

## Cost Analysis of Teacher Absenteeism in Nigerian Secondary Schools

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**ABSTRACT** The paper was based on the contention that teacher absenteeism is costly, which could lead to wastage in the school system. Hence, the paper analyzed the cost of un-authorized teacher absenteeism in Nigerian secondary schools between 1997 and 1999, i.e. two academic sessions of 1997/98 - 98/99. The analysis revealed that the cost of absenteeism was relatively high when the dwindling financial allocation to education is put in mind. The analysis showed that the total cost of absenteeism for the period was ₦56.0 million (US \$800,018) at N70/US \$1 exchange rate that was in existence at that time. The yearly average cost was ₦26.0 million (US\$400,009). The analysis also showed that cost of absenteeism seemed to be higher in Delta, Kwara and Ogun states when the % of sample was juxtaposed with the % of total cost of absenteeism. On the other hand, the cost of absenteeism seemed to be lower in Edo, Lagos and Ondo states, when their percentage of sample was juxtaposed with the percentage of total cost. Similarly, the average total unit cost of ₦222 (\$3.2) of rural schools as against ₦220 (\$3.1) of urban schools suggested that the cost of absenteeism could be a bit higher in the rural schools than the urban schools. The paper therefore, concluded that though the total money cost of un-authorized teacher absenteeism could be small (only 6.0% of the total actual teacher emolument during the period of study), such amount could constitute an enormous wastage. This included the un-quantified cost, especially to students in form of lessons not taught, going by the aggregate number of days (256,237) teachers were absent. An all-inclusive approach was suggested to reduce the incidence of unauthorized teacher absenteeism. This included better working conditions, comprehensive rural development, improved funding of schools and application of the available laws to check rate of absenteeism among teachers. It is hoped that these suggestions would make teachers to be more committed to their job, thereby encouraging better attendance, thus reducing the cost of wastage arising from teacher absenteeism.

### INTRODUCTION

The scarcity of resources and the problem of how best to allocate them among the contending educational needs have been the bane of educational planners, managers and policy makers over the years. For education to expand in quantity and quality, it requires greater resources allocation in terms of human, money, time and materials. Of the human resources required for the production function of the school system, teachers are the most vital. This is because they play great facilitative role in the teaching-learning process. According to (Aghenta 1998), in spite of the advancement in science and technology, the teacher is not yet displaced in the classroom nor has his important role in education diminished. In this vein Tarpeh (1994) described them as the mainstay of any institution and their number and quality affect the efficiency of teaching and learning process. He regarded them as a crucial input in the transformation of students.

Teachers seem to have profound influence

on the social-cultural development of their society, since they influence many values directly and indirectly to their students. No wonder (Coombs 1985; Federal Government of Nigeria 1985; Psacharopoulos and Woodhall 1997; Ukeje 1986 and Utulu 2001) all identified teachers' quality and dedication as significant predictors of quality of education. Also, Taiwo (1986) believed that teachers occupy a transcendental position of importance in the world and in the affairs of people.

The school system depends heavily on teachers for the execution of its programmes. However, the quality of school productivity will be meaningless if teachers' attitude to work is negative (Nwadiani 1992). Therefore, to improve educational standards, there must be dedicated and appropriately motivated teachers. Unfortunately, there has been a perennial problem of instability of teachers in the country. Indeed, teacher absenteeism and turnover; job dissatisfaction; perceived neglect and excessive grievances have been identified as the most

pressing and complex problems confronting the nation's teaching profession.

The shirking model as used by (McConnel and Brue 1989; Sapford and Tzannatos 1993) have some degree of discretion over their performance at work and are therefore capable of shirking; that is neglecting or evading responsibility. This could manifest in truancy, lateness especially when the working condition is not motivating. The worker exercises this discretion positively or negatively depending on his state of mind. Workers generally compare their inputs to the equitability of the reward received and would likely shirk, if they feel that the working condition and environment are lower than expected. Thus, even in the absence of attractive salaries, workers may decide not to shirk, if in their opinion, the non-economic and welfare packages are sufficiently attractive or traded off. However, the absence of both may leave the workers with the bitter option of shirking.

In Nigeria, teachers' welfare and conditions of service were abysmal especially in the 1990's. In addition, the school environment was highly repellent. School buildings were dilapidated, with inadequate teaching-learning facilities and in most cases, the classrooms were over-crowded. All these could alter the attitude of teachers to work. In fact, since the government take-over of schools, the attitude of the Nigerian teacher seems to have gradually deteriorated (Adeyemi and Akpotu 2001). This situation has forced many teachers to leave in search for "better" jobs, while many others have become indifferent to school affairs resulting in truancy and negative work attitude. Corroborating this development, (Meziobi and Nwadiani 1992) had observed that, teachers' truancy and absenteeism have assumed increasing and frustrating dimensions. While (Aghenta 1993: 25) lamented that the teaching profession in Nigeria is fast becoming "a grumbling profession" and an increasing number of teachers are regarding teaching as "a part-time and pass-time occupation".

Ironically, education sector has enjoyed huge government expenditure, only second to expenditure on defense in yearly budgetary allocation over the years. Specifically, Coombs (1985) had identified education as the world's largest growth industry over years in many countries, with huge capital outlay. In Nigeria, the chunk of education budgetary allocation goes to recurrent expenditure, especially for the

payment of teacher's salaries and allowances. As remarked by (Aghenta 1993), about 71% of recurrent expenditure on education is spent to pay teachers.

This is to show that the social cost of education is very high in Nigeria, because of the level of development. The government is largely responsible for public education. The cost of education keeps rising every year due to periodic wage increase, expansion of the educational system due to the introduction of Universal Basic Education and spiral inflation trend of 14.5% average; Central Bank of Nigeria (2002). In this circumstance, the average unit cost in most education systems has the tendency of rising from year to year, while quality may remain at a standstill or even declines. Unfortunately, such records are hardly available in the Nigerian school system. However, reports on university education in Nigeria (Federal Ministry of Education 2001) reveal that average institutional cost per student ranged from ₦37, 082 in 1992 to ₦105, 000 in 2001. This represents an increase of ₦67, 918 or 183.16%, for the period. This, no doubt is an indication that there has been enormous increase in the overall educational cost. This phenomenon of rising unit cost of education is largely due to the highly labour intensive nature of education. Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1997: 176) for example, indicated that teachers' salaries represent "at least 70 percent of the total current costs of education in many developing countries and more than 90 percent of the current costs of primary education". That teacher' salaries and personnel emoluments exert such a powerful influence on current cost of education means that teachers' salaries must be carefully weighed against educational efficiency. Indeed all attempts to reduce education costs are bound to focus on teachers' salaries, if meaningful results are to be achieved.

In spite of these growing financial costs of education, very serious problems have been confronting the Nigerian educational systems in the form of teacher absenteeism (Adeyemi and Akpotu 2001). Bearing in mind the crucial role of teachers in the educational industry and the "high-handedness" of teachers' salaries in current cost of education, negative attitude on the part of teachers, which influences efficiency could have compounding implications on costs of education.

Education is both a social and economic good,

hence, it provides for the training and education of the child to ensure benefits for the child and society. Economically, education is seen as a worthwhile investment that is expected to yield off, acting as an engine for economic growth and development. How well these benefits are achieved depends largely on the quality, competence and dedication of the teachers.

The phenomenon of teacher absenteeism has devastating consequences on the educational system, the national economy and on the students. Economically, absenteeism reduces the efficiency of the school system through increase in economic wastage of the school system and of the meager and scarce resources available to education and the economy.

Also, Vaizey (1971) and Adeyemi (1998) contended that teacher absenteeism has the tendency to increase cost of financing education. It can also lead to increased student dropout rates. There is the tendency to classify absentee teachers as truant teachers with much tendency to breed truant and delinquent students.

It is important to note that absenteeism in this paper refers to days of un-authorized leave and absence from schools by teachers. The authors recognized that there are reasons for absenting oneself from duty. They include the personal-related ones like illness and family-related problems. The job-related ones include poor condition of service, job dissatisfaction, and personality problem. Absenteeism could be because of genuine reasons, but could be illegitimate when the school authority is not duly informed before or immediately there is a cause for it either in writing or by proxy. It is a common knowledge that absentee teachers come back thereafter with various flimsy excuses and lies. In fact, section 67, part IX, cap 4 of Western Nigerian Education Laws considers teacher's absence from school without permission as a professional misconduct, which if proved "would warrant the prohibition or suspension from teaching of the teacher. The irony of it today is that such teachers are paid their full salaries by school heads, with no official report made to supervising ministry. If a worker gets paid for an undone job, it is morally awful and economically irresponsible. The aggregate of such practices would inflate the cost of production, even if it is marginal. Thus, Vaizey (1971) and Adeyemi (1998) had contended that teacher absenteeism has the tendency to increase the cost of education. They believed that it could

also lead to increased student dropout rates. This is because such teachers have much tendency to breed truant and delinquent students.

Absenteeism could also be a sign of bad management, which can cause a lot of harm and damage to the organization. Hence, Evans (1995) revealed that organizations with high degree of absenteeism are subject to higher fringe loss than necessary as a result of under-utilization of facilities already paid for and above all, loss in overall productivity. Teacher absenteeism affects the internal and external efficiency of the educational system. It certainly leads to loss of many school days resulting to high rate of dropouts and failures as well as creating a pool of large numbers of costly repeaters, because many lessons would not be taught.

Largely, most educational financial analysts hardly consider how efficiently the available physical, financial and human resources are being used to achieve desired educational goals. In the Nigerian setting, school administrators hardly have ideas of what it cost to provide any unit of education or how the classroom time of the teacher is judiciously used. In the absence of such basic data, educational managers become severely handicapped to improve cost effectiveness and to assess and explore alternative possible ways of getting more and better results within the limits of available resources. More so, the efficiency of the Nigerian educational system has much been in doubt. It is in this light that this study intends to contribute to improve educational planning and management for improved efficiency in the use of limited resources to minimize wastage arising from absenteeism. Specifically, this paper examined the following problems:

1. What is the pattern of un-authorized teacher absenteeism in Nigerian public secondary schools?
2. What is the cost of un-authorized teacher absenteeism in Nigerian public secondary schools?

## METHODOLOGY

The teachers in public secondary schools in seven states of the federation formed the subjects of the study. The schools were stratified according to geographical location. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 367 secondary schools with 9055 teachers in relation to the absolute size of the states.

A checklist titled “Checklist For Collecting Data on the Rate of Teacher Absenteeism in Nigerian Secondary Schools (CFCDORTANSS)” was the main instrument. The checklist was validated through senior colleagues.

The checklist was completed through the schools’ staff time-books, which showed the days each teacher sampled was absent from duty with authorization. The school principals duly authorized these records. Data was collected through appointed research assistants who were serving teachers. They each collected data from respective schools/states, where they were quite familiar.

Average annual teacher salary was ₦149371 (US \$2134) as determined from the Approved Documents of the National Salaries and Wages Commission. Absenteeism means absence from a day’s duty illegitimately; therefore, one day was taken as the unit of measurement of absence. Average daily income varies across the states.

The overall assumption was that everyday a teacher is absent costs the system financially, but the extent became the focus of the paper. The average unit cost of absenteeism was taken to be the average working day’s pay per teacher, which was obtained by dividing the average monthly salary by the number of working days in the month. This was based on the teachers’ salary in operation during the period of study. This unit cost was used to determine the total cost of teacher absenteeism. Available records of the sampled schools showed that the absentee teachers were paid their full salaries during the period of study, including the days absented.

The major variables considered include:

- (i) number of teachers that were absent from schools in the sampled states,
- (ii) total monthly salaries of teachers in the sampled schools, and

- (iii) the total number of days teachers were absent.

Simple percentage, average and cost ratio were used for data analysis.

## RESULTS

Table 1 presents the data of teacher absenteeism during the period under review. The table shows that a total of 367 schools and 9055 teachers were used. Delta State constituted 22.8% of the teachers sampled; Edo State 12.6%; Kwara 3.8%; Lagos 23.0%; Ogun 8.2%; Ondo 18.4%; and Oyo 11.2%. Similarly, 76.2% of samples belonged to the urban schools, while 19.9% belonged to the rural schools.

### Research Question 1

*What is the Pattern of Teacher Absenteeism in Nigerian Secondary Schools?* Table 2 reveals that the number of days teachers were absent for the two academic sessions in the seven sampled states. As earlier mentioned, the data were collected in a large-scale research through the “on the spot” serving teachers, using the staff attendance/time book. The information gathered were duly checked and approved by the principals of the schools sampled.

The table revealed that sampled teachers (9055) were absent from duty without permission/notification for 256,237 days for the two sessions, averaging 128118.5 days. Teachers in urban schools accounted for 66.3% of the total absence as against the 76.2% they constituted of the total sample, while the teachers in the rural schools accounted for 33.7% as against the 19.9% they constituted of the total sample; if table 1 is juxtaposed with table 2. However, the data from Kwara state were not classified according to location.

**Table 1: Number of schools and teachers used per state**

S. No.	States	No. of schools used	Urban	% Urban	Rural	% Rural	Grand Total	% of total
1.	Delta	111	1222	59.1	845	40.8	2,067	22.8
2.	Edo	68	1039	91.2	100	8.8	1,139	12.6
3.	Kwara	20	-	-	-	-	348	3.8
4.	Lagos	42	1977	94.9	105	5.1	2,082	23.0
5.	Ogun	31	600	95.0	147	5.0	747	8.2
6.	Ondo	56	1344	80.3	329	19.7	1,673	18.4
7.	Oyo	39	717	70.9	282	29.1	1,011	11.2
	Total	367	6899	76.2	1808	19.9	9055	100.0

Source: Computed from Adeyemi and Akpotu (2001)

\*Data were not classified into Urban and Rural

Furthermore, the pattern by states showed in parenthesis the percentages proportion of the sampled teachers and number of absence by states respectively: Delta 22.8% (34.2%); Edo 12.6% (9.1%); Kwara 3.8% (6.0%); Lagos 23.0% (13.6); Ogun 8.2% (12.7%); Ondo 18.4% (12.7%); and Oyo 11.2% (10.9%). These figures revealed that the percentage proportion of absence was higher than the percentage proportion of the samples in Delta, Kwara and Ogun states. While the reverse was the case in Edo, Lagos and Oyo

states. This could translate to an emerging pattern of cost of wastage arising from absenteeism.

### Research Question 2

***What is the Cost of Un-Authorized Teacher Absenteeism in Nigerian Public Secondary Schools?*** As shown in Table 3, cost calculation was done, using a day as a unit of measurement. This is because teachers are paid monthly in Nigeria, and therefore a day's pay can be easily

**Table 2: Teacher absenteeism by days (1995/96 – 1996/97) session**

States	Number of Days Absent			
	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Total	(%)
Delta	36268 (41.4)	51399 (58.6)	87667	34.2
Edo	21621 (92.3)	1811 ( 7.7)	23432	9.1
*Kwara	-	-	15327	6.0
Lagos	31901 (91.7)	2885 ( 8.3)	34786	13.6
Ogun	20082 (58.2)	14414 (41.8)	34496	13.5
Ondo	25861 (74.2)	6773 (20.8)	32634	12.7
Oyo	18960 (68.0)	8935 (32.0)	27895	10.9
Total	154693 (66.4)	86217 (33.6)	25623737	100.0

Yearly average = 128,118.5

Source: Computed from Adeyemi and Akpotu (2001).

Data not classified into rural and urban.

**Table 3: Estimating the cost of teacher absenteeism (1997/98 – 1998/99 sessions)**

State	No. of absents (days)			Unit cost* (Teacher daily salary) ₦/\$	Total cost (₦/\$)			% of Total
	Urban	Rural	Total		Urban	Rural	Total	
Delta	36268	51399	87667	232.09	8417440.1 (\$120249)	11929193.0 (\$170417)	20346634 (\$290666)	36.3
Edo	21621	1811	23432	225.08	4866455 (\$69522)	407620 (\$5823)	5274074.5 (\$75344)	9.4
*Kwara	-	-	15327	189.75	-	-	2907685 (\$41538)	5.2
Lagos	31901	2885	34786	242.10	7723232 (\$110332)	698459 (\$9978)	8421691 (\$120310)	15.0
Ogun	20082	14414	34496	193.10	3877834 (\$55398)	2783343 (\$39762)	6661178 (\$95160)	11.9
Ondo	25861	6773	32634	183.06	4734115 (\$67630)	1239865 (\$17712)	5973980 (\$85343)	10.7
Oyo	18960	8935	27895	230.05	3461748 (\$62311)	2055497 (\$29364)	6417245 (\$91675)	11.5
Total	154693	86217	256237		33980824 (\$485440)	19113977 (\$8273057)	56001260 (\$800018)	100
Average Unit Cost					220 (\$3.1)	222 (\$3.2)	219 (\$3.1)	
Average Total Yearly Cost							280000630 (\$400009)	

\*Unit cost constitutes the average daily salary of a teacher in the respective states. A teacher is paid per month in Nigeria and the amount paid varies from state to states.

\*\*Conversion to US \$ is based on the exchange rate that existed during the period of study which was ₦70.00 to US \$1

Source: Central Bank of Nigeria.

\*Data not classified into rural and urban

worked out as the unit cost of teacher absenteeism. Secondly, the labour law of “no work, no pay” recognized that deduction of money from absentee worker should be worked out by day (Wages Board and Industrial Councils Act 1974). Unfortunately, there was no evidence of any deduction from the salaries of the absentee teachers during this period, hence this study to aggregate the money loss to public treasury.

The total cost of absenteeism was obtained by multiplying the average daily pay of teacher by the total absence during the period of study. This method followed the approach of (Kuzmits 1979). As shown in the table, a total of ₦56,001,260 (\$800,018) was lost during the period of study, translating to about ₦28,000,050 (US \$400,009) annually. This constituted about 6.0% of the total annual salary of the 9055 teachers, which was put at 467,238,000 (US \$6,674,829).

Furthermore, the percentage proportion of sample size to size of absenteeism and consequently the size of the cost of absenteeism among the states showed that Delta, Kwara and Ogun states incurred more cost on teacher absenteeism. Table 4 shows that these states recorded 22.8%, 3.8% and 8.2% if the samples respectively, while they recorded 36.3%, 5.2% and 11.9% of the total cost of absenteeism respectively, which were not proportional.

On the other hand, table 4 shows that Edo, Lagos and Ondo states relatively incurred lower cost on absenteeism, judging from their 12.6%, 23.0% and 18.4% of the sample size they recorded respectively, as against the 9.4%, 15.0% and 10.7% respectively accounted for in the cost of absenteeism. While Oyo state recorded relatively proportional percentages for the three variables, which were 11.2% of the total sample that

generated 10.7% of total absenteeism and 11.5% of the total cost of absenteeism.

Similarly, table 4 shows that while higher proportion of the sample came from the urban schools (76.2%), only (19.9%) came from the rural schools. However, the table revealed that teacher absenteeism seemed to be higher in the rural school, consequently the cost. The table shows that the 76.2% sampled urban teachers accounted for 60.7% of the total cost of absenteeism, while 19.9% sampled rural teachers accounted for 34.1% of the total cost of absenteeism.

## DISCUSSION

This study analyzed the cost of teacher absenteeism in Nigeria public secondary schools over a period of two academic sessions.

From the forgoing analysis, it is revealed that the cost of un-authorised teacher absenteeism was relatively high when considered the dwindling financial allocation to education in the country and the call by government to educational managers to eliminate wastage in whatever form and size. The total cost of absenteeism of ₦560,001,260 (US \$800018) for the period of study or ₦28,000,630 (US \$400009) yearly average could appear small because it constituted only 6% of the total annual salary of the 9055 teachers, which was put at ₦467,238,000 (US \$6,674,829). However, the multiplying effect of such cost to students, other colleagues, government and even the public is unquantifiable. More so there are many hidden and implicit costs, which cannot be accounted for. For example, students’ time lost arising from failure, repetition and dropout as well as students’ foregone earnings for the wasted periods when the teachers were absent. In addition, the unauthorized absences in practice were supposed to be computed and deducted at source from the salaries of the teachers concerned but this was not done from investigation. The above findings have support in Pigors and Myer (1981), which asserted that teacher absenteeism is indeed wasted in money, man-hours, and human values and jeopardize organization health.

The main focus of this paper may not be to compare cost absenteeism among the sampled states and even between rural and urban locations, nevertheless the pattern revealed by the analysis as shown in tables 3 and 4 is worth discussing. In the tables, the percentage of total sample size in Delta, Kwara and Ogun states was

**Table 4: Percentage proportion of teacher sample size of Absenteeism and size of cost of Absenteeism (1997/98 – 1998/99 sessions).**

State	Sample Size Total %	No. of absents (days) Total %	Cost of absenteeism Total %
Delta	22.8	34.2	36.3
Edo	12.6	9.1	9.4
Kwara	3.8	6.0	5.2
Lagos	23.0	13.6	15.0
Ogun	8.2	13.5	11.9
Ondo	18.4	12.7	10.7
Oyo	11.2	10.7	11.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Sources: Computed from table 1, 2, and 3

not proportional to the percentage of total cost of absenteeism recorded. While the four states constituted 34.8% of the total sample, they incurred as high as 53.4% of the cost. This was an indication of a higher rate of absenteeism. The reason for this finding could be adduced to the fact that these four states have many rural schools. Adeyemi and Akpotu (2001) found that rural teachers are more absent than their urban counterparts are. Most rural schools' teachers do not reside in such communities for lack of social amenities and good roads, which hinder access. Such inaccessibility hinders periodic visits by school inspectors, as such teachers and even principals in such schools attend schools at will. For example Delta state with 22.8% of the total sample and 36.3% of total cost of absenteeism is a riverine state with large rural communities. To get to many schools requires travelling in canoes and motoring boats. Thus, teachers in such schools prefer to reside in the few urban centres and attend schools at will.

On the other hand, the tables revealed that Edo, Lagos, Ondo and even Oyo states, which all accounted for the 65.2% of the total sample, only incurred 34.8% of the total cost of absenteeism. However, the percentage varied from states to states, but the picture indicated a lower cost of teacher absenteeism in the states. The reasons could be that teachers in these states were more motivated through better working conditions and less degree of absenteeism by rural teachers.

Furthermore, the analysis showed clearly that the cost of absenteeism was higher in rural schools than the urban schools. This deduction is made from the findings in table 4. In the table, 76.2% of the total sample was urban schools' teachers, while only 19.9% were rural schools' teachers. However, the 19.9% incurred as much as the 34.1% of the total cost of teacher absenteeism in the sample states, while the 76.2% only incurred 60.7% of the cost. When proportionally compared, it showed that much of the cost of wastage arising from teacher absenteeism could be traceable to rural schools. In addition, the average total unit cost of teacher absenteeism was slightly higher in rural than urban schools. It was ₦222 (\$3.2) in the rural schools, while it was ₦220 (\$3.1) in the urban schools. This should be expected in a situation when many teachers and even principals in the rural schools live in urban centres. They travel daily which is cost intensive. With special

arrangements, though illegitimately, these teachers connive with their principals to attend schools or to alternate attendance for selected days of week as an incentive to remain in the rural schools. Through this, they believe they could reduce their cost of commuting, thereby looking for alternative means of making extra money, especially on those "free" days.

Moreover, it has been discovered as earlier mentioned that school inspectors and supervisors hardly visit the rural schools for the reasons of bad roads, poor terrain and inadequate security arrangement. Therefore, the absence or irregularity of inspection of rural schools could have accounted in part for the seemingly higher cost of absenteeism among rural schools' teachers.

These findings have implications on the financing and management of secondary education in Nigeria, where all the states almost share the same educational characteristics. The non-provision of basic educational facilities in schools and social infrastructural development in school communities can be seen as a form of opportunity cost of funding growing number of un-authorized absentee teachers. That is, a chunk proportion of the scarce money that could be put into other aspects of the schools or even the infrastructural development of the rural areas is expended on the payment of teachers that illegitimately absent themselves from schools. In addition, that students, parent, government and the public have to bear the financial burden of teacher absenteeism is rather unfortunate. It indeed implies that there was an unconscious "motivation" and reward for absentee teachers.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

From the foregoing analysis, it can be concluded that the cost of un-authorized teacher absenteeism is relatively high in Nigerian secondary schools. The cost varies from state to state, but relatively higher in the rural schools than the urban schools, which could imply that states with more rural schools may incur higher cost on teacher absenteeism than ones that have more urban schools.

It is therefore, suggested that all-inclusive approach should be followed to reduce the cost of un-authorized teacher absenteeism in the nation's secondary schools, if total elimination

can not be attained. The Nigerian school system must be planned with a focus on the welfare and well-being of teachers to ensure their total commitment to their job. The rural communities should be given a comprehensive face-lift. Good roads, light, water and staff quarters for teachers in the rural schools will help to reduce teacher absenteeism. Certain allowances, such as rural placement allowance should also be paid to motivate the teachers in the rural schools. Where practicable, the provision of staff buses to ensure easy commuting of teachers to and from schools could help to ease the stress associated with difficult transportation that sometimes discourages workers from going to work.

Moreover, the yearly appraisal and promotion exercises should not be mere subjective events. The system should reward good attendance (punctuality and regularity). Unauthorized absentee teachers should be rebuked and the existing laws on worker absenteeism must be operated. Warnings, queries and sanctioning are all provisions of law to checkmate erring teachers. Unfortunately, many school heads do not like to "offend" their teachers especially the law of "no work no pay". For this reason, any un-authorized absentee teacher should be made to organize extra lessons for their students to cover the day(s) he or she is absent at no extra cost to the school. This would reduce wastage arising from student failure linked to teacher irregularity at work.

The counselling units of the schools could be of assistance to teachers that are known to have formed habit of coming to work at will. Professional counselling of such teachers could assist in correcting the behaviour and suggest positive measures that can possibly overcome such maladjustment behaviour.

It is the belief of this paper that if the above suggestions are adopted the incident of un-authorized absenteeism among the secondary school teachers in developing countries in general and Nigeria in particular would be greatly reduced, if not totally eliminated.

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