

REVIEW ARTICLE

TEACHERS MOTIVATION AS A VIABLE OPTION FOR THE SURVIVAL OF THE NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

It is a well-known fact that teachers are the cornerstone of any educational programme. No matter how well education policies are formulated, planned and funded, without professionally qualified, dedicated and highly motivated teachers to execute the plan, the aims and objectives of that programme will fail woefully. It is very disheartening to see the teachers in the institutions of learning being treated with levity, contempt, abandonment and in fact as second class citizens. This seriously affects the standard of teaching and learning in the school and greatly threatens the very existence of education in the country. This paper examines the need for motivating the teachers and also suggests various ways of motivating in order to avert an imminent and total collapse of education in the country.

Key words: Teachers, Disheartening, Suggests

INTRODUCTION

For any educational plan to materialize, the teacher must be there to see the full implementation of the programme. This is because it is that no educational system can rise above its teachers (Ukeje Okwuonu 1993) For a tool to be effective, it has to constantly maintained. The teacher is an indispensable factor in any educational system. The quality of country's education is determined by the quality of the teacher. Since the teacher cannot offer what they do not have, he must be adequately equipped for his job In agreeing with the above Ada 1993:69 says:In any education system, the success or otherwise of the process very much on the quality and the caliber of teachers who are the interpreters and transmitters of desirable skills, knowledge and values in the society. In Nigeria today, the teacher are most often than not taken for granted. Their welfare is totally neglected. The society looks down on them because of their dismal conditions. As a result of this, the teacher becomes disinterested disenchanted with their work. This leads to ineffective teaching and learning. The students suffer and the quality of education continues to deteriorate. The paper aims to highlight the welfare of the teachers which Babatunde (1992:63) would Make them more stable and committed to their jobs. The second part of the paper will examine the various avenues open to the government to encourage the teacher in their work.

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WELFARE AND TEACHERS' WELFARE SCHEME

Hornby (1992:1449) defines welfare as good health, happiness, prosperity e.t.c of a person or group. Welfare can be taken to mean anything done to promote and sustain a person's well being to ensure his continuous happiness and survival within that environment. Teacher's welfare scheme can be defined as any specially planned package of incentives designed to make the teacher health, happy, prosperous, satisfied, dedicated, committed and motivated insure a way that they will bring out their very best in their places of work and within the society in which they live so that both the student and the society at large will greatly benefit from their services. It is believed that this package of incentives when fully implemented will serve as a catalyst that will maximize the teachers output for the growth and development of education in the country.

THE NEED TO MOTIVATE THE TEACHERS

There are various reasons why the teacher should be motivated in their work. A hungry man is an angry man. When the teacher are not adequately taken care of especially with regards to regular and prompt payment of their salaries and other entitlements, their attitudes to work automatically changes. They refuse to obey the laid down rules for their work, they come to work but no meaningful work is done. There is no effective teaching and learning "instead of teaching, many of the resort to discussing their personal woes in the class" Agogo 1994:7 they would even embark on work to rule action.

This will immediately put to stop any educational programme that is going on. On the other hand, if they are encouraged, they put in their best and the education of the students which Ukeje (1991:4) says "can make a mule dance" continues to grow from strength to strength. You do not give what you do not have, when the teachers are not exposed to new strategies of teaching, more and deeper knowledge of subject matter, more sophisticated instructional materials, effective teaching and learning could not be said to have taken place. This will adversely affect the quality of education which Aghuno (1994:89) says is: *The measure of how much the education offered, has turned out people who are intellectually, morally, emotionally, attitudinally, culturally and above all functionally and relevantly equipped for useful living within the society.*

In order words, the lack of exposure of the teachers to modern system of education makes the students to be functionally defective. As Ukeje 1991:12 clearly puts it "education ... is the key that unlocks the door to modernization but it is the teacher who holds the key to the door "with his constant and meaningful exposure, a high degree of perfection ensures with his new knowledge, new ideas and modern skills, he raises his work output, updates his students' knowledge thereby raising the academic standard of the institution.

Adequate welfare scheme for the teachers will bring about a conducive atmosphere in their places of work. This enhances the teachers' initiative, drive and commitment. With the resources available to them, they try to maximize their output. The students greatly benefit from them. This equally raises the quality of education in the country which is "Function of competence of her teachers to instruct, administer and discipline her clients" (1994:7) Adequate motivation of the teachers make them to develop the traits of honesty and sincerity. They are just and fair in their dealings with their students. They are quick to admit their faults and weaknesses and readily and willingly accept corrections from superiors. They are eager to adapt to changes introduced to better the lot of the students and the institution. The teachers need to be motivated in order to prevent them from engaging in sharp and unhealthy activities in order to make both ends meet and to live up to the expectation of the society in which they live. As Babatunde (1992:60) rightly says:

The Nigerian Society ... is highly materialistic ... So in a situation where the teacher is not living up to expectation. He is looked down upon. He is seen as belonging to the never do well group.

So, in order to live up to expectation, the teachers exploit their students in one form or the other. This brings about a strained relationship between them and their students. When the teachers are motivated in the high manner, they become contented. They will not deceive, cheat or steal in any form. They are satisfied with the much they get knowing fully well how and why they get what they get knowing what to expect as their due in future. This makes them to be considerate, dependable and committed to their work. The students try to reciprocate by putting in their best and this in turn raises the moral and academic tone of the institution.

MOTIVATING THE TEACHERS: THE VARIOUS WAYS

It is strongly believed that the best way of motivating the teachers is by putting in place a comprehensive welfare package for them designed to better their lot not only as teachers, but as members of the society in which they live. The welfare package must include the following: *Regular and prompt payment of their salaries and allowance:* Irregular and overdue payment of salaries and allowances for teachers from primary schools to the universities have been a thorny issue in the work and life of the teachers of this country. Umanah (1994 - 259), Kanu (1994:6) and Babatunde (1992:109) strongly condemn this ugly trend and they suggest that for the teachers to perform their duties effectively, they must be paid as and when due. It has been observed that one of the major causes of strike actions by the teachers is as a result of nonpayment of their salaries and allowances. It is being suggested that teachers should be paid their salaries when other workers in other ministries get theirs. Furthermore, a decree should be promulgated by Federal Government making it mandatory that the teachers' salaries must be paid on or before the 27th day of every month. The various ways are:

ADEQUATE REMUNERATION OF TEACHERS

Teaching is a time job and as such there should be a biannual upward review of their salaries and allowances to compensate the rate of inflation in the country. What is paid them presently is so small that many of them engage in private practices to the detriment of their job. Babatunde (1992:61) calls them the business - teacher group and further goes on to say:

"This is a group of teachers with many faces. They are teacher who combine commercial activities with their teaching jobs. They are those you find bringing pairs of shoes, dresses, underwear, and soft drinks to school for fellow members of staff and students to purchase. They usually allow the commercial activities to take precedence over their normal teaching duties.

This upward review of their salaries and allowances will make them to depend for their living on what is paid them monthly. This will make them to devote their attention to their teaching job.

PROMOTION OF TEACHERS

Teachers should be promoted as and when due. Their regular promotion is part of the fruit of their labour and it enhances their productivity. It is sad to note that many teachers are forced to stay on the same salary level for seven years or more. While Babatunde (1992:60) laments that "promotion exercises" for teachers have been embargoed on so many occasions" Ugwu (1995:60) bemoans the pathetic situation of teachers in Lagos State Polytechnic by saying that the deserving staff have not been promoted since 1992 and that competent staff were kept on the same level for as long as 11 years. It is being advocated that the teachers should be promoted every three years as is currently done in some Federal Education Institutions.

Obi (1990:86) observes that regular release of teachers' promotion will increase their zeal towards their work.

IN—SERVICE TRAINING: In-service training is needed by the teachers to update their knowledge of the subject they teach. Ibi (1994:248) is of the view that governments should be relatively involved in both pre service and in-service programmes for teachers. Babatunde (1992:63) observes that professionalism in teaching will require the "introduction of in-service professional training programmes for teachers from pre-primary to University levels. The in-service training being suggested here will be full pay. This, in the long run will increase the overall competence of the teachers.

SPONSORED CONFERENCES, SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS: Teachers should be sponsored to attend conferences, seminar and workshops at least once a year. This will give them the opportunity to rub minds with other educationists thereby keeping them abreast with modern trends in education. Obi (1990:79) agrees with the above by saying:

For a teacher to become more proficient in discharging his duties, he must take routes such as workshops, independent study, curriculum committee work...and professional conferences.

He goes on to say that every teacher "must always be ready to renew and revamp his teaching strategies" Okuwubunka (1994:84) warns that:

A teacher will soon decay if he is not constantly exposed to new ideas and trends in his profession, professional reputation could be established through publications and initiating seminars and workshops.

This conferences if sponsored by the institutions will equally help the teachers in getting their promotions as and when due.

GIVING TEACHERS RESEARCH GRANT: Individual or group of teachers should be given research grants once they come up with viable research proposals. Emeh (1993:67) is of the view that colleges of education must wake up to their proper research roles and warns that researches on teaching must be taken seriously if professionally competent teachers are to be produced. When teacher are given this research grand, not only will they come up with new ideas in the education process, but they will equally have that sense of achievement as being contributed to the ever growing knowledge in the field of education.

PROVISION OF WELL EQUIPPED LIBRARY AND LABORATORIES

Teachers need library and laboratories that are fully equipped with current or up-to-date relevant books and instruments for their study, research and teaching. Odoh (1990:25) and Okwenu (1993:9) and are of the view that many institutions in the country have poorly equipped libraries and laboratories which adversely affect the teacher in their work. It is being suggested that obsolete books and equipment that fill the library and laboratories presently be removed and current and

relevant ones put in their place which will enhance the performance of the teacher.

GRANTING OF LOANS TO TEACHER: loans should be granted to all teachers as is being done in some federal education institution. The loans should be enough to buy the teacher furniture, second hand vehicles or motorcycles and able to buy shares in some companies. Umunh (1994:260) says that giving the atmosphere for them.

ADEQUATE MEDICAL ATTENTION: The teacher and their wards should be provided with adequate medical services. Each institution should have a clinic and doctor attached to it even if it is on a part time basis. Again, there should be designated hospitals where serious cases should be referred to and the hospital bills fully settle by the institution. The present practice in some federal Education institutions where patients who are referred to hospital settle the bill by themselves and then apply to their institution for reimbursement, which may take months to settle, should be discouraged. Hospitals where such patients are referred to hospitals settle the bill by themselves and then apply to their institutions for reimbursement may take months to settle should be discouraged. Hospital where such patients are referred to should send their bill direct to the institutions which now settle them. This is usual practice in banks and other companies.

PROMPT PAYMENT OF GRATUITY AND PENSION: One important aspect of the teacher's welfare scheme often neglected is payment of their gratuity and pension. Some teachers have been known to die without getting their gratuity. And yet, not only that they cannot feed, they equally have member of their family and relatives to maintain. Babatunde (1992:62) refers to them as 'aged teacher' and described them as those that "have put in between thirty and thirty five year of teaching and are still in the classroom due to the need to fulfill family commitments" That much teacher change their date of birth every few year is no more news. All these things happen due to the lopsided manner teachers' gratuity and pension have been handled by government. What is being suggested here is that before any teacher retires, his gratuity and pension papers must have been fully processed and ready for payment. His gratuity should be paid latest three months after the last payment of his salary. If this is done, not only will the teachers be assured of their future and therefore carry out their assignment with greater vigour, but those that find themselves incapable of continuing with their jobs will voluntarily retire.

ADEQUATE OFFICE ACCOMMODATION: Teacher need spacious well equipped offices in order to perform their jobs well. At time, one sees teachers especially the newly employed ones loafing about due to lack of office accommodation. Offices should be provided for all the teacher and such offices should have basic amenities as tables, chairs, ceiling fans or air conditioners and cupboards.

CO-OPTING TEACHERS IN MANAGEMENT DECISION: Teacher or their representative should be involved in taking decision that affect them and their institutions. Okwuenu (1992:10) says that management committee of each College of education should include among

other the academic staff member of the college supporting the above, Obi (1990:82) says:

Give an opportunity, most teachers will reach a higher level of productivity if allowed to generate input as to how they feel the job should be completed. Good administrative and supervisory practices can create conditions whereby teachers are allowed to take part in the planning procedures. the essence of the above is that it give teachers an intrinsic job satisfaction.

Where decisions are based on the will of the people, everyone will participate in the achievement of the set objectives and none will have any cause for protest (Okwuenu1993:143). Thus, the strained relationship that usually exists between the teachers and the management will be greatly minimized.

POSITION OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES: teachers need to be provided with recreational facilities for their physical, mental and social growth and development. "One of the most serious challenges posed to present day educational institutions in Nigeria is the provision of recreational opportunities". (Momodu 1987:49) Jack (1982:4) is of the opinion that education that does not cater for recreation is maimed. Incomplete and a half - done thing.

Out - door games facilities such as football field, volley ball, handball and basketball courts and lawn tennis court should be provided which table tennis badminton, ludo, chess, whot, monopoly, and draught should equally be provided as in-door games. These game facilities if provided will be the teachers' avenue for enjoining their leisure which not only give them pleasure but also rejuvenates their minds and physique which in turn will make them willing and capable of facing their jobs squarely.

EMPLOYMENT OF SUFFICIENT TEACHERS: Many teachers today are over-burdened by having so many students and subjects to handle. There have been occasions when some teachers teach five to eight courses per semester and others teach up to 400 hundred students or more at a time. The situation is even worse in some primary and secondary schools especially now that some states have dismissed many of the teachers who are non-indigenes of the state. Taiwo (1995:18) report that one of the reasons for the poor performance in JAMB examination this year was due to large sizes of classes being handled by teachers while Yawe (1995:18) says that in Taraba State:

Another major problem is that of staffing. Most of the schools are under staffed with few qualified teachers. A teacher covers six classes and this is so must for him to control and to put in his best.

It is being suggested that more qualified teacher be employed in such a way that no teacher in the college and Universities handles more than two subjects or course per semester and nobody teaches more than 200 students there. In primary school, no teachers should handle more than one class and no class should contain more than 30 pupils.

PROVISION OF ENOUGH CLASSROOMS AND BASIC TEACHING FACILITIES: No teacher teaches effectively when the classroom is not enough to accommodate his student, when the seats are inadequate and when basic teaching materials such as chalk, chalkboard and duster are unavailable. Jagha (1995:3) reports that the local branch of ASUU of Ahmadu Bello University embarked on strike over the deteriorating teaching conditions there. He adds that "even basic teaching facilities including blackboard, chalk and electricity supply are unavailable". Yawe (1995:18) lament that 287 schools in Taraba state lack of furniture in the schools that have classroom blocks is so pronounced that pupils squat on bare floor for their lessons.

Enough classroom blocks should be provided to accommodate all the pupils and students. Again sufficient seat and desks should be available for them to be comfortably seated. In addition, basic teaching facilities such as chalkboard, chalk, of all these will greatly enhance the performance of the teachers.

END- OF YEAR PARTY FOR THE TEACHERS: There should be an end- of year party for the teachers every year. Such an activity will give them the opportunity to interact in a relaxed atmosphere, take stock of their achievements for the year and look forward to working harder in the coming year. Such a party which will be funded by the institution should feature speeches, riddles and jokes, eating, drinking and dancing.

Conclusion

No nation rises above standards set and taught by its intellectuals and teachers (Amakiri 1992:4). Therefore the quality of education provided in any society and the nature of the change effected by that education are both dependent on the quality of teachers and the effectiveness of their teaching in the schools (Ukeje 1991:4) if the teachers are apathetic, uncommitted, uninspired, lazy and unmotivated the whole nation is doomed (Orzigi 1992:62). What is being emphasized here is even if the best of the students are offered admission in the schools, and the schools fully equipped, without employing and maintaining professionally qualified, exposed, dedicated and highly motivated teaching staff, the lofty aims and objectives of education will continue to elude this country. Urgent attention should be shifted back to improving the teachers' welfare to ensure the survival of education in the country.

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