

## Teachers' Production, Utilization and Turnover Patterns in the Primary School Education System in Nigeria

<sup>1</sup>Sunday O. Adegbesan and <sup>2</sup>Lasun Gbadamosi

<sup>1</sup>Training and Research Fellow,  
National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration, (NIEPA), Ondo State, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Educational Management and Business Education Department,  
Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria

---

**Abstract:** With regard to the quality of teachers produced in Nigeria, the quality of results and number of pupils who graduate to secondary schools have continued to fall. This claim has been blamed on the inadequate, inefficient and ineffectiveness of teachers among other factors still, institutions continue to train millions of teachers yet they are not adequate in the system. The call to address these issues of inadequacy, inefficiency and ineffectiveness yielded negative result by the government and other stakeholders because the magnitude of the problem is alarming and capable of causing crisis within the primary education system. This paper now critically looks at the state of teachers' production, utilization and turnover patterns at primary school level and gives suggestions as recommendation which would serve as solutions to the deficiencies highlighted.

**Key words:** Teacher • Production • Utilization • Turnover • Primary education system

---

### INTRODUCTION

One of the major problems of the current crises in Nigeria education system is the failure or inability of the state to ensure adequately supply of qualified teachers to all publicly owned primary schools in the country. Primary school education which could otherwise be referred to as the beginning or the foundation, upon which other subsequent levels of educational pursuit could effectively be built, deserves serious attention of educationists, parents and all others who desire societal progress. The national policy on education spelt out one of the aims and objective thus:

“Training of the mind of children in the understanding of the world around them as well as the acquisition of the appropriate skills, abilities, competencies, both mental and physical as an equipment of the development of the Nigeria Society”

**Teacher Production in Nigeria:** The quantity, quality and variety of teachers produced in Nigeria have grown phenomenally. But basically, since 1952, these growths have resulted in different programmes available to those who want to avail themselves of training to become

teachers. To manage growth in these areas and to chart new directions, teacher production has become streamlined and controlled policy-wise by the National Teachers' Institute and the National Commission for Colleges of Education. This streamlining is a very timely and welcome development and there is evidence to clearly show each commission has been doing very well in nurturing and sustaining impressive developments within its statutory areas of operation, thus minimizing conflicts of interest and streaming what would have been disasters in teachers education.

Historically, one would say that teacher training institution was established in this country in 1859, by the Church Mission Society (CMS) at Abeokuta. The same moved to Lagos in 1869 and later to Oyo in 1896. [1] (Fafunwa 1991). Subsequently, teacher training institutions were established at Ogbomoso in 1897 and Ibadan in 1905 by the Baptist Mission and Wesleyan Methodist Missionary society respectively. Prior to the establishment of the first teacher training institution in Nigeria, the Presbyterian church of Scotland had proposed what was referred to as “a unique institution – The Hope Waddell Training Institute” [1], having in mind two major purposes. Firstly, to train young primary school

teachers in the various trades and secondly, to train teachers and preachers. This endeavour to establish teacher training schools started in the Northern part of the country in 1909 at Nassarawa under the auspices of Hanns Vishes, Director of Education for Northern Nigerian then.

The curriculum content of the early teacher training schools by the various missionary groups were mainly centered on the concept of theology with a view to preparing pupils for preaching the doctrine of the various missions rather than preparing pupils solely for teaching. The Phelps-stokes commission of 1925, criticized the practice of teachers-training programmes by the missionaries on the grounds that the pupils-teachers were usually over worked and under paid and that both the curriculum conduct and the supervisory aspects were inadequate adding that perhaps the missionaries did not understand the concept of African education [1]. Hence the commission proposed and outlined two types of teacher training institutions, namely; the elementary training centre (ETC) for lower primary school teachers and the higher elementary training college (HETC). On the other hand, subsequent development through the Ashby commission of 1959, observed some imbalance between, “elementary, secondary and higher education, which in turn, weakened the quality of the primary and secondary schools [1]. Meanwhile, an interpretation of the effectiveness of an educational system according to Millian and Edmud [2] hinges on “the quantitative measure of how many young people obtained a complete elementary education.....”.

The Federal Government constituted the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) under the provision of section 5 © and (d) of Decree No of 1989 and charged the commission among other things “lay down minimum standards for all programmes of teacher education and accredit-their certificates and other academic awards after obtaining thereof prior approval of the Minister” [3]. Although the NCCE is seen as specifically concerned with the affairs of teachers training education at colleges of education level (state and Federal). It is actually clear by the pronouncement of the phrase “minimum standards” which incidentally is an extract from Nigerian National Policy on Education, that, hence forth the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) will ultimately become the minimum basic qualification for entry into the teaching profession in Nigeria” [4]. This pronouncement simply means that graduates of College of Education being the least qualification acquired for

teaching in an educational institution should start from the primary schools. Thus, in terms of policy formation and implementation with regard to teacher production quality, it would suffice to say that the least qualification for teaching at primary school level would be NCE holder.

**Teacher Utilization in Nigeria:** The notion of teacher utilization can be discussed along three basic perspectives. The first of these perspectives is the determination of what teachers are expected to do as indicated by their employers versus what they actually find themselves doing at the classroom level. The second perspective is the determination of teachers’ actual workload viz-a-viz whether it is too heavy or too light although this perspective is aggravated by the fact that primary and secondary schools may not have a work load that is clearly defined by staff student ratio for the different disciplines/subjects. Thirdly, assuming that we know all that the teacher does in any school system, there are certain indicators which enhance or mitigate teachers efforts, willingness or desire to utilize their skills for teaching effectively and efficiently. Thus, the level of teacher utilization is predication on several factors some of which may be intractable to the teacher.

A recall of factors militating against production or rather, retention of good and quality teachers lingers on the low morale of teaching profession and their economic status. This dilemma seems to undermine teacher utilization in this country. Teacher utilization cannot be effectively achieved if people do not embrace the profession with maximum interest and zeal to put in their best. In the present – era, where colleges of Education all over the country are concerned with training minimum level of certified teachers to our educational institutions, there are still some deficiency in many of the students who are supposedly expected to be teachers. Some of these problems have to do with poor background of the students academically. The very good students who must have had an excellent background right from the primary through secondary education will usually opt for non-teaching professions such as Medicine, Engineering, Accountancy, Business Management, Law and the like. Many students come to teacher training institution on a last resort basis or as a preparing ground for their heart-felt desired profession. It is not uncommon that students trained in colleges of Education solely for teaching purposes in areas such as Industrial arts or Business Studies (Accountancy and Secretarial) or Agricultural/Home economics are still found working in Industries,

Banks and Private organizations. Teachers and students according to Furlong and Pockington [5] “are to work at an appropriate level in order to promote maximum learning by the children”. Ideally, a teacher who is effectively committed to his/her responsibilities would take pleasure in extra –curricular activities with the pupils so as to motivate and arouse their interests to learning situations. In times past, between 1960s and 1970s when the economy of the country, relative to its population was a lot better, teachers in our institutions were more committed to their primary functions in the school along with extra-curricular activities. Schools were very conducive because relationships between teachers and students were not confined to the classrooms alone. Teachers hardly realized that there was another world outside elsewhere, rather, they took keen interest in the affairs of students activities such as debates, dramas, traditional and cultural displays, sports and games, sometimes even picnics, where the general staff and their families took interests and attended to most of such functions. Today, teachers are saddled with the right economic situation. Salaries alone could no longer sustain a teacher and his/her family and so teachers run helter-skelter trying to make ends meet. In such a manner, the attention of the teacher for effective performance is certainly not there. The teacher seldom attend to the basic classroom schedules as may appear on the time tables. While in earnest their attention is geared towards attending to some personal endeavour elsewhere in a bid to provide supplement to their economic demands. This notion is vividly supported by the Minister of Education Dr Sam Egwu when he said “many of our teachers have abandoned their classrooms for alternative avenues of livelihood” [6]. Thus, despite some meaningful endeavours by Federal or state governments and contributions from individual as well as groups at different seminars and conferences, if the condition of

service for teachers already on ground is not seriously overhauled with a view to making the profession enviable to other professions, then teacher utilization in this country is not likely to improve. Such a situation will simply jeopardize the teaching profession even for those who might have genuine interest in teaching and cherish the profession.

**Turnover Patterns:** The notion of teachers has to do with frequency rate and number of teachers who leave and or enter the profession. A steady state of turnover connotes some measure of stability since some teachers need to leave while others have to come in [8]. In Nigerian context, several reasons are responsible for the high teacher-turnover that we have witnessed in the last ten (10) years or so. No matter the reasons, the high turnover of teachers is usually characterized by a steady outflow of teachers of different cadres and subjects out of the provision, as a result of forced and /or due to retirement; deaths, moving into other professions/other countries (a term sometimes referred to as brain-brain); disciplinary action against erring teachers; ill-health, national and international assignment and so on. Quite unlike unskilled traders where workers could leave their jobs and be replaced almost immediately without necessary loss of resources or production, the teacher education is a profession like skilled trades where if a worker leaves, it takes time to find an appropriate person for replacement. [9] This concept signifies that there is higher turnover pattern in a job where almost anybody can also do the job than where only specialists are required. Perhaps because of the acute shortage of qualified and certificated teaching staff to adequately cater for our educational institutions, especially at the primary schools level, that one finds people with basic secondary education employed to teach [10]. If the condition were to be very strict at primary and secondary school level and even at a higher level,

Table 1: Percentage change in enrolment and number of teaching in teachers colleges in Oyo State 1995/96 to 1982/83

Session	No. of Colleges	Enrolment	No. of Teachers
1975/76	15	6539	270
76/77	15	7091	310
77/98	15	7992	348
78/79	15	8129	370
79/80	16	9994	497
80/81	16	9930	485
81/82	18	12567	529
82/83	18	12226	527

Table 2: Percentage change in teacher qualification 1976/77 – 1982/83

Subject year	BA/BSC/BEd/Number	%	NCE Number	%	Grade I number	%	Others number	%	Total
76/77	1237	44.0	396	14.1	224	8.0	1237	43.9	2816
77/78	1670	45.7	435	11.9	284	7.8	1263	34.6	3652
78/79	2016	45.1	608	13.6	477	10.7	1370	30.6	4471
79/80	2791	48.0	738	12.7	514	8.8	1781	30.6	5824
80/81	3674	39.2	987	10.5	1262	13.5	3442	36.8	9365
81/82	4028	32.8	1673	13.6	2522	20.6	4048	33.0	12271
82/83	4298	30.2	2540	17.9	2174	15.3	5207	36.6	14219

Table 3: Number of teaching in the Polytechnic, Technical Colleges made centre 1975/76 to 1982/83

Session	Technical Colleges			Technical Colleges		
	No	Enrolment	No of Teachers	No	Enrolment	No of Teaching
1975/76	1	21415	132	4	1973	75
76/77	1	3012	129	4	1933	61
77/78	1	2655	Na	4	1647	65
78/79	1	2709	174	3	1667	70
79/80	1	2223	Na	6	2057	88
80/81	1	Na	Na	6	2388	99
81/82	1	Na	Na	8	2836	140
82/83	1	4313	Na	36	3914	138

Na means 'not available'

Source: Okunola O. [7] trends in educational Development in Oyo State during the second republic (1979 - 83) in Kayode Ajayi and Taiwo Ajayi (eds) New Perspectives in Nigerian Education; vantage foundations, Ibadan

Table 4: Reasons for leaving the teaching job by primary school teachers between 1985 – 1995

Reasons	Frequency	%
General dissatisfaction with the profession	1208	33.5
Failure on the job	12	0.3
Desire to another type of work	335	9.3
Death	51	1.4
Voluntary retirement	708	19.6
Compulsory retirement	1177	32.7
Study leave	114	5.9
	3605	100.0

Source: Gabdamosi, L [15] Investigation into the attrition rate of Ogun State Primary School Teachers Planning Implication for Universal Basic Education (UBE) in T. Ajayi etals (Eds) Planing and Administration of Universal Basic Education UBE in Nigeria. Daily Graphics: Ibadan

such that only qualified persons are allowed to teach, then there would be very low turnover pattern in our educational system [11]. There are some employers, especially in teacher institutions that only persons with teacher education bias should be considered for apparent as teachers. Already people who came in without requisite certificates are usually advised to make up for the defense so as to function effectively [12].

Presently, while in the process of phasing out Grade II teachers or failed Grade II teachers most of our

primary schools are saturated with teachers having basic education of secondary school certificates [13]. This, I guess is with a view to maintain a higher turnover of one system. Again, in the opinion of this paper, turnover pattern in our education system cannot exactly be low or high for the simple reason that teaching jobs are not necessary reserved for only certificated teachers, at least at the primary level. Provided that the headships and some far key positions in the school are maintained by teachers with education bias [14].

**Conclusion, Implication and Options:** In concluding this paper, one has to bear in mind that teacher production in Nigeria has come a long way and have shown inconsistent improvement in terms of the quality, quantity and variety of teacher production for Nigerian schools. Some persons have called for closure of satellite part-time and weekend extension teacher education programmes, as a way of reversing these trends. The production of teacher must of necessity identify what employers want them to do, what teacher actually do during teaching and what teacher education institution think teachers should be doing and for which they train their teachers. These three diverse views or expectations must be narrated so that the teachers, who are produced regardless of the quantity to produce, are ultimately those than can be utilized for effective teaching at the classroom level. An attempt therefore to maintain standard and enough requirement of quality trained teachers will be thwarted if such teachers are not easily available or perhaps met in a required quantity to suffice for the institutions which, invariably would lead to low turnover pattern of the educational system. So many scholars, authors, educationists, educators and researchers have made so many suggestions which have either not been used or have been faultily applied. The suggestions given below are part of the rhetoric which government and those in authority are aware of but have lacked the courage, political will and financial obligation to practicalize them.

### **Recommendations and Conclusion**

#### **This Is Hereby Suggested That:**

- Admission into teacher education programme in colleges should be done simultaneously, this exercise for selecting candidates into polytechnics, colleges of education and universities be conducted at a time to prevent colleges of education being dumping ground for candidates who could not get admitted into polytechnics or Universities.
- The professionalization of teaching is a major area to be addressed if this high turnover is to be arrested.
- Teachers need to appreciate their social roles and status better so that other members of the society would be able to do the same. Public expectations of the teachers' performance are constantly increasing and teachers therefore, rise up to meet these expectations and rekindle public interest in education.

- That respect and honour should be accorded to all teachers alike, be it at primary, secondary or tertiary levels.
- That beside our consideration of Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) as the minimum qualification for teaching profession, degree holders should be mandated to likewise teach at our primary schools, without undue constraints in terms of financial benefits and welfare services.
- Constant refresher courses for teachers at all levels be encouraged along with seminars and conferences to update their knowledge.
- Teachers at all levels be opportune to visit other institutions within and outside the country for comparative, innovative and corrective purposes.
- Those school buildings, classrooms, laboratories, workshops and the general environment should command a sense of beauty and excellence so as to create enthusiasm into both the teachers' and the students for an effective teaching and learning situation.
- Parents or guardians should cherish and admonish their children in the course of the pursuit of this noble profession.

Finally, there is need for continuing cooperation between the different agencies of government that set and monitors policy of teacher education in Nigeria. Cooperation is needed so as to unduly interfere with fixed policy boundaries to ensure orderly transition from one teacher education programme to the next higher one; to ensure that there is no conflict between the minimum academic standards of one teacher education programme versus that of another; to ensure exchange of ideas, experiences and so on, designed to enhancing the activities of these bodies and by implication, that of teacher education in Nigeria. It is against these suggestions that I want to observe that the future of teacher education in Nigeria is bright and would soon undertake the present problems which we believe are with us simply because of the stage we are in now; a normal baby will one day walk and run even if he does not become the fastest man in the world.

### **REFERENCES**

1. Fafunwa, A.B., 1991. History of Education in Nigeria. NPS Educational Publishers Ltd., Trust House, S.W. Ring Road, Ibadan.

2. Millian and Edmud, 1995. Educational Management: A Systematic Approach. DSKC Publishers, Toronto, pp: 66-69.
3. Lassa, P., 1991. "Teachers of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" Keynote Address at the Follow-up workshop on Transition from Senior Secondary Schools to Colleges of Education, Jos, 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> Nov.
4. Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004. National Policy on Education, Federal Government Press, Lagos
5. Fourlong D. and Z. Pockington, 1998. Planning and Organization: A School Based Curriculum. Glasgow: Rober-Machehose and Company.
6. Egwu, S., 2009. A Handbook on Educational Situation. Abuja.
7. Okunola, O., 1990. trends in educational Development in Oyo State during the second republic (1979 - 83) in Kayode Ajayi and Taiwo Ajayi (eds) New Perspectives in Nigerian Education; vantage foundations, Ibadan.
8. Ali, A., 1995. "Creative Senescing" Research in Education, 17: 4.
9. Bamisaiye, R., 1990. Sociological Foundations of Nigerian Education; Ibadan, A.M.D. Publishers, pp: 158-168.
10. Musa, Y.S., 2000. Teacher Production and Turnover Pattern at school level in K. Isyaku etal (eds) National Commission for Colleges of Education, Kaduna.
11. Okon, U., 1995. "Problem of Teaching Primary School Mathematics in Nigeria" Journal of Teacher Education, 4: 1.
12. Ayu, I., 1994. The State of Education in Nigeria Today and Education Toda. Vol. 7, No. 1, A Quarterly Journal of Federal Ministry of Education and Youth.
13. Buckhardt, U., 1996. "New Personality and Teaching" Mathematical Transitions, 24: 1.
14. Smith, M., 1994. "Teacher Personality and Teaching" Mathematical Transaction". Teacher Education update, 19: 2.
14. Ukeje, B.O., 1991. Education of Teachers for New Social Order: TNTT (Journal of Teachers Education), 1: 1.
15. Gabdamosi, L., 2000. Investigation into the attrition rate of Ogun State Primary School Teachers Planning Implication for Universal Basic Education (UBE) in T. Ajayi etals (Eds) Planing and Administration of Universal Basic Education UBE in Nigeria. Daily Graphics: Ibadan
16. Yesufu, F., 1994. "Quality in Nigerian Education" Educational Perspective Vol. 24.