

UPGRADING TEACHERS' REMUNERATION IN NIGERIA FOR QUALITY SERVICE DELIVERY

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Abstract

The beauty of any remuneration lies on giving it to the beneficiaries as at when due, commiserating with the level of their job performance, qualifications and what is obtainable in other professions. Teachers give out their best if their needs are satisfied to a reasonable extent. So, their compensations need to be reviewed and upgraded for quality service delivery. The paper discussed the present plight of an average Nigerian teacher, and highlighted some teachers' compensations that need to be upgraded such as wage/salary, bonuses, incentives, insurance, medical and retirement benefits, training and re-training opportunities. The paper concluded that since teachers are instrumental to quality education, unless attention is paid to their welfare packages, there will be no job satisfaction and the standard of education in the country will continue to dwindle. The paper amongst others suggested that stakeholders in education sector should look out for what is best for teachers and treat them the way their counterparts in other countries and professions are treated, for this will attract and help to retain quality teachers.

Keywords: Upgrading, Teachers, Remuneration, Quality, Service, Delivery.

INTRODUCTION

Whenever a worker receives a pay either from a head or directly from an organization or company for doing a work, he/ she has been remunerated. Remuneration is compensation or award for performing or delivering services at a particular time. It is also described as the sum of all the financial and non-financial compensation an employee receives (study.com). Kagan (2020), posited that remuneration is payment or compensation received for services or employment which includes a basic salary and any bonuses or economic benefits that an employee or executive receives during

employment. In the teaching profession, it entails the overall financial and non-financial rewards a teacher gets for being employed to teach in an academic institution.

What a teacher goes home with as a compensation for his duty has a lot to say concerning his quality and the quality of the student produced. Teachers that earn higher pay are known for higher productivity which results in better student's performances (will, 2019). No nation excels beyond the quality of education given to the citizenry and "no teacher, no education". Any nation that toys with teachers' welfare does it at the detriment of her society.

To ensure efficiency in the educational sector and sustainability, most nations have embraced functional and befitting teachers' welfare system as an inevitable tool for fast national growth and development. Nations such as china, Finland, Singapore treat their teachers with utmost respect and adequate pay policy. Just like workers in other organizations; their teachers are motivated and are satisfied with their living and working conditions.

Presently, in Nigeria, Issues like poor teachers' remuneration, irregular pay and denial of some benefits occupy the headlines of the dailies with teachers showing dissatisfactions over their pay and their working conditions. These issues have led to series of local, state and national strikes, which in turn, contributed to the fallen standard of education in the nation. Furthermore, poor teachers' remuneration and the way in which it is paid, has been identified by scholars as one of the major demotivating factor leading to teachers' loss of trust in the administration of the educational system with a feeling of being neglected, undervalued and disrespected by their government (teachers' voice). This kind of feeling does more harm than good and doesn't in any way promote educational goal attainment.

Teachers are men and women who have gone through special training, acquired the necessary skills, knowledge, attitude, and values in an official training institution, to teach and impact same to the learners in the most acceptable way (Amaele in Adiele, 2020). They are either employed by the government or private institutions to render services so as to receive compensations. They are stakeholders in education and contribute greatly to the success of the school system. Not only are teachers professionals in their own field, they produce other professionals such as engineers, medical doctors, lawyers, even teachers.

The roles of teachers to the society are enormous. But the question that bothers the researcher include the following; are teachers' remunerations in comparable to what is paid to other civil servants? Is their payment regular? Are all the allowances and fringe benefits that other civil servants enjoy extended to teachers? These questions need to be addressed. Not paying attention to the needs and yearning of teachers is a barrier to quality service delivery in the education sector. Studies have shown that regular salaries and adequate compensations are among the motivating factors and enhancer of teachers' job satisfaction (Adelabu, 2005 and Oroko 2014). In order to step up their game as nation builders, words must be matched to actions in giving teachers adequate pay system.

The Condition of an Average Nigerian Teacher

The teaching profession is a mother to other professions. How comes other professionals are better remunerated than the teachers? Remuneration should come with joy, but the feeling of not been properly compensated robs off a teacher's joy whenever he is paid. A teacher's take home package in Nigeria is below what their counterparts in the oil companies, business organizations, medical firms, e.t.c. receive for services rendered. Teachers are among the least paid, yet, they are expected to deliver quality services. This disturbing issue has resulted to poor academic performance and fallen moral standard in our society.

In the past, teachers were recognized, valued and appreciated by the government, parents, students, even the society at large. They were useful tools for both the villagers and the village heads. No important meeting holds without inputs from teacher(s). They served in the capacities of secretaries and interpreters. Teachers contributed intellectually and financially to the development of individuals and communities. They were always the first to build houses, buy cars and their children were given quality education. In short, teachers were motivated and delivering quality services became their target.

The teaching profession remained enviable till when things began to change, especially during the military administration when teachers found it very hard to meet up with their family needs (Eromosele, 2020). Dr. Aminu Ladan of the National Teachers Institute (NTI) in Adesulu *et al.* (2015) pointed out that “teachers pay is so low that most of them can barely put food on their tables by the time they settled their children’s school fees, utility and medical bills, yet they are expected to perform magic”. In the same vein, Kazeem Labaika of the Academic Staff Union of Secondary Schools (ASUSS) in Adesulu *et al.* (2015) declared that teachers, being the pivots of education in the nation “are denied, deprived and depressed”. There is need for teachers to be motivated and empowered like their counterparts for proper performance (Oroko, 2014).

There are two categories of teachers in Nigeria, those who teach in government schools and others that are employed in private establishments. Those employed by the government are paid by either the state or by the federal government while the teachers in the private institutions are paid by their employers. For the teachers in the government schools, their salaries vary depending on the state of the country where they are employed or if they belong to the categories that are being paid by the federal government.

Teachers placed at level 8 at federal schools go home monthly with an average salary of ₦46,000 to ₦66,000. While in states like Lagos, those employed under the Lagos state ministry of education receive ₦45,000 monthly as entry salary for a level 8 teacher (Okeke, 2021). Also, the average net salary for class teacher at rivers state senior secondary schools board is ₦89,000(mysalariescale.com). Even though, the teachers in Rivers state are paid higher, it is still below what their counterparts in other professions earn. The case is different in other states where teachers earn between ₦20,000 and ₦70,000 per month. In the private schools, teachers pay vary based on the level of the schools. Those in small schools go home with very little amount ranging from ₦10,000 to ₦20,000. Whereas in some big and well organized schools, the teachers’ welfare is considered to be paramount. Teachers earn ₦50,000, ₦250,000, even more depending on their qualifications.

Although, recently, President Muhammad Buhari has ordered an immediate review of teachers salaries and wages. This has not been fully implemented in all the states since some are still battling with the issue of minimum wage. Significantly, an upward review of teacher’s salaries and wages is a right direction in motivating teachers for better performance and consolidation of the educational system.

Upgrading Teachers’ Pay for Quality Service Delivery: To upgrade according to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, “is to raise something to a higher standard”. Upgrading means adding value or life to what has being in existence to make it more meaningful. In other words, upgrading teachers’ remuneration entails increasing what teachers have been receiving as salaries and some other benefits to enhance their productivity. For the goals of education to be actualized, teachers must be paid adequately. Remuneration of teachers can only be adequate, if the rewards are given to the beneficiaries as at when due, commiserating with the level of their job performance,

qualifications and being in line with what their counterparts in other professions receive as rewards for services provided. Researches have revealed that people can only give out their best if their needs are satisfied to reasonable extent. Marumbu (2014) asserted that adequate pay has the capability to motivate, attract and retain workers towards higher performance. Workers tend to show satisfaction if salaries, fringe benefits, administrative relationship, training and re-training, physical working conditions, advancement and recognition are favourable (Nisar & Siddiqui 2019). This goes a long way to show the importance of upgrading teachers' remuneration for quality performance. Teachers are saddled with a great responsibility of molding the future of the society. To achieve this great task, attention must be paid to what they receive as a pay, the extent and the manner in which it is being paid. Value must be added to their compensations. Meeting the needs of the teachers will determine their willingness and commitment to their duties.

Some Teachers Compensation that Need to be Upgraded: There are two categories of compensations used to boost teachers' job satisfaction and performance namely; the financial and non-financial compensations. The financial compensations include the following;

- ❖ **Wage and Salary:** The terms 'wage' and 'salary' are commonly interchangeable, and their meanings are the same in many contexts- but not always. Wage is a fixed payment earned for works or services, typically paid on a daily or weekly basis. While salary is the regular payment by an employer to an employee for employment that specified either for monthly or annually, but is paid most commonly on a monthly basis, especially to white collar workers, managers, directors and professionals (lexico.com).
A salary does not change on a weekly or monthly basis. Salaries are calculated annually, divided by twelve months and paid out each month. Wages on the other hand, are calculated on the number of hours worked. Both comprise all compensations made to workers for either physical or mental work, but they do not represent the income of the self-employed (Jan,[n. d]). In which ever form an employer of teachers chooses to pay, let the payment follow the due process.
- ❖ **Bonus:** A bonus refers to benefits or compensations an employee receives from the employer for good performance. It comes in the form of cash or cash equivalents but not expected by the employee (Bardot, 2017, & Bloommenthal, 2021). Teachers deserve such surprises from the government or the private employers especially during festive seasons to motivate them and to provide social security.
- ❖ **Incentive:** An incentive is a form of compensation awarded to employees for results rather than for the time worked (Benstead, 2018). An incentive could be monetary or non- monetary rewards that motivates an individual for good performance, it is one of the most important drivers of employers performance. In the teaching profession, incentives are used to keep teachers motivated, hardworking and spur them to strive for the best possible results. It promotes quality service delivery and staff retention. One of such compensation is the incentive for rural teachers. Teachers in the rural areas are entitled to enjoy additional 5% basic salary as incentive, 10% for teachers in difficult terrain, and 15% for teachers in riverine areas (NUT, in Adelabu, 2005). These are clearly documented but are rarely paid to rural teachers. If these incentives and more are fully implemented, the issue of teacher's scarcity in the rural areas will be addressed. More teachers will be retained in the rural communities, rather than every teacher striving to teach in the urban areas.

- ❖ **Special Allowances:** Some of the special allowances include;
 - i. **Housing Allowance:** Housing facilities or house rent allowances can be provided for teachers in active service to enable them deliver their duties efficiently.
 - ii. **Retirement Benefits:** There should be functional pension plan and other benefits that teachers can enjoy after they retire from teaching at the prescribed age. Most importantly, these benefits should come timely without much stress.
 - iii. **Insurance:** Accidental and life insurance should be introduced into the teaching profession. The awareness that there will be compensation for a teacher if any there is an accident or if death occurs encourages a teacher to do more for the best of his profession. It is a way of giving teachers emotional security and a sense of belonging. They feel valued, satisfied with their job and will be ready to do more.
 - iv. **Medical Benefits:** Medical allowances should be provided for teachers for their medical check-ups and proper treatments. This should also be extended to their immediate families.
 - v. **Leave Policy:** There should be plans and provision for teachers leave and leave allowances. It is the right of teachers to get adequate number of leaves and pay for leaves such as casual leaves, medical leaves (sick leave) and maternity leaves. Teachers should enjoy leave travel allowances to enable them travel with their family during holidays has been practiced in other professions.

There are some Non-Financial Compensation such as;

- i. **Training and Re-training Opportunities:** For improved productivity in the teaching profession, teachers need to be trained and retrained. Training of teachers must be a continuous process because of the dynamic nature of our society. Teachers must be updated with the current changes in their profession. This shouldn't be left for the teachers to cater for alone. They need support in terms of logistics, time and resource persons.
- ii. **Recognition and Awards:** Studies have shown that recognition and award programs have motivated teachers for best results. Ensuring that excellent teachers are recognized and awarded can encourage them to go higher in service delivery (Hans, 2011).
- iii. **Fringe Benefits:** These are extra benefits added to employees' base salary such as cars, meals, etc. Fringe benefits can be given to teachers who have contributed to the development of the educational sector. They don't come in cash but are highly valued by teachers and can be used to make the teaching profession attractive. Although, some state government in Nigeria, have initiated a policy of granting a revolving loan for teachers in order to assist them build their own houses, buy cars, but majority of the teachers do not receive such allowances. There is notable improvement in teachers' salaries and the way the salaries are paid, as observed by (Adelabu, 2005). Special allowances such as allowances for science teachers, incentives for rural teachers, insurance, overtime have not been harmonized. Thus, the government ought to ensure that this aspect is addressed if quality service delivery is the utmost goal of the educational sector.

The Need for an Upgrade

Since what teachers get as pay and how it is paid affects teachers' attitude to their job, it is imperative that value or life be added to teachers' remuneration. Below are some of the reasons for upgrading teachers' remuneration.

- ❖ **To give Teachers' Status a Boost:** Poorly paid teachers struggle with low esteem in the society. Their inability to cater for themselves and their immediate family slow them down whenever financial matters arise. Higher pay means lifting the teacher's status.
- ❖ **For the Attainment of Educational Goals:** Teachers as the pivot of education deserve the best in terms of pay. For Nigeria as a nation to use education to effect positive change, the educators' remuneration must be improved.
- ❖ **Increasing Teachers Pay will strengthen the teaching workforce:** One of the challenging issues in the teaching profession is inadequate pay. This issue has discouraged many from going into teaching. Increasing teacher's pay could fortify the quality and increase the future workforce.
- ❖ **For Better Students Performance:** A good pay system for teachers is a determinant factor for better students' performance (Oroko, 2014). When a teacher is properly remunerated, it enhances his well-being. Emotionally, he will be stable because he can attend to his needs. He will be happy and would want to put more effort to retain his job. Again, because his working conditions are favourable, he will go into researches to enhance his cognitive skills which will reflect in his students academic performance. A study by Will, (2019), revealed that students educated by teachers with higher cognitive skills out performed those taught by mediocre. Increased pay for teachers enhances their cognitive skills which in turn, promotes students performance (Will, 2019). Students educated by teacher with higher cognitive abilities outperform those taught by mediocre. Based on this, improving the starting salaries of teachers may attract higher quality teachers and as well boost the student's performance.
- ❖ **Reduction of Second Job:** A second job is an activity done in addition to one's main job, especially to earn extra income. In order to make ends meet, most teachers go for second jobs which in one way or another affect their job performance negatively. Adding value to teachers pay will reduce the cases of second job. Also, it will serve as a means of retaining quality teachers and keeping them focused with classroom work.
- ❖ **To Checkmate Rural – Urban Migration:** There are cases of some rural schools where only the headmaster with one or two teachers manage the school because most of the teachers posted to those schools refused to stay. Sometimes, their refusal to stay is associated with irregularities in paying the stipulated rural teachers incentives. If there is a good pay system and additional allowances are given to rural teachers, many teachers won't abandon their duty centres in the rural areas for jobs in the cities.
- ❖ **Choosing Teaching Profession as First Choice of Study:** Students seeking for admissions into higher institutions hardly choose faculties and universities of education as their first choice of study. This is because, they are avoiding not ending up as teachers. Upgrading teachers' remuneration will arouse the interest of students in choosing education as their first choice of study (Nwamara, & Adiele, 2019).
- ❖ **Less Dependence on Government for Training and Re-training Programs:** An upward review of teachers' remuneration will enable them finance some of their training programs without depending totally on the government. To be acquainted with current issues and development in the teaching profession, teachers need to be trained and re-trained. If their pay system is adequate, they can fund their trainings. But in a situation where they are

under paid, the entire burden will rest on the government. Consequently, training and re-training opportunities keep eluding the teachers to update teachers with current issues and new developments in their profession; there is need for training and re-training programs.

Ways for Teachers to Earn More Money

Apart from the government making teachers starting adequate and attractive, there are other ways teachers can earn more. These include the below:

- ❖ **Home Tutorial:** One of the ways a teacher can make more money is by starting a home tutorial or lesson. This requires a teacher using his subject knowledge and skills to teach one-to-one or small groups in evenings or weekends. As a teacher, you can check out local tutoring places or post on your own ad on social media to see if anyone is in need of private teachers. Once you are good at your subject, students from your school or from your neighbourhood would come to your tutorial. This will add value to your income and may change your life.
- ❖ **Selling of Teaching Resources:** There are some teaching resources you've put time and effort in creating and you often lay hands on them because they are meaningful. Share them with other teachers online and get paid. Use some online platform such as "teacher's pay teachers" to showcase your teaching materials for other teachers to buy.
- ❖ **Public Speaking or Presentation:** Many people suffer stage fright and thereby avoid speaking in public. Teachers are unique when it comes to public speaking and presentation. Teachers are trained for this purpose and speaking before groups is what they do all the time. As a teacher, you can offer to speak for small businesses, sales or charitable organizations or trade groups to earn extra money. Create awareness and put yourself out, add something new to what has been in existence to be outstanding.

Online Tutoring: With the advent of ICT (Information and Communication Technology), there are many opportunities to tutor various subjects online. Some online sites such as; Wyzant, Tutor Me, Skype, Google hangouts or a professional conference application such as "Webex" can help match a teacher with a student in his area. Again, "Skooli" as an online platform connect teachers to student who need help in different subject in different grade levels. Skooli gives teachers the options of either teach scheduled classes or be available as online support, to give immediate response to students in need and get paid.
- ❖ **Freelance Writing and Editing:** Having teaching experience is an advantage to any education writer. As a teacher, all you need do is to put down events that take place in your day to day into writing. The stories you tell about your job can be written for others to read and benefit from them. There are sites that pay education writers. Teachers can send some of their ideas and earn more money. Not only becoming a freelance writer, teachers are used to correcting papers. Editing other people written works can help a teacher make more money. A lot of companies and websites are looking for editors on a contract basis.
- ❖ **Video Lesson:** Another reasonable way a teacher can earn extra money is by posting videos on *YouTube*. There is an opportunity of making more revenue if your video proves more popular.
- ❖ **Exam Making:** Teachers can make more money by marking exams such as GCE, WAEC and NECO. Hence, you have academic qualification and experience in the subject you intend to mark, go ahead and apply during the marking periods.

- ❖ **Writing of Books:** Writing of books or e-books makes a teacher richer. As an expert in your field, you can pick up a topic of public interest, discuss it and increase your cash flow. Also, you can solve past questions for JAMB, NECO and WAEC to help students who are in need. It can also come in the form of e-books. Make use of the internet to share your wealth of knowledge while improving your financial wealth.

CONCLUSION

Upgrading teachers' remuneration is like fixing a round peg into a round hole in solving problems relating to failing standard of education in Nigeria. Since it has been proved that teachers give out their best when their needs are satisfied to a reasonable extent, the lawmakers responsible for teachers pay must rise up, ensuring that teachers get suitable pay and that other compensations such as incentives, insurance, medical benefits, bonuses, retirement benefits, training opportunities are given to them as at when due. The paper concluded that teachers are instrumental to quality education, unless attention is given to their welfare packages, there will be no job satisfaction and the standard of education in the country will continue to dwindle. Higher teachers' remuneration is associated with quality service delivery. To attract and retain quality teachers for educational goals attainment, educators should be recognized and valued. Also, the teachers starting salaries should be adequate and should be timely reviewed. Again, teachers can make more money without cheating the system by using some of the useful ways listed in this paper.

SUGGESTIONS

1. The stakeholders in education sector should look out for what is best for teachers and treat them the way their counterparts in other countries and professions are treated.
2. Agencies responsible for teachers' compensation should ensure that higher salaries go to the most effective teachers.
3. To encourage rural teachers, there should be speedy implementation of rural teachers' incentives.
4. To attract and retain quality, lawmakers need to let educators know they recognized and valued and that includes an adequate starting salary.
5. The government should ensure that teachers' remuneration is timely reviewed.

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