

Financing Human Resource Development In The Ghana Education Service: Prospects And Challenges Of The Study Leave With Pay Scheme

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Abstract

The Ghana Education Service (GES) as an organization uses its study leave with pay policy which has been at the easy disposal of teachers since independence of Ghana as a means of up grading its staff. This policy was very flexible until the year 2000 when some restrictions were placed on the accessibility of the facility. This study therefore set to find out the prospects and challenges of the study leave with pay facility with the restrictions the GES has placed on the facility. The data was gathered from teachers and administrators of the Bolgatanga Municipality. This study consisted of a quantitative survey followed by semi-structured qualitative individual interviews. Theoretical and practical issues of this type of research have been presented along with the research design, data collection and analysis procedures, and ethical considerations. The study found out that majority of teachers have benefited from the facility. However the study leave with pay facility was difficult to access because of subject areas restrictions and other administrative problems. The study concluded that many teachers have accessed the scheme by way of meeting the criteria for selection. However the criterion for selection is accompanied by cumbersome process. The Ghana Education Service should ensure that there is equality for all GES approved courses, monitor beneficiaries to ensure that they return to the classroom after studies, support teachers financially through Distance Learning Programme were some of the recommendations of the study.

Keywords: study leave, policy, accessibility, facility, prospects, challenges

Introduction

The importance of a teacher, and particularly *a well motivated and psyched up one*; for the success of education delivery, and indeed the success of our quest for national progress through human resource development cannot be overstated. This is rightly supported by the report of the Eleventh Conference of Common Wealth Education Ministers at Barbados in 1990 and as indicated by the Common Wealth Secretariat, (1993) that “of all the factors that influence qualitative improvement of education, the quality, competence and character of teachers are undoubtedly the most significant”. The Common Wealth Secretariat (1993) argued that “if a teacher is not competent or qualified or does not have the positive attitudes towards the children or does not have the appropriate skills to handle the curriculum in terms of instructional methodology, all inputs in the classroom could be wasted”.

The Ghana Education Reform Review Committee (2004) in their report to the government agreed that “the quality of human capital of any nation depends upon the quality of education it offers and the quality of education given is also determined by the quality of teachers who teach in the school”. In the teaching profession in Ghana, the Ghana Education Service (GES) has regarded training and development as very important in all levels; from basic level through to the tertiary level. Apart from the initial training that teacher undergo at the post-secondary and at the tertiary level, the GES still see the need for regular training and development to update its staff with new ideas in methods of teaching and new concepts that are relevant in the classroom work and for the Ghana Education Service in general. This will ensure that every teacher in the Service is instilled to have the capacity to fit into the changing reforms in the Service. Indeed, teachers are able to perform their work well when they have the requisite skills. This makes them satisfied with their work performance and willing to remain in it. It also served as a motivation to have an opportunity to regularly upgrade one’s knowledge to enable one climb the career ladder in the Ghana Education Service. The only means in the Ghana Education Service by which teachers can have this opportunity is the granting of the study leave **with** and **without** pay which is the focus of the study.

THEORITICAL ISSUES

The Concept of Training and Development

Through continuous training and development of staff, organizations can be empowered to face the challenges of competition, globalization and technological advancement. It is in this direction that Simmonds (2002), states

that, training; development and change are mutually dependent. It is therefore due to these reasons for the basic survival of the organizations that Human resource development plays an important role in their scheme of operations. Training is a process of exposing employees to specific knowledge and skills in order to enable them to perform specific jobs/tasks. According to Pinnington and Edward (2000: 184-185), “training is intended to help an organization to achieve its mission and business goals”. In other words, training is any learning activity which is directed towards the acquisition of specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for successful performance in an occupation or task. The training needs of employees are always evident in their work output. Such employees need to learn new skills, and since their motivation is likely to be high, they can be acquainted relatively easily with the skills and behaviors expected in their new position (Stoner and Freeman, 1989). It is asserted that training is also seen as a management tool that emphasized the development of a skill and knowledge or attitude for specific purpose, linked to the goals of an organization (Mayo 1924-1933 cited in Denzin, 1987). Adu (1967) contended that training is a form of instruction designed to improve an officer’s capacity in his present job or to enable him to perform a more responsible job. Therefore, training involves any activity that is designed and performed to assist an employee to learn new ways of doing a job better, all in a bit to achieving organizational goals. As such, the focus of staff training is the job or task. There are two types of training methods; on the job and off the job training. On the job training is the type by which a new employee learns various aspect of his/her job while actually performing the job. Rebores (1982: 179), also asserted that, “most training activities take place on the job and it tends to be the most effective method of training”. These include job instruction, apprenticeship, job rotation, coaching etc. On the other hand, off the job training is training outside the work place/environment. These include lectures, simulations, workshops, role-plays, conference etc (ibid) Development experts with different academic orientation view development from different perspectives because development is seen as a concept that cuts across academic boundaries and has assumed multidisciplinary character (Acheampong, 2006). Taking a holistic view, development may be defined as a complex relationship encompassing economic, social, cultural, political (good governance, rule of law and the participation of the people in decisions affecting their lives.) and environmental factors. Conyers and Hills (1984), observe that development as a process connotes continuous and systematic changes which improve the general welfare of society. Todaro (1998), underscores the issues of life sustenance, self-esteem and freedom, in that development is not purely an economic affair. Development is a systematic process of educating, training and growing by which a person learns and applies information, knowledge, skills and attitude and perceptions (Megginson, 1972). This assertion is true because, teachers are best equipped with the requisite skills, knowledge and attitude to impart in students to bring about the desire changes in them. Harbison (1976) cited in Acheampong (2006), broadly defines human resource development as the process of building the knowledge, the skills, the working abilities, and the innate capacities of all the people in a society. He further notes that “Human resources Constitute the ultimate basis for the wealth of nations.” Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production; human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital, exploits natural resources, build social, economic and political organizations and carry forward national development”. Clearly, a country which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people and to utilize them effectively in the national economy will be unable to develop anything else (Harbison, 1976).The level of Human resource development is the driving force in the achievement of economic development of any country in the world. Many economies believe that the key asset that propelled their self sustained economic growth and development is not their physical capital but the body of knowledge amassed coupled with the ability to train and equip the population to use the knowledge effectively.

Staff development therefore is the growth or realization of a person’s ability and potentials through the provision of learning and educational experiences (Acheampong, 2006). The staff is assigned roles, given task in higher positions, with the aim of developing him to attain the goals of the organization. It is also a process that helps organization to grow, adapt to technological developments, fulfils social responsibility and provide employees the greater job satisfaction (Ibid p.25). In fact, senior or upper level workers are given general and conceptual skills to enable them improve on organizational performance to achieving organizational goals. Staff training and staff development are important because they lead to increased stability of an organization, since they create a reservoir of qualified employees who easily replace those who get transferred, retired or exited from the organization for various reasons. Staff training and development is an important investment in human resource, since it increases employees’ productivity. The acquisition of new skills, knowledge and attitudes helps employees to increase both quantity and quality of output in their work. They also reduce work related accidents. This is because proper training in job skills and safety techniques enhances employee abilities to handle work related equipment carefully. Training and Development of staff in an organization is important because they increase a worker’s value to an organization and this prepares him/her for promotion. Training and development enhance job motivation and satisfaction. Dissatisfaction which leads to tardiness, absenteeism, and turnover and job restriction can be greatly reduced when employees are trained to experience direct job satisfaction associated with a sense of achievement and the knowledge that they are developing their own inherent capabilities at work.

Staff training and development reduce the problems, which are associated with the supervision of employee. This is because a well designed training and development programme enhances employees' abilities to learn new work methods and equipment and also helps them to adjust to changes in the context of their job. It is conclusive from the above that, staff training, staff development are relevant to organizational goal attainment because, they lead to reduction in work related accidents, increase stability of an organization, increase workers' value in an organization, enhances motivation and satisfaction, reduces role overload, role conflict and role ambiguity to the attainment of organizational goals (the Ghana Education Service).

The Study Leave with Pay Scheme

Education has been recognized from time immemorial to be the bedrock for national development. Many people use education to enhance their prospects for promotion and self actualization. Teachers are a group of people who always seek to update and upgrade themselves through education. Access to conventional education is becoming increasingly competitive and expensive. Many teachers therefore rely on the study leave with pay scheme to further their education. The study leave with pay scheme policy of the GES which is the core of this study is designed to meet the current demands of the organization and to reflect the needs of the country's educational needs. There is the need to train more qualified teachers to ensure the success of the new educational reforms that emphasized on improving the quality of teaching and learning, improving the management efficiency of education sector and improving access to and participation in basic education. The policy of the study leave with pay is a means of motivation. Indeed, the National Educational Forum of 1993/4 on Educational Reforms identified among other things as the lack of teachers motivation with resultant lack of commitment and to teaching. This eventually affects the effective implementation of the educational reforms. Contributions from some researchers and educationists led to the study leave policy measures which are aimed at addressing the large number of basic and secondary school teachers who qualify for the facility at any given period (Nyaogbe, 1993). However, due to the increasing number of teachers applying for study leave and budgetary constraints and budget cuts by government of Ghana, the Ghana Education Service has streamlined the study leave with pay scheme to make it cost effective. In the past the scheme was so flexible that many teachers were granted study leave with pay. The unlimited number of teachers granted study leave with pay in the past, created too many vacancies in the schools. This put the service budget on strain. This called for the review of the scheme to a quota scheme to determine the total number of personnel to benefit from the study leave with pay based on the needs of the service in relation to course of study. The national quota for study leave with pay for personnel of the Ghana Education Service is 3000. The Regional Quota is Total regional applicants divided by National applications multiplied by National Quota. The Metropolitan, Municipal or District Quota is Total Metropolitan, Municipal or District applicants divided by Regional applicants multiplied by Regional Quota. The Metropolitan, Municipals and Districts then determine deprived schools and award the study leave. The total number of applicants for a particular year is always more than the quota allocated for the grant of study leave with pay. The service therefore instituted the following criterion for the selection of applicants for the grant of study leave with pay: First, consideration is given to teachers who have served for two consecutive years in deprived areas. Second, consideration is given to teachers who have served for ten years and above after their last course of study. Third, consideration is given to personnel who have served between six to nine years since their last course of study and the fourth and final consideration is awarded to personnel who have served between three and five years since their last course of study. To further ensure that personnel do not abuse the scheme, the policy therefore will not allow programmes which are not included in the study leave guideline to be pursued, since that would mean waste of money. Personnel granted study leave were bonded and therefore expected to come back to serve for a period of time depending on the number of years that one was granted study leave with pay, that is, $x+1$, where x is the number of years spent studying. Personnel who broke this bond were requested to pay the value of the bond which is five times the total amount spent on the individual. However, the GES does not enforce these measures, either because they do not have the means to or political interference. The study leave with pay strategy is therefore designed to keep teachers in the classroom in the wider interest of the service. It also aims at the provision of quality education for Ghanaian students/pupils and other Nationals who want to study in Ghana. It is also to ensure that more teachers are trained in critical subjects' areas (ICT, Science, Mathematics, English language, and French). It has often been said that the study leave with pay policy for instance should encourage much higher furtherance of education, since that will make the organization more resourceful and competitive. The current quota allocation of 3000 teachers per annum to be sponsored for further studies is inadequate in meeting the desires of the myriad of teachers for further education. As if that were not enough a handicap, the actual administration of the 3000 quota slots is shrouded with a lot of favoritism which destroys the principle of fairness. Many applicants who meet all the set criteria normally are not picked but rather the unqualified ones due to the fact that they know people in higher political authority. The issue of determining who is working in a deprived area has been a problem. Originally, the Metropolitan, Municipals

and Districts used to determined who works in a deprived area, but that prerogative now lays in the Regional Human Resource Management/Development Unit.

Rewards and Motivation

Mensah (2000) saw motivation to refer to the level of desire of an individual to behave in a certain manner at a time. According to him, in an organizational context, motivation may refer to the willingness of an individual to respond to organizational requirements in the short run. It causes people to make choices, from the available alternatives, about how to best allocate their energy and time. That goes to suggest that people normally tend to be more motivated in activities/relationships that offer the greatest perceived rewards or the fewest penalties, that is, they will observe priorities. Moorhead and Griffin (1998), believe that people in organizations are motivated to perform to high levels. They contended that job performance depends on ability and the environment as well as motivation. They continued that, to reach high level of performance, an employee must want to do the job, and must be able to do the job (ability). Vroom (1964), cited in Kumar and Sharma (2001) claims that the level of motivation people feel in doing a particular activity depends upon the extent to which the results are expected to contribute to their own particular needs or goals. Whatever motivational perspective an organization chooses, it is typically made operational through the organization's reward system. Reward refers to anything the organization provides in exchange for services. Whereas some rewards are tied to performance, such as pay increases, incentives, promotion etc, others are not, including base pay, benefits, holidays, etc. The motivation of people to work has been defined by Cherrington and Wixom (1983), as people do what they are rewarded for doing. Reward in its broadest sense is something given in return for 'good received'. In organizations it involves exchange relationships. Rewards in organizations are awarded to employees in exchange for 'good received' that is for performance. Steers and Porters (1982) are of the view that, the ways in which rewards are distributed within organizations and their relative amount have considerable impact on the levels of motivation. In most organizations the quantum of employees' rewards corresponds to their level of training and development. An employee is more satisfied and ready to do his job if he/she is well trained. Organizational rewards includes anything an employee values and desires that an employer is able to offer in exchange for employees contributions. According to Casio (1992), rewards includes both compensation and non-compensation rewards. Compensational rewards are the direct financial payments and other indirect financial benefits that the employee gets. On the other hand, non-compensational rewards are all the things that enhances a worker's sense of self respect and esteem, such as training to improve job skills; status to improve individuals' perception of self worth (Casio, 1992), and study leave with pay forms part of this category. According to Casio (1992), rewards cut without the employee consent may lead to reduced motivation to do the job well. I therefore think that, that explained why most teachers leave the service when they do not get the study leave with pay, after teaching the required number of years. Reward systems must be made effective, if they are to serve their intended purpose. They must satisfy the basic needs of employees, comparable to those offered by other organizations in the immediate area, multifaceted, and most importantly distributed in a fair and equitable manner.

Motivation, Job satisfaction, and Job Performance

Mayo (1924-1933) cited in Mensah (2006), the champion of human relation approach who studied into working conditions and level of productivity to management at the Hawthorne place of the Western Electric Company in Chicago, believed that a happy worker is very productive. He sought to find the various conditions on worker's productivity. Job satisfaction is a very important attributes which is frequently measured by organizations. It is a pleasurable emotional state resulting from appraisal of one's job. Maslow (1970) cited in Stoner and Freeman (1989), theorized that individuals are motivated to fulfill a hierarchy of needs, with the need for self-actualization at the top. According to Maslow, individuals will be motivated to fulfill whichever need is prepotent, or most powerful. The prepotency of a need depends on the individual's current situation and recent experiences, starting with the physical needs that are most basic, to self- actualization as the highest level. The implication of this theory is that, basic physiological needs of employees must be satisfied by a wage sufficient to feed, shelter, etc to job security. According to Maslow, when all other needs have been adequately met, employees will become motivated by their need for self-actualization. McClelland, (1961) cited in Stoner and Freeman (1989), found that the need for achievement is closely associated with successful performance in the work place. He for example found out the study of his Three-point description of achievement motives that people who succeed in competitive occupations were well above average in achievement motivation. Herzberg (1969) cited in Stoner and Freeman (1989), developed a two-factor approach to work motivation in which job satisfaction was attributed to factors related to job content and to job context. Weiss (2002) argued that job satisfaction is an attitude, and points out that researchers should clearly distinguish the objects of cognitive evaluation which are emotions, beliefs and behaviors. According to Mayo (1924-1933) cited in Mensah (2006), job satisfaction can be an important indicator of how employees feel about their jobs and a predictor of work behaviors such as organizational absenteeism and turnover. Moorhead and Griffin (1998), argued that job

satisfaction and organizational commitment are important work-related attitudes. They assert that employees' mood, assessed in terms of positive or negative affectivity also affect attitudes in organizations. Vroom (1964), cited in Kumar and Sharma (2001) analyzed the results of twenty studies that measured both satisfaction and performance, and the findings was that, the two (satisfaction and performance) had median correlation of 14, and correlation coefficient of +86.0-31. Kreitner et al. (2002) suggested that, one of the biggest controversies within organizational research, centers on the relationship between satisfaction and job performance. Herzberg (1969) cited in Kreitner et al. (2002), believes that job satisfaction motivates better job performance. His hygiene factors ease sources of dissatisfaction and, his motivators foster job satisfaction. Herzberg argues that job satisfaction leads to higher performance while others contend that high performance leads to job satisfaction. Hellriegel et al. (1999) thinks that employee effort is not only a variable that affects performance; abilities, traits, and role perceptions also influence performance. They went on to suggest that, employee performance can be maximized by rewarding him/her with salary, job security, and rewards that are personally satisfying.

The Teaching Profession and Staff Turnover

Until the twentieth century, teachers had relatively little preparation for their jobs and relatively little voice in determining the conditions of their employment. Training of teachers consisted of one or two years, and sometimes less at a normal school or teachers' college and teachers had to follow strict rules and regulations concerning their behavior outside school. Teachers were not organized and isolated. This has been a thing of the past. Teachers are now aspiring to become professionals with expert knowledge concerning the content and methods of instruction in their particular fields. According to Agyeman (1986), a profession is an occupation; especially one needing advanced education and special training etc. That explains why many teachers are desirous for more academic laurels to enhance their work. As such a lot of teachers normally gain admission into tertiary institutions but few are able to make it because of the conditions attached to securing the study leave. The teaching profession in Ghana has an association known as the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), which dates back to the 1930s, when teachers felt the need to come together to promote and/or defend their interest and rights. As time went on, some teachers who have had higher training and development at the tertiary level have also formed another teachers association known as the National Association of Graduate Teachers (NAGRAT) for graduate and interested non-graduate teachers. Teachers in most developing countries and especially Ghana are not satisfied with their conditions of service as compared to other professions. This has accounted for the mass quest for academic laurels by many teachers to make them attractive to organizations with better conditions of service. The research evidence clearly shows that employees decisions as to whether to leave their work or quit are affected by their feelings of job satisfaction. Lawler (1967) suggested that, satisfaction is very much influenced by the actual rewards a person receives and the organization has much control over these rewards. This means that, organization can influence employees' satisfaction levels, and that is what the GES is trying to achieve through the study leave with pay, even though it still has difficulties. Turnover is expensive in terms of cost in recruiting and training for replacement. In effect, organizations can manage turnovers so that if it occurs, it will occur among employees the organization can afford to lose (Steers and Porters, 1982). Therefore, the GES needs to take a cue from this to prevent many more teachers from leaving the service. For the new educational reform to succeed and for that matter the Ghana Education Service, there is the need for qualified teachers who are satisfied with their conditions of service. It is therefore necessary that teachers who gain admission into tertiary institutions are given the study leave to ensure the success of these reforms. To that effect, this study seeks to find out the prospects and challenges of the study leave with pay and, and how it affects staff development in the Ghana Education Service. This will eventually bring to light, how these difficulties they encounter affect job satisfaction, job performance, and eventual turnover from the Service. It will also look at the prospects of the study leave with pay for teachers and the Ghana Education Service, since more specialized teachers in critical subject areas will be trained to fill the numerous vacancies in the Ghana Education Service.

RESEARCH APPROACH

Research Design

The survey research design (also known as sample survey) was adopted for this study since the researcher was interested in studying the opinions or perceptions of GES staff on the prospects and challenges of the study leave with pay and how that affects staff development in the Ghana Education Service in the Bolgatanga Municipality. Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1990) have explained that descriptive research studies are designed to obtain information concerning the current status of phenomena. They are directed towards determining the nature of a situation, as it exists at the time of the study. The descriptive design was chosen because it has the advantage of producing good amount of responses from a wide range of people. At the same time, it provides a meaningful picture of events and seeks to explain people's perceptions and behaviour on the basis of data gathered at a point

in time. Also, in-depth follow-up questions can be asked and items that are unclear to the respondents can be explained using descriptive design (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1993). The target population and accessible population for the study comprised all teaching staff of basic schools, senior high schools and management staff at the Educational Directorate in the Bolgatanga municipality. Two representatives of the two teacher unions, that is, Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) and National Association of Graduate Teachers (NAGRAT) will also be included. They have either enjoyed the study leave with pay or needed upgrading in order to climb up the career ladder

Sampling procedures and Sample size

Stratified random sampling was adopted in selecting the sample for the study so that the study could cover basic schools; kindergartens, primary schools, and junior high schools. The municipality has about 183 basic schools made up of 71 kindergartens, 66 primary schools, and 46 junior high schools. These are grouped into ten circuits with Bolgatanga West 'B' circuit with the highest schools. The municipality also has 1,280 teachers, making up 201 kindergartens, 613 primaries, and 466 junior high school teachers. There are four senior high schools in the Bolgatanga Municipality, consisting of 210 teachers and 3,732 students (Ghana Education Service, Statistical section, 2003). The simple random sampling was used to select two circuits from the ten circuits of the Bolgatanga municipality and a total of 200 respondents from three hundred twenty-six (326) respondents. The breakdown is as follows; 100 teachers at the Basic level, 80 teachers at the senior high schools level, 18 education officers, and 2 from the two teacher unions (GNAT and NAGRAT). With the simple random sampling method, the lottery method was used; pieces of paper were cut using the same measurement and the names of the schools were written on them. Each piece of paper was folded, rolled and put in a container. The pieces of paper were then thoroughly intermixed. The rolled papers were then picked one by one without the selector looking into the pool. This was, however done with replacement in order to maintain the same provability for each school to be selected. Thus when one was picked, it was recorded and put back into the container. In the event of the same school being picked twice, the second picking was ignored and the rolled piece of paper returned to the pool. This process went on until the required number or sample size for each category of respondents was reached. The inclusion of the choice of teachers in the basic schools is significant because it appears most of the teachers at this level are young (ages between 20 and 40). Apart from that, majority of the teachers in the basic level have just a certificate 'A' Three-Year Post Secondary. As such they are more likely to want to further their education or make plans to leave the teaching service for a better venture if the conditions of the study leave do not change. Teachers of senior high schools will also be included because; they have already enjoyed the study leave with pay and may have certain experiences when they applied for the study leave with pay. Officers of the Ghana Education Service and two representatives of the two teacher unions will be purposively selected. Key informants in this study shall be the Regional Director of education, Municipal Director of Education, and other Directors, two circuits' supervisors and a representative each from GNAT and NAGRAT. In all, 170 teachers from the two circuits constituted the sample.

Research Instrument

In this research, data were collected through the use of survey and interviews. Surveys and interviews are used extensively in educational research, and typically inquire about the feelings, motivations, attitudes, accomplishments, and experiences of individuals (Gall et al., 1996). The survey is more commonly used in quantitative research, because its standardized, highly structured design is compatible with this approach. The interview is more commonly used in qualitative research, because it permits open-ended exploration of topics and elicits responses that convey unique meaning of the respondents' words (Gall et al., 1996). The use of both of these research methods can ensure the credibility of the obtained results. The general purpose of the survey is to collect data from participants about their characteristics, experiences and opinions (Gall et al., 1996). The questionnaire, developed by the researcher, was designed as a survey instrument to elicit teachers' points of view and establish a profile of the teachers experiences of study leave with pay in the Bolgatanga Municipality. The work of Bobson (1999) was considered during the development of the questionnaires. The modifications and additions to the surveys were based on the literature and the specific context of the study. The opportunity for written responses was provided in some parts of the survey, requesting the respondents to share their views and any other comments with the researcher. The comments were recorded and used to enhance the presentation of data and to complement the discussion of the findings. Gall et al. (1996) advised that it is helpful to vary in some way the approach used to generate the findings the researcher intends to corroborate. Therefore, a semi-structured interview procedure was used to acquire specific answers to questions referring to teachers' perceptions and preferences on study leave with pay. This allowed the researcher to probe into areas on which respondents were unable to expand their idea. This qualitative method of data collection allowed the participants freedom to express their ideas about a variety of issues relating to study leave with pay, not addressed or limited in the survey. To complement the survey data, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with a

sample of eighteen Education officers and two from the teacher unions were interviewed. The interviews incorporated open-ended questions, which allowed the participant to derive responses from their own perspective. The questions guiding the interview were developed from the review of literature on study leave with pay and modified according to the specific context of the study.

Pilot Testing

Validity and reliability are essential to the effectiveness of any data-gathering procedure (Best and Kahn, 1998). Reliability is the degree of consistency that the instrument or procedure demonstrates. Validity is defined as the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of specific inferences made from the instrument or procedure results (Gall et al., 1996). Therefore, the research instruments were pretested on 10 respondents to ascertain their validity and reliability. The purpose of the pilot testing was to gain an insight into the relative strengths and weaknesses of the research instrument in order to make possible improvements prior to the main study. One expert, my supervisor and colleagues reviewed the instrument, commented on its appropriateness, and made recommendations for change. These colleagues and expert were selected on the basis of their experience in the area of study. The feedback from those most knowledgeable in the area under study helped to ensure that the survey measured what it was intended to measure. Their recommendations and suggestions were taken into consideration, and some modifications were made to ensure its reliability while extensive use was made of the relevant literature in order to guarantee the construct validity of the inventory. The instrument was, therefore, adopted.

Data Collection Procedure

Before embarking on the data collection exercise, the researcher obtained a letter of introduction from The Director, Institute of Development Studies, University of Cape Coast, to the Municipal Director of Education, Bolgatanga, and requesting permission for the researcher to conduct the study in the district. The Bolgatanga Municipal Director of Education subsequently issued a letter to the staff of the various schools in the Municipality to give the researcher the necessary co-operation and support. On reaching each school, the researcher introduced himself and showed the letter of the Municipal Director of Education to the head of the school that subsequently made the contents of the letter known to his/her staff members. Participants in each school were put together and the purpose of the study was explained to them after which the questionnaires were given out. The researcher was available to explain the meaning of the items that were unclear to the respondents. This was to ensure that the right responses were elicited. Only a few of the respondents asked questions, however. In each school, the completed questionnaires were collected back by the researcher on the same day. This was to ensure a high return rate.

Data Analysis

First the field data was edited and scrutinised to ensure consistency in the responses provided by the respondents. Also an overview of the open-ended responses was done so that responses that expressed similar idea but were worded differently were put together. Next, both open-ended and closed-ended responses were written out and assigned codes. All the questions in the questionnaire were then coded and computerized. The computerisation was based on the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS). This aspect of the data processing included the definition of variables, keying in data (codes) and editing the data for missing values and filling in same. Guided by the research objectives and questions the data analysis took the form of simple frequency tables, percentages and some cross tabulations. Finally, findings, conclusions and recommendations were made in line with the research problem and objectives and/or research questions.

Ethical Considerations

As this study involved the acquisition of personal information, ethical principles were considered during the data collection process. Ethical guidelines were followed to ensure that all the participants of the study were treated with respect and consideration. Before proceeding with data collection and analysis, approval was sought from. The Director, Institute of Development Studies, University of Cape Coast. Permission was also obtained from the Municipal Director of Education of the participating schools. The participants were informed of the nature and procedures of the study. They were informed that their participation was voluntary and they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Every effort was made to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, including removal of names. After the completion of the interviews, participants were given opportunity to review their responses and to make any changes to their statements.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Background Characteristics of Respondents

The researcher collected data from the field on the demographic characteristics of teachers on gender, age, marital status, family size and educational level. Other background characteristics include religious affiliation, ranks and length of service. The aim was to establish the category of teachers patronising the programme and to find out how the respective characteristics tend influence the level of participation in the programme. With regard to gender, there were more males (75.3%) than females (24.7%) in the sample. This does not reflect the demographic distribution of gender in Ghana. This might be due to sampling error or otherwise.

Age

With respect to age of the respondents, the majority of the respondents (95.9%) were between 20 and 49 compared with only 4.1% who were aged 50 or more years. The mean age was 34.5%. This means that teachers who accessed the study leave with pay scheme of the GES are generally young people. This is good for GES since most of the beneficiaries of the scheme have many years to stay at work for the GES. Age is an important factor in determining the respondents' perceptions of future prospects as well as a measure of willingness to access the study leave with pay despite the restrictive measures imposed on the facility by officials of the Ghana Education Service. The age distribution as revealed in this study reflects the distribution of age in Ghana.

Marital Status

On the issue of marital status, the results of the study suggest that there were more married persons (77.1%) than those who were either, single, divorced or widowed (22.9%). This means that most of the respondents accessing the study leave with pay scheme of the GES are couples or responsible people who would be more likely than not to return to the service of GES. This is also good news for GES as far as the sustenance of the scheme is concerned.

Family Size

Related to the issue of marital status is family size. Investigation into this aspect of respondents background reveals that an overwhelming proportion (90%) of the respondents have between 1 and 5 family size compared with only 5.3% of the respondents with a family size of more than 10. This means that the respondents have an average family size of 3 which reflect or conforms to the mean family size. This reflects the educational aspirations of the teachers since large family sizes can be a hindrance or otherwise to further education. This finding is another safety indicators with respect to access to the study leave with pay scheme since most of the respondent can be described as responsible people and therefore not likely to abuse the opportunity given them. Therefore, there is the need for GES to consider granting of study leave with pay to such responsible people since they are more likely to come back from study leave to work for GES.

Educational Level

The educational status of individuals is an important determinant in their assessment of their personal situations. Low educational level is generally associated with lower professional status and lower salaries and opportunities. Teachers with low educational level may want to upgrade and advance in their professional status if they have enough finance and opportunity such as study leave with pay and the needed requirements to further their education in any of the Government Tertiary institutions. This study attempted to ascertain the educational level of the respondents. It was discovered that the majority of respondents (72.9%) who accessed the study leave with pay scheme of the GES were first degree holders when compared with non-degree holders (27.1%). This suggest that most of the beneficiaries of the scheme are accessing the scheme to enable them pursue their second degree. This is a good thing for not only the individual but also for GES in the sense that, that level would enhance the beneficiaries of the scheme's performance and thereby contribute to the realisation of GES's goals and objectives.

Religious Affiliation

The religious affiliation of the respondents was also investigated. It was found out that about 87.1%) of the respondents are Christians while 12.9% were either traditionalist or Muslim. This was expected because Ghana is predominately a Christian society. This variable however, appears to have little or no bearing on respondents access to study with pay scheme of the GES but only a characteristics of religious affiliation of the respondents.

Rank of Respondents

Rank is the ultimate goal in the achievement of higher educational laurels which itself is contingent, once the service of attaining study leave with pay. This aspect was investigated to ascertain which category of teachers or staffs were accessing the study leave with pay scheme of the GES, as it has some implication fairness and

transparency in the allocation enquiry are that most of the respondents accessing the study leave with pay scheme were principal superintendent 68.8% followed by senior superintendent I (11.2%). This suggests that most of the respondents are middle level personnel who are hoping to reach the rank of Director Assistance (i.e. Assistant Director II and Assistant Director I). On the other hand, very few of the respondents in the rank of Senior Superintendent II and I are accessing the study leave with pay scheme of the GES. For most middle level personnel to be accessing the study leave with pay reflects the respondent's occupational aspirations levels. Therefore, there is the need for GES to encourage more of such personnel by way of granting them the study leave with pay.

Length of Service

This aspect of the respondents was also sought for to ascertain how long teachers or staff of GES have to be with the service before they are granted study leave with pay. The results are that most of the respondents indicated between 6 and 15 years (78.8%) working with the GES before accessing the scheme while 14.7% had worked for GES for between 16 and 20 years before accessing the scheme. Only 6.5% of the respondents reported having working for between 1-5 years before accessing the scheme. This suggests that the more years you serve the more likely one would be given approved for study leave with pay. This appears to be in conformity with the GES policy on training whenever a minimum length of service is required to qualify one for study leave with pay except in special circumstance such as the relevance of the performance to GES for which the study leave is being sought

Assessments of the Prospects of the Study Leave with Pay Scheme of GES

This study tried to assess the prospect of the study leave with pay scheme of the GES. The issues addressed under this objective are whether or not respondents has ever gone on study leave with pay and for how on study leave with pay and for how long, basis for granting of study leave by GES and reasons for requesting for study leave with pay.

Ever gone on Study Leave with Pay About 88.8% of the respondents had ever gone on study leave with pay while 11.2% had never had the opportunity. This means that there is a high demand for study leave with pay by the staff of GES. This has serious implication for not only financial resources of the GES but also human resources especially, the teachers since there would be the need to replace those teachers who would be away from the classroom. When asked about how long respondents were away on study leave with pay, the duration mentioned ranged from 2-5 years with a mean of 3.9 and a standard deviation of .595. This means that the mean number of years respondents were away on study leave with pay could be relied on as a measurement of Central tendency and therefore it can be concluded safely that most of the respondents spent about 3.9 or approximately 4 years away from their employment. This is quite a long time investment and therefore the need for teacher or staff of GES who have benefited from the scheme to show their utmost appreciation by returning to stay and work for GES so the organisation would save scarce resources in recruiting new personnel because of their refusal to return to the service.

Basis for Granting of Study Leave with Pay

Another aspect of the assessment of the prospect of the study leave with pay scheme of the GES was to enquire about the basis for granting of the study leave with pay since this has implication for fairness and transparency. Table 10 presents the basis for granting of study leave with pay in the GES. Table 10 shows that the basis for granting of study leave with pay includes minimum number of years served, place of service, relevant of course and number of years in service area.

Table 10: Basis for Granting of Study Leave by GES

Basis for granting of study leave by GES	No	%
I had served the minimum number of years required	140	82.4
I had served in rural area	9	5.3
My course of study was relevant to GES	15	8.8
I had served more years than others within my subject area	6	3.5
Total	170	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2009

Furthermore, it can be observed from Table 11 that about 82.4% of the respondents reported that they served the minimum number of years required while only 3.5% claimed they had also served more years than others within his or her subject area. This suggests that the policy of minimum number of years required is being enforced and applied in addition to location of service (rural), relevance of course to GES and subject area (17.6%).

Reasons for requesting for study with pay.

Relating to the issue of the basis for granting study leave with pay, the study also made an attempt to solicit for the reasons why respondents requested for study leave with pay. Table 12 presents the reasons. The main reasons that were reported included meeting selection criteria and right to access, meeting financial commitment while in school and to enable respondents pay for fees, learning materials and accommodation. As can be seen from Table 12, about 70% of the respondents reported meeting financial commitment while in school as the main reason for requesting for the study leave with pay while 30% requested for it because they met the selection criteria including right to access it and to enable them pay for fees, learning materials and accommodation while in school. Most of the respondents reported financial commitment as the reason they requested for study leave with pay. This is an indication of how expensive training programmes are in recent times and therefore without support such as study leave with pay and scholarships, it is becoming extremely difficult for individuals with family to pursue their educational and occupation aspirations. Therefore the need for GES to ensure that the scheme is sustainable can never be over emphasised.

Table 11: Reason(s) for Requesting for Study Leave with pay

Reason(s) for Requesting for Study Leave with pay	No	%
Meet selection criteria and my rights to access it	17	10.0
To help me meet my financial commitment while in school	119	70.0
To enable me pay for my fees, learning materials and accommodation in school	34	20.0
Total	170	100

Source: Field Survey, 2009

Benefits Derive from Study Leave with Pay

Another important objective of this study was to find out the extent to which GES staffs in the Bolgatanga Municipality have benefited from study leave with pay scheme. The benefits as reported by the respondents cover payment fees or buy learning materials, acquisition of knowledge, and up-grading of knowledge, salary in terms of loans. Table 13 presents the detail results on the benefits derived from study leave by the respondents.

Table 12: Benefits Derived from Study Leave

Benefits Derived from Study Leave	No	%
Payment of fees/ buy learning materials	100	59.4
It helped me to acquire knowledge to teach better	7	4.1
Up-grading of knowledge and rapid promotion	12	7.1
Was able to solve financial difficulties at home while in school	16	9.4
Taking salary in school and therefore not accessing SSNIT loans	34	20.0
Total	170	100

Source: Field Survey, 2009

It is clear from Table 13 that about 59.4% or more than one-half of the respondents believed that the study leave with pay help them to pay for their fees and buy learning materials while only 4.1% were of the view that they benefited by way of acquisition of knowledge to teach better. Others, about 36.5% enumerated the benefits to include up-grading of knowledge for rapid promotion, solving financial difficulties while in school and taking salary while in school and therefore not accessing SSNIT loans. Thus for most of the respondents, had it not been the study leave with pay, it would have been difficult for them to pay for their fees and learning materials while in school. This is related to the general notion in Ghana that school fees are on the higher side and only few people are able to afford especially, courses that are of great demand. In effect, what the respondents are saying is that the study leave with pay scheme of the GES is of great benefit, as well as great relief and as such every effort must be made to sustain it to benefit as many staff as possible. When asked to indicate who benefits most from the study leave with pay scheme, the response was that teachers benefit more (62.4%) than any other persons or the government and the schools (37.6%). Respondents were also asked about the number of times they have benefited from the scheme. The results showed that most of the respondents (77.6%) had benefitted once while 22.4% had benefited twice or thrice. For most of the beneficiaries to be teachers is not surprising since GES is mostly made up of teachers and for most of them to have benefited once is an indication that there is the need to give chance to others waiting in the queue before those who want to access the scheme for the second or third time. Those who benefited more than once were asked to explain why they were refused at the first instance. About 57.9% of the respondents explained that it was due to the competitive nature in accessing the scheme, so everyone could not get because of the quota system. This aside, if one choose a course where there were already many more qualified teachers, one was not certain to get it (2.4%). Other reasons had to do with the number of years served being less than what others have and the choice of the course (2.4%).

Challenges in Accessing the Study Leave with Pay Scheme

In order to identify some of the challenges in accessing the study leave scheme, a number of issues were raised to be addressed by the study. These included accessibility to the scheme, criteria for selection, process of accessing the scheme and difficulties faced in securing the study leave with pay. Other issues considered were awareness of rules governing the award of the scheme, opinion about the quota system. The rest of the issues were management role in making the scheme more accessible and number of teachers returning to classroom or otherwise.

Table 13: Accessibility of Study Leave with Pay to Teachers

Accessibility of Study Leave with Pay to Teachers	No	%
It is difficult in terms of the number of years to serve	16	9.4
The scheme is fraud with corruption, biases and nepotism	12	7.1
It is difficult to access the scheme due to the quota system	73	42.9
It is transparent and accessible to those who are willing to go by the rules and regulations	15	8.8
Selection criteria is difficult	54	31.8
Total	170	100

Source: Field Survey, 2009

From Table 13, it can be seen that the majority of the respondents (74.7%) reported that it is difficult in terms of the number of years to serve coupled with the fact that the scheme is fraud with corruption, biases and nepotism. Only 8.8% of the respondents indicated that the scheme is accessible because it is transparent and accessible to those who are willing to take advantage of it and also go by the rules and regulations. Clearly it appears from the responses provided by the easy to access the study leave especially with the introduction of the quota system and selection criteria. This has serious implications for bribery and corruption as already pointed out by some of the respondents, while transparency is questionable. On the other hand, measures such as the quota system, number of years to serve, selection criterion and rules and regulations are not strictly adhered to, therefore the

sustainability of the scheme will be at stake, since resources will be over utilised in the granting of the study leave with pay to many teachers.

Criteria for selecting teachers for Study Leave with Pay

Another aspect of challenges in accessing the study leave with pay which was investigated in this study was the criteria for selecting teachers for study leave with pay. The responses that come up included relevance of programme to GES, number of years served in the service, area of interest, completion of three years bond service, quota and category of subjects and teaching in a deprived area. The details of these issues are presented in Table 14

Table 14: Criteria for Selecting Teachers for Study Leave with Pay

Criteria for Selecting Teachers for Study Leave with Pay	No	%
Programme of study should be relevant to GES	4	2.4
Based on the number of years served in the service and the area of interest	143	84.1
Completion of three years bond service, programme applied for and the institution	12	7.1
On quota bases and on category of subjects	9	5.3
Teaching in a deprived area	2	1.2
Total	170	100

Source: Field Survey, 2009

Observation of the data in Table 14 shows that over 80% of the respondents reported that one of the criteria for selecting teachers for study leave with pay is the number of years one has served and the area of interest. This is to be compared with about 16% of the respondents who indicated relevance of the programme of study, completion of a bond, quota and teaching in a deprived area. The majority of respondents reporting that the number of years is a criterion for selection of teacher on the scheme suggest that the length of service of a potential beneficiary is being emphasised. This has implications for staff attribution since too long period of service before access to the scheme can be a disincentive to staff retention. On the other hand, if the length of service is too short this will not be good for GES. It is human and financial resources that would be stretched to the limit since so many teachers would be in a queue to access the scheme. When respondents were asked to indicate whether the criteria are fair to all the teachers, nearly 73% said that the criteria are not fair while about 27% reported that the criteria are fair to all teachers. For the majority of the respondents to indicate that the criteria are not fair suggest that there is the need for a review of the criteria for selecting teachers for the scheme if the criteria are to be seen as transparent and fair to all.

Reasons for Unfairness of Selection Criteria

This study also tried to ascertain the reasons for unfairness of the selection criteria. Table 15 clearly shows that a number of reasons account for this phenomenon. About 83.1% of the respondents attributed the unfairness to selection criteria to the fact that some teachers are always granted not because of the selection criteria set, but because of the ties they have with the officers in charge of the scheme or that some qualified teachers cannot be granted due to low quota in some of the subject's areas.

Table 15: Reasons for Fairness of Selection Criteria or Otherwise

Reasons for Fairness of Selection Criteria or Otherwise	No	%
Some teacher are always granted not because of the criteria set, but because of ties to officers who grant the scheme	80	64.5
Some programmes are relevant to GES but the quota system may not allow them	3	2.4
Some qualified teachers cannot be granted due to low quota in some subject areas	23	18.6
Ability to pay those in charge of study leave with pay	16	12.9
Discrimination in terms of disability	2	1.6
Total	124	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2009

About 16.9% of the respondents see not only the quota system to be hindrance but also ability to pay those in charge of the scheme as well as discrimination on grounds of disability. The latter two reasons even though were reported by a small proportion of the respondents, suggest how much ‘filthy’ is getting into the operation of the scheme in terms of selection of teachers for study leave with pay. Another aspect of the challenges in accessing study leave with pay that was investigated under this study leave was the process of assessing study leave with pay. Table 17 presents the results. About 41.2% of the respondents reported that the process is unfair and cumbersome in nature and therefore does not bring about encouragement. While about 28.2% of the respondents in their view, the process is not transparent, riddled with manipulations and employs a quota system. Yet others (30.6%) are of the opinion that the process gives encouragement to those who have served for a long period and are also able to pursue highly prioritised courses adding that the application process is easy to follow. For most of the respondents to see the process of accessing study leave with pay to be unfair, cumbersome and not transparent is to emphasize the earlier suggestion that the selection criterion for study leave with pay is unfair and therefore a challenge not only in terms of accessing the scheme but also in terms of the scheme’s sustainability.

Table 16: Process of Accessing Study Leave with Pay

Process of Accessing Study Leave with Pay	No	%
Because of the quota system	19	11.2
It gives more courage to those who served long years and are also able to pursue the highly prioritized courses	19	11.2
The unfair and cumbersome nature of the process does not bring about encouragement	70	41.2
Application process is easy	33	19.4
The process not transparent and riddles with manipulation	29	17.1
Total	170	100

Source: Field Survey, 2009

Difficulties Face in Securing Study Leave with Pay

As part of indentifying the challenges in accessing the study leave with pay scheme, respondents were asked to indicate what difficulties they faced in securing study leave with pay. The difficulties that came up included issues such as corruption, quota system, and cumbersome administrative structures and follow ups of the application. Table 18 of these is about 41.1% of the respondents reported that the quota system makes it different for them to secure the study leave with pay while about 29% of the respondents reported that there is too much corruption in granting the study leave. About 17% of the respondents however, claimed that they did not face any difficulties in securing the study leave with pay. For the greater majority of the respondents to report that

they faced some difficulties in securing the study leave with pay is an indication that qualifying to access the scheme alone is not enough, there are other hurdles applicants need to clear with the quota system and corruption being the most serious difficulties to deal with.

Table 17: Difficulties Face in Securing Study Leave with Pay

Difficulties Face in Securing Study Leave with Pay	No	%
I did not face any difficulty	29	17.1
The difficulty is that there is too much corruption in granting the leave with pay	49	28.8
The usual quota system	69	40.9
Administrative structures is cumbersome	13	7.6
Follow ups of application and photocopying of documents	10	5.9
Total	170	100

Source: Field Survey, 2009

Awareness of Rules Governing Award of Study Leave or Otherwise

Another aspect of the challenges in accessing the study leave with pay that was explored by this study was whether or not respondents were aware of the rules governing the award of the study leave with pay scheme. The study revealed that indeed, majority of the respondents (78.2%) were aware compared with 21.8% of the respondents who reported that they did not know about the rules. Even though a small proportion of the respondents did not know about the rules, it is important for the management of the scheme to make copies of the rules available to staff from time to time if any misconceptions about the scheme are to be dealt with. For those who indicated that they did not know about the rules governing the award of the scheme, they were asked to explain why. Their reasons had to do with lack of orientation about the scheme for newly recruited teachers, knowledge about the rules come the notice of applicants rather too late or when they are about to fill in the application forms. This suggests that some teachers gain admission into higher institution to pursue courses that are not GES approved courses. This can create misunderstanding and misconception about the scheme, because the rules are not known by most of the applicants. On the other hand, those who claimed they are aware of the rules governing the award of study leave with pay, they explained that there are conditions of service for teachers to read and also there are circulars on the scheme in the schools for teachers to read. This means that while some teachers are fact finding type others are not and therefore only get to know about the rules when they are filling in the application form to access the scheme.

Opinion about Introduction of Quota system

Opinion about the introduction of the quota system was envisaged to be a possible challenge in accessing the study leave with pay. Therefore respondent's opinion about the quota system was sought. Table 19 presents the respondents' responses. It can be deduced from the responses that the respondents opinion about the quota system reflects their concerns including quota system is unfair, limited to certain courses, few qualified teachers are able to access the scheme. Table 19 suggests that the majority of the respondents have negative opinion about the introduction of the quota system with pay with 47.1% of the respondents expressing the opinion that it is not the best because some teachers who were qualified are not able to access the scheme while 15.9% were of the opinion that the quota system is good because it affords every teacher the opportunity to access the scheme when due. The opinions expressed by the majority of the respondents suggest that the quota system remains one of the major challenges teachers faced in accessing the study leave with pay. However, without the quota system it would be difficult for the management of the scheme to meet the demand for the scheme.

Table 18: Reasons for awareness of Rules Governing Award of Study Leave or otherwise

Reasons for awareness of Rules Governing Award of Study Leave or otherwise	No	%
No because newly trained teachers are not always oriented about the study leave with pay scheme	6	3.5
Yes because there are conditions of service for teachers to read and also there are circulars on the scheme in schools for teachers to read	112	65.9
No because the rules come just when teachers are ready to fill the forms	34	20.0
Teachers gain admission to higher institution to pursue courses that are not GES approved courses	18	10.6
Total	170	100

Source: Field Survey, 2009

Management Role in Making Scheme Accessible to Teachers

Management role in making scheme accessible to teachers was also envisaged in this study as a challenge in accessing study leave with pay. Table 20 presents the results. It was found out that management role in making the scheme accessible to teachers should include given priorities to teachers in deprived areas, abolish quota system or increased the quota system, decentralised the award to school levels and make the scheme open to all teachers who have serve the minimum number of years. Among the roles that management of the scheme should play to make the scheme accessible to teachers. Over 50% of the respondents suggested that management should abolish the quota system or increase the quota so as to have more teachers to upgrade their knowledge while some respondents (32.9%) were of the opinion that management should make the scheme opened to all teacher who have served the minimum number of years required as well as give teachers in less deprived areas priority instead of placing emphasis on subjects and courses. This aside some of the respondents (15.9%) were of the view that management should consider decentralising the awarding of the scheme to the school levels. Thus, the focus of management's role in making the scheme accessible to teachers is on quota system; abolishing it or increasing the quota. However, abolishing the quota system might not be the solution to accessing the scheme easily as some teachers might think.

Table 19: Opinion about Introduction of Quota System

Opinion About Introduction of Quota System	No	%
It does not provide a fair playing ground for all teachers since teachers in the sciences have higher chances of being awarded the scheme	12	7.1
The quota system encourage teachers to read certain courses	2	1.2
It is good because it will give every teacher the opportunity to access it when due	27	15.9
It is not good because the number of teachers awarded is so small, and this affects the quality of teachers in the field	49	28.8
It is not the best because some teachers who are qualified are not able to access the access	80	47.1
Total	170	100

Source: Field Survey, 2009

Factors Influencing Teachers to Return to the Classroom after Benefiting from the Scheme

Another objective of this study was to examine the extent to which the study leave with pay scheme has brought about teacher motivation, job satisfaction and staff retention in GES. The responses obtained from the respondents are love of the profession and students, unavailability of work elsewhere, promotion or increase in salary, further study with pay and bonding of teachers. It can be deduced from Table 21 that the factors reported by the respondents bordered on the social, economic, job security and security of the scheme.

Table 20: Management's Role in Making Scheme Accessible to Teachers

Management's Role in Making Scheme Accessible to Teachers	No	%
Although priorities should be place on subjects or courses, attention should also be given to teachers in the less deprived areas	40	23.5
The quota system should be abolished	49	28.8
They should increase the quota so as to have more teachers upgrading their knowledge	38	22.4
Decentralize the awarding of the scheme to school level	27	15.9
It should be opened to all teachers once they served the number of years required	16	9.4
Total	170	100

Source: Field Survey, 2009

Socially, about 43% of the respondents reported that love of the profession and for the students is one of the factors responsible for teachers to return to the classroom after benefiting from the scheme while only one respondents pointed out that teachers return to the classroom after benefiting from the scheme because they want to continue to enjoy further study leave with pay or get promotion faster than their colleagues. Other respondents (45.2%) felt that teachers' job security coupled with the several unavailability of jobs elsewhere as well as the fact that some teachers would like to upgrade themselves, get more salary and move from a lower to a higher rank are some of the factors that account for teachers returning to classroom after benefiting from the scheme. Thus the factors motivating teachers to return to the classroom after benefiting from the scheme can be said to reflect the occupational, educational, financial and social and economic status aspirations of the respondents.

Mechanisms to Ensure Teachers Return to Classroom after Study Leave

This study also tried to ascertain the extent to which study leave with pay has brought about teacher retention in GES. Table 22 shows the mechanisms to ensure that teachers return to the classroom after benefiting from study leave with pay.

Table 21: Factors Influencing Teachers to Return to Classroom after Benefiting from the Scheme

Factors Influencing Teachers To Return to Classroom after Benefiting from the Scheme	No	%
Love of the profession and students	73	43.0
Unavailability of work elsewhere	64	37.6
The upgrading and salary adjustment moving from previous rank to higher rank	13	7.6
To continue to enjoy further study leave with pay, to get promotion faster than their colleagues	1	0.6
The bonding of teachers awarded the scheme	19	11.2
Total	170	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2009

The mechanism included extra duty allowance and provision of remuneration and higher salaries, application of sanctions to those who refuse to return to serve as deterrent to others, improving conditions of service in the GES and bond teachers, and enforcement of the bond. Most of the respondents (41.2%) were in favour of the latter mechanism followed by improving the conditions of service in the GES (32.4%) while really 23% of the respondents wished that provision of extra duty allowances and provision of higher salaries would help do the trick. Only a few 3.5% of the respondents advocated for application of proper sanctions to those who failed return to GES after benefiting from the scheme. It is gratifying to note from the responses of the respondents that

the mechanisms being suggested is not only to their personnel interest but also they proposed mechanisms that aim at safeguarding the scheme and therefore its sustainability in the long run.

Factors likely to hinder the Sustainability of the Scheme

As a follow up to the factors influencing teachers to return to the classroom after benefiting from the scheme, respondents were also asked to state the factors likely to hinder sustainability of the scheme. The responses presented from Table 22 are that, the factors relate more to attitude of teachers, demand for the scheme, the administration of the scheme and its financial implications.

In particular, about 47% of the respondents cited corruption and lack of transparency in the award of the scheme while about 25% of them reported that the large numbers of teachers applying for the study leave with pay can hinder the sustainability of the scheme. Put together, about 28% of the respondents indicated that the failures of teachers who have benefited from the scheme to return to the classroom drain the scheme.

Table 22: Mechanism to Ensure Teachers Return to classroom after Study leave

Mechanism to Ensure Teachers Return to classroom after Study leave	No	%
Provision of extra duty allowances and provision of remuneration and high salaries	39	22.9
Proper sanctions should be applied to all those teachers who do not return to the cities	6	3.5
Improving the conditions of service in the sector	55	32.4
Bond teachers awarded the scheme and enforce the bond	70	41.2
Total	170	100

Source: Field Survey, 2009

All the key informants corroborated the responses given by the teachers in the interview, but said that steps will be taken to address some of the problems raised by the teachers. For instance, in reaction to the question on the quota system, the NAGRAT and GNAT officials said that, the quota system and other restrictions on the study leave with pay is making it difficult for teachers to upgrade their knowledge. As such the GES must granted study leave with pay to teacher applicants who will gain admission to various tertiary institutions, provided the meet the requirements outlined in the GES conditions of service such as teaching for three years after training college before study leave is granted. Other issues raised by the key informants were that; while the NAGRAT and GNAT officials were optimistic about a change in policy as a result of submission made to the GES council, officers at the Regional and Municipal offices of the Ghana Education Service believe that the policy is in the right direction. This is because of the high turnover of teachers who have benefitted from the policy. Moreover, the courses some teachers offer at the tertiary institutions are not needed in the classroom and also the teachers coming from the training college are lesser than those who qualified for the Tertiary institutions.

CONCLUSIONS

Findings of the Study

1. (i). About 88.8% of the respondents have ever gone on study leave with pay and were away for about 4 years on the average.
 (ii). About 82% of the respondents reported that, the number of years one serves is one of the bases for the granting of study leave with pay while the main reason for study leave with pay was meeting financial commitment while in school (70%)
2. (i). More than one-half (59.4%) of the respondents mention ability to pay for their fees and buy learning materials as one of the benefits derived from the study leave with pay while 36.5% mentioned, solving financial difficulties and enjoying salary while in school as added benefits.
 (ii). Teachers were the beneficiaries of the scheme (62.4%), followed by government and the schools (37.6%) expected teachers to go back to the classroom to give their best after benefiting from the scheme.

- (iii). Most of the respondents (77.6%) reported that they have benefited once while 22.4% had benefitted more than once but not more than thrice.
- (iv). About 57.9% explained that they were refused first time because of the competitive nature of the scheme and the quota system aside from choosing courses that were not GES approved.
- 3 (i). About 74.7% of the respondents reported that it was difficult to access the scheme because of the quota system apart from the number of years served, fraud, corruptions, biases and nepotism.
- (ii). The main criteria for selecting teachers for study leave with pay was the number of years one had served and subject of interest in addition to relevance of the programme to GES, completion of a bond, quota system and teaching in a deprived area. However, nearly 73% of the respondents claimed the selection criteria is not fair and the reasons are that teachers are always granted study leave with pay not because of the selection criteria, but because of ties they have with those who manage the scheme
- (iii). On the process of assessing study leave with pay, 41.2% of the respondents reported that it is cumbersome and unfair in nature, not transparent, riddle with manipulations.
- (iv). The main difficulty in securing the scheme was seen by most of the respondents (41%) to be the quota system while about 29% felt corruption was a problem while 17% of the respondents claimed they had not difficulty in accessing the scheme.
- (v). On reasons for the awareness of the rules and regulations governing the scheme, about 78.2% of the respondents reported that they did not know about rules and regulations as compared with 21.8% who knew about them.
- (vi). On opinion about introduction of the quota system about 47% said that it is not the best because some teachers who are qualified are unable to access the scheme. While 15.9% said that it is good because it gives every teacher the chance once in the service of GES.
- (vii). Over 50% suggested that management should abolish the quota system or increase the quota while about 33% suggested to management to make the scheme open to all teachers who have met the minimum number of years required if the scheme is to be made accessible to teachers.
- 4 (i). Factors influencing teachers to return to the classroom after benefiting from the scheme were love for profession and love for the students (43%) while about 45.2% of the respondents reported job security, unavailability of jobs elsewhere, promotion and increased salaries as the factors motivating teachers to the return to the classroom.
- (ii). Mechanisms to ensure teachers return to the classroom included extra duty allowance, provision of remuneration and salaries, application of sanctions, enforcement of bond and improvement in conditions of service while the factors likely to hinder the sustainability of the scheme included corruption, lack of transparently, huge number of teachers applying for the scheme.

Recommendations

1. GES should ensure that there is equality for all GES approved courses. To be able to do this GES should source for funding from international bodies to support the government budgetary allocation for the scheme. For instance, GES can collaborate with education related NGOs to help by sponsoring teachers to go for further studies or make financial contributions towards the scheme especially in areas where both NGOs and GES stand to benefit equally.
2. The Ghana Education Service council on the advice of the Director General may grant study leave with pay to members' of the service for approved courses. This also means that without approval a person cannot continue with a programme of study even if admission has already been granted to an institution of learning.
The reason is that, if such measures are not exercised, many teachers will vacate the classroom and leave the pupils without teachers. What government can do to solve the problem is to encourage the upgrading of knowledge through Distance Learning programmes at some of the institutions in the country. If teachers are supported financially through Distance Learning programme within the framework of a well-defined policy, they will be able to upgrade their academic knowledge and at the same time stay in the classroom.
3. There is the need for GES to monitor beneficiaries to ensure that they return to the classroom after studies. This can be done through enforcement of the rules and regulations governing the award of the scheme as well as applying the appropriate sanctions to those who refuse to return after benefiting from the scheme including refund of all the money spent on them with interest.
4. Management of the Scheme should try to follow the right procedures to for teachers to access the scheme by Keeping in line with what is spelled out in the study leave document. Management of the Scheme should try to improving the conditions of service in the sector. This can help reduce some of the difficulties associated with the scheme. Bond teachers awarded the scheme and enforce the bond.

5. GES should provide extra duty allowances, adequate remuneration and attractive salaries along side application of appropriate sanctions including the bond and ensuring that all those teachers who default do not return to the cities to teach.
6. Most teachers think that the only incentive in the teaching service is the study leave with pay and as such they have every right to get it without restriction. In view of this, a lot of problems are created if the facility is restricted. This means that teachers must be motivated so as to retain them in the classroom after their course of study.
7. The image of the teacher must be lifted to attract people into the profession. Most people enter the profession either as a last resort or as a stepping stone to further their education. As a result of that every effort must be made to attract people to enter into the teaching service.

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