

Demand and Supply of Teachers in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The observed dearth of teachers in public senior secondary schools in Edo State, Nigeria has become worrisome to stakeholders of education. It is against this backdrop that this paper attempted an expository situational education with a view to supply the required teachers that are being demanded in secondary schools in Edo State. It was observed that 4,328 teachers are needed; relule only 1,863 teachers are available to teach in 298 public senior secondary schools in Edo State. It was however, supported that government should supply through recruitment of qualified teachers to schools; adequate allowance should be provided for teachers in order to retain them in rural schools, among others.

Keywords: Demand and Supply of Teachers, Secondary Education, Public Secondary Schools.

Introduction

Demand and supply of teachers in Nigerian public secondary schools is a pair of educational scissors. As inseparable parts of an essential tool of education; the movement of one invariably affects the other. It stands to reason, therefore, that every demand for teachers literally means a corresponding supply, all things being equal. Also, the immense relevance of education to national development cannot be overemphasized. Many countries commit huge sums of money into the funding of education. In order to ensure that a lot of people benefit from formal education, some countries make principle and secondary education free. In Nigeria, education is said to be free through Universal Basic Education Scheme in the first 9 years of schooling (Primary 1 through to Junior Secondary School class 3).

In Nigeria also efforts are made by the government to ensure that those people who missed their earlier opportunities to obtain formal education when they were young now have a second chance in adult education. In pursuance of this laudable objective, various governments in Nigeria, whether states or federal have over the years allocated substantial parts of their annual budgets to education. This is in realization of the federal government's adoption of education as an instrument par excellence for effective national development based on the five main national objectives as ensured in the National Policy on Education [1].

Secondary education plays significant roles in the actualisation of making an individual self-reliant and developing the community. This is because it is at the secondary school level that career decisions are made, hence several secondary schools were over the years opened existing ones expanded in infrastructure, so as to provide the needed formal education to the learning secondary schools going age. However, these schools can achieve nothing without quality and effective teaching to carry out the task of teaching and learning.

In the conceptualization of education, the teacher is obviously a prime factor. A teacher is an academic who is able to manipulate and re-engineer the other resources to achieve set goals and, in a manner, to achieve the inculcation of relevant knowledge (Ehiaguina, 2014) [2]. He is an academic catalyst and an intellectual developer, a character molder for acceptance behaviour, a role model and a near perfect ideal of human discipline. In spite of these encomiums bequeathed upon the teacher, he may still be having some daunting challenges like lack of job satisfaction, how morale, poor social image, workload related issues and remunerations.

Teaching as an art is challenging and demanding hence its being perceived by teachers as lightest energy dissipating activity. Teachers may find themselves working outside the school hours attending to students' work, consequently lengthening their working week. The effect of this energy sapping, time consuming and stressful situation is that teachers may not be able to maximise their input for effective teaching. The quality of education is directly related to the quality of instruction in the classroom. Perhaps academic qualifications, knowledge of the subject matter, competence and skills of teaching and the commitment of the teacher have effective impact on the teaching learning process [2].

In the same vein, the seeming shortage of qualified, experience and efficient teachers who should have brought about the realization of the laudable national education objectives in our secondary schools, gives cause to worry because it is at this school level that career decisions are made by young graduates, when the idea of producing qualitative secondary school learners comes, the notion of having adequately qualified, experienced and dedicated teachers who are efficient in teaching cannot be no qualitative education. The alleged shortage of qualified, experienced, dedicated and effective teachers is becoming worrisome to stakeholders in the education sector. This is because when teachers roles are critically viewed against the backdrop of socio-economic development and capacity

building for improved job performance, the need for the aforementioned crop of teachers cannot be overemphasized [3].

In public secondary schools in Edo State, the minimum teaching qualification is the National certificate in Education (NCE). Holders of NCE are to teach in the junior secondary schools. Owing to the alleged acute shortage of teachers, they are observing found teaching in the senior secondary schools. However, qualifications of teachers found in schools vary from one individual to the other. An unprofessional practice that is observed in schools is the use of unqualified teachers to teach subjects outside their areas of specialisation. The reason often adduced by teachers and school heads, when interviewed, is lack of qualified teachers to teach the subjects. English and Mathematics are the noticeable subjects that teachers are draft from the subject areas to teach under the principle of “one-cap-fit-all” [4].

However, the issue of inadequate teaching in our public secondary schools in Edo State has become disturbing to stakeholders of education. More disturbing is perhaps the persistent decline in governments budgetary allocation to the education sector which appears to impede the recruitment of qualified teachers into the secondary school system. This paper is, therefore, volunteering a comprehensive education of the

current teachers’ dispositions in schools, as well as the need for and supply of teachers to fill the available vacancies.

Need For Teachers in Public Secondary Schools

It is observed that public secondary schools in Edo State are understaffed. The Federal Government reported that the falling quality education in Nigeria is caused by acute shortage of qualified teachers in the secondary schools level [4]. It was also reported that about 20 million Nigerian children are out of school in Nigeria. The report indicates that a disproportionate percentage of the children are girls who constitute about 58% due largely to traditional practices and prejudices ranged against girl child education in a “patriarchal milieu”.

From available statistics, it is obvious that many teachers are needed for Edo State public secondary schools. The teacher factor, therefore, becomes sacrosanct. This is because many educational programmes and projects have failed mainly because they did not take the “teacher factor” to account. Although the government has reiterated its commitment to ensuring the success of secondary education in Edo State and that teachers will therefore always be an integral part of the process of its conceptualization, planning and execution, it is generally known that many schools do not have the required number of qualified teachers.

Public Senior Secondary School Disposition of Teachers in Edo State.

S/N	LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA	NO. OF PUBLIC SEC. SCHOOLS	NO. OF TEACHERS AVAILABLE	NO. OF TEACHERS NEEDED
1	Akoko-Edo	28	104	245
2	Egor	11	112	308
3	Esan Central	14	85	198
4	Esan North East	12	102	256
5	Esan South East	18	96	273
6	Esan West	17	132	260
7	Etsako Central	7	45	264
8	Etsako East	14	76	145
9	Etsako West	26	120	176
10	Igueben	10	69	260
11	Ikpoba- Okha	14	174	426
12	Oredo	13	186	435
13	Orhionmwon	29	112	228
14	Ovia North East	25	74	264
15	Ovia South West	13	101	178
16	Owan East	16	96	208
17	Owan West	21	88	204
18	Uhunwode	21	91	234
	TOTAL	298	1,863	4,328

Source: Ministry of Education, Benin City (2023).

From the table above, it can be observed that the demand for teachers in public Senior Secondary schools in Edo state is very high. The public senior secondary schools in Edo state are 298. The total number of teachers needed to adequately fill the vacancies in the schools is 4,328, while the total number of teachers available is 1,863. The available number of teachers is about one-third of the required number of teachers.

Supply of Teachers in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Edo State

It is said in education parlance that “no educational system can rise above the level of its teachers”. In other words, the quality of education cannot be higher than the quality of the teachers in the schools. Having established the fact that there is high demand for teachers in public senior secondary schools in Edo State, the need to supply the system with good quality trained teachers in order to have well trained, responsible citizens who will be able to face the modern socio economic and technological challenges cannot be overlooked.

To this end, the need to raise the present level of general education of teachers and the level of their initial professional preparation, broadened and intensified in the 21st century, becomes relevant because it is now common knowledge among stakeholders of secondary education, that the quality of education in Nigeria has fallen. This is mainly evident from the products of Nigerian universities who gained admissions through organized examination malpractices in miracle centres that virtually all the secondary schools have turned into” [6].

Omo-Ojugo (2005) [7] has also noted the general concern in developing countries, like Nigeria, that students at all levels lack the basic reading skills in order to properly function in a world where information is rapidly increasing and knowledge becoming much more complex. For instance, while much attention is given to the teaching of reading in literate countries such as the United States of America, Canada and Britain, etc, little or no importance is attached to the teaching of reading in Nigeria.

Furthermore, it is observed that Nigerian students (Edo Student inclusive) do not generally perform well in most public examination. Almost every year, Chief Examiners reports for the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and the National Examinations Council (NECO) highlight the abysmal poor performance of students at the senior secondary school certificate Examinations. Added to this poor performance at these public examinations, is the widespread vice of examination malpractice which is indicative of poor and inadequate preparation for examination. When students have not read widely and thoroughly and have not been well-prepared for examination, the tendency would be to turn to short-cuts and sharp practices in order to pass examination [7]. A major fall out of this phenomenon is that many students who find their ways to Nigerian Universities, polytechnics, Colleges of Education, etc. are unable to function academically and properly in such tertiary institutions.

If the consequence of the above scenario to be reversed in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century, Nigeria and Edo State in particular, must therefore, begin by giving greater attention to our secondary education. This level of education constitutes the building block of any society’s educational development. We need to supply both enough quality and quality teachers for secondary school education in Nigeria once this sector has been supplied with well-trained quality teachers, the Edo, nay Nigeria Students, will certainly aspire to other levels equipped with a capacity to meet and deal with life challenges.

However, in the 21st century, education is sure to be the key to new global knowledge and technology-driven-economy. It is only education that can provide us with the opportunity to overcome many of the obstacles, which impede our socio-economic and political transformation. Attention should, therefore, be focused on the supply of quality teachers secondary school education who will be able to translate the curriculum into concrete realities, teach and equip our students with the opportunities they need to optimize their potentials and contribute to the growth and development of the society and humanity.

Conclusion

Nigeria and Edo State in particular, is at present in a complex and professionally demanding environment for teachers work. This is mainly because of the revolution in information and communication technologies for which the majority of Nigerian teachers have not been adequately prepared. Virtually all countries of the world have come to terms with the challenges of modern life. Highly effective schools and improved students outcomes should be key objective of government.

This is because education of the highest quality is the foundation for the future of the country. Education is the “weapon” for empowering any nation to rise to the challenges of social cultural, economic and technological change. If improving student outcomes is the desired focus, then efforts should be geared at improving also the supply and quality of teachers so that they can be more effective in their work.

Suggestions

Demand for and supply of teachers cannot work in vacuum without a corresponding fact in student’s outcomes; hence it is hereby suggested among the following that;

1. Edo State government should make concerted efforts to supply the needed number of teacher to fill the existing required vacancies.
2. Recruitment of teachers for the purpose of supply should be evenly spread. Also, subject areas should be supplied.
3. The recruited and supplied teachers should be qualified ones and not the politically induced recruitment of “teachers” by dubious politicians. It should be based on merit and not favouritism and ethnical basis.
4. Adequate incentives must be provided for teachers. For example, Rural Teachers Allowance (RTA) should be provided for teachers in the rural areas in order to minimize their quests of transfer to schools in the urban schools.
5. The remunerations and conditions of service of teachers should be the same as their counter parts, if not better, so as to minimize attention of teachers from the secondary schools.
6. Government should provide adequate finance for funding secondary education instead of embarking on escapist tendencies by formulating never surpassing and never-result- oriented policies to deceive the public. Teachers creative inequality in the class room cannot be replaced by technology.

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