

## **DEARTH OF TEACHERS IN RURAL BASIC SCHOOLS: IMPLICATIONS ON HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE AMENFI WEST DISTRICT, GHANA**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The paper investigated and reviewed current literature that provided evidence on the effects of inadequate teachers in rural basic schools and its impact on Human Resource Development. The descriptive design was used for the study. However, the study employed a mixed method for data collection. Specifically, the study used questionnaire, interview guide and focus group discussion guide as main instruments for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. The study population was one hundred and sixty-three (163) teachers from thirty selected rural basic schools. The study employed the stratified and the simple random sampling techniques to select participants for quantitative data and made use of purposive and snowball sampling techniques to select key informants and participants for focus group discussions respectively. Descriptive statistics was the medium used to analyse quantitative data whereas qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis. Inferential statistical tools including chi-square test was used to ascertain the relationship between variables and regression analysis used to measure the effects of independent variables on the dependent variables. Since the study revealed that most teachers hardly accept postings to rural schools, 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. In addition, policy makers can also reduce the relative disadvantage of a rural location by ensuring that administrative processes do not discriminate against remote schools. Efficient systems of payment and equal access to opportunities for further study, transfer and promotion can reduce the disincentive to locate in rural areas.*

**KEYWORDS:** Education, Performance, Development, Inadequate, Human Resource and Basic

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### **INTRODUCTION**

It has become very important to close the educational gaps and remove the enormous disparities in educational access, inclusion and achievement. One reason, among others is the importance of this for making the world more secure as well as fairer (UNESCO, 2007). Moreover, human history has become more and more a race between education and upheavals. If we continue to leave vast

sections of the people of the world outside the scope of education, we make the world not only less just, but also less secure.

The most basic issue relates to the basic fact that inability to read and write are forms of insecurity in themselves. Not to be able to read or write or count or communicate is a tremendous deprivation. The extreme case of insecurity is the certainty of deprivation, and the absence of any chance of avoiding that fate is imperative. The development of the human resource is key to arresting the danger of deprivation and gross insecurity in the world and to ensure socio-economic development of every country. The part played by the teacher in this regard cannot be over emphasised. Adequate provision of quality, proficient and knowledgeable teachers is essential ingredient to ensure and sustain the development of the competencies of the citizenry to play critical and responsive roles in a country's development (Sen, 2003).

Human Resource Development (HRD) deals with the process of developing the competencies in people and creating the necessary conditions through appropriate policy implementation to facilitate the application of these competencies for their own benefit and for that of society (Swanson, 2007). The inference of the definition connote that human resource development engross many components of development of people consisting of their intellectual, emotional, social-cultural and moral development. According to DeSimone and Werner (2012), Human Resource Development is the systematic and planned activities designed to provide the necessary skills to meet current and future job demands. HRD concerns the development of the competencies of the individual through education and training. The development of a nation's human resource is a critical factor in determining the productive levels which affect a nations GDP (Siddiqui, 2011). Mabey (2003), argue that the development of a country's human resource starts right from basic education. A proper educational background of the individual from the basic level to a large extent, determines the level of capacity a nation can build in terms of its human resource for productive use in the future (Anderson, 2009). Basic education forms the basis for the development of the human resource therefore, investing resources in the form of adequate teachers, logistics, infrastructure and teaching and learning materials is fundamental to the growth and development of the potentials, competencies, abilities, capabilities, aptitudes and values of people for better life (Levy, 2007).

The heart of Human Resource Development is education, which plays a considerable and corrective function in complementary the socio-economic underpinning of a country. In view of the fact that a nations population is its most valuable resource, it necessitate the fostering and caring for its population right from basic education level to realize an enhanced value of life (Department of Education and Literacy India 2012). This justifies an all-round development of citizens, which can be accomplished by building sturdy foundations in basic education. In view of that teacher adequacy and quality play a fundamental function in guaranteeing optimum human resource development (Siddiqui, 2011).

The absence or inadequate teachers in rural basic schools is a major setback to the achievement of quality education, capacity building and for the development of the human resource. Teachers are an extremely important facet of any society for a multitude of reasons. Teachers are the people who educate the youth of society who in turn become the leaders of the next generation of people (Baiden-Amissah, 2006). Certainly, teachers have a significant mark on the development of pupils as they teach and help them develop their knowledge to become responsible and productive members of society. Teachers enrich the young generation of children with the requisite competencies so that the future is a safe, secure and great place to live in for every person (UNESCO, 2007).

Not surprisingly, all the cases of speedy use of the opportunities of global commerce for the reduction of poverty have drawn on help from basic education on a wide basis. The concentration on basic education determine, to a large extent, the nature and speed of economic and social progress of every country (Carole, 2011). Basic education in Ghana consists of nine years from primary one to the end of the three year Junior High School. The education offered at this level, essentially aims at providing the basic intellectual foundation for continued education at Senior High School and beyond and to reduce inequality among the mass populace of the country (Johnson & Strange, 2005).

Over the years, in pursuit of restoring the standards of the education system, successive governments have made various efforts with the view to ensuring that the education service fulfills the expectations of the individual as well as making available, the requisite human resource to meet the needs of all rural basic schools in the country. Baiden-Amissah, (2006) emphasized that equitable deployment of teachers in terms of numbers, experience and qualifications is vital to the achievement of quality education and for the development of the human resource for national development.

There are multitudes of well-publicized problems including shortage of teachers, under qualified teachers and poor teacher performance. In the classroom, this results in poor learner standards and lack of classroom discipline. Ghana's education is bedeviled with several challenges among them is insufficient qualified teacher supply in our basic schools particularly, the rural or deprived schools (Baiden-Amissah, 2006). According to the Commission for Africa (2013), Ghana has just a quarter of the teachers it needs to give every child in the country a quality primary education. In rural areas the problem is especially acute and classes of 80 or more pupils to one teacher are not uncommon. The Ministry of Education (2012) indicated that teacher deployment to rural schools is a critical challenge facing Ghana's education. The Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) in rural and underserved districts are high thereby hindering quality teaching and learning which in effect undermine knowledge acquisition and skills by pupils. The consequence is the mass failures of pupils from rural basic schools and this adversely affect the quality of human resource development in the country. The Amenfi West district is among those with a very low level of education. This is attributable to many factors. Notably amongst them is limited number of

teachers in the district which hinder the development of the competencies of pupils in schools (Ghana districts, 2006).

It is in view of these challenges that the study sought to fill the gap in knowledge by assessing the effects of inadequate teachers in rural basic schools and its implications on human resource development in the country. The specific objectives of the study were to assess factors causing teachers refusal to accept postings to rural schools, examine the association between insufficient teachers and pupils' performance, and assess the effects of inadequate teachers on human resource development.

This study is geared toward making meaningful contribution to existing body of knowledge in improving teaching and learning in basic education in less endowed schools. The findings of the study would provide a platform based on which educators and policy decision makers could resort to and make appropriate strategies for addressing the shortfalls in rural basic schools in the country. The recommendations would also inform School Management Committees and Parent Teacher Associations in addressing the many challenges impeding development of the human resource in their rural communities.

### **Empirical review**

Rural area, according to Johnson and Strange (2005) is vicinity beyond metropolitan cities with a population number fewer than two thousand five hundred (2500) people. Monk (2007) associates rural areas with economic reliance on agriculture. This study combine the two definitions and consequently, define rural schools as schools located in isolated regions with small and sparse populations predominantly reliant on agriculture and with less than 2500 inhabitants.

The stumpy pupil accomplishment of rural schools is attributable to the predicament of insufficient supply of high-quality teachers (World Bank, 2010). This is sustained by copious investigations showing that pupil's success is most universally a direct effect of teacher presence and quality (Carey, 2004). Prominently, this apparent verity is not distinctive to rural schools in Ghana, this is a widespread problem for rural schools all around the world, where teacher turnover is high and hiring is difficult (Monk, 2007). Stinebrickner (2001) draw attention to the inclination for high-quality and accomplished teachers who increasingly choose to abscond rural schools for better condition of service elsewhere. While specific numbers for teacher transfers in Ghana stay impossible to differentiate, a separate research finding indicated that the prospect of a teacher transferring from a lower socioeconomic school to a school with higher socioeconomic standing is higher than in the contrary trend (Krei, 2000). To further single out this problem, Ingersoll (2001) claims that teacher turnover is the primary reason for the teacher shortage in rural areas.

Teachers consigned to teach in rural schools repeatedly refer to poor work conditions as a feature of disappointment and increased possibility to run-off (NCTAF, 2002). These work conditions take account of poor facilities, scarce number of course book and supplies as well as huge class sizes (NCTAF, 2002). The World Bank (2010) bring up that some of these countryside schools

have recurrent electricity outages and some do not have access to electricity. In addition, several rural teachers sigh the poor condition of their accommodation facilities and the long distance between their place of abode and their schools. Furthermore, low remuneration, need of access to professional prospects, the responsibility to take on multiple duties and lack of public transportation in rural areas have forced teachers to depend on personal automobiles and put up with the brunt of the increased cost of living (Monk, 2007). Marwan, Sumitono and Mislán (2012) establish that some schools can merely be reached through restricted access-roads or via rivers.

Given that rural schools are characteristically small, teachers are required to carry teaching loads in multiple subjects. This demands greater preparation time for teachers and plausibly places greater strain on teachers having to cope with diverse subject content at the same time. Adding up to teaching numerous subjects, teachers are regularly forced to concurrently teach a broad array of pupils capacity (Monk, 2007), as well as various age groups at the same time (World Bank, 2010). It is noteworthy to keep in mind that rural teaching takes account of teaching indigent, neglected or emaciated pupils thus repeatedly likened to sporadic school attendance and greater student needs. This places an extra challenge for already overworked rural teachers to guarantee student teaching and learning (Monk, 2007).

Monk (2007), study illustrates that rural teachers experience socio-cultural seclusion from relatives and acquaintances. Since countless of these rural areas are severely impoverished and are allied with an aging inhabitants, joblessness and low quality of life, scores of teachers chiefly those from municipal environment are faced with difficulty when trying to hang out, which adds to their job frustration (NCTAF, 2002). Research has made known that rural teachers usually receive less access to teaching resources and teacher support programmes owed to their geographic remoteness (Ingersoll, 2001).

Every organization needs three main resources to survive. Even if an organization has got all the money and the materials it needs, it must still find capable people to put them into effective use. It is, therefore, safe to claim that human resources are essential resources of an organization. It is equally true to say that human resources are the highest asset of any organization, because no matter the amount of capital invested in an organization in terms of infrastructure and materials, its success or failure depends on the quality of people who plan and execute its programmes therefore, the development of the competencies, in terms of knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes of people is cardinal to the development of society (DeSimone and Werner 2012).

The effect of the teachers in the performance of the students is germane. The teachers are the facilitators who are to impact into the students the concepts expected to be learnt. However, Ramesh-Rao & Jani (2011) was of the opinion that lack of teachers in basic schools grossly contribute to students' low performance. When considering growth in technology, the development of human resource is paramount (Owusu-Acheampong, 2015). This was in line with the view of Owolabi and Adedayo (2012) who noted that problem of industrial development is attributable to that of inadequacy of sufficiently trained human resources and this has been a major

constraint on the rate of technological and economic development of the country. The teacher is the major manpower saddled with the responsibility of impacting the concepts considered fundamental to technology through the teaching of these basic concepts. This was why Adeniyi (1993) noted that a country's human resource development depends on the quantity of her well-qualified teachers.

The availability of professional teachers in rural basic schools is low (Krei, 2000). The reasons may not be farfetched. Teaching is seen as a dumping ground for any unemployed school leaver, irrespective of their area of specialization. This group of young men and women thus handle the job as a bye-pass venture to their desired ends (Akinfe, Olofinniyi & Fashiku, 2012). Consequently, their contribution to the job would be very low since they lack the dedication demanded by the job (Owolabi and Adedayo, 2012). The few ones that seem to show little dedication lack the technical know-how of teaching since they were never trained on the job. The resultant effect on the students' performance is catastrophic. This eventually culminates to a decline in the development of human resources which eventually, adversely affect national technological growth and development (Ramesh-Rao & Jani 2011)

Sometimes, the schools are very thinly staffed and parents are often worried about the safety of children. Quite often, the parents' reluctance has a rational basis, and these gaps too need to be addressed. Many school heads explain that in their effort to cope with the teacher shortage, they employ "untrained" teachers: high school graduates who have completed a short induction to teaching course as part of a government initiative to support rural schools. These teachers are enthusiastic and hardworking, but lack the essential knowledge and teaching skills that are needed to deliver a quality education (Strange, 2011).

## **METHODOLOGY**

The descriptive design was used for the study. However, the study employed a mixed method comprising the use of questionnaire administration, interviewing and focus group discussion for data collection. Specifically, the study used questionnaire, interview guide as well as focus group discussion guide as the main instruments for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. The population for the study comprised all rural basic schools in Ghana. The study population was basic schools in the Amenfi West district of the Western Region of Ghana. In all forty-five (45) rural basic schools were selected for the study. The total population of teachers was two hundred and seventy-one. The fraction of teacher population who participated in the study constituted a total figure of one hundred and sixty-three (163). The study employed the stratified random and the simple random sampling techniques to select participants for quantitative data and made use of purposive and snowball sampling techniques to select key informants and participants for focus group discussions respectively. The sample size was based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for determining sample size from a given population. Descriptive statistics was the medium used for analysis of quantitative data whereas qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis. Inferential statistical tools including Chi-square test was used to ascertain the relationship between

variables and regression analysis also used to measure the effects of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Data relating to sex of respondents revealed that 103(63.2) percent constitute males and 60(36.8) percent were females. It is therefore inferred that there are more male than female teachers in rural schools. On the basis of number of years spent in their respective schools, 85 representing 52.1 percent indicated that they had spent between one to three years while 18 (11) percent replied that they had spent less than one year. Thirty who made up 18.4 percent showed that they had spent between four to six years and ten years and above respectively in their schools. It can be concluded that most of the teachers have spent between one to three years in their schools.

On responses about teacher's willingness to accept posting to rural schools, 22.1 percent indicated they voluntarily decided to accept postings to rural schools while the majority representing 77.9 percent grudgingly accepted to work in the rural schools. From the foregoing discussions, most of the teachers were unwilling to teach in deprived or rural schools. In addition, respondents were made to express their likes and dislikes in their present community or schools. Forty-two representing (25.8) percent affirmed that they liked working in their present school while the greater part of participants constituting 74.2 percent had no desire staying in their present schools. An interview with the heads of institutions to ascertain whether schools have adequate teachers or not revealed that, most of the schools do not have adequate number teachers. This was confirmed by the teachers as 139(85.3) percent of the teachers indicated that their schools do not have adequate number of teachers while only few schools had adequate number of teachers. In all most of the head teachers indicated that they require additional teachers to reduce the pupil teacher ratio. Twenty-four respondents indicated that their schools require about 1-3 additional teachers, ninety-one indicated that their schools require between 4-6 teachers to supplement the effort of the existing teachers while the remaining 29.4 percent indicated that their schools need about six teachers and beyond to complement the effort of the already existing teachers. These findings from the teachers were also confirmed by the various groups involved in the focus group discussions.

Issues whether teaching and learning was effective and efficient, 18.3 percent indicated that teaching and learning is efficient and effective while the majority 81.7 percent indicated that teaching and learning was not effective and efficient. However, respondents cited inadequate teaching staff, inadequate teaching and learning materials, congestions in the classrooms, inadequate furniture, pupils frequent absenteeism and uncooperative parents as factors militating against effective teaching and learning.

Respondents were required to respond to 'yes' or 'no' questions in order to verify whether the teachers were professional or not. Fifty-four representing (33.1) percent said yes while 66.9 percent said no. the findings showed that most of teachers are non-professionals and this could have an impact on the quality of teaching and learning in the schools.

**Reasons why teachers do not accept postings to rural schools**

Respondents were made to indicate whether they agree or disagree to statement about factors that prevent them from accepting postings to rural schools. Responses obtained indicated that many factors really accounts for some teachers reluctance to accept postings to rural schools. Reporting from the gathered data, results showed that 127 (77.9) percent indicated lack of opportunities for professional development, ninety-five (58.3) percent attributed their reasons to social-cultural exclusion, 144(88.3) percent said inadequate teaching and learning materials, one hundred and eight indicated unattractive environment (66.3), 139 (85.3) percent indicated lack of portable water and access to electricity, 62.7 percent indicated lack of access to good roads 52.1 percent mentioned lack of access to hospital or health centre, 152(93.3) percent said low salaries and 84 representing 51.6 percent indicated uncooperative attitude of parents as reasons for their inability to accept postings to rural schools. In terms of priority, low salaries, inadequate teaching and learning materials, lack of portable water and access to electricity, lack of opportunities for professional development, socio-cultural exclusion, etc were major factors impeding teacher's willingness and desire to serve in rural schools.

This finding is consistent with that of the World Bank (2010) who brought up that some of these countryside schools have lack electricity. Furthermore, low remuneration, need of access to professional prospects, the responsibility to take on multiple duties and lack of public transportation in rural areas have put most teachers off from accepting postings to rural schools (Monk, 2007).

**Associations between inadequate teacher and student's performance**

Chi-square test was conducted at 5% margin of error to ascertain the relationship between inadequate teachers and pupils performance. The test results showed that there is an association between inadequate teachers and pupil's performance. The test gave a p-value of .000 as against alpha of .05 and a chi-square value of 76.458. The implication of the test showed that inadequate teacher's impact negatively on student performance and therefore, schools without adequate teachers are likely to have weak or poor academic performance as against schools with adequate teaching staff. This result is consistent with the findings of (World Bank, 2010) which pointed out that the stumpy pupil accomplishment of rural schools is attributable to the predicament of insufficient teacher supply.

**Effects of inadequate teachers on human resource development**

Participants were asked to express their opinions on the effects of inadequate teachers on the development of the competencies of pupils (human resource). Responses obtained indicate that sixty (36.8) percent mentioned insufficient teachers put pressure on existing teachers and thus make them not to be able to perform up to their optimum. Forty-nine (30.1) percent iterated that inadequate teachers affect the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom since only few teachers manage a very large class size which inhibit effective classroom supervision and control. Fifty-four (33.2) percent responded inadequate teachers bring about poor academic performance.



It can be inferred from the above discussions that majority of respondents were of the opinion that inadequate teaching staff put pressure on the existing teachers making them to overwork themselves which in effect, affect the quality of teaching which accordingly, limits students academic performance. The finding also revealed that inadequate teachers have adverse effect the development of the human resource in rural basic schools. This is because, these rural students would not be taught the needed skills and knowledge (competencies), and the appropriate means to develop their intellectual capabilities and moral values which would equip and prepare them for life in the future. Regression analysis done to ascertain the effects of inadequate teachers on students' performance showed that inadequate teachers really affect the performance of students. Test results showed a p-value of .002 as against alpha of .05. The implications are that if rural schools are not provided with the requisite number of teachers, it would prevent effective teaching and learning and subsequently, affect pupils performance and as a result retards the development of the human resource of rural schools.

### **Challenges associated with inadequate teacher supply on human resource development**

Investigations ascertaining the challenges confronting rural basic schools were sought. The responses showed that most basic schools are faced with several challenges that inhibit their performance. Limited supply of teachers was found to be the greatest among the challenges as represented by 87(53.4) percent, followed by financial constraints (31.3), inadequate teaching and learning materials (10.2) percent and uncooperative attitude of parents of rural schools (5.1). It is noteworthy that all these are potential challenges that can impact negatively on the development of the competencies of rural school children. This finding corresponds with that of (Krei, 2000), who found out that the availability of teachers in rural basic schools is low.

In an interview with one of the heads of rural basic schools, this is what he had to say: *“we don't have enough teachers here. We are only four teachers' two professionals and two non professionals managing the school. We teach classes one to six as well as the nursery. In addition, we do not have money to buy the teaching aids when the one supplied by the district education office gets finished. We actually need help”*.

### **CONCLUSION**

The study revealed that rural schools have long struggled with attracting and retaining teachers. Low salaries and social and geographic isolation were some of the main factors responsible for their difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers as well as refusal of teachers to accept posting to rural schools. Inadequate supply of teachers and poorer educational outcomes in rural areas result from a combination of several factors. These factors are compounded by supply-side inequalities, which provide a poorer education service for rural children. This consequently, creates a major problem in developing the competencies of the human resource in rural schools.

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE**

The main points of this study and their implications for practice can be summarized as follows:

1. The introductory period, or the first three years of teaching, is a time when new teachers should be circumspectly and thoroughly be introduced to their roles as professionals and into the settings in which they will work.
2. Teachers working in particularly challenging contexts, such as rural settings, need to be fully supported in responding to the challenges presented.
3. A carefully planned orientation programme during the early years helps to retain beginning teachers, perk up their performance, and establish habits of practice that lead to career-long development.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings, the following are recommended

Since the study revealed that most teachers hardly accept posting to rural schools, there is a need to develop deployment policies that ensure sufficient teachers in remote schools. The government should implement a well-designed programme of redistribution of teachers within each region, together with a express staffing process to quickly fill up the existing vacancies. Requiring newly qualified teachers to serve some time in remote schools before taking up an urban job has some guarantee. Young, lately qualified teachers may be more transportable than older teachers, and may be enthusiastic to move to a remote school, especially if they see it as a temporary move. If combined with a system of scholarships for teacher training, this may provide a channel for people from poor rural backgrounds to complete teacher training and return to their home areas.

Incentives can have an impact, but they need to be substantial to outweigh the advantages of an urban location. To get the best value from incentives, they need to be carefully targeted on the most remote schools. Policy makers can also lessen the relative disadvantage of a rural location by ensuring that administrative practices do not differentiate against remote schools. Well-organized systems of payment and equal access to prospects for advance study, transfer and promotion can reduce the discouragement to locate in a rural area.

In addition, providing the necessary social services such as electricity, portable water and accessible roads could help attract teachers to accept postings to rural schools.

Since the study revealed that inadequate teachers and financial constraints as major problems confronting the development of the human resource in the rural basic schools, it is recommended that religious bodies, philanthropist and government through the Ministry of Education and particularly, the Ghana Education Service constantly visit rural basic schools to assist them with the requisite human, material and financial resources to help them to be able to develop the competencies pupils in those areas.

## AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The scope of the study could be extended to cover other districts to ascertain the impact of scarce teacher supply on student's academic performance. Another study could be carried out to ascertain the impact of unqualified teachers on the development of human resource in rural schools.

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