

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS FACING B.Ed. PART -  
TIME PROGRAMME IN UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

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INTRODUCTION

In-service education for teachers (INSET) is a popular avenue through which most practising teachers update their professional knowledge and skills. INSET is a strategy for facilitating change in the individual teacher and it has been applied mainly to help school teacher become more knowledgeable about their subject matter, individualise instruction, write suitable behavioural objectives, use current educational technology, develop curricula and use group procedures in their classroom". (Schmuck, 1980). INSET has become a necessary part of our education system in as much as pre-service education cannot provide all the professional skills and competencies required by the teacher for efficient and effective performance. Knowledge is not a static phenomenon; it changes from day to day in response to the dynamic processes in our socio-economic environment and institutions as well as the needs of man. In fact, the rapid rate at which new knowledge gets into the world can easily make one out of date within a couple of years. If such new knowledge is to be acquired by our teachers for the purpose of contributing to quality education in schools, there must be a virile and continual programme of retraining and updating the serving teachers (Ndu, 1989). INSET is one such system of teacher education. Hence, Obanya and Ezewu (1985) posited that the ultimate goals of in-service education is either to increase the efficiency in educational practice or to bring to focus the implementation of educational innovations.

In-service education consists of various educational programmes, such as degree, certificate and diploma programmes, training courses, workshops, conferences, seminars, lectures, professional meetings, and demonstrations. Some in-service programmes are of relatively long duration while others are of short duration lasting from days to a matter of weeks. Whereas some come in form of full-time programmes, others are run as part-time programmes for practising teachers. The critical issue in in-service education is not necessarily the duration or whether it is a regular programme or part - time programme but the fact that individuals who engage in it are those who have their full-time employments from which they are allowed to participate in the appropriate in-service programme.

With the rapid expansion of Primary and Secondary School population in Nigeria especially within the last two decades several universities and related tertiary institutions have accordingly mounted part-time degree, diploma and certificate programmes to meet the teacher training needs of schools and colleges. Part-time degree programmes range from 2 years for Master of Education (M.Ed.) to 5 years for Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) candidates. These degree programmes which operate in University of Jos, University of Benin and University of Ilorin, to name a few, have increasingly become a popular means through which certain individuals (who for reason of their regular employment, could not afford a full-time study) can further their educational pursuits and acquire new certificates. Popular as part - time education

has been. Some scholars have expressed dissatisfaction over such INSET programmes. For instance, Obanya and Ezewu (1985) noted that the in-service education organised at University of Ibadan was bedeviled by lack of adequate classroom space, shortness of course duration and lack of sufficient desks and seats. Afe (1990) also observed that the B.Ed. part-time education programme in Bendel State University (BENSU) was faced by inadequate programme duration, poor lecture time table and unsatisfactory examination arrangements.

The focus of this paper is on the management problems facing the B.Ed part-time programme of the University of Benin (Uniben). Although, the researcher (a lecturer in the part-time programme) has personally had series of complaints by participants on what they generally called "poor management" of the programme, there is no known research report on the programme since it took off almost a decade ago. Much as some studies have been carried out to investigate similar programmes in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria and elsewhere it will be intellectually unethical and unscientific to super impose the solutions derived from such previous studies on the management of problems facing the education programme in Uniben.

It is against this background that an empirical study was carried out in Uniben in the first quarter of 1991 to investigate the management problems facing the B.Ed. part-time programme. This paper which is a report of the said empirical research is therefore intended to identify and analyse the management problems facing the programme and suggest possible solutions to them.

To direct the thrust of the paper, the empirical study will provide answers to the following research questions.

- (a) What are the management problems facing B.Ed part time programme?
- (b) How can these problems be solved so as to make the results of the programme more effective?

### Methodology

The population for this study consists of all the 380 B.Ed Part Time students who were doing their final year in the 1990/91 session. The choice of these finalists was predicated on three major reasons. First, the students are the most experienced among the entire students who are the consumers of the programme. As consumers who have stayed longest among the whole students they seem to qualify most in being able to identify the various problems experienced since they started their course of studies. Second, by virtue of their longer exposure to different sets of programme co-ordinators (for those co-ordinating the programme now are relatively new) they stand a better chance of being able to make a broad and balanced assessment of the management problems. Third, unlike most of the non-final year students who did not enjoy University campus boarding facilities the existing final year students once enjoyed campus accommodation facilities before the recent change to off-campus boarding facility. Hence the finalists stand in a vantage position to make a better evaluation of the accommodation arrangements over time.

The instrument entitled "B. Ed Part-Time Programme Evaluation Questionnaire" (BPPEQ) was used for data collection. The contents of the BPPEQ were validated by Educational Management lecturers and other colleagues of the researcher in the Faculty of Education, University of Benin.

The BPPEQ was divided into three main parts. The first part dealt with demographic variables of the respondents. The second section which contained nine questions sought from the respondents the factors which motivated them to undertake the programme. The third section sought their views with regards to the management problems facing the programme. Respondents were asked to list the management problems confronting the Part Time programme. Only the results of the data on the third part of the questionnaire were reported in this paper.

The questionnaires were administered personally by the investigator to all the 380 final year students which formed the population and therefore the research sample of the B.Ed part-time students. A total of 360 students completed the questionnaire in the form that could be used for the analysis of the study. Data analysis involved the use of frequency distribution and percentages.

## 2. Results and Discussion

Table I summarises the findings with respect to the management problems confronting the Part time programme. On the whole eight problems were identified. They include poor co-ordination, inadequate boarding facilities, unsuitable library and textual materials, highly commercialised programme, lack of teaching aids, substandard classroom facilities, communication gap (between students and university management) and overcrowded time-table.

Table I: Problems Facing B.Ed Part Time Programme - Frequency Distribution

S/N	Problems	Number	%
1.	Poor Co-ordination of Programme	210	70
2.	Inadequate Boarding Arrangements	189	63
3.	Unsuitable Library and textual materials	180	60
4.	Programme is highly commercialised	165	55
5.	Substandard classroom facilities	150	50
6.	Communication gap between students and University Management	141	47
7.	Lack of Teaching Aids	93	31
8.	Overcrowded Time Table	36	12

The eight problems identified in this study and presented in Table I are analysed and discussed one after another below.

- (i) **Poor Co-ordination of Programmes:** Findings of this research showed that 210 (70%) of the respondents identified poor co-ordination as a major problem hindering the programme. Participants blamed the poor results of the programme on the bad co-ordination of lecturing personnel, lecture time table and other tasks in the programme. A substantial proportion of the students confessed that those charged with the responsibility of co-ordinating the programme failed to give them the proper orientation needed for

- effective learning. Besides, the lectures were not regularly supervised by the appropriate management personnel. It is important that such a programme which involves the sound training of teaching personnel should be judiciously co-ordinated right from the day the students are given the orientation to the period when they graduate from the programme.
- (ii) **Inadequate Boarding Arrangements:** 189 (63%) out of the 300 respondents saw inadequate boarding facilities as a problem. This group believed that the situation in which the bulk of the students now stay off campus in houses not originally designed for student accommodation leaves much to be desired. Boarding facilities on campus should be expanded to make way for part-time candidates who may wish to stay on campus and face their studies. In the short-run, universities which wish to rent secondary school buildings for boarding purposes should ensure they are tidy and spacious enough to permit successful academic work.
- (iii) **Unsuitable library and textual materials.** This ranks as the third crucial problem in the list. Of the total respondents, 180 (60%) did not mince words on the enormity of the problem. The issue is that most of the library books and journals were somewhat obsolete and therefore could not meet the needs of the students. In view of this problem the Federal and State governments should provide funds specifically for the purchase of current library and textual materials for teachers and students consultation.
- (iv) **Programme is highly commercialised:** Students generally complained that the tuition fees were very exorbitant. They also observed that lecture handouts were sold at cut-throat prices while cost of photocopying course documents was equally high. A total of 165 (55%) students saw the part-time programme as a commercial venture meant to exploit the poor students. In a situation where the regular B.Ed students pay no tuition fees for the same degree, it will be more equitable if Bursary arrangements are made by governments to cater for at least the various fees charged for the programme. It should be noted that this finding is in line with Obanya and Ezewu (1985) which found that the Part - time certificate programme of the Institute of Education, University of Ibadan was very expensive.
- (v) **Substandard Classroom Facilities:** Half of the respondents (or 50%) noted that the schools where part time lectures are held outside the regular lecture theatres on the campus have relatively small classroom space, rickety seats and desk and poor chalkboard layouts. All these did not facilitate teaching and learning. In fact, a situation where some students reportedly took their lectures by sitting by the window did not augur well for sound learning.
- (vi) **Communication Gap Between Students and University Management:** Those respondents who saw communication gap as a problem were 141 or 47%. They strongly believed that the management information system in the University was faulty especially in relation with the periodic briefing of students on the problems and the steps being taken to solve them. Students confessed that they did not receive any response with regards to the complaints lodged with management. They believed tended to appear unconcerned about their management welfare in the programme. As responses provided by the students suggested that they were suffering in silence, it is imperative that management should provide suggestion box where students can lodge their complaints and

anticipate due feedback. Management should provide opportunities for periodic meetings with students for it is only through such interaction that relevant solutions to problems can be generated, ascertained and established by all concerned.

- (vii) Lack of Teaching Aids: Only 31% of the respondents identified this problem. It was alleged that most lecturers deliver lectures without the slightest sets of teaching aids. A situation where the teacher trainees are expected to go down to schools to use relevant teaching aids is one that calls for a B.Ed programme that is rich in educational technology.

Although time is a major constraint in this part time programme, efforts should be made by lecturers to use teaching aids and guide the teacher trainees on how to develop local aids.

- viii) Overcrowded Time-Table: A mere 12 percent (36 students) strongly complained that the lecture time tables and examination time tables were too crowded for their liking. This finding is supported by Afe (1990) and Uche (1980) who found in similar in-service programmes that students were dissatisfied with methods of overloading the time table with so many periods in a day. If students are to gain something they can retain properly in the programme, there is need to re-appraise the lecture and examination time tables so as to provide for rest periods. Afterall "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy".

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

In the foregoing sections of this paper, attempt has been made to identify and discuss the various management problems hindering the B.Ed. Part-Time programme of the University of Benin.

The problems so far identified have arisen largely due to new demands by the education system and the society that priority be given to in-service education of serving teachers through Part-Time studies. Although, the beneficiaries of this programme, most of whom are experienced teachers have no choice now but to receive their lectures and acquire the relevant certificates needed to fit them to take up higher pedagogic responsibilities in schools, yet whatever is worth doing is worth doing well. It is therefore imperative that governments and others interested in the education of the teachers should provide trainees with the suitable learning environment. After all, they cannot pretend to be satisfied with an education system that teaches students to listen to lecture, copy notes, memorise and pass examinations without imparting in them the ability to apply themselves to the problem of teaching and learning.

This paper observed that part-time lectures were not properly co-ordinated and supervised by the organisers of the programme. Classroom, library and textual facilities were utterly inadequate and interpersonal interaction between lecturers and students was low. Lecture and examination time table were overcrowded with several periods each day. An education system in which lectures and examinations are rushed can hardly prepare the teacher trainees adequately to handle the upper classes of secondary schools in such a manner as to achieve the cognitive psychomotor and affective objectives as demanded by the new education system.

This paper therefore calls for a new and drastic approach to the training and retraining of teachers towards the improvement of teaching and learning. It calls for appropriate learning climate where trainees can acquire the competencies and skills needed to bring up our school children. Such

competencies include class management, effective communication between staff and students, teaching for creativity and other desirable social values and attitudes.

To foster the imparting of relevant teaching skills, management has a duty to provide the basic learning resources, equipment and materials. Consequently, management should operate a functional resource centre where facilities for developing skills and competencies are kept. Lecturers should therefore emphasize flexibility, adaptability and creativity using methods that will help their students acquire the skills and competencies that will help them teach for creativity and applicability of learning materials.

The present system whereby students are required to pay high tuition fees and make financial provision for their feeding, books, accommodation and learning materials tend to give the impression that the programme is commercialised in disfavour of the students. The Federal, State and Local Governments should step in and reduce the cost burden on the students by granting each student with bursary assistance to cover at least tuition, accommodation and feeding expenses. Besides governments private agencies and individuals should back up this important teacher education programme by donating money and materials for the implementation of new and progressive ideas.

Finally management should strive to effectively communicate with staff and students on practical ways and means of solving problems and gearing the programme towards meeting the needs and expectations of the recipients and the society.

## References

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