

# **The Problems and Negative Effects of the Use of National Youths Service Corp (NYSC) Members as Ad-hoc Teaching Staff in Nigeria: A Case Study of Kalgo Local Government Area of Kebbi State**

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**Abstract:** *This research study was undertaken to identify problems and negative effects of the use of National Youths Service Corp (NYSC) members as ad-hoc teaching staff in Nigeria with particular reference to Kalgo Local Government Area of Kebbi State. A descriptive research design was adopted. Four secondary schools exist in Kalgo Local Government Area, all of which were sampled. Data collection was mainly through the use of inventory, oral interviews and questionnaires. Ineffective curriculum implementation, superficial knowledge of subject matter, lack of commitment, as well as inadequate knowledge of the culture and traditions of the host communities have been identified as the problems and negative effects of the use of corp members as ad-hoc teaching staff in Nigeria. The study recommends the employment of qualified teaching staff, strengthening of the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) and effective inspection and supervision of schools as the panacea for stemming the falling standard of education in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** *corp members, national youth service corp, pedagogical skills, standard of education, teaching methodology*

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## **I. Introduction**

### **1.1 Establishment of the National Youths Service Corp (NYSC)**

The National Youths Service Corp was established by the Federal Military Government of Nigeria in 1973. The scheme provides that graduates below the age of thirty (30) who are holders of Higher National Diploma (HND) and Bachelor's degrees are deployed to states other than their states of origin to undertake one (1) year compulsory community service. The certificate obtainable after the service qualifies the graduate to seek employment in the public or private sector. The main goal of establishing the scheme is to create a better understanding and appreciation of religious and ethnic differences among the youths, and to unify the country after a devastating civil war that lasted from 1967 to 1970 [1], [2], [3], [4], and [5]. This is to be achieved through developing common ties and friendship, cultivating the spirit of team work and engaging in frank dialogue. In so doing, the youth corp members are exposed to modes of living of the people in different parts of the country, thereby eliminating prejudices, intolerance and ignorance, and also confirming at first hand the similarities among Nigerians of all ethnic groups and religions.

The one year service begins with a three week camp orientation during which the prospective corps members are formally inducted into the scheme, and exposed to its underlying objectives. Afterwards, the corp members are deployed to various public and private sector establishments. These establishments are regarded as their areas of primary assignment. They include schools, hospitals, banks, agricultural establishments, government ministries, and various other sectors (both public and private).

### **1.2 Abuse of the NYSC Scheme**

Over the years, the NYSC scheme has been abused regrettably by the major stakeholders. First and foremost is the issue of posting of corp members. No child of a rich man serves outside the choice postings of Abuja, Lagos, Port-Harcourt and Warri. Those graduates without influential parents try to bribe their way into "juicy" postings. Many pay the money and still end up not getting their choice [6].

Some accept bad postings, sign on and only show up on pay day. This perversion of purpose goes on every year, and thus "national integration" is left for those who are less well to do or do not have "long leg" [6]. Secondly, Corp Members serve as source of cheap labour especially to state governments and private organizations who do not want to employ permanent staff because of the cost of their salaries. The salary payable by the federal government of Nigeria to every corp member is about \$122 per month at present. State governments and private organizations where the corp members are posted are allowed under the law to pay the corp members whatever they like depending on their financial strength. This provision has been seriously abused. Some states pay as low as \$12 per month. The Corp Members are made to do more work with less pay. This exploitation has dragged on for years.

Furthermore, female corp members are sexually harassed by their male superiors. Some females are actually intimidated into obliging their bosses while others fall prey due to the harsh economic situation in which they found themselves [6].

### 1.3 NYSC Members as Ad-hoc Teaching Staff

About eighty percent (80%) of corp members are posted to public and private schools. They constitute a bulk of the teaching staff of these schools. Regrettably, most of these corp members did not read education courses in the tertiary institution. They end up in classrooms without adequate pedagogical skills to impart knowledge.

The regulatory body for the teaching profession in Nigeria, the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), has made repeated calls on the National Youths Service Corp to, as a matter of urgency, stop posting corp members who did not study education to schools [7].

According to them, this practice has a negative impact on the nation's standard of education. These calls have fallen on deaf ears. Corps members without teaching qualification are still being posted to schools where they teach with little or no supervisions.

### 1.4 Objectives of Study

This research work aims to identify the negative effects of using unqualified corp members as teachers in Nigeria's basic schools. It also aims to provide solutions to the problems identified. It will enable stakeholders especially governments at all levels (Federal, State and Local) to devise an effective means of raising the standard of education in Nigeria.

## II. Methodology

### 2.1 Research Design

Description research design was adopted in this study. It enabled the researchers to observe and explain various phenomena without manipulating any variable.

### 2.2 Study Area

This study was undertaken in Kalgo Local Government Area, of Kebbi State in northern Nigeria. Created in the military edict of the Federal Military Government in 1996, Kalgo Local Government Area has a total area of 1,173 km<sup>2</sup>. It is part of the Sokoto plains which lies 300m above sea level. Headquartered in Kalgo town, the local government is made up of fourteen (14) communities: Badariya, Banganna, Dangoma, Diggi, Etene, Gayi, Kalgo, Kukah, Kutukullu, Magarza, Mutubari, Nayilwa, Wurogauri and Zuguru.

Out of these communities, only four (4) communities of Kalgo, Diggi, Dangoma and Kukah have secondary schools. These four (4) secondary schools were sampled for this research study.

### 2.3 Instrumentation and Data Collection

The instruments used for data collection were oral interviews, questionnaires and inventory. The inventory helped to show the number of permanent teaching staff needed in each school, and the number of corp members received annually to replace them.

## III. Results And Discussion

**Table 1: The ratio of permanent teachers to corp members in the four Government Day Secondary School (GDSS).**

School	Number of permanent teachers available	Number of permanent teachers needed	Number of corp members posted
GDSS, Kalgo	31	12	10
GDSS, Diggi	26	14	7
GDSS, Dangoma	24	15	8
GDSS, Kukah	27	13	6

**Source:** Secondary School Management Board, BirninKebbi.

The above table indicates shortage of qualified teaching staff in the available secondary schools in Kalgo Local Government Area of Kebbi State. This is not uncommon in the whole twenty one (21) Local Government Areas of the State. This ugly situation is due to the negligence of the education sector by the state government. Since the inception of the current administration in the state in 2007, no concrete steps have been taken to address the rot in the education sector. Statistics from 2014 West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) results indicate that Kebbi State ranked thirty fourth (34th) out of the thirty six (36) states in Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), with an abysmal average performance of less than ten percent (10%).

It is common knowledge that public schools in Kebbi State lack qualified teachers with the requisite pedagogical skills. Most of the available teachers including corps members lack the necessary teaching qualifications. The effects of these deficiencies in the secondary school system fall on the poor, innocent students. Their only “crime” is being born to poor parents who cannot afford sending them to well-equipped and better staffed private schools at home and abroad. In Nigeria, rich parents especially the political elite usually send their wards to class schools at home and abroad, thereby neglecting public schools.

The standard of education in Nigeria has been adversely affected by the use of unqualified corp members in the following ways:

### **3.1 Ineffective Curriculum Implementation**

One of the major effects of the use of corps members on the standard of education is ineffective curriculum implementation. The scheme of work set out to be taught for the term, session or throughout the period of training is never implemented to the letter. This is because corp members come and go. They only stay for a period of twelve (12) months. At present, there are three (3) batches of corp members in a year: March, July and November deployments respectively with some batches coming at the middle of the term. The old corp members pass out the previous months respectively. The new corp members come in and take over the task of teaching without knowing where the previous corp members stopped. They just start from whichever topics that please them. A proper curriculum and its implementation proceed from the simple to complex topics. This kind of chaotic and haphazard situation does not augur well for an effective curriculum implementation which proceeds from the known to the unknown.

Furthermore, the heads of those public schools where corp members are deployed do not usually take necessary steps to guide them. So this is a cycle of negligence that runs from the state government to the education inspectorate units and down to heads of schools.

### **3.2 Lack of Pedagogical Skills/Techniques**

About Ninety percent (90%) of corp members posted to schools did not read education courses in their various tertiary institutions. As such, they do not possess the requisite pedagogical skills for imparting knowledge. Teaching in the classroom goes beyond the knowledge of the subject. Some teachers may have adequate knowledge of the subject matter but lack the necessary teaching skills which enable children to understand them. Adequate and effective teaching entails possessing the necessary teaching skills capable of distilling knowledge to the level of children’s understanding and sustaining a robust classroom experience.

The importance of having adequate pedagogical skills cannot be over-emphasized. That is what distinguishes professional teachers from untrained teachers. Teaching skills are the mainstream of education. Without them, educational objectives are defeated. The acquisition of appropriate teaching skills ensures that teaching methodologies are followed to the letter.

### **3.4 Superficial Knowledge of Subject Matter**

It is regrettable to note that the neglect of the nation’s tertiary education over the years has resulted in the production of graduates with superficial knowledge of the subject matter. These graduates find themselves in the classroom in the course of their national service. This leads to chaotic and boring classroom experience.

Several cases have been established where corp members deliberately skip some topics of a subject because they do not have in-depth knowledge of such topics. They do so in order to avoid embarrassment. It becomes awkward for the teacher to entertain questions arising from such perceived difficult topics. The children suffer; public schools keep producing pupils and students with no in-depth and clear understanding of their learning experiences.

### **3.5 Lack of Commitment**

Most corp members always show lack of commitment to duty in terms of lateness to classes and absenteeism. This lackadaisical attitude is caused by little or no supervision from superiors and lack of incentives from their employers. They attend classes anytime they wish. Some corp members go as far as conniving with their heads of school and become ‘ghost corp members’ throughout the service year.

Most corp members show lack of commitment because teaching is not their calling. They do not have passion neither do they derive pleasure of any kind in teaching. They are just forced to be in the classroom because of the compulsory one year of national service.

The negative effect of this kind of attitude on the standard of education is enormous and unquantifiable. Here are teachers who not only show lack of commitment but also lack in-depth knowledge of the subject matter and the requisite pedagogical skills and teaching methodology. It results in a situation where the children cannot pass basic examinations as witnessed in the results released by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) in recent years.

### **3.6 Inadequate Knowledge of the Culture and Traditions of the Host Communities**

One factor that is very glaring in Nigeria is our cultural and religious diversity. Nigeria is made up of not less than two hundred and fifty (250) ethnic groups, each with its own peculiar language. Corp members are usually deployed to states other than their own.

The only medium of instruction and communication is the English language. Consequently, it is always difficult for corp teachers to communicate effectively with students especially those in junior secondary classes. This is very common in Northern Nigeria – a region which is still finding it very difficult to fully embrace Western education. The students prefer to be taught in Hausa language which is widely spoken in Northern Nigeria.

Furthermore, Nigeria is roughly divided between a mainly Muslim north and mainly Christian south. So corp members from one divide who may find themselves in another divide may unknowingly be doing something that insults the sensibilities of their host communities. For instance, Islam is a very conservative religion. Most parents of Islamic faith are deeply opposed to the teaching of sex education to their children. Cases have been established where parents came threatening school heads and corp teachers because their daughters were reportedly taught by the corp teachers on how to maintain personal hygiene, including washing of inner wears regularly. This also extends to the teaching of the reproductive system in a subject like Biology where students are taught the various functions of the reproductive organs.

## **IV. Recommendations**

In view of the problems and negative effects associated with the use of corp members as ad-hoc teaching staff in Kalgo LGA of Kebbi State in particular and Nigeria in general as identified above, the following recommendations are made to restore the standard of education:

### **4.1 Employment of Qualified Teaching Staff**

Employment of qualified teaching staff remains a potent panacea to stemming the falling standard of education in Nigeria. By law, the minimum teaching qualification in Nigeria is the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) obtainable from colleges of education. Other higher teaching qualifications include Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) and Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) both of which are obtainable from universities. Federal Government recommends that a teacher in a primary or secondary school must possess any of these qualifications. This is being flouted with impunity.

It is regrettable to note that the school system is now a dumping ground for millions of unemployed graduates in Nigeria. Most employers especially in mushroom private schools go for these unemployed graduates without teaching qualification in a bid to secure cheap labour. They find themselves in classrooms without any teaching skills or the knowledge of subject matter.

Teaching is a noble profession, and should be regarded and treated as such. The course of civilization depends on teachers. Only people who meet the minimum requirements for teaching should be allowed to do so.

### **4.2 Strengthening the Teacher's Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN)**

It is very disappointing to note that teaching profession in Nigeria does not have a strict regulatory body like other professions – engineering, law, medicine etc. The supposedly regulatory body for teaching profession in Nigeria, the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), has always been seen as a toothless bulldog. The Federal Government should empower and strengthen the TRCN to ensure that the minimum teaching requirements are enforced for teachers.

At present, the Federal Government proposes that teachers in primary and junior secondary schools should possess a minimum of NCE while senior secondary teachers should possess a minimum of B.Ed or PGDE. The TRCN should be strengthened to ensure that all schools, both public and private, conform to these minimum standards. The TRCN should not only make recommendations, but also empowered to enforce those recommendations, with strict punitive measures for defaulting employers/schools.

### **4.3 Adequate Inspection and Supervision**

The various inspectorate units in federal and state ministries of education as well as local education authorities should ensure that all public and private schools within their respective domains are regularly inspected for conformity to basic standards. Inspectors are not meant to sit down in offices and collect fat pay at the end of the month; they are supposed to always be making unscheduled visits to schools in both urban and rural areas, checking teaching staff attendance and teachers' lesson notes, stalking to class sessions to observe teaching skills and methods and advise teachers afterwards on how to improve, providing mentorship and tutelage to younger teachers instead of harassment, and generally guiding school heads on how to administer effectively.

Furthermore, the school heads should on daily basis supervise teachers to ensure that they attend classes as and when due. They should also monitor and guide younger teachers to enable them improve on their teaching skills.

## **V. Conclusion**

The falling standard of education in Nigeria is majorly caused by the use of unqualified teachers especially members of the National Youths Service Corp (NYSC) and other unemployed graduates. Problems and negative effects associated with this include ineffective curriculum implementation, lack of pedagogical skills, superficial knowledge of subject matter, lack of commitment and inadequate knowledge of the culture and traditions of the host communities. The following recommendations have been made: employment of qualified teaching staff, strengthening and empowerment of the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) as well as effective inspection and supervision of schools by the concerned statutory bodies. It is hoped that when these recommendations are implemented, Nigeria's system of education will be a model in Africa, and Nigeria will be the real giant of Africa, and not a giant with feet of clay.

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