while considerable efforts have been made to reform teacher education, a strategic, well-funded, and sustained implementation framework is essential to achieve a robust and future-ready teacher education system in Nigeria.

Keywords: Teachers, reform, education, challenges, policy

Introduction

Education all over the world is seen as a process of transmitting the cultural heritage, stabilizing the present and improving or changing the future of the people. The school system in this regard is generally accepted as a major agent of education. This makes the factor of the teacher central in the task of education. Today, teacher education is considered to be the foundation for quality and relevance in education at all levels. This article reviews current literature on the historical trends and dynamics of teacher education in Nigeria since the colonial era. Specifically, the paper focuses on the following: the beginning of teacher education in Nigeria, effect of regionalization on teacher education. Teacher Education after independence current dispensation of teacher education vis-a-vis policy guidelines, access, curriculum development and delivery and challenges of teacher education in Nigeria for a better world.

Two accounts of missionary endeavours to promote western education in Nigeria preceded the imperial occupation and were well documented by African historians of education. (Fafunwa 1991, Taiwo 1980, Osokoya 1989). The first account was the contact made by the Portuguese merchants in the first half of the 15th century. As early as 1472, the Portuguese had landed in Benin City (a Nigerian city in the present South-south geo-political zone) for trading purposes. They, therefore, established trading posts along the coastal areas of Nigeria including Lagos and Brass. Meanwhile, as they realised the need to communicate with the people of the area in a common language and possibly

share a common faith with their customers, they invited the Roman Catholic mission from their home country who eventually founded schools and churches along the trading posts. By 1515, a school had been founded in the Obas palace in Benin City while a seminary to train African priests and teachers to manage the churches and schools was founded in Sao Tome (an island off the coast of Nigeria) in 1571. This encounter was however an abortive experience as the Portuguese influence faded away as a result of the inter-tribal wars that ravaged the area for about 300 years over the greed to catch slaves for exportation to Europe and American as a result of the greed to catch African slaves (Fafunwa 1991).

The second missionary attempt however was successful and had a lasting impact on the people of Nigeria. Between 1842 and 1892, eight different Christian missions had established themselves in different parts of Southern Nigeria while several abortive attempts were made by some missions to penetrate into the Islamic areas of the north. The Wesleyan Methodist, the first to arrive, confined themselves to the south-western part of Yoruba land with their strength concentrated in Lagos, Abeokuta and Ibadan. The Church Missionary Society (C.M.S), by far the largest, concentrated in the Yoruba land and Niger Delta (Osokoya 2010). The United Presbyterian church from Scotland concentrated effort in Old Calabar. The Southern American Baptist, found strength in Lagos, Abeokuta and Ogbomoso while the Qua Iboe mission from protestant Ireland, established themselves along the Qua Iboe river. These missions on arrival founded schools with curriculum heavily weighted on the three Rs-reading, writing and arithmetic. Mission schools were inadequately funded as the missions enjoyed virtually no

financial support from the home missions. Schools were run on the limited funds subscribed by the local congregations. The teachers appointed were untrained and unqualified as teacher education programmes were not available in the country then. Attempts made in these early years of formal education to recruit teachers from the West Indies and the older British settlements of West Africa did not solve the problem too. Painting the picture of teachers employed in the mission schools in 1901, (Afigbo 1968) quoted the then inspector of school who wrote: Very few the teachers in the schools in the protectorate hold any certificate or have any training as teachers. They are for the most part mission agents of whose duties teaching in the mission schools forms only a part and no educational qualification or attainment are required for them.

Fafunwa (2004) states that the origin of teaching profession in Nigeria could be traced to four major landmarks: the missionary activities in the provision of education between 1842 and 1882. These missionaries were Roman Catholic, Wesleyan Methodist, Baptist Church of Scotland (The Presbyterian Church is of Scotland and not the Baptist) and Christian Missionary Society used pupils teacher method to train teachers before and after Nigerian independence.

Historically, the first teacher training institution in Nigeria was founded by the Church Missionary Society in 1859. The school established in Abeokuta and named "The training Institution" was moved to Lagos in 1867 when the missionaries were expelled from the town (Fafunwa 1991). The school was later moved to Oyo in 1896 and renamed St. Andrews College, Oyo. The Baptist mission followed the example of the CMS and founded a teacher training college at Ogbomosho in 1897. Also, the Wesleyan Methodist founded Wesley College Ibadan in 1905. The first teacher training in northern Nigeria was Nassarawa College founded by the colonial government in 1909. The main concern of the missions teacher training institution was to produce school masters who are to graduate to classroom teachers, catechists, deacons and priests (Osoba & Fajana 1980). Therefore, the subjects taught in the teacher training at the period included: the New Testament criticism, Christian faith, school method and management, preaching and theology, hygiene, geography, history, English among others (Fafunwa 1991). The operation of teacher education in the period was heavily criticized by the Phelps Stokes Commission Report of 1922 for its irrelevant and poorly conceived curriculum, inadequate supervisory system and the high rate of teacher-pupil ratio.

In 1929, Mr. E.R.J. Hussey, the first director of education, re-organised the teacher training system in Nigeria along the suggestions given by the Phelps Stokes Report. Meanwhile, he centralised the control of education in Nigeria by merging the existing two departments of education in the northern and Southern provinces. He thereafter created two types of teacher training institution namely. - The Elementary Training Centre (ETC). This is a two-year course leading to Teachers Grade III certificate for lower primary school teachers and; The Higher Elementary Training College (H.E.T.C) also lasting for another two years and leading to Teachers Grade II Certificate. Another historical landmark in

the development of teacher education in Nigeria was the establishment of Yaba Higher College by the British Colonial Administration in 1932. The College ran a three-year diploma teacher education programme from its inception. Unfortunately, the Yaba Higher College suffered immensely during the Second World War. Its campus and medical school were acquired by the army for war purposes. The college was finally absorbed by University College Ibadan in 1947. The diploma course was discontinued in 1950. Teacher education programme in Nigeria was further enhanced when the University College Ibadan, founded in 1948 introduced a one-year diploma course in education as from 1957/58 session. In view of this, the present research study intends to investigate teacher education: trends in policy, reforms and challenges in Nigeria from 1960 to 2019.

Today, teacher education is much improved than it was before independence and few decades thereafter. The National Policy on Education, published in 1977 and revised in 1981, 1998, 2004 and 2013 clearly articulates the importance attached to teacher education and affirms that "no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers". The Policy gives the goals of teacher education as: Producing highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of Nigeria education system encouraging the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers Helping teachers to fit into the social life of the community and the society at large and to enhance their commitment to national goals providing teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to changing conditions and enhancing teachers commitment to the teaching profession.

The Policy makes it mandatory for all teachers in Nigeria to be trained and stipulate Nigeria Certificate of Education (NCE) as the minimum qualification to the profession. The policy also provides that "teacher education shall continue to take cognizance of changes in methodology and in the curriculum" and that teachers shall be regularly exposed to innovations in their profession. It further recognizes the need for in- service training "as an integral part of continuing teacher education".

The statutory responsibility for teacher education in Nigeria today is vested in College of Education, Institutes of Education, Polytechnics, National Teachers Institute (by distance) and University Faculties of Education. The Polytechnics and Colleges of Education award the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) which is a sub-degree but professionally demanding diploma obtainable after three years of full-time study. The admission requirements for the NCE programme are Senior Secondary Certificate or its equivalent with passes in five subjects including English language. The curriculum for NCE teachers is well designed to produce teachers exposed to a breadth of studies covering all that is required to make them competent professionals. New courses such as computer education, mathematics and General English have been made compulsory for all NCE students. Also relevant themes such as Nigerian constitution, environment/ conservation education, population and family life education, HIV/AIDS education, drug abuse and women's

education have recently been infused into the curriculum.

The National Teachers' Institute (NTI) was established in 1976 by Decree No. 7 of 1976 to offer upgrading programmes for teachers through distance learning. Over the years NTI has been providing in-service training for teachers during school holidays and week-ends for the award of NCE, B.Ed and Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) certificates. Institutes of Education in the various universities have also been involved through distance learning and part-time courses the training of teachers for N.C.E, B.Ed AND PGDE Certificates. Faculties of Education prepare pre-service teachers for B.Ed, B.A. Ed. and M.Ed degrees. There are four major requirements for the degree programme in the Nigerian universities, namely: - General studies - Educational studies - Studies related to the students' intended field of teaching - Teaching practice.

Before the take-off of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1976, the Federal Government, in September, Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo was established in 1964. However, in 1968, the two colleges of Education in Ibadan were merged with Adeyemi college of Education and charged with the following aims. (a) to prepare well-qualified non graduate teachers for secondary grammar schools and teacher training colleges State. (b) to conduct in-service programmes for teachers of secondary grammar Schools and teacher training colleges and (c) to carry out research and experiments in methods at all levels of education (Adeyemi College of Education, 1969, pp. 2-3, in Adeyinka, 1990, p.3). However, the NCE, with the National policy on Education hoped would ultimately be the minimum entry qualification into the teaching profession (FRN, 1977, P. 26 & 1981, p. 39) has now been made the minimum entry qualification into the teaching profession as contained in the third edition of the National policy on Education (FRN 1998, p. 33). After 1968, several regular and specialized and Colleges of Education have been established throughout the country by both the federal and State Governments. Also, while some Colleges of Education have been approved by the National Universities Commission to run degree programmes, others have taken it upon themselves to run degree programmes of other Universities. Furthermore, some polytechnic run NCE programmes - along with their usual technological programmes.

Another significant event relating to the teaching profession immediately after independence was the introduction of the B.A. (Education) and B.Sc. (Education) combined honours degree programmes. The University of Nigeria, Nsukka convened a conference in February 1961 that was financed by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The theme of the conference was "Teacher Education in Nigeria". The conference agreed that, "a degree plus a nine-month diploma course was an unsatisfactory method for preparing graduate teachers and many of the teachers so produced lacked dedication and professional aptitude". (Fafunwa, 1974, p.200) This is also what Fafunwa (1974) describe as "a thin layer of education courses spread on top of a three-year academic subject matter specialization (Fafunwa, 1974, p. 200). The conference, therefore recommended the

introduction of a three-year Bachelor of Arts and Science combined honours degree in Education thus supporting an earlier recommendation in the Ashby Report of October 1960. The new degree programme was launched by the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in September 1961, thus becoming the first University to start a new programme of teacher education.

This new programme generated considerable debate usually characteristic of any innovation. In a quick succession, however, other Nigerian Universities introduced their own programmes as follows. The university of Ibadan 1963, the Ahmadu Bello University, 1964, the University of Lagos, 1965, and the University of Ife (new Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife). 1967. This new programme generated considerable debate usually characteristic of any innovation. In a quick succession, however, other Nigerian Universities introduced their own programmes as follows. The university of Ibadan 1963, the Ahmadu Bello University, 1964, the University of Lagos, 1965, and the University of Ife (new Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife). 1967.

Teaching and the National Policy on Education.

A decade following the attainment of Nigerian independence witnessed another remarkable expansion of teacher education programmes. In fact, the decade ended with another educational conference tagged National Curriculum Conference of 1969 while the paper of the conference gave birth to the national policy on education in 1977. This document provided ground for National Policy on Education in 1977, with the revised editions, 1981, 1998, 2004 and 2014. For the first time in the history of Nigeria, the document states the objectives and curriculum contents of all levels of education. It also fashioned out a new system of education. The national policy on Education also states that teachers from pre Nursery to tertiary levels will be professionally trained. In view of this, Adeyinka, (1988) categorized institutions where, teachers could be professionally trained as follow:

Grade III Teachers training College.

Grade II Teachers Training college.

Advanced Teacher Training college/ colleges of Education
Institute of Education

Nigeria Teachers Institute.

Efforts of Nigerian governments in the recent time is another land mark event in the development of teaching profession. Education and its facilities have improved tremendously. As at 2020, there was total number of 275 Universities in Nigeria, 63 Federal, 63 state and 149 private Universities in Nigeria, each having faculty of education. This makes it possible and convenient for people to be trained as teachers and awarded with B. Sc (Ed) B. A(Ed) and B. Ed.. There is another opportunity for graduates without Bachelor of education but who want to develop their teaching competencies through PGDE.

As of early 2025, Nigeria officially has 205 accredited Colleges of Education, according to the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) These institutions are distributed as follows: 27 federal colleges, 54 state colleges, and 82 private colleges. This represents a substantial increase from the 152 institutions recorded in 2020 (comprising 21

federal, 49 state, and 82 private colleges), highlighting ongoing expansion in teacher training capacity.

These Colleges of Education continue to serve as the primary institutions for training qualified teachers for Primary and Junior Secondary School levels. Their expanded number enhances the national capacity to produce well-trained educators across the country, addressing both urban and rural demands for qualified teaching personnel.

At the University, Polytechnic and College of Education, there are pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes that are run as differently. Such as Pat-time, Sandwich and Distance Learning (National Teachers' Institute and National Open University) etc. Another remarkable effort of Nigerian government was the establishment of teachers' regulatory body, Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria, TRCN. TRCN was established by Decree 31 of 1993 (now Act CAP T3 of 2004). Thus, the Act has the following provisions. In the implementation of the Act establishing the regulatory framework for the teaching profession in Nigeria, several key mandates are emphasized. First is the clear determination of who qualifies to be called a teacher, which entails a formal definition of individuals eligible to hold the title and practice the profession. Closely related to this is the stipulation of the standard of knowledge and skills expected from those seeking to be registered as professional teachers. These standards are not static but are expected to be raised periodically in line with evolving educational needs and global best practices. To ensure accountability and transparency, the Act mandates the establishment and continuous maintenance of a register of qualified teachers, including regular publication of the updated list. Furthermore, the Act empowers the appropriate body to regulate and control all aspects of the teaching profession, thereby curbing disorder and ensuring professionalism.

It also provides for the classification of teachers based on their level of training and academic qualifications. In this classification, holders of the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) are primarily prepared to teach at the primary school level, while those with degrees such as B.Sc. (Ed), B.A. (Ed), and B.Ed are trained to teach at the secondary school level. Graduates with Master's and Doctoral degrees are typically expected to serve at tertiary institutions. Moreover, the teaching profession is guided by a Code of Conduct designed to prevent professional misconduct, with the Council responsible for formulating and enforcing these ethical guidelines. To address breaches, an Investigative Panel is tasked with conducting preliminary inquiries and determining whether cases should be escalated. Such cases are then forwarded to the Teacher Disciplinary Committee (TDC), which has the authority to deliberate and pronounce judgments on professional infractions. Sanctions for unprofessional conduct, depending on the severity, may include suspension or outright termination of appointment, thus reinforcing discipline and integrity in the profession.

Statement of the Problem

Education all over the world is seen as a process of transmitting the cultural heritage, stabilizing the present and

improving or changing the future of the people. Despite several previous research studies on teacher education reforms and policy, it seems none of the efforts as been able to address the problems of teacher education in Nigeria. Earlier research studies such as Saliu and Akinbode (2022), historical development of teaching Profession in Nigeria before and after independence. Lawal and Ojebiyi (2008), reported that historical development of teaching education in Ogun State, Nigeria, 1976-2006. Babalola, Jeyeoba and Okediran, (2007), university of autonomy and financial reforms in Nigeria: Historical background, issues and recommendations from experience. Fafunwa, (2004) and Taiwo, (1980) submitted that Nigeria education system Past, Present and Future, none of its focused on trends and reforms of teacher education from 1960-2019. In view of this, the present study intends to investigate Teacher education: trends in policy, reforms and challenges from 1960-2019

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate Nigerian university education: trends, issue of reforms and challenges from 1960 to 2019 specifically, the study examined the followings:

1. To trace the in trends in teacher Educational Reforms from 1960 to 2019.
2. To examine the Challenges of teacher Education reforms from 1960 to 2019

Research Questions

1. What are the trends in policy and reforms of Teacher Education in Nigeria from 1960 to 2019?
2. What are the Challenges of teacher Education Reforms in Nigeria from 1960 to 2019?

Research Method

This study adopted a qualitative research approach and employed a historical research design to explore the trends and challenges of teacher education reforms over a 58-year period (1960-2019), which allowed for the analysis of past events, issues of reform and challenges to understand their impact on the educational system. The study focused on secondary data gathered from various government reports, policy documents, educational journals, books, and articles related to Nigerian educational policies from 1960 to 2019. Systematic analyses of the texts were conducted to identify recurring themes, key reforms, challenges, and the context in which these reforms were implemented. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key themes related to the educational reforms and challenges in Nigeria.

Results

Research Question One: What are the trends in policy and reforms of Teacher Education in Nigeria from 1960 to 2019?

Expansion of Teacher Training Colleges: The Nigerian government increased investment in teacher training colleges to meet the growing demand for educators after gaining independence in 1960.

- **Ashby Commission Recommendations:** The commission recommended establishing a new corps of Grade I teachers, styled as well-qualified, non-graduate teachers, to staff lower levels of secondary schools and teacher training colleges.
- **Establishment of Advanced Teachers Colleges:** These colleges, later renamed Colleges of Education, were designed to meet the middle-level manpower needs of Nigeria's economy, particularly in education. Teacher Primary Education (UPE) Initiative (1970s-1980s)
- **Increased Demand for Qualified Teachers:** The UPE program led to a surge in demand for qualified teachers, prompting the expansion and improvement of teacher training colleges.
- **Establishment of the National Teachers Institute (NTI):** The NTI was established through Decree No. 7 of 1976 to offer special programs for middle-level teachers. National Policy on Education Reforms (1980s-1990s)
- **Introduction of New Curricula:** The government introduced new curricula to enhance the quality of teacher education.
- **Establishment of Colleges of Education:** These colleges were established to train teachers for primary and secondary schools.
- **Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN):** The TRCN was established to control and regulate teaching in Nigeria.
- **Distance Learning Centres (DLC):** DLCs were established by the University of Ibadan's Senate in 1988 to offer external study programs for teachers.

Other Reforms

- **Universal Basic Education (UBE) Program:** Introduced in 1999, the UBE program aimed to provide free and compulsory education for all children of primary and junior secondary school age.
- **6-3-3-4 System of Education:** Introduced in 1981, this system reformed the structure of education in Nigeria.

Research Question Two: What are the challenges of teacher Education Reforms from 1960 to 2019?

The gravity of the problem of access to university education in the country from 1980 – 2014 is illustrated in table 1, which indicates the number of prospective applicants and admission offered during the period under review.

The challenges confronting teacher education in Nigeria from 1960 to 2019 include:

- **Inadequate Funding:** Insufficient government funding and poor utilization of available funds hindered the delivery of quality education.
- **Lack of Qualified Teachers:** Shortage of experienced and well-trained educators in teacher training institutions.
- **Outdated Curricula:** Teacher education programs used curricula that were not aligned with current educational needs.
- **Poor Infrastructure:** Inadequate facilities and resources in teacher training institutions.

- **Low Morale of Teachers:** Poor conditions of service, lack of incentives, and late payment of salaries contributed to low teacher morale.
- **Brain Drain:** Weakening attraction to the teaching profession led to dwindling enrollment in teacher education programs.
- **Insufficient ICT Knowledge:** Limited knowledge and use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) among teachers.
- **Aversion to Teaching Profession:** Negative perceptions and lack of prestige associated with the teaching profession.
- **Teacher Retention and Turnover:** Challenges in retaining qualified teachers due to poor working conditions and lack of incentives.
- **Institutional Corruption:** Corruption within educational institutions compromised the quality of teacher education.
- **Insecurity:** Insecurity issues affected the stability of educational institutions.
- **Poor Policy Implementation:** Difficulty in translating educational policies into practice due to various inhibiting factors.

Discuss of findings

The first research question revealed that reform efforts focused on new curricula, establishment of colleges of education, Teacher Registration of Nigeria and distance Learning Centres. This finding is online with the work of Lawal and Ojebiyi (2008) who established that there were great significant improvement in the infrastructural facilities and enrollment rates.

The second research question showed that there were inadequate funding, lack of qualified Teachers, outdated curricular, poor infrastructure, low morale of teachers, brain drain, aversion to Teaching Profession and institution corruption. This study agrees with the work of Taiwo (1980) who stressed that there are different challenges confronting teacher education in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The trends in policy and reforms of teacher education from 1960 to 2019 reflect efforts to improve the quality and accessibility of education in Nigeria. Despite these efforts, challenges persist, including inadequate funding, lack of qualified teachers, and poor infrastructure. To address these issues, it is essential to:

To ensure a robust and effective teacher education system, it is essential to sustain investment in teacher training by guaranteeing adequate funding and the provision of necessary resources to colleges and universities responsible for preparing future educators. Continuous financial support helps maintain high standards in facilities, instructional materials, and faculty quality. In addition, enhancing teacher motivation is crucial. This involves improving the conditions of service for teachers, offering both financial and non-financial incentives, and providing opportunities for regular and meaningful professional development. Such measures

contribute to greater job satisfaction and commitment among educators.

Moreover, updating teacher education curricula to reflect current educational demands and technological progress is vital. Curriculum reforms should emphasize 21st-century teaching competencies, digital literacy, and inclusive education practices. Aligning the content and delivery of teacher training programs with real-world classroom needs ensures that teacher graduates are well-prepared to face contemporary challenges in education. By addressing these challenges and building on past reforms, Nigeria can strengthen its teacher education system and improve educational outcomes for future generations.

Recommendations

Base on the findings of this study, the following are hereby recommended:

1. There should be Sustainable investment in teacher education: Ensure adequate funding and resources for teacher training institutions.
2. Efforts should also be geared towards enhancing teacher motivation: Improve conditions of service, provide incentives, and promote professional development.
3. Deliberate efforts should be put in place to align teacher education programs with current educational needs and technological advancements.

4. Stakeholders must demonstrate will to tackle corruption, insecurity, and policy implementation challenges to create a stable educational environment.

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