

**INCESSANT TEACHERS' STRIKE IN NIGERIA: MATTERS ARISING****BY****Ola-Williams, Maureen Chinasa (Ph.D. Scholar), Ogbaini Aliu Clement (PhD Coordinator)  
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Lome, Togo. maureenchinasa28@gmail.com****Abstract**

*This paper examines the recurring issue of incessant teachers' strikes in Nigeria, the underlying causes, consequences, and potential resolutions. It identifies the root causes of the persistent strikes, analyzes their impact on the education system, and explores viable solutions to mitigate or prevent future disruptions. Factors contributing to the recurrent strikes, such as inadequate funding, poor working conditions, policy inconsistencies, and labour disputes were observed. The paper underscores the detrimental effects of these strikes on the continuity of learning, educational outcomes, and the overall stability of the Nigerian education sector. In addressing these matters, the paper explores potential solutions such as robust dialogue and negotiation mechanisms, improved funding for education, and the development of sustainable policies that prioritize the welfare of teachers. Suggestions are made for comprehensive reforms in the education sector to foster a more conducive and stable environment for teaching and learning. The implications of this research extend to education policymakers, administrators, teachers' unions, and other stakeholders involved in shaping educational policies and practices in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** *Incessant, Complex web of factors, Welfare of teachers, Robust dialogue*

**Introduction**

In Nigeria, the education sector has been marred by a recurring challenge that has significant implications for the stability and progress of the nation's educational system—the incessant strikes by teachers. The recurrent nature of these strikes has raised concerns about their impact on the quality of education, institutional stability, and the overall development of the country. This paper delves into the matter of incessant teachers' strikes in Nigeria, aiming to unravel the root causes, consequences, and potential solutions to this persistent issue. Education is universally acknowledged as a cornerstone of societal progress, playing a pivotal role in shaping the intellectual, social, and economic fabric of a nation. In Nigeria, the pursuit of quality education has been marred by a persistent challenge that disrupts the academic landscape and casts a shadow over the aspirations of students, teachers, and the nation as a whole—the incessant strikes by teachers. The recurrent nature of these strikes has raised critical concerns about the stability, continuity, and overall effectiveness of the education system in Nigeria.

The phenomenon of teachers' strikes in Nigeria is not a recent development but rather a persistent issue that has plagued the education sector for decades. The reasons behind these strikes are multifaceted, ranging from labour disputes and inadequate remuneration to unmet demands for improved working conditions and infrastructural deficiencies. Each episode of industrial action exacerbates the challenges facing the education system, leaving a trail of consequences that extend far beyond the immediate disruptions.

The education sector is a critical component of national development, serving as a key driver for economic growth, social progress, and human capital development. However, the consistent disruption caused by teachers' strikes poses a significant challenge to the attainment of educational goals in Nigeria. The cyclical nature of these strikes raises questions about their root causes, the recurring issues leading to industrial actions, and the lasting effects on students, teachers, educational institutions, and the nation as a whole (Adavbiele, 2015)

**Historical Perspectives**

The first noble strike was held in Nigeria in 1945 and since then till date there have been uncountable number of strike actions by different union and groups. Teachers' strikes over the last decade have been the bane of educational development and planning in Nigeria. The educational sector has received the heat among all sectors (Alemu, 2015). There have been series of strike actions in the Nigerian educational sector both tertiary

institutions, Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP) and many other academic unions. Strike actions are increasingly gaining strong recognition in the Nigerian's educational sector which has attracted the attention of well-meaning citizens and international bodies and stakeholders. Disagreement and conflicts is a common phenomenon in any organisation owing to the diversity of workforce in an organisation. Strike action can persist for a long period of time. Once it persists without stopping, it can then be termed as incessant strike. The historical context of teachers' strikes in Nigeria is multifaceted, reflecting a pattern of industrial actions that dates back several decades. Initial strikes were often motivated by demands for improved working conditions, better remuneration, and a commitment to the overall welfare of teachers. Understanding the historical evolution of these strikes is crucial for discerning persistent themes and recurring issues that continue to contribute to the problem. Incessant teachers strike have become a persistent issue in Nigeria and it has caused a significant disruption to the educational system negatively impacting student learning outcome giving them a negative perception of the government. Education in Nigeria has not been able to achieve its paramount objective because of strike action (Alemu, 2018).

### **Root Causes of Incessant Strikes**

Several root causes underlining the persistent occurrence of teachers' strikes in Nigeria. Some of the key causes include;

- i. Poor working conditions such as less or lack of teaching materials, poorly equipped classrooms, overcrowded classroom resulting in the teachers' inability to deliver quality service.
- ii. Inadequate remuneration and irregularities in the payment of the salaries and entitlement can affect them drastically and can lead to lack of motivation.
- iii. Deficiency in infrastructural facilities and school resources. According to Obiekwe and Onukwu (2023), school facilities refer to those essential instruments which make teaching effective, these include library, sporting facilities, school buses and a host of others.
- iv. Unresolved labour dispute and lack of dialogue between government and the Nigerian union of teachers
- v. Lack of investment in the educational sector have left so many schools and teachers inefficient and incompetent
- vi. Denial of study leave with pay can discourage teachers who intend to acquire more knowledge to keep updated in the field of education
- vii. Differences in compensation and conditions of service for workers in the same institution.
- viii. Lack of training and professional development making it very difficult for them to improve their teaching skills and stay up to date with the current teaching method.
- ix. Disagreement over government policies and reforms in educational sector.  
Teachers are considered to be one of the least paid and there is a small gratuity for them after several years of service, this alone is highly discouraging. These issues have led to consistent tensions between teachers and the government, thereby resulting in repeated strikes as a means of protest and negotiation  
(Njure, 2021).

### **Consequences of Teachers' Strikes**

The effect of incessant teachers strike action on teachers and on the academic performance of student over the years have be a very serious issue that cannot be over emphasised. Osunkoya (2019) stated that competence of good teacher include what they teach and how they teach. What a teacher delivers to student and how she delivers it can be disrupted by strike. Strike actions have drastically dwindled the academic performance of students, posing a lot of negative effects on them, this is because the period that would have been used to teach and acquire knowledge is spent on the street or at home all in the name of strike. Then destabilises the academic programmes and its operation. It decreases students learning, research and innovations. The students fall behind in their studies and eventually have problem catching up, most of them lose interest in education and resort to untimely marriage or trading. Those who decide to wait get underserved extension in their study years. It affects students' examination performance, thereby encouraging examination malpractice, student eventually become seekers of certificate no longer seekers of knowledge. Where have we missed it? Cannot there be a meaningful transformation programmes?

The consequences of incessant teachers' strikes permeate various dimensions of the education system. Academic calendars are disrupted, leading to incomplete syllabus coverage and compromised educational standards. Students bear the brunt of these disruptions, facing academic setbacks and uncertainties about the continuity of their education. Additionally, the morale and motivation of both students and teachers are adversely affected, contributing to an overall decline in the quality of education. Strike actions have serious implications on teachers, even though they are embarked on to achieve some goals, but when it persists longer than necessary, it affects their moral, and this in turn will affect the quality of their service delivery, most of them go down with emotional issues, this is because they are also at the risk of permanently losing their job, becoming unemployable in the labour market. Some teacher eventually becomes jack of all trade juggling between selling of stuff and commodities and teaching so as not to lose at both ends, a typical example is selling eggs, vegetables and wears etc. to other staff in school while teaching, tell me? How effective will their teaching be? They will then find it difficult to prepare lesson notes, focus while teaching, attend classes, and give assignment and so on.

Incessant Strike has a long term effect on most of the equipment and instructional materials used for teaching as they will be abandoned for lengthy period of time and will no longer be maintained so many of them eventually begin to wear out, imagine? Equipment that that are not even sufficient will eventually depreciate. The school programmes are consistently disrupted, leading to wastage of manpower, stoppage of teachers development programmes, brain drain, sickness, psychological stress and even death as the case may be. These and lots more are some of the consequences of incessant teacher's strike (Adavbiele, 2015).

### **Discussion**

Inadequate remuneration, poor working conditions, and unresolved labor disputes were identified as primary root causes of teachers' strikes. The consequences of strikes extend beyond academic disruptions, affecting students, teachers, parents, and the overall quality of education. Teachers' strikes exhibit a cyclical nature, influenced by historical patterns of labor relations, policy decisions, and economic factors. Past interventions have shown varying degrees of success, with factors such as transparency, inclusivity, and sustained commitment influencing outcomes (Alemu, 2018).

### **Conclusion**

Incessant teachers' strikes in Nigeria represent a complex challenge that requires multifaceted solutions. The suggestions outlined in this study aim to address the root causes, consequences, and historical patterns associated with these strikes. By implementing these suggestions, stakeholders can contribute to creating a more stable, resilient, and effective education system in Nigeria.

### **Suggestions**

The following suggestions are made:

- i. One of the primary root causes identified is inadequate remuneration and welfare for teachers. According to Wahab (2018), provision of welfare services to the teachers helps in the quality delivery of their teaching services for better student performance. To address this, the government and relevant stakeholders should conduct regular reviews of teachers' salaries, ensuring they are competitive and reflective of the crucial role educators play in national development.
- ii. Enhancing working conditions for teachers is crucial for promoting job satisfaction and reducing the likelihood of strikes. Investments in infrastructure, classroom resources, and teacher facilities should be prioritised to create a conducive and motivating environment for educators.
- iii. Efforts should be made to strengthen collective bargaining processes between teacher unions and government bodies. Clear and transparent negotiation channels, with mutual respect for each party's interests, can contribute to more effective agreements and a reduction in industrial actions.
- iv. Professional development opportunities should be expanded for teachers to improve their skills, stay updated with modern teaching methodologies, and enhance their overall effectiveness. Investing in continuous training can contribute to a motivated and empowered teaching workforce.
- v. The establishment of efficient and transparent grievance resolution mechanisms is crucial for addressing labor disputes promptly. These mechanisms should provide a fair platform for teachers to express their concerns, with a commitment to resolving issues before they escalate into full-scale strikes.

- vi. Adequate investment in educational infrastructure, including classrooms, libraries, and laboratories, is essential. Improved infrastructure contributes to a more conducive learning environment and addresses a key concern identified by teachers.
- vii. Collaboration among stakeholders, including teachers, policymakers, parents, and community leaders, is vital. An inclusive approach to decision-making and policy formulation can contribute to a more harmonious educational ecosystem.

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