

**IMPROVED INCENTIVE SYSTEM IN TEACHING PROFESSION AS
STRATEGY FOR QUALITY DELIVERY AND ENHANCED
PRODUCTIVITY IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA**

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Abstract:

This paper tries to appraise the incentive systems and packages in the Nigerian school system, and explains the extent lack of incentives affect teachers motivation and their job satisfaction. It emphasizes the need to review the incentive packages in the school system since salaries and fringe benefits and other incentive packages afford a rare and precious vehicle of tangible, non verbal communication in an institutional environment. As a worker seats down and computer the amount of his incentives, it forces review and communication, dedication and commitment on his job on a regular basis. It recommends that Government needs to institutionalize teaching service incentive system, that means a selective accelerated Salary Enhancement Scheme should be set up to offer a potential sustainable solution to salary and incentive problems within a wider context of 'Pay Reform Incentive Review'.

Keywords: teaching profession, incentive, motivation, quality delivery, school system.

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INTRODUCTION

The success of any organization depends, to a great extent, on the workers of that organization and the effective mobilization of the efforts of all people who make up the organization. Hence, much attention is paid to managerial responsibilities for eliciting productive behaviour. It is therefore necessary that all individuals in the system work together towards the achievement of objectives.

A close look at a group of people performing the same job for some time reveals that some do it better than others. The question that comes to mind is “what factors really account for the differences in performance? Two variables come to mind immediately; one is that the differences reflect varying degrees of skill or ability displayed by individual workers, and the other variable is motivation. Organizations strive to ensure job satisfaction of their workers because of its effect on performance. Various research findings have revealed that people can only give out their best if their needs are satisfied. It is therefore reasonable to say that human work behaviour is largely a function of motivation.

Variables that could lead to job satisfaction or dissatisfaction are several. A careful examination of relevant literatures (Obanye P. 2008, Okendu J. 2012), revealed among others facts that workers tend to show satisfaction if salary, fringe benefits, work itself, administrative relationship, physical working conditions, recognitions, advancement, training and retraining are favourable. The extent to which these factors are made available in teaching profession will provide the willingness and feeling of commitment to teachers. Looking at the Educational system of Nigeria, Taiwo (1980), asserted that if teachers are to perform their duties efficiently they should among other things be trained and retrained by means of good conditions of service comparable to their counterparts in the non-teaching professions.

The extent to which a worker is ready to change depends on the personal feelings and contentment. Those willing to change especially if it involves additional work-load are those who feel that such changes also bring enhanced general conditions of service. Change is brought about by individuals, their personal satisfaction, frustration, concerns, motivations and perceptions, all play part in determining the success or failure of a change initiation.

The increasing distaste for teaching profession is likely to hinder the progress of educational development in the country and may further intensify the problem of implementing the National Policy on Education. Therefore, it has become imperative to review the incentive packages in the teaching profession and capacity building as well to serve as a scientific explanation for the factors which affect work motivation of teachers and then discover areas of teachers needs and how to provide for these needs in order to ensure quality delivery and productivity.

The analysis of quality of work life of teachers at all level of education system showed that teachers are dissatisfied with salary, fringe benefits, professional growth opportunities, absence of welfare services such as bus service, canteen services, housing schemes etcetera, Njoku A.C. (2011).

These treatments have led to public assessment of teachers in the teaching service as ‘forgotten:

They are accorded low prestige by members of the public. This has created an uncomfortable situation, in which teachers seem to perpetually occupy an equivocal position in the Nigeria society,

and thus society itself has remained ambivalent about teachers. This is upsetting to teachers and it contributes to their growing militancy, brain drain and incessant strike action.

CONCEPT OF INCENTIVE

Incentive is an act or promise for greater action. It is also called a stimulus to greater action. Incentive is something which is given in addition to wages. It means additional remuneration or benefit to an employee in recognition of achievement or better work. Incentive provides a spur or zeal in the employees for better performance. Therefore, a hope for a reward is a powerful incentive to motivate employees. Besides monetary incentives, there are some other stimuli which can drive a person to greater actions. These include job satisfaction, job security, job promotion, and pride for accomplishment. Incentive really sometimes works to accomplish the goals of a concern, and brings about motivation. While motivation refers to initiation, direction, intensity and persistence of behaviour, incentives, on the other hand, are external measures that are designed and established to influence motivation and behaviour of individuals, groups or organization. Incentive system or structure is a combination of several more or less coherent incentives. Motivators include positive incentives in the above sense and also all other external factors which impact upon people or organizations motivation.

The need of incentives can be many and enumerated as follows;

- i. To increase productivity;
- ii. To drive or arouse stimulus work;
- iii. To psychologically satisfy a person, that leads to job satisfaction;
- iv. To enhance commitment in work performance
- v. To shape the behaviour or outlook of subordinate towards work.
- vi. To inculcate zeal and enthusiasm towards work
- vii. To get the maximum capabilities of workers so that they are exploited and utilized maximally.

Types of incentives used as motivator

There are two categories of incentives used to motivate employees namely:

1. *Monetary Incentives*: These are incentives which satisfy the subordinates by providing their rewards in terms of rupees. Money (salary or pay) has been recognized as a chief source of satisfying the needs of workers. Therefore money not only satisfies psychological needs but also the security and social needs. Hence, in many factory and organizations, various wage plans and business schemes are introduced to motivate and stimulate the workers to work.
2. *Non-Monetary Incentives*: Besides the monetary incentives, there are certain non-financial incentives which can satisfy the ego and self-actualization needs of employees. Non-monetary incentives are the incentives which cannot be measured in terms of money. They are often used to satisfy the psychological needs of the subordinates, and include as follows
 - a. *Promotion*: promotion is an effective tool to increase the spirit to work in a concern. If the workers are provided opportunities for the advancement and growth; they feel satisfied and contented and they become more committed to the organization. Promotion helps to boost staff morale and motivate them to work harder, thereby increasing productivity and efficiency; Ozigi (1977), points out that lack of promotion however can cover morale resulting in frustration, resignation and premature retirement and affect also the general efficiency and productivity.

- b. *Security of Service:* Job security is an incentive which provides great motivation to employees. If the employee's job is secured, he/she will put maximum efforts to achieve the objectives of the organization. The pension plan is one of the most popular ways to provide security for workers. It is best set up in collaboration with competent legal and insurance advisers.
In most establishments, the insurance programme has a strong bearing on their recruitment effort, their ability to keep good employees and their success at maintaining a reasonably high level of productivity. Important benefits in the comfort and protection category include; good hospitalization, major medical plans, good life insurance, good accident insurance, travel insurance, death allowances, supplementary disability, dental insurance, psychiatric care, sick pay etc, similar incentives are desirable in the teaching profession.
- c. *Suggestion Scheme:* The organizations should look forward to taking suggestions and inviting suggestion schemes from the employees. In the school system, suggestions about the contents and materials from subordinates are necessary. Various articles written by employees can be published in various magazine of the school to improve the work environment. This also is helpful to motivate the teachers to feel important and they can also be in search for innovative methods which can be applied for better lesson delivery. This ultimately helps in growing a concern and adapting new methods of teaching.
- d. *Physical Working Conditions:* The importance of the provision of the relevant facilities and equipment in working places should not be over emphasized. The provision of desks, seats, chalks, teaching aids and chalkboards are part of the ingredient of effective learning. In a school system, the school library is an inseparable part of the instruction serving as a reaching centre as well as repository of information for both teacher and learner. In Urebu (1984) view, for teachers to put into practice the professional skills learnt, the physical working environment needs to be comfortable; working without facilities and equipments is like going to farm without a hoe.
- e. *Employee Pleasure and Recreation:* These non-monetary incentives would contribute to an easier, more pleasant and more relaxed life for the majority of teachers in Nigeria. They include, vacations, holidays, rest periods, sabbaticals, personal time off, wash-up-time, recreation programmes, and lounge or cafeteria facilities.
- f. *Job Enrichment:* Job enrichment is another non-monetary incentive in which the job of a teacher can be enriched. This can be done by increasing his responsibilities, giving him an important designation, increasing the content and nature of the work, training and retraining. Through these ways efficient teacher can get challenging jobs in which they can prove their worth. This also helps in the greatest motivation of the efficient employees.

Combinations of financial and non-financial incentives (positive incentives) together help in bringing motivation and zeal to work in a concern.

Negative Incentive

Negative incentives are those whose purposes are to correct the mistakes or defaults of employees. The purpose is to rectify mistakes in order to secure effective results. It is negative by nature; for instance demotion, transfer, fines, and penalties.

MOTIVATIONAL INCENTIVES IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

The concept of incentive describes tangible and intangible rewards that need to be provided in the school system in order to activate or promote meaningful work attitude in the school.

In spite of the research findings or reports of the importance of motivation in goal realization in educational organizations, Bojuwole (1995), observed that many public school teachers lack motivation and are poorly paid, disgruntled by the poor conditions of the environment of their work-place as well as by their deplorable condition of service. The tendency for these teachers is to devote more of their energies to trade-union matters contending with their employers for better condition of service rather than attending to their students. There is no doubt that the obvious reason why teachers are becoming more aggressive and uncompromising is the low level of salaries, allowances and fringe benefits which they receive. The main source of their anger and frustration is that workers in other sectors of the public services with the same academic qualifications and experiences receive better treatment from the same employer - government. The disparity is always apparent, if not evident, in some cases where the starting salaries of teachers and their equivalent counterparts in the public service are the same, huge hidden benefits and allowances which are non-taxable are paid to those in the public service and other parastatals.

This implies that teachers attitude towards students, attitude toward teaching, attitude towards self (self concept) and attitude towards colleagues all have significant influence on teachers behaviour, and as such, on their motivation to teach and how effectively they perform their teaching task. However, since attitude cannot be seen, they are better inferred from behavioural dispositions in various aspects of the teachers' cognitive, affective and psychomotor operations in the school system. There are too many incidents of absenteeism, the causes include the desire of teachers to avoid unpleasant, unhealthy or tension generating conditions in the work environment. The work itself may be uninteresting, frustrating and unchallenging or the reward and punishment system in the employment is discriminating and unjust. Absenteeism may therefore become a form of escape mechanism for some teachers.

On this matter, Mezieobi (1992), x-rayed the conditions of service in the school system thus;

‘the uncongenial work climate in most Nigerian schools are exemplified by poor equipped laboratories and workshops, overcrowded and ill-ventilated classroom buildings, utter disrepair of furniture and equipment, inadequate instructional materials and resources, irregular payment of teachers salaries and fringe benefits among other factors, inversely relate to high teachers' absenteeism.’

Many stakeholders agree that teachers' level of job satisfaction and motivation depends on an array of factors such as levels of remuneration, location and type of school, availability of appropriate housing, opportunities for further training, and conditions of service, work load, promotion and career path, students behaviour, relationship with community, school quality factors such as availability of teaching and learning resources. Since teachers are the most important resources in educational programmes the implication is to frustrate best possible quality in teachers' work force. The policies implemented by government must take into account the interplay of certain critical variables that influence teachers' careers. These variable include among others pre-employment training, remuneration, and personnel development.

The issue of motivational incentive of teachers has become very critical and topical in recent times; every written document about teachers extols the roles and the importance of teachers in education

process. Yet when it comes to the question of how to improve and motivate them, those whose duty it is to manage, and administer to teachers seem to look elsewhere. Teachers' conditions have too long been a taboo issue. Educational debates have tended to ignore the issue of teachers because it is sensitive to deal with but the situation of teachers has reached an intolerable low point. In the report of Okoro (1998), teachers constitute the largest single group of public servants. In spite of the role teachers play as major agents in the transformation of society from industrial-based to technological and knowledge-based society; governments tend to look at issues affecting their morale, their salaries and other conditions of services as issues that appear helpless to tackle even amidst resource availability. Government is always afraid of their sheer numbers and the salary bill which could not be otherwise. Okoro (1998), further outlined the resultant effect of poor incentive in teaching profession as, poor performance, attracting the least qualified, premature departure from teaching, lack of commitment to the job among others.

It should be noted that Civil Servants in Nigeria according to their grade levels are entitled to various incentive packages (fringe benefits). Most notable include, car and housing loans, free medical services, and early payment of pension and gratuity, from grade 7 and above civil servants can receive a car loan and, below the grade, a motorcycle and bicycle loan. All other workers receive vehicle basic allowances. Car loan is the most sought-after as visible fringe benefit in the civil service. Majority of teachers do not receive these allowances even though various State governments in Nigeria have instituted a policy of granting a revolving loan for teachers to assist them build their own house.

The feeling of powerlessness is one of the reasons for the rising teachers' militancy as a result of lack of motivation, the inability of teachers to take effective part in making decision that concerns them particularly their welfare. This sense of impotency stretches to what goes on in their schools. Government decides what subjects should be taught; the West African Examination Council (WAEC) decides the subjects that shall be examined and how they will be examined; the National University Commission (NUC); the National Board of Technical Education (NBTE); and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) are all bodies that have taken the powers of curriculum organization, control and examination from teachers in our tertiary institutions whose Senates and Academic Boards should have such responsibility; Nwagwu (1998), lamented that centralization and too many regulations, guidelines and laws from Ministries of Education have even robbed teachers of the power to discipline their students. In effect, teachers are given enormous responsibilities but starved of the power and authority to exercise some initiative in deciding how to perform the tasks.

APPRAISING INCENTIVE SYSTEM IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Vroom (1964), in his expectancy model asserts that the strength of rewards impact on workers' motivation and effort are functions of three factors: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. Expectancy is the workers perception of the strength of the link between effort and performance. If I work hard and put myself out, will that translate into enhanced task performance? Instrumentality is the workers perception of the strength of the link between performance and the reward; if my performance is strong, will I receive commensurate rewards? Valence is the value a worker places on the reward; will the rewards I receive be things I really care about.

Vroom's model actually highlights the fact that, in order for an incentive program to have a strong impact on worker's motivation and effort, the worker must believe that effort will lead to performance, that performance will lead to rewards, and that the rewards will be desirable. On this note, a manager who wants to design an effective incentive system must take into account the

workers' perceptions along each of these three dimensions. Empirical research has shown that the strength of these three factors can in fact predict workers' effort and performance level, if any of these factors is weak; the incentive system is not likely to have meaningful positive impact. Not surprisingly then when teachers feel relatively under compensated they are more likely to engage in politicking, turnover, militancy and brain drain.

Lunenburg's highlights on Vroom expectancy theory is based on the three key elements: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. According to him, a person is motivated to the degree that he or she believes that (a) effort will lead to acceptable performance (expectancy), (b) performance will be rewarded (instrumentality), and (c) the value of the rewards is highly positive (valence). (See Figure 1.)

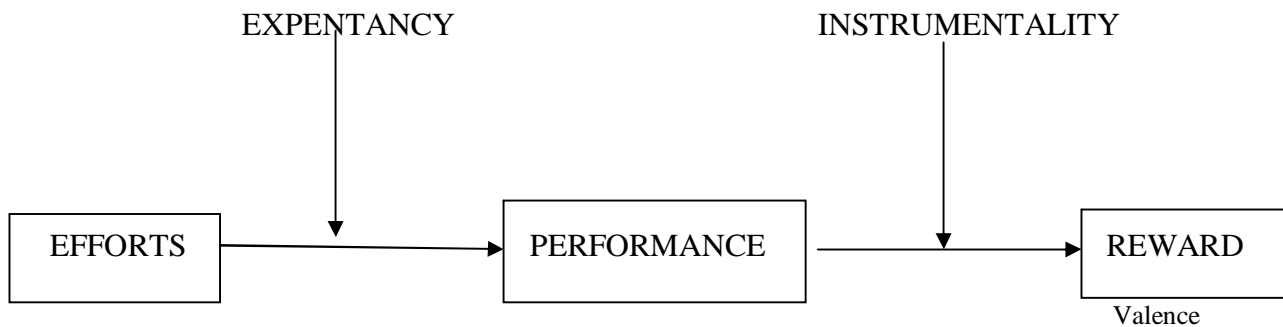


Figure 1. Basic expectancy model (Adapted from Lunenburg, F. Expectancy Theory Motivation, 2011)
Expectancy

Expectancy is a person's estimate of the probability that job-related effort will result in a given level of performance. Expectancy is based on probabilities and ranges from 0 to 1. If an employee sees no chance that effort will lead to the desired performance level, the expectancy is 0. On the other hand, if the employee is completely certain that the task will be completed, the expectancy has a value of 1. Generally, employee estimates of expectancy lie somewhere between these two extremes.

Instrumentality

Instrumentality is an individual's estimate of the probability that a given level of achieved task performance will lead to various work outcomes. As with expectancy, instrumentality ranges from 0 to 1. For example, if an employee sees that a good performance rating will always result in a salary increase, the instrumentality has a value of 1. If there is no perceived relationship between a good performance rating and a salary increase, then the instrumentality is 0.

Valence

Valence is the strength of an employee's preference for a particular reward. Thus, salary increases, promotion, peer acceptance, recognition by supervisors, or any other reward might have more or less value to individual employees. Unlike expectancy and instrumentality, valences can be either positive or negative. If an employee has a strong preference for attaining a reward, valence is positive. At the other extreme, valence is negative. And if an employee is indifferent to a reward, valence is 0. The total range is from -1 to +1. Theoretically, a reward has a valence because it is related to an employee's needs. Valence, then, provides a link to the need theories of motivation.

From the foregoing description of incentive structuring system, it could be noted that designing and structuring incentive schemes in the teaching profession based on individual and group performance is ideal. Basing rewards on individual performance is generally associated with increased pressure on individual teacher to perform and to accept responsibility for his/her own actions. Individualistic

scheme successfully distinguish between high and low performers. Such systems provide a valuable source of performance feedback, and foster the sense of meritocracy. When incentives are based on group performance, group members report greater liking and respect for one another, enhanced self-esteem and perceptions of control, lower anxiety, and more task enjoyment. Similarly, measures developed to boost teacher motivation are also based on three theories of motivation and productivity according to Johnson (1998). These theories are;

- Expectancy theory: Individuals are more likely to strive in their work if there is an anticipated reward that they value, such as bonus or a promotion, than if there is none.
- Equity theory: Individuals are dissatisfied if they are not justly compensated for their efforts and accomplishments.
- Job enrichment theory: Workers are more productive when their work is varied and challenging.

The first two theories are justification for merit pay and career ladders, and the third suggests differentiated staffing, use of organizational incentives, and reform-oriented staff development, increasing the content of work, and giving important designation.

Incentive strategies for Retaining Competent Teachers :

In as much as number of studies have argued that merit pay plan often divide faculties, set teachers against their administrators, are plagued by inadequate evaluation method, poor students may pose threats to the teacher's rating and rewards. Notwithstanding, the idea of merit pay has a straightforward appeal. It produces rewards for meeting established goals and standards. Merit pay and other incentive policies may gain popularity largely because of their seeming simplicity. They are meant to provide external incentives- financial rewards, advancement opportunities, and work place variety. However, it does not adequately resolve the problem of teacher satisfaction.

Teachers enter teaching to help young people learn. Their most gratifying reward is accomplishing this goal. The work-related factors most important to teachers are those that allow them to practice their craft successfully. Frase and Larry (1992) identified two sets of factors that affect teachers' ability to perform effectively as the work context factor (teaching environment), and the work content factor (teaching). Work context factors are those baseline needs, they include working conditions such as class size, discipline conditions, and availability of teaching materials; the quality of the principal's supervision; and basic psychological needs such as money, status, and security. Context factors clear the road of the debris that block effective teaching, and good supply of it prevents dissatisfaction.

Work content factors are intrinsic to work itself; they include opportunities for professional development, recognition, challenging and varied work, increased responsibility, achievement, empowerment, and authority. Adelabu (2005), argues that teachers who do not feel supported in these states are less motivated to do their best work in the classroom. Similarly, the poor recognition of teachers' services causes the profession to be regarded as a stepping stone. Ezekiel-Hart (2012), observed that in spite of the paucity of statistical data, attrition of teachers is a well known phenomenon in Nigeria due to poor condition and low prestige accorded the teaching profession. At the second National Teachers' Summit held in National Teachers Institute (NTI) Conference Centre, Kaduna, April 20 –22, 2004, the following observations emerged from papers and discussions:

1. The summit noted with dismay the high attrition rate of teachers due mainly to unattractive conditions of service.
2. The working environment in which teachers find themselves is not conducive

3. The poor treatment of pensioners reduces the capacity of the system to retain teachers and worsen current attrition rate.

Other researches for instance Data from the National Centre for Education Statistic (1997) confirm that staff development, parental support, teacher participation in school decision making, influence over school policy, and control in the classroom are the factors most strongly associated with teacher satisfaction. This demands that major areas that relate to teachers' job satisfaction need to be effectively considered, such as;

- Feedback which is the factor most strongly related to job satisfaction yet teachers typically receive very little accurate and helpful feedback regarding their teaching.
- Autonomy which is strongly related to job satisfaction for many teachers. Autonomy is not necessarily defined as freedom from interference in the classroom; rather, the majority of teachers view autonomy as freedom to develop collegial relationships to accomplish tasks.
- Collegiality is also important for teachers and can be expressed through experiencing challenging and stimulating work, creating school improvement plans, and leading curriculum development groups. Johnson (1989) concedes that collegiality is directly linked to effective schools, where "teachers value and participate in norms and continuous improvement of collegiality".

Discovering what matters to teachers and how best to motivate them for sustained and improved performance have been a complicated challenge. Extrinsic rewards that have been tried in the past have generally not produced the desired result. Researches and experiences show that teachers are most likely to value intrinsic rewards such as self-respect, responsibility, and a sense of accomplishment, this shows that compensation mechanisms can be a powerful incentive in linking performance to rewards. Compensation systems that reward people directly based on how well they perform their jobs are known as

pay-for-performance plans (Berger, 2009). These may take such forms as "commission plans" used for sales personnel, "piece-rate systems" used for factory workers and field hands, and "incentive stock option (ISO) plans" for executives (Mercer, Carpenter, & Wyman, 2010) including other staff. However, rewards linked to performance need not be extrinsic. Other forms of recognition for good performance can be very effective as well. This implies that the incentives towards achieving these need to be reviewed.

The clamour for quality assurance in basic education in Nigeria is the central goal of both those who enter the teaching profession, and those Governments and the Agencies who are working to reform the education system in terms of quality delivery, productivity and standard. Therefore, new direction in participatory school improvement, comprehensive and meaningful staff development and supportive teacher evaluation, hold great promise for improving teachers' motivation.

Some specific variables have been developed by some working groups on teaching profession (Common Wealth Secretariat 1993), to give priority in planning and implementing improvement of teachers' incentive packages to improve their moral and motivation. Some of these variables include:

- i. **Financing Issues:** Allocation for salaries and method of payment
- ii. **National personnel Issues:** Conditions of service, personnel management procedures, benefits, salaries, allowance, pension and insurance.
- iii. **National Support Issues:** Staff development supervision, staff unions
- iv. **In-School Support Issues:** Teaching materials, curriculum, development and staff activities.

v. ***In-School Personnel Issues:*** Teacher behaviors, teacher appraisal and principal style. Selective intervention which does not take into account the interrelationship between the set of variables specified is unlikely to have the desired results. Okoro (1998), averred that these set of variables do not specify the socio-political context in which the education system, schools and teachers work. It selects set of variables which are thought to be amenable to manipulation at the planning and implementation level. Raising teachers' salaries without streamlining the payment system, and developing efficient national and in-school managerial and professional support systems, will not lead to greater job satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

Teachers should be motivated and energized through better pay and performance-based incentives; professional pride should be created in teaching and be used to motivate and raise the commitment of teachers at all levels. That means the social status of teachers needs special attention by all the Governments of the Federation and all employers of teachers because teachers are the real builders of tomorrow. Education is the most effective instrument for national development while teachers are the executors, facilitators and pacesetters of formal education

Recommendations

1. The conditions of service and the general welfare or incentive packages for teachers at all levels should be reviewed and upgraded from time to time like their counterparts in other establishments, it is a tool to ensure quality delivery productivity and standard in education system.
2. The governments and stakeholders should enact an array of incentive plans designed to recruit, reward and retain the best teachers, recognizing an outstanding teacher still in-service and honouring him/her with the designation "Emeritus", this could be also promotional to a special scale. In the case of a retired outstanding teacher, who is still active and healthy and whose service is still valuable, such a designation could be given to him/her to remain in service for the period of the 'Emeritus' designation as will be determined by the Council in consultation with various governments. Merit pay and career ladders are intended to provide financial incentive, varied work, and advancement opportunities for seasoned teachers. These along with the cross-the-board pay raises, work environment premiums for difficult assignments, grants or sabbaticals for research and study are expected to improve teachers' performance and motivation.
3. Schools should not be left out in our socio- economic planning. Teachers commute long distances to their place of work as a result significant amount of time and energy is spent to get to place of work. Provision of good school bus service as an incentive will go a long way to improve the moral of the teacher. Provision should also be made for compensation for injury, free medical treatment, study leave and prohibition of unauthorized salary deductions
4. Government needs to institutionalize teaching service incentive system. That means a selective accelerated Salary Enhancement Scheme should be set up to offer a potential sustainable solution to salary and incentive problems within a wider context of 'Pay Reform Incentive Review'.
5. There should be more conscious efforts on the part of State and Federal governments, principal, parents and counselors to contribute to the teachers' personality growth and development through the provision of adequate facilities, counseling services and professional training opportunities in Nigeria. Every meaningful effort should be harnessed

on the part of employers of teachers to provide environments equipped with adequate human and material resources that can promote teachers emotional maturity, responsibility and achievement motivational traits in order to enhance positive work attitude in the education system.

6. In order for a country to plan and implement a programme aimed at improving the quality of education through raising and sustaining teachers' morale and motivation, it is essential to put in place an informed policy and rationalized management structure in the Ministry of Education to ensure that this programme is implemented as and when due

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