



**TEACHERS' DEMANDS AND  
MANAGEMENT OF PRIMARY  
SCHOOLS IN THE NORTH  
CENTRAL STATES OF NIGERIA:  
AN ANALYTIC VIEW**

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**Abstract**

*The paper discusses the concept 'teachers' demands' as the needs of the teachers that is fought for through industrial actions. The paper examines the roles of the teachers in teaching and learning process in relation to primary education. The paper contends*

**Keywords**

*Teachers' demands, school managers, primary education, goals of education, school children. that if teachers' demands are not met, there would be problems of laxity and indiscipline in the*

**INTRODUCTION**

The quest for the implementation of all legitimate demands of the teachers was the reason for an industrial disharmony between the government and primary school teachers of some states in the North Central of Nigeria. One may be quick to ask why teachers' demands? The answer to the question above is not farfetched. Teachers' demands in Nigeria arouse as a result of dissatisfaction of the teachers' with their working condition. By working condition here, it refers the various issues that affect the teachers in their work place. These issues according to Ananga (2011) include

*school and work would be left undone and the set goals of the primary school would be unachievable. The paper concludes that stakeholders in education should rise to speak with one voice to condemn the treacherous act committed against primary education by the governments in the North central states of Nigeria. The paper recommends that a law should be put in place to abolish all private primary schools, which their existence has resulted to the total neglect of public schools. Also, all political office holders should not be allowed to send their wards outside the country to school but be compelled to send their children to government public schools. This will re-direct the attention of the government to do what is right and just to the teachers, lift the standard of the public school and build confidence in the people.*

non-payment of upwardly review salaries and allowances; bad working environment; unfavourable school climate among others.

It could be said that teachers' demands have a link with job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is regarded as the positive or negative evaluative judgments people make about their jobs (Weiss, 2002). For Locke (1976), job satisfaction is a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job. In accordance with these definitions, teachers' job satisfaction is conceptualized as teachers' overall affective reactions to their work or to their teaching role (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2004).

In Nigeria, teachers are recognized as indispensable human resource and the most important element in the educational system. The teacher was treated as the pivot on which educational development is hinged. But issues surrounding teachers' demands have not been given adequate attention, which make them unsatisfied. Teachers' satisfaction has been considered as a vital factor for the improvement of the education system and thus has got an unshakeable place in educational researches. Satisfaction is a psychological phenomenon and its concept is highly intricate and subjective. Teachers' satisfaction describes how content an individual teacher is with his or her job. It expresses the extent of match

between the teachers' expectations from the teaching and the rewards that the teaching provides. To this end, teachers' demand is one of the key factors in school dynamics and is generally considered as a dependent variable in which effectiveness of the school is evaluated.

However, in recent times, stakeholders in the Nigerian education (teacher inclusive) have lamented continuously on the problems experienced in the education sector. The problems in the educational sector resulted into decays which have reached an unprecedented level to the extent that most schools particularly primary schools in the North Central States of Nigeria operate under unconventional means without instructional structures; worn out equipment (where they are available at all); overcrowded classrooms among others (Ogbeche, 2009). The teachers are at the receiving end of the debilitating state of the system of education which has defied any meaningful solution. A casual visit to any primary schools in Nigeria would reveal the extent to which this level of education has been neglected. Simply put, educational facilities at the primary level are in a terrible shape. Little wonder, Iwambe (2014) reported that primary schools in Benue and Kogi states are in a terrible state apart from those that are located in the state capitals renovated by Universal Basic Education (UBE) Boards. To worsen the situation in the North Central Nigeria, states like Benue and Kogi refuse to implement the current approved teachers' minimum wage of eighteen thousand naira only (₦18,000=) and other enhanced allowances after when such package has been implemented for other categories of workers in the respective states. This therefore calls for serious questioning.

The assertion above explains why Shafritz (2015) avers that salary is the main demand which a worker is making from employment and that what an employee wants is simply to be assigned work that he or she is supposed to do and the amount will earn by the end of the day for such a job and nothing else. For Robbins and Judge (2008), teachers derive job satisfaction from such factors as: the job itself, salary, possibilities to advance themselves, supervision, and relationship with co-workers. The authors argue that of all these job factors, the issue of remuneration and enjoyment with the job itself indicated the greatest correlation to high job satisfaction levels on the overall.

The popular chant “No Teacher, No School” by the protesting primary school pupils on the street of Makurdi on Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2013 in support of their teachers attested to the ill-treatment meted out on the primary school teachers in the state (Iwambe,2014). Of course, education is life and the instrument by which life is birthed is the teacher, and today the world is talking about movement from education to knowledge when teachers are relegated to the background in Nigeria. When society fails to place premium on knowledge it becomes doomed, one must be an utmost optimist to say that states like Kogi and Benue in the North Central Nigeria are not doomed. It is against this background that this paper discusses, analyses and synthesizes teachers’ demands and management of primary schools in the North Central States of Nigeria.

**Methodology:**

This is a qualitative study that takes analytic view at teachers’ demands and management of primary education in North eastern state of Nigeria.

**The Teacher and His Demands**

Discussions surrounding teachers and their demands are issues of leadership, job satisfaction and labour matter. In fact, teachers are expected to be a model and lead by example in the school, hence indispensable element in educational system of any nation. Perhaps, this explains why Aluede (2011) describes teacher as the man that makes hard things easy. For Awoniyi (2007), the teacher is the “central man” in the social and economic development of any nation. The teacher imparts knowledge needed to create new institutions, use new technologies, cope with environment, and alter the patterns of behaviour. Awoniyi further stressed that teacher is the leader in that crucial area that is a catalyst for the growth of the closely interrelated economic, political, cultural and demographic systems.

In his conception of teacher, Majasan (1995) affirms that a teacher is the one who teaches (especially young ones), builds up, instructs, trains and guides them for healthy growth and stable adult life. Put differently, a teacher is someone who instructs others or provides activities, materials and guidance that facilitate learning in either formal or informal situations.

His job goes beyond teaching into moulding lives, guiding youth, motivating students and character development. In other words, a teacher can be viewed as one whose line of duty covers teaching, instructing, impacting knowledge and innovations, and guiding learners to pass through the learning process.

Good teachers are essential for the success of any national educational programme. It is now generally accepted that the teacher is the pivot on which the success of any programme of educational renewal like the 9-3-4 educational programme hinges. According to Ndagana (2009), teaching involves the interaction of so many personnel and professional elements that is impossible to separate them. But throughout his work, the teacher has only one concern: the development of children under his care. As a matter of fact, as children enter school, the first matter of importance to parents is the teacher. Parents in the opinion of Lawal (2009) expect that the teacher will be a warm and affectionate person, although he needs not be overtly demonstrative for the children to feel his lovingness. He must accept and respect children, be aware of their stage of growth, and be sensitive to individual differences among them. Lawal further explains that the teacher must accept without prejudice the children immaturity while at the same time opening up the possibilities of more mature behaviour.

For Aflalo and Gabay (2012), teachers have special demands placed on them. They must be persons whose own emotional house is in order. Exposed to children's adoration, hostility, ambivalence, ambition and impulse, the teacher must be sufficiently able to differentiate between the children's need and his, so that he can deal with them with good sense. He must deal with his own biases, fears and anxieties to keep them from interfering with his good judgement. A good teacher therefore to Aflalo and Gabay is more of a philosopher, psychologist and sociologist as well as an instructor. Thus it is not uncommon that the teacher is saddled with the responsibility of translating the curriculum and breaking it down to meaningful objectives and goals. The question then is if these tasks are left in the hands of disgruntled person, we need not guess what the outcome will be as we are a witness to the latest impasse between some state governments and their teachers in the north central states in Nigeria.

In many states of Nigeria, Ogbonnaya (2009) stated that primary school teachers are not well paid by the state government. In fact some states owed salary arrears ranging from three to eight months. In the north central states of Nigeria for instance, state like Benue and Kogi have not implemented the minimum wage of ₦18,000 for the primary school teacher after implementing the package for other categories of workers in the two states. Under such conditions, the teachers refuse to attend classes. For example, primary school teachers in Benue state have been on-and-off since October 4, 2013 till date. The teachers according to Iwambe (2014) embarked on industrial action to demand that the government of Benue state should honour its agreement to pay them a minimum wage of ₦18,000; provide sufficient instructional materials; and improve school infrastructural facilities. It is sad to note that not one out of these demands was met by the government, not even the most important and pressing one that has to do with remuneration was addressed. The case of kogi state is pathetic as Obahopo (2014) reported that the closure of primary schools in the state as a result of industrial action of teachers to press on their demands is affecting the future of over 1.3 million pupils. According to this author, primary schools were closed in Kogi state for six months in 2011, five months in 2012, almost the whole year in 2013 and now close again in 2014 with the teachers vowing not to resume until their demands are met. Similarly, in Plateau state government owes primary school teachers not less than five months salary due to insufficient funding of education in the state. Even in the remaining state in the North Central States of Nigeria where the minimum wage package had been implemented, it was through serious negotiation with the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) of the said state before a mutilated version of the real package is approved. And this has a serious effect on the management of primary school.

### **School Management**

The term 'management' has been defined in various ways. Akpakwu (2012) defined it as a process of getting the work done in order to get the objectives of the organization accomplished in a pre-planned way. According to Musaazi (1982), "Management is a social process concerned with identifying, maintaining, motivating, controlling and unifying formally

and informally organized human and material resources within a social system. In such a social process, there is always a structural hierarchy comprising the subordinates and superior officers. Sherlekar (1994) described it as a guideline, leadership and the control of the efforts of a group of people towards some common objectives. Management has also been seen as the effective organization and utilization of the human and material resources in a particular system for the achievement of identified objectives (Yawe, 2010). It is concerned with the efficient and effective performance of task in achieving the goals and objectives of an organization.

Considering the meaning of management in the school sector, Nwadiani (1998) described management as a variety of sequential and related activities that are designed and carried out in order to effectively and efficiently achieve the goals of teaching and learning in relation to the needs of the society. This achievement could be made through effective planning, organizing, coordinating, supervising, directing, motivating, controlling, budgeting and evaluating programmes as well as undertaking risks and handling of uncertainty (Olagboye, 2004; Uyanga, 1995).

Relating the meaning of management to primary school, we can therefore refer to educational management at the primary school level as the process of coordinating activities and making decisions that would lead to the attainment of the goals of primary education. However, achieving the goals of primary education has become a mirage in some states in Nigeria especially in the north central part; this is because of the unfavourable working conditions.

### **Primary Education**

All over the world, primary education has been regarded as the most patronized by people. This perhaps may be due to the fact that it is the foundation of the whole educational pursuit, which is expected to provide literacy and enlightenment to the citizens (George, Olayiwola, Adewole and Osabuohien, 2013). The importance of primary education can therefore be seen in the sense that all beneficiaries of the other levels of education by necessity have to pass through this level (Adebayo, 2009). In other words, primary education is the education given in an institution for children aged

6-11 years and constitutes the bedrock upon which the entire education system is built.

According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013), Primary Education is the “Education given in institutions for children aged 6 to 11 plus”. This definition is in consonance with the World Bank (2006) definition which stated that, primary Education sometimes referred to as elementary education, and is the education programme that is normally designed on a unit or project basis to give pupils a sound basic education in reading, writing and mathematics along with an elementary understanding of other sources such as history, geography, natural science, social science, art and music, which serve to develop pupils’ ability to sustain and use information about the immediate environment and the nation.

The goals of primary education as stated in the National Policy on Education section 4(16) of FRN (2013) are to:

- i. inculcate permanent literacy and numeracy skills, and the ability to communicate effectively;
- ii. lay a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking;
- iii. give citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society;
- iv. mould the character and develop sound attitude and morals in the child;
- v. develop in the child the ability to adapt to his/her changing environment;
- vi. give the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable him to function effectively in the society within the limits of his/her capacity;
- vii. provide the child with basic tools for further educational advancement including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality.

For any government to achieve the above goals in Nigeria, there is every need for putting the right peg in the right hole. By this, it becomes imperative for government to put in place all the factors that will facilitate the achievement of these objectives and also ensure their maintenance. According to Akale in National Teachers’ Institute (NTI) (2002), teachers are the most important resource in education programme. To ensure the best possible quality in the teaching workforce, the policies implemented by the government must take into account the interplay of certain critical variables that influence teachers’ career such as pre-service training,



recruitment policies, remuneration and continuing education programme. Teachers should be given both local and international scholarship to upgrade and update their knowledge and skills in order to influence changes in education. They should be encouraged to further the spirit of enquiry and creativity and assisted to fit into the social life of the community and society at large. This will go a long way in realizing the above stated objectives.

#### **An Analytical View of Teacher's Demands and Management of Primary Schools in the North States**

On the basis of conventional thought, funding is the most significant challenge with developing North-central education system. Recent development in the educational sectors of state like Benue, Kogi and Kwara have shown that increased funding is the panacea to North-central educational system. Budgetary allocation to education sector in Benue and Kogi states since 2005-2013 has been grossly inadequate as depicted in the table below (see table 1).

**Table 1: North-Central States' Education Budget from 2005-2013 in Billions**

States	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL
<b>Benue</b>	44.91	46.3	44.84	64.65	63.29	89.49	71.6	159.78	130.992	715.852
<b>Kogi</b>	31.31	33.89	45	52.37	78.669	78	80	126.411	132.6	658.25
<b>Kwara</b>	33.9	35.66	60	66.5	72.2	67	60.61	85.1	94.4	575.37
<b>Nasarawa</b>	25.42	29.05	35.46	55.7	58.3	87.5	81.506	104	108	584.936
<b>Niger</b>	33.79	42.08	50	55.45	69.09	111	129	94.05	83.7	668.16
<b>Plateau</b>	29.4	31.9	45	63.02	79.5	74.864	86.562	115	133.5	658.746
<b>Total NC</b>	198.73	218.88	280.3	357.69	421.049	507.854	509.278	684.341	683.192	3861.314

Source: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/01/fg-states-lgas-squander-ngr-in-9-years>

The table above shows steady increase in budget allocation to education in the North-Central zone during the period under review. In spite of the

increase, funding for Benue and Kogi states' is grossly inadequate due to the large size of the two states. However, as important as funding, teachers are important instrument in education. They are also the pivot on which the educational process is hinged. Teachers play a major role in the whims and caprices of the educational system. They can influence the teaching-learning outcomes either positively or negatively because they determine the quality of instructional delivery and also influence quality education when it comes to implementation of the curriculum and educational policies. But it has been observed that many factors affect teachers' achievement in their mandate. For instance, primary school teachers in some states in the north central part of Nigeria are facing numerous challenges relating to their work. These problems range from non-payment of teacher's minimum salary package and security to acute shortage of infrastructures and instructional materials. Okonkwo (1997) listed teachers' demand facets as follows (see table 2).

**Table 2: Facets of Teachers' Demand**

<b>Teachers Demand Facets</b>	<b>Description</b>
Pay	Demand concerning salaries and remunerations.
Promotion	Denying teachers their promotion and appropriate authority responsible for their day-to-day activity.
Benefits	Denying teachers opportunities for further education, development and training.
School policies	Confining teachers through the use of school policies, syllabus and administration to repetitive activities, methods and programmes.
Operating	Poor administrative and organizational climates in the school system.
Nature of	Non-professionalization of teaching in Nigeria, lack of teaching teachers' recognition and low status.

Source: Okonkwo (1997).

The problems enumerated in the table above are applicable to teachers' demands in Benue and Kogi states. It is these demands that forced the teachers to embark on strike action in Kogi and Benue states as often as possible. Obviously, when teachers embark on strike, their morale get low and this leads to general laxity and indiscipline in the schools, which significantly affects effective management of school (Ogbonnaya, 2009). Also, their work will be left undone during the strike and the entire school system suffers the repercussion. Fagbamiye (1987) observed that teacher's lack of dedication to duty has led to a fall in the standard of education. This belief goes to reinforce the spirit that teachers do not deserve better treatment than what they are getting at present.

Furthermore, the manager of primary school is grievously bearing in mind of his position and the dual roles he is expected to play. In one hand, as a teacher whose right to good life has been infringed upon; and on the other hand, as a head teacher/manager whose duty is to co-ordinate the activities of other teachers/divergent groups in order to achieve the objectives of the school. The task of achieving these goals is a herculean one because the head teacher will require the efforts of other teachers to get things done. With the teachers on strike, nobody among them will be willing to render their services to the school and the school activities will be grounded totally.

In addendum, considering the importance of primary education as the foundation of other levels of education, adequate care should be taken to ensure that it is organized properly. Incessant strike of primary school teachers makes the objectives unrealizable. It is obvious that unless the teachers are provided with the drive that would energize them, their best would not be attained and the accomplishment of the educational goals would be difficult.

Equally, it is important to note that the primary concern of every management is the accomplishment of the desired objectives. At the primary school level, the management wants to achieve among other

things: inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy skills, effective communication, laying foundation for scientific and reflective thinking, citizenship education, character and moral training, development of manipulative skills and providing basic tools for further education. How can these objectives be achieved when teachers are in and out of classroom due to strike? It becomes difficult and practically impossible for the management of primary school to achieve the above set goals.

### **Conclusion**

From the foregoing, this paper discusses, analyses and synthesizes teachers' demand and management of primary schools with the view to resolve the lingering issues that lead to strike in primary schools. The paper conceives teachers' demand as the legitimate right of the teachers that was denied them by the government. The paper reveals that the inability to meet these demands was the cause of teachers' agitations in the respective states in the north-central states and this ultimately bring about laxity and indiscipline in the schools which invariably make works in the school to be left undone and the set goals of the primary school unachievable. The paper establishes that budgetary allocations to education in the North Central States of Nigeria is grossly inadequate as the overall budgetary allocation to education in Nigeria falls below the 26% recommended by United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Lastly, the general conditions under which the primary school teachers work in Nigeria is pathetic and teachers are therefore left with no alternative than to change the situation through industrial action as we witness in public schools today. No doubt, when two elephants fight, definitely it is the grass that suffers. Incidentally, the grasses are the pupils/students, parents, head teacher/management of primary schools, society, and even the striking teacher: let us all rise and speak with one voice to condemn this treacherous act committed against primary education by the government because a stitch in time saves nine.

### Recommendations

The National Assembly should make a law that will abolish all private primary schools, which existence has resulted to the total neglect of public primary schools, all political office holders should not be allowed to send their wards outside the country to school but be compelled to send their children to government public primary schools, all government personnel that is civil servant should have their children schooling in public primary schools and all members of the public should also patronize public primary schools. This will re-direct the attention of the government to do what is right and just to the teachers, lift the standard of the public primary school and build confidence in the people.

Also, the administration, control and funding of primary education should be put under the Federal Government exclusively. Again, an agency like TETFUND should be established and named PEFUND that is primary education fund, whereby all limited liability company in Nigeria would release two per cent (2%) of their profit to effective running of primary education through the primary boards of the various states in the country.

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