



Literature in English Teachers in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Edo State Nigeria and National Development

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Abstract

The paper investigated the dearth of Literature in English teachers in post basic education in Edo state and its implications on national development. The population was 309 public senior secondary schools in Edo state Nigeria while the 309 principals were the responses. The sample size was 36 selected public senior secondary schools using the simple random sampling technique while the 36 principals were the respondents. The results revealed that there was dearth of professionally qualified Literature in English teachers. It was concluded that if this situation is not addressed many students, especially the children of the poor will not be able to access university education to read law all other things being equal and contribute as planned high manpower to the judicial sector of the economy and thus national development because Literature in English is one of the subjects required to read law in universities in Nigeria of which Edo state is part, all other things being equal. It was therefore recommended that Literature in English should be a course of study on its own, separated from English Language in Nigerian universities.

Keywords: Literature in English, Professionally Qualified Teachers, Public Senior Secondary Schools, National Development.

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INTRODUCTION

The growth of any nation involves the development of the different sectors of the nation and for these sectors to be developed there are high level manpower needed. These high level manpower are mainly developed in universities according to the National Policy on Education (NPE) which

states that university education shall make optimum contribution to national development by among others, intensifying and diversifying its programmes for the development of high level manpower within the context of the needs of the nation (FRN, 2014). The universities where these high level manpower are produced and needed for each sector of the economy have different colleges, faculties, departments. For example, in the health sector, the colleges of medicine, faculties of pharmacy, schools of dentistry among others prepare and produce high level manpower for the health sector like medical doctors, pharmacists, dentists respectively. In the education sector, universities of education, faculties of education and institutes of education in universities, produce the manpower needed to develop the education sector.

Likewise in the judiciary sector, where the law profession is domiciled, lawyers, barristers, magistrates, judges are first and foremost prepared and produced in the faculties of law in universities. It is pertinent at this stage to know that the products of each college, faculty and department as the case may be, went through the universities' processes in order to be qualified as high level manpower ready to develop their different sectors of the economy and thus national development. In order to be part of the processing in the universities, the individuals meant for the development of these sectors must possess some basic qualifications that will enable them get admitted into the different colleges, faculties, departments of their choice careers.

The entry qualifications differ from one college, faculty and department to another, even disciplines as the case may be. In the faculty of law for example, in Nigeria, there is this basic requirement of a credit and above pass in Literature in English and in four other relevant subjects like the core subjects which are English Language, Mathematics, Civic Education a trade/entrepreneurial subject and one other relevant subject. This goes to show that credit and above pass in Literature in English is a must have for everyone who wants to study law in Nigerian universities and so as to contribute their quota in developing the judicial sector of the economy. So also are other disciplines with their respective entry qualifications needed to become one of those to develop the other sectors.

This paper however is focused on the law profession in the judicial sector of the economy. It has to do with the basic entry qualifications needed to study law in universities and to find out if one of the subjects (Literature in English) required at credit and above passes levels have adequate number of professionally qualified teachers to teach them at the senior secondary level of education especially in public senior secondary schools, from where they are expected to proceed to universities to study law as their choices of career. All other things being equal, like passing the United Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) organised by the Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB) with scores and cut off marks prescribed by the universities, as well as passing the Post University Tertiary Matriculation Examination (PUTME) with scores/cut off marks prescribed by the universities for the different disciplines in the colleges, faculties and departments.

It is however observed that the dearth of Literature in English teachers in public senior secondary schools may cause students from poor homes and especially those in rural areas not to pursue their dreams of their choice career in law because they may not have enough money for tutorials where there are no Literature in English teachers to teach them (Tom-Lawyer, 2014 & Fatimayin, 2013). They may also loose some years waiting and working, doing odd jobs in order to save money for tutorials while their relatively richer cohorts and those from private schools

may have gained admission to study law in the universities. This loss of time can be considered as wastages because their cohorts are already ahead of them in the universities.

Statement of the Problem

It has been observed that there is dearth of Literature in English teachers in Edo state in public senior secondary schools in recent times, Some stakeholders in education are worried as they say if this is a truism, it means a time will come when there will be paucity of lawyers, barristers and even judges to drive the judicial sector of the economy thereby contributing their quota to national development. Others are saying if truly there is dearth of Literature in English teachers in public senior secondary schools in Edo state Nigeria, the students can attend extra classes in this subject in the so many tutorial classes that abound in our cities and at villages. The third set of stakeholders opinion, is that not every parent/guardian have the money especially the poor to pay for extra classes for their children/wards, so what happens to their dream and choice of career of studying law in the universities in order to become lawyers, barristers and subsequently magistrates and or judges ready to develop the judicial sector of the Nigerian economy. This means that, if the last observation is true, the children of the poor can no longer study law in the universities which violates one of the overall philosophies and goals of education as embedded in the NPE, which states that, education is compulsory and a right of every Nigerian irrespective of...social status... (FRN, 2014).

In the universities, English Language and Literature in English are taken as a degree course of study, which some say is a combined degree course; however in the senior secondary school curriculum, it is taken as two different subjects. So they are listed separately in the school time table; while English Language appears on every school day in the school time table being a core subject, Literature in English appears twice or thrice on the time table with lesser workload, yet the teachers seem to be in shortages. If it appears that there is dearth of Literature in English teachers in public senior secondary schools in recent times (Ogunnaike, 2002) whose responsibility is it to provide adequate number of qualified teachers in public senior secondary schools? Since the schools are public schools it is then the responsibility of the state governments to provide these teachers, especially when many professionally qualified graduates with B.A. (Ed) English Language and Literature in English are churned out yearly from Nigerian universities. Or is it that the state governments post teachers with B.A. (Ed) English Language and Literature in English to these school but the teachers most often opt to teach English Language? There is also this question of why are the English Language teachers more than the Literature in English teachers in these schools since they specialised in English Language and Literature in English in the universities? Is this the situation in the public senior secondary schools in Edo state? If the government, educational planners, policy makers and other stakeholders in education refuse to address this issue and on time, there will be the problem of some students especially from the poor homes and rural areas who want to study law in universities will not be able to do so which may negatively affect not only the judicial sector of the economy in future but also national development.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

- To ascertain how many schools offer Literature in English in the public senior secondary schools in Edo state.
- To find out the number of sampled students in the sampled public senior secondary schools in Edo state.
- To find out how many students offer Literature in English in the sampled public senior secondary schools in Edo state.
- How many professionally qualified teachers in Literature in English are in the sampled public senior secondary schools in Edo state.

Research Questions

To guide the study, the following research questions were raised:

- How many public senior secondary schools were sampled in Edo state?
- What is the number of students in the sampled public senior secondary schools in Edo state?
- What is the number of students offering Literature in English in the sampled public senior secondary schools in Edo state?
- What is the number of professionally qualified Literature in English teachers in the sampled public senior secondary schools in Edo state?

METHODOLOGY

This paper adopted the ex post facto research design. The 309 public senior secondary schools as at 2014 and 2015 was the population of the study while the 309 principals were the respondents. The sample size was 36 public senior secondary schools selected using simple random sampling technique, that was two schools each from the eighteen local government areas that make up Edo state while the 36 principals were the respondents using convenience sampling technique. A checklist named “Literature in English Teachers in Senior Secondary Schools (LIETISSC)” The checklist was divided into two sections; section A and section B. Section A contains the demographic features of the school while section B contains questions on the variables of the research questions. The checklist was administered to the respondents by the researcher and her research assistants with 100% retrieval rate. Data collected were analysed in Table 1 using discrete numbers.

RESULTS

Research Questions 1 to 4

Table 1: Results of Research Questions 1-4

| RQ | Item | Response |
|----|---|----------|
| 1 | No of sampled public senior secondary schools in Edo state Nigeria | 36 |
| 2 | No of students in the sampled public senior secondary schools in Edo state Nigeria in 2014 and 2015 | 18992 |

| | | |
|---|---|------|
| 3 | No of students offering Literature in English in the sampled public senior secondary schools in Edo state Nigeria | None |
| 4 | No of professionally qualified Literature in English Teachers in the sampled public senior secondary schools in Edo state Nigeria | None |

Research question one in Table 1 showed that 36 public senior secondary schools were selected as the sampled schools in Edo state Nigeria. The number of students in the sampled schools were 18992. No student offered Literature in English in the sampled schools and there were no Literature in English teachers in the schools.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The dearth of Literature in English teachers in public senior secondary school in public senior secondary schools is quite alarming (Tom-Lawyer, 2014; Fatimeyin, 2013 & Ogunnaike, 2002). This means that many if not all the students cannot study law in Nigerian universities because Literature in English is one of the subjects required to study law among others. If this continues without being addressed there will be dearth of lawyers, barristers and even magistrates and judges in Nigeria in the very near future. When this occurs, the judicial sector of the Nigerian economy will be in a state of comatose because the manpower needed to develop the sector may not be adequate in number, the children of the poor who could not access private tutorials where Literature in English teachers can be found to teach them will be exempted from being lawyers, barristers, magistrates and judges. It was so worrisome that the English Language teachers found in these schools, though very minimal in number could not offer to teach Literature in English after specializing in English Language and Literature in English in Nigerian universities. This perhaps may be the picture in Nigeria. So, government who are owners of public schools should ensure there are Literature in English teachers in public senior secondary schools in Edo state inclusive, in order to avoid the impending acute manpower needs in the judicial sector of Nigerian economy for national development, all other things being equal.

CONCLUSION

It was concluded that there was dearth of Literature in English teachers in the public senior secondary schools in Edo state Nigeria and this does not augur well for national development. When student are not able to read their preferred courses of study because there are no teachers to prepare them for it, especially those whose parents are poor and cannot afford to send their children to private tutorials where possibly there are Literature in English teachers is a violation of the students' right to education.. Some may have to lose some years because they have to work to earn enough money to pay for private tutorials to enable them read and pass Literature in English so that they can have access to universities to read law. Those lost years of stay back can be considered as wastages because the cohorts from relatively richer homes or counterparts from private schools who could afford private tutorials in Literature in English may have gone far ahead of him. State governments who are proprietors of public senior secondary schools have seemingly violated the NPE which states that education is compulsory for all Nigerians and that they have right to it irrespective of their social status among others by not providing adequate number of professionally qualified Literature in English teachers in public senior secondary schools for national development.

Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that English Language and Literature in English as a course of study in universities should be separated so that there will be graduates of English Language and graduates of Literature in English. This will stop the seemingly observation of teachers who specialise in English Language and Literature in English from preferring to teach English Language after graduation from universities for whatever reasons. Educational planners, policy makers and other stakeholders of education should sensitise and educate state governments on the importance of having adequate number of professionally qualified Literature in English teachers in public senior secondary schools and also advise them to do the needful so as to avoid the challenges their actions and inactions will cause in future in the judicial sector which is not an indices of national development.

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