Factors for unequal distribution of primary school teachers in Ruangwa District council, Tanzania

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Abstract:

This study attempts to explore the factors for continuing existence of unequal distribution of teachers in Ruangwa District council, Tanzania. To capture the objectives of this study random and purposive sampling techniques were employed in the selection of a sample of 160 respondents out of a total of a population of 479. The findings suggest that a combination of lack of motivation and incentives; attrition; poor recruitment and deployment policy; preference to work in certain areas; lack of opportunity to career development; access to social service such as health care; and teachers' mobility are the factors responsible for inequitable distribution of teachers in Ruangwa District council. Therefore this study recommends the government devises a good strategy for motivating teachers to accept posts in remote rural areas. Comprehensive deployments policies need to be developed that ensure sufficient teachers in remote schools.

Key Words: Education; Tanzania; Attrition; Teachers, Equitable Distribution.

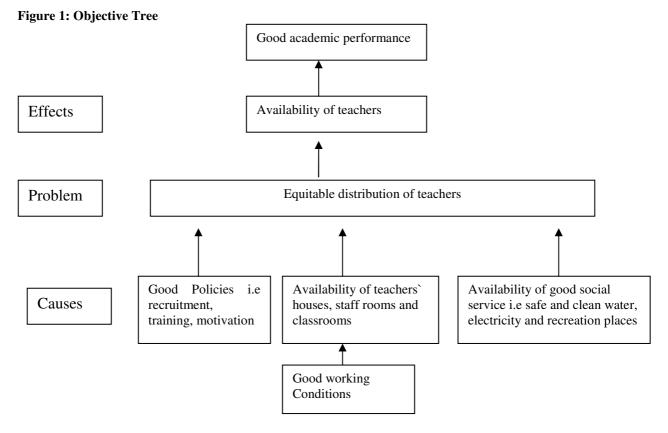
1.0 Introduction

Since independence in 1961, education has always been seen as the core of national development. The Government of Tanzania through the management of the Education Sector commits herself to provide quality education. It faciltates provision of equitable quality education and training at all levels. It also collaborates with educational stakeholders so that they participate actively in the provision of education (Carr-Hill, 1984; Davidson, 2004; Narman, 2004; Rajan, 2003; and Sumra, 2003). The Government gives high priority to the provision of quality education to all Tanzanians because of its fundamental role in bringing about the Nation's social, culture and economic development as emphasized in the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP/MKUKUTA), the Tanzania Development Vision 2025, the Election Manifesto 2010, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as well as Education for All (EFA) goals and other international commitments (Azam, 2001).

In the process of provision of quality education, the Education Sector is sub-divided into four sub-sectors namely: Basic Education (Pre-Primary, Primary, Secondary, Teacher and Adult and Non-Formal Education); Folk Education, Higher Education, and Technical and Vocational Education and Training. All sub-sectors fall under the parent Ministry that is, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) except for the Folk Education sub-sector which falls under the Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children (MCDGC) (URT, 2006).

Despite of these efforts, the distribution of teachers has been the area of concern for many policy makers. The free education policy of the United Republic of Tanzania and the subsequent rapid increase in the enrolment of pupils seem to have brought about demand for more qualified teachers in many primary schools. During the first year (2002) of Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) implementation, efforts were made to ensure an equitable and gender-balanced distribution of trained teachers by recruiting more teachers into schools, and to reduce regional inequalities in Teachers Pupil Ratio. Attaining a reasonable balance between the demand and supply of teachers is an important aspect of education sector reforms in the country one that could either derail or lead to their successful implementation. According to MOEC (2003) Teachers' shortages are more noticeable in the primary schools located in the remote rural areas than those in urban areas. Similar observations have been made by Mulkeen, (2005) who states that, in many African countries, teachers prefer to teach in urban areas than rural areas, as a result, rural schools may be left with empty posts. This implies that schools in the rural districts had always been subjected to constant problems of teachers' distribution and its repercussion to the quality of education.

Ruangwa District council is one of the rural districts which have been one of the top five bottom districts that receive little attention in terms of budget disbursement on education sector despite of the implementation of Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP). Overall the Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) in Ruangwa is s 57:1 compared to the desired national Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) is 45:1. Hence this motivates this study to identify what are factors determines unequal distribution of primary school teachers in Ruangwa. In identifying the factors the study develops objective tree as guiding tool for this study (see figure 1)



2.0 Literature Review

In many countries, urban areas have qualified teachers who are unemployed, while rural areas have unfilled posts. This pattern of simultaneous surplus and shortage is strong evidence that the problem of finding teachers for rural schools will not be solved simply by producing more teachers.

Most of the education sector reforms began in 1970s (Mutiso, 1975, Nyerere, 1967 and Sifuna 1976 as cited in Narman (2004). The overall objective has been to ensure an equitable access to high quality formal education and adult literacy through facilities' expansion, efficiency gains and quality improvement, accompanied with efficient supply and use of resources (Njabili, 1999). The provision of education in Tanzania is guided by National Macro-policies, Sectoral Education Policies and Programmes. The macro-policies include the Tanzania Development Vision (2025) and the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP/MKUKUTA). The National policies are supplemented by sectoral policies and programmes which include the Education Sector Development Programme (1997) revised in 2001 and 2008, the Education and Training Policy (1995), the Technical Education and Training Policy (1996) and the Higher Education Policy (1999). Other policies include the Community Development Policy (1996) focuses on measures which enable people to recognize their own abilities, identify their problems and use the available resources to earn, increase income and build better life for themselves. The Child Development Policy (1996) aimed at educating communities on the basic rights of the child and providing direction and guidance on child survival protection and development.

Following the development of the Education and Training Policy 1995, the Ministry developed the following plans/programs: Education Sector Development Programme (ED-SDP), Local Government reform Act of 1998, Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) 2002-2006, Secondary Education Development Plan (SEDP) 2004-2009, the Adult and Non-Formal Education Implementation Plan (ANEIP) 2003/04-2007/08. All these programmes have been developed to improve the quality of education and strengthen the link between education provided at all levels and the social and economic development of Tanzania (ADEA 2006)

According to the Basic Education Development Committee (BEDC), (2001) the teacher in the classroom is the main instrument for bringing about qualitative success in the teaching and learning processes. As such any problem related to the uneven distribution of the teachers may create an impact in the process of learning and teaching at the school environment. Omari (2006) for example, points out that the teacher's role in the classroom

consists of a variety of moves and activities meant to facilitate and advance the attainment of the lesson goals. Ishumi and Nyirenda (2002), Heymen (1976) and Ikejiani (1964) also suggest that, for the learning and teaching to prosper, dynamic processes of interaction between a teacher, a learner and the subject matter is crucial. Thus, few educational authorities would disagree that, good schools have the best-trained and most experienced teachers. These statements highlight clearly on the importance of the teacher in facilitating the process of teaching and learning in the classroom situation so as to bring about the desired quality education to all people. The major staffing challenge for public education systems in most low-income developing countries is how to achieve an equitable spatial distribution of teachers between rural and urban areas. The perceived unattractiveness of working in rural schools is usually compounded by the lack of additional motivation and incentives for teachers to work in these locations. As a consequence, rural schools generally have relatively less qualified and experienced teachers, teacher turnover is higher and, with higher vacancy rates, teachers have to work harder than their colleagues in urban schools. (World Bank, 2001). The situation of PTR distribution in Ruangwa District Council District shows to be 57:1.

The financial year 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 a total of 20 and 21 teachers were deployed in Ruangwa District Council. Also, the Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania (BEST) for year 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 reports shows that in 2005 number of teachers posted in Ruangwa district were 27 but only 23 reported, in 2009, 27 teachers were posted but only 19 teachers reported while 2010 only 38 reported out of 42 teachers who were posted and this represent 90.4 per cent. This number of teachers is not proportion with pupils' enrolment in Ruangwa District Council where there has been a tremendous increase in pupils' enrolment rates without a significant increase in the number of teachers particularly during PEDP implementation in 2002 to 2006; moreover the number pupils' enrolment has increased from 2939 pupils in 2009 to 3200 pupils in 2010. Similarly, the report shows the widening gap of the pupil-teacher ratio has been widen for past five years as a result of PEDP program where number of children enrolled in schools were increasing so the projection of the staff were irregular.

Mulkeen and Chen (2008), show that, there are quite a few constraints on teacher distribution in government schools. The rural-urban divide in living conditions is one of the major constraints in attracting teachers in rural areas. Many countries report that teachers express a strong preference for urban postings because living conditions in general are so much better in urban than in rural areas. Teachers often express concerns about the quality of accommodations; the working environment, including classroom facilities and school resources; and access to leisure activities and public facilities in rural areas. Health and HIV/AIDS concerns also contribute to teachers' unwillingness to work in rural schools. Living in rural areas often involves poor access to health care. The prevalence of HIV in rural areas and the lack of medical facilities have made rural postings even less attractive to teachers. The importance of HIV for teachers should not be underestimated. Across Africa, an estimated 260,000 teachers, 9.4 percent of the total employed in 1999, could die of AIDS-related illnesses over the next decade.

In South Africa, HIV testing of more than 17,000 teachers revealed that 12.7 percent were HIV positive, and the prevalence rates were higher among rural teachers and among younger, less experienced teachers (Mulkeen et al, 2008). For teachers using antiretroviral treatment, reliable access to medical facilities is even more critical. In some cases, teachers who are ill are posted to urban centers to allow them access to medical services. Although they do little to enhance the teaching in urban areas, their absence from rural areas further enhances the rural-urban divide. In Ghana, poor health is the most common reason given for early transfer. In Uganda, the policy is that teachers with health problems should be posted to schools near medical facilities. Mozambique is considering a similar policy. Also the same study was conducted in India; shows that In India 54% primary schools have only one or two teachers. The number of primary schools with three or less teachers is 71.5 %.

Another study conducted by Mulkeen (2005) in Malawi shows uneven distribution of teachers in Malawi. He argued that, since the introduction of Free Primary Education in 1994, teacher recruitment has been done by hiring untrained temporary teachers, who are later trained through the MIITEP program. This recruitment was done centrally, and the teachers were deployed to schools on the basis of needs. Candidates are not recruited for specific locations, and there were no specific recruitment policies to select teachers for rural areas. There has been high demand for places in teacher training, and the entry qualifications have been rising.

Under the MIITEP system, the deployment of teachers was done at the point of recruitment. The intention was to deploy teachers to the rural schools where the need was greatest. However, many teachers, particularly female teachers, found reasons to argue that they should not be sent to rural areas. For female teachers, they often made

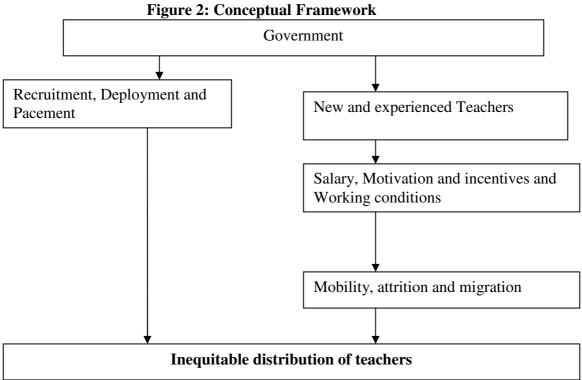
the argument based on marriage. If a woman's husband is located in an urban area, the ministry will not normally force the woman to leave the area. Once the teachers were deployed, teachers were able to request transfers to other areas. For female teachers, transfer was often requested on the basis of marriage, and there were even some reports of women faking a marriage in order to get a transfer. It is rare to find female teachers in rural areas, unless they are with their husbands (if, for example, both are teachers). Male teachers were sometimes able to get a transfer on the basis of doing further study, and so needing access to social services. Teacher illness is another major justification for movement. In Malawi, ARVs are available free to people with HIV, but only a limited number of hospitals can dispense them, or even diagnose HIV. There is no formal arrangement to allow sick teachers to move to areas near hospitals. However for compassionate reasons district education managers often allow a transfer.

Overall there is a good deal of teacher movement in Malawi. In 2004 over 4,000 teachers, or 10% of the teacher population, transferred to another school. Most movement is initiated by the teachers themselves. Teachers who want to move may face long delays, but may eventually get to move where they want, likewise teachers with a lot of influence, or who have pressing humanitarian reasons to move (such as marriage or illness), may be able to get redeployment to urban areas (Mulkeen 2005).

3.0 Methodology

3.1 The conceptual framework

The Conceptual framework for this study is developed from Laine (2005) model. The model was modified and some of the variables were relaxed basing on Tanzania education sector. In attempting to understand what factors are most important in affecting the distribution of primary school teachers in Tanzania, this conceptual framework points out the Government as the main employer of primary teachers. The framework adopts two scenarios one being a new and experienced teachers and the second being placement, deployment and hiring of new teachers, it is assumed that in the process of placement, deployment and hiring the Government may post teachers without references or without having a base of posting hence lead to inequitable distribution of teachers. Similarly, it is assumed that if the new or experienced teachers are placed in their working stations and find out that the working environment is not conducive, no motivation and incentives, poor access to social services it will demoralize their working attitude hence their reaction will be to shift and look for another opportunity and if this happen it will create inequitable distribution of teachers thus having linked with the first scenario as shown in figure 2.



Source: Laine (2005,) and modified by the researcher to fit the study.

3.2 Data Sources

The study targeted employees in the education sector in Ruangwa District Council such as primary school teachers, District Education Officers, Ward Education Coordinators and Human Resource Officers. Random and purposive sampling techniques were employed in the selection of a sample of 160 respondents out of a total of a population of 479. Random sampling was employed in selecting teachers in order to get equal representation in terms of gender and age while purposive was used in selection of Education Officers, Human Resource officer and Ward Education Coordinators in order obtain information with respect to the objectives of this study. Primary data was collected through a combination of structured and semi structured interviews with teachers, education officers, human resource officers and ward education coordinators. Questionnaires relevant to the subject were employed and distributed to 160 respondents including 151 teachers, 6 Ward education Officers, 1 Human resource officer and 2 council education officers. An extensive review of literature and policy was carried including the 1995 Education Policy, PEDP I/II (2005), BEST, Teachers Recruitment reports for 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 in Ruangwa District Council District and attendance register were reviewed in the course of collecting data

Ruangwa District Council is one among six districts in Lindi region. It covers 2564km squares. Ruangwa District Council is located in South East of Tanzania. It borders Masasi district in the South, Lindi rural in the East, Kilwa in the North, and Liwale and Nachingwea districts in the West. The District headquarters is called Ruangwa District Council and is 152 kilometers from Lindi Town which is the Regional capital. The area of the District is 2560 km2, which is about 256036 hectors. About 69,641 hectors (34%) is being used for agriculture for production of cash and food crops. The arable land covers an area of about 204,826 hectors equivalent to 80% that of Natural and Planted forests is 40.614 hectors equipment to 15% and 10.562 hector equivalent to 4% is an suitable for human settlements and other uses. The District has 75 registered villages, 359, sub-villages (hamlets), wards that form 3 divisions of Mandawa with an area of 744 km2, Mnacho that has 970 km2 and Ruangwa with an area of 840 km2. According to the 2002 National Population and Housing Census, the Population is 124,516 with the growth rate of 1.4 per annum.

4.0 Findings and Discussion

Table 1 show; male teachers below the age of 25 represent 25 percent of all male teachers in the sample while there are almost twice as many female teachers (45.7 percent) in the same age group in the sample. The number of primary teachers below 25 ages being less in this district is supported by the education system in Tanzania, where someone had to spend almost 14 years of formal education before being employed thus by the time s(he) gets into employment is about 24 years of age hence restricts the number of primary teachers below 25 ages being high. On the other hand primary teachers between the age of 25-40 shows to be in favour of male teachers by recording 70 per cent compared to female teachers who are 51.6 per cent, however the results is still impressive as both gender are above 50 per cent compared to the age above 55 and below 25. The distribution of primary teachers at the age between 40 and above almost is non-existence due to the fact that at this age most of teachers might have changed their professional as a result of globalization that has brought up many opportunities. Overall average of teachers below 25 ages recorded 37.3 percent compared to 58.8 per cent that recorded by the primary teachers aged between 25 to 40 years, this implies the distribution of primary teachers at Ruangwa District Council is largely dominated by this group. However, the group of 40-55 and above is represented by less than 2 per cent, which probably implies that those who are at these ages are the head teachers or assistant head teachers.

The findings reveal that 99 per cent agree that the salary is major causative in inequitable distribution (see table 2). The major concern almost all teachers raised was the inadequate salary they get; they argued that the salaries that they get are totally inadequate; as a result they are forced to engage in other activities that may affect their working habit and spoil their teaching ethics in the public service. Similarly the complaint made by Ward Education Coordinators was related to salary levels. Every single coordinator interviewed about this issue felt that teacher's salaries were too small even to provide for the most basic needs of a teacher and his or her family.

[&]quot;The salary that teachers are getting is not adequate for them to meet their basic requirements. They therefore have to do other things in order to make a living.....they also forced to borrow money and they are always in debt" (Male Education Coordinator, Ruangwa District Council).

The arguments of the teachers and officers interviewed regarding the salary issues shows to be validity in this study considering that salary scale for teachers in the public service with certificate earn Tanzania Government Teachers Scale (TGTS) B which ranges from Tsh 244,400-280,800 while those with Diploma gets TGTS C (Tsh 325,700-40,2700).

Motivation and incentives were identified as an obstacle to equitable distribution, where 50.99 per cent strongly agreed that lack of incentive has role to play in inequality distribution followed by 35.1 percent equivalent to 53 respondents who had agreed. Alternatively, 20 respondents approximately to 13.2 per cent had disagreed that lack of motivation and incentives is responsible for inequitable distribution while 1 per cent equally to 0.7 respondents had strongly disagreed on this. These findings conform to findings on the study which explored the motivation and incentives of workers in sub Saharan Africa and Asia as well as the Tanzania Education Policy 1995, which has not given teachers incentives attention due.

This study found out that the working environment in Ruangwa District Council District does not attract teachers especially those with high qualifications to work in remote areas. There is a great shortage of staff houses and there are no good houses in rural areas for teachers to rent. The study found that many teachers do not have houses, and those who do live in houses that are often in serious need of repair and most schools are in very poor physical environment. For example, Ntawilile primary school has only two classes, one is used as a class at the same time as a teachers' house.

The conditions in which most teachers are working are discouraging and very challenging, especially in the most remote rural primary schools. Lack of facilities such as staffrooms, classrooms, teaching and learning materials are clearly discouraging, for example Machang`anja primary school the classroom is also being used as teacher`s house while Nambilanje primary school, teachers who are not yet married are sharing the houses.

Likewise, the working environment in the majority of schools is deplorable with dilapidated school structures, insufficient teaching and learning materials. In addition, remote schools teacher usually have high teaching workload and it is not uncommon in such schools for teachers to handle more than one class. Teacher teaching lower classes are faced with large and unmanageable classes. Class sizes of more than 70 pupils per class are common in Ruangwa District Council particularly in the first three. For example Mtawilile a teacher manage 78 pupils, Kitandi one teacher manage 76 pupils, the same to Matambarare and Mbekenyera where each teacher manage 76 and 74 pupils respectively.

This study also found that attrition; poor recruitment and deployment policy; preference to work in certain areas; lack of opportunity to career development; access to social service such as health care; and teachers' mobility are the factors responsible for inequitable distribution of teachers in Ruangwa District council. The percentage of response in relation to these factors are shown in the tables attached to this study as annex.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

To conclude, the major findings of this study relates with the empirical study reviewed under this study, Wider PTRs caused by inequitable distribution of teachers was found a common characteristic feature dominated the remote rural primary schools. Also in remote rural areas there are different pushing factors that always make the teachers get out their working stations including unreliable working environment, hence inequitable distribution of teachers. Despite the different strategies taken by the government to improve education in the country, the teachers' shortage seems to be a chronic problem that impedes the provision of quality education, hence confirms that there is a role that policy makers in education sector need to play to rectify the situation if the country has to develop.

5.2 Policy Recommendation

This study recommends;

- There is a need of improving teachers' working environment by providing important social services such as access to safe and clean water at/near the school, spacious staff rooms and teachers' house, improving access to social service to reduce primary teachers' turnover.
- The government needs motivate teachers to accept remote rural areas posting. The strategy could be ensuring fair distribution of training opportunities among teachers; timely release of teachers' salary, paying double shift teaching and hardship allowances where applicable. At the same time school-level

strategies should be developed/strengthened to recognize and reward good performance among teachers on specific identified characteristics/indicators. In the long term, improvement of teachers' working conditions e.g. teachers' welfare, improvement of salaries, provision of special allowances need to be provided appropriately as it deem feasible.

• There is a need to develop deployment policies that ensure sufficient teachers in remote schools. Successful strategies seem likely to require a combination of accurate information about deployment and teacher movements and policies that require or encourage rural location. Similarly, the annual employment and deployment of teachers should be specific school market oriented (market demand approach); that is the employment strategy should be specific to the areas with teachers shortage. This means that teachers looking for employment should be deployed while knowing where they ought to go to fill the gap of the teachers' shortage. Under this perspective teachers sent in regions should not be sent to schools but they should be left to apply for a post in the specific schools known to have the teachers' shortage. Several countries such as Lesotho have applied this approach and it was found fruitful.

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Table 1: Distributions of primary teachers

		age of the re	age of the respondent			Total
		below 25	Between 25 and 40 years	Between 40 and 55 years	Above 55	
SEX	Male	5	14	0	1	20
		25.0%	70.0%	.0%	5.0%	100.0%
	Female	14	16	1	0	31
		45.2%	51.6%	3.2%	.0%	100.0%
Total		19	30	1	1	51
		37.3%	58.8%	2.0%	2.0%	100.0%

Source: Field survey

Table 2: inadequate salary is a reason for inequitable distribution of teachers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Agree	1	.7	.7
	strongly agree	150	99.3	99.3
	Total	151	100.0	100.0

Source: Field survey

Table 3: Lack of motivation and incentives by the Management is a reason for inequitable distribution of teachers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	0.7	0.7
	Disagree	20	13.2	13.2
	Agree	53	35.1	35.1
	Strongly agree	77	50.99	50.9
	Total	151	100.0	100.0

Source: field survey

Table 4: Policies is a reason for inequitable distribution of teachers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Agree	3	2.0	2.0
	strongly agree	148	98.0	98.0
	Total	151	100.0	100.0

Source: Field survey

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	1	.7	.7
	Moderate	75	49.7	49.7
	Agree	68	45.0	45.0
	strongly agree	7	4.6	4.6
	Total	151	100.0	100.0

Table 5: Attrition as a reason for inequitable distribution

Source: Field survey

Table 6: Preference is a reason for inequitable distribution of teachers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Disagree	29	19.2	19.2
	Moderate	41	27.2	27.2
	Agree	81	53.6	53.6
	Total	151	100.0	100.0

Source: Field survey

Table 7: Lack or few opportunity of career development is a reason for inequitable distribution of teachers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	
Valid	Disagree	50	33.1	33.1	
	Moderate	51	33.8	33.8	
	Agree	22	14.6	14.6	
	Strongly agree	28	18.5	18.5	
	Total	151	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field survey

Table 8: Teachers Movement (Mobility) is a reason for inequitable distribution of teachers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	
Valid	Disagree	14	9.3	9.3	
	Moderate	94	62.3	62.3	
	Agree	43	28.5	28.5	
	Total	151	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey

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