

# Factors Contributing to the Accumulation of Primary Teacher's Debts to the Government of Tanzania: A Case Study for Dar Es Salaam Region

Dr. Ibun Kombo.  
University of Dodoma -Tanzania

## Abstract

This paper presents the findings of the study which was conducted to determine factors contributing to the accumulation of primary school teacher's debts to the Government of Tanzania, a case study of Dar es Salaam Region in its three municipalities namely, Ilala, Kinondoni and Temeke. Data was obtained through sampling method which also helped to determine the population of this study. It includes staff from government Ministries, Teacher's union officials, municipal officials, primary school teachers and pupils who were randomly supplied through personal administered questionnaires.

Review of various documents was also done through published, unpublished reports and newspapers obtained from libraries, ministries offices, independent departments and office of the Teacher's union. This together with the questionnaires and the direct interviews ultimately generated findings for this study. Data were electronically edited, summarized, classified, tabulated and analyzed using electronic software package for social sciences (SPSS) to get the final suggestions and conclusions.

Lack of proper budgeting, mismanagement of education funds as well as the absence of a policy manual which can identify the rights and obligations of the teachers were found to be the main root causes of Primary school teacher's debts accumulation of the Government of Tanzania. This is why most of the blames are directed to the Government of Tanzania for lack of commitment in considering education as the first priority in its budget.

## Background of the Problem

One of the hallmarks of the labour movement, strikes are organized events in which workers stop production and refuse to return to their jobs until their demands are met. The most popular strike demands have historically been higher wages, shorter hours or safer working conditions. Strikes have been occurring in America since the Revolutionary era, but became increasingly prevalent during the Industrial Revolution. Some of the most famous strikes in American history, like the Homestead strike or the Ludlow Massacre, ended in violence as industry owners hired armed guards to break the strikes ([www.history.com/topics/strikes](http://www.history.com/topics/strikes)).

Strikes have played a significant role in the economic, political, and social life of the world throughout its history. From strikes by shoemakers, printers, bakers, and other artisans in the era of the Revolution through the bitter airline strikes two centuries later, workers repeatedly tried to defend or improve their living and working conditions by collectively refusing to work until specific demands were met.

Since the early 1880s, when reliable statistics were first compiled, American workers have struck with a frequency roughly equal to that of their peers in Europe. Strikes in the United States, however, have tended to last longer than elsewhere, with a mean duration between 1881 and 1974 of twenty days. Accordingly, the total number of workdays lost in strikes proportionate to the size of the work force has been higher in the United States than almost anywhere else in the world ([www.history.com/topics/strikes](http://www.history.com/topics/strikes)).

However, the strikes, in Tanzania were not frequent movements for the workers to fight for their rights. But after the passing of The Employment and Labour Relations Act, No.6 of 2004 gave workers the right to strike on disputes of interests on the one hand, and indirectly denies it on the other. Section 75 of the Act gives employees the right to strike but the right should be in line with limitations.

There were number of strikes after this act, and the trend of strikes in Tanzania were alarming. For instance in June 2004 the police were forced to intervene in a riot at Karibu Textile mills factory, in which workers were engaging in industrial action because of alleged poor remuneration (The Express June, 2004).

Also disgruntled workers assembled outside the factory's main gate and started throwing stones at the interior, while shouting slogans against the management, which responded by calling the police.

Again in August, about 600 casual workers with Dar es Salaam-based Shelys Pharmaceuticals Limited went on strike, to press for better payment and conducive working conditions.

Hence teachers realized that their remunerations were not fulfilled in terms of lack of proper budgeting and mismanagement of education funds. Also there was the absence of policy manual that identifies rights and obligations of teachers in Tanzania. Hence this was the root causes for primary teacher's debts and strikes dated back from November 2008.

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction to the problem.

This paper is concerned with background information of the problem. The research problem can be viewed as a question that has no answer yet. It refers to some difficulty in which researcher's experiences in the context of either a theoretical or practical situation, and wants to obtain a solution (Kothari, 2003).

### 1.1 Importance of Education.

Social scientists view learning as a relatively permanent change in behavior or capability that results from experience. Because learning is so vital to social life, societies seldom leave it to chance and undertake to transmit particular attitudes, knowledge and skills to their members through formal systematic training which sociologists call the institution of education (Hughes, 1999).

As an issue of reality, the performance of any government and its employees is greatly influenced by the extent to which the former provides education or work instructions to the later. In this regard, education is acknowledged to be among instruments which bring about job satisfaction at workplace and, therefore it is believed that primary school teachers may be intrinsically motivated to work with confidence only when they are satisfied with the treatments they get from the employer, especially on the way they themselves decide on.

Moreover the government should think to motivate primary school teachers so as also to boost their morale. At the end of the day, the government will have much more educated staff and hence be able to deliver better services to the society. As far as education is concerned, it is considered to be the centre of well being of the society enhance the development of current and future employees who will help the government to develop the basis for motivation of its employees the whole process of developing their country.

The First President of the United Republic of Tanzania (URT) Dr. Julius Kambarage Nyerere described education as the purposeful efforts to empower human beings to acquire skills and important knowledge so as to face the dynamic environment (Nyerere:1985).

This fact gives us basic thoughts as a starting point that teachers who are the main actors in education in any country are the most fundamental source of strategic knowledge, ethics, wisdom, prudence. They can empower people to provide with good judgments about human being because of their main role to educate people as well as our children in the schools (<http://kurayangu.com>).

Teachers have an immense impact on the human society. One can safely assume that a person is not in the proper sense till he is educated, as a result, that teachers are the one who are doing such a job everyday to the human mind by enabling them to think and take the right decision, and we can conclude that a human being becomes a rational animal when he/she is properly educated (<http://kurayangu.com>). Here we are made also to understand that it is through the teacher's work which helps human beings to acquire knowledge, information and spread to all other people in society.

People understand that the quality of human resource of any nation is judged by the number of literate population living in it. This is why people opt to educate their children at any cost they can afford. The generation should be supported with facts that education is recognized as a basic human right, and is crucial in giving individuals, communities and countries a route out of poverty, conflicts and instability ([www.ungei.org/resources/files/wvi...](http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/wvi...)). This notion gives us the power to say that education is a necessity if a nation aspires to achieve growth and development and more importantly sustain it. Such desire exactly may explain the fact that rich and developed nations of the world have a very high literacy rate and productive human resource as compared to underdeveloped countries. In fact these countries have since then started imparting selective training with motivations through teachers. By utilizing education programs they are ensuring that they can meet the new technical and business demands of the 21st century, in other words; their priority was for education of their society (<http://www.ei-ie.org>).

The role of education has become even more imperative in this world and it becomes absolute necessary for significant economic and social development of any nation but this ambition can only be possible when the welfare of the main stakeholders including primary school teachers are given equal priority.

The importance of education is basically in two ways: the training of a human mind is in complete without education. And education makes a person a right thinker. Also it enables a person to think and make correct decisions.

The secondly education requires that the human being, after acquisition of training and skills be enabled to search and get information from the external world to accustom him with the past history. Moreover he can receive all necessary information regarding the present. Without proper education a person is as though in a closed room. With education, a person find himself/herself in room with all windows open towards outside world (Bielby, *at al.* 1989).

However, with all basic reasons mentioned and even those not mentioned here, there must be good governance in the education sector. In order to enable school teachers and local leaders to become responsible and accountable to the school community and creating a conducive environment for understanding and

improving schools. In this atmosphere we should work harder to find the opportunities for primary school teachers and explore the obstacles that hinder their developments.

At national and international levels the Government of Tanzania has been highly praised for the initiative to provide primary education to all eligible pupils and make it accessible to its people. However, universal access is just a first step. Those who have praised the work in Tanzania have not commented on the impact of the Government's program on teachers or the quality of education the students are receiving. The numbers of students enrolled in schools have taken precedence over the quality of education the system is providing them. Numbers, not quality, has been the preoccupation of the Tanzanian Government and international authorities (Primary Education development Plan, 2002-2006).

Teachers play an important role in the progress of an individual's mind and a country also. Ignorance is one of the major speed-breakers in the swift developing country and can be overcome easily through education but this role can only be maintained if teachers (especially those at the lower schools) have willing to support education developments.

## **1.2. THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.**

In recent years a conflict between primary school teachers leads by their union, the Tanzania Teacher's Union (TTU) and the Government, has arisen concern over their remuneration and other benefits which remains unpaid for a long time.

The Prime Ministers' Office Regional Administration and Local Government (PMO RALG) together with The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) and Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MoFEA) were given directives to act on this basic problem and also verify the of teacher's claims submitted to the government, by the committees formed some years back in 2004, 2007 and 2008. The aim was to establish an accurate figure each teacher claims from the government and to find out why these debts accumulated every year so that the government could determine ways of solving this problem permanently.

This research wanted to identify or establish the causes and effects of the accumulation of these debts and advises how this problem could be permanently to create harmony in the education sector. This research we will come up with concrete findings of the nature of the problem together with the impacts recorded in all stages and suggestions as to how to minimize or solve this problem.

### **2.1 The Burden of Teacher's Debts on their Life.**

Tanzania is facing a problem of attracting and retaining able graduates to the teaching profession and like other countries in Africa. The shortage of teachers in all areas, not only in mathematics, science and technology threatens the goals of expanding education and enhancing its quality. The shortage of teachers will most likely continue to be the main challenge for teacher policies in the near future. This is likely to be the case worldwide, although the reasons vary – demography, labour market trends, the impact of HIV/AIDS, teacher's incentives, and so on.

Tanzania like other Third World countries is also facing a problem of unsatisfactory working conditions for its employees especially those working under the central and local governments. In the United Republic of Tanzania (URT), teachers fall in this category and are currently holding responsible their employer (i.e. the government to pay their outstanding claims which have accumulated for so many months, if not years.

According to Professor Shivji (2005) of the University of Dar es salaam, who was contributing to a paper presented by Professor Mwajabu Posi at a seminar on Academic Freedom, Social Responsibility and the State of Academic, she argued that “under the ongoing economic reforms the education sector suffered most. There is no way any state in African that can claim it does not have money to finance education; priority is simply not been given to education”. The Guardian newspaper of Tanzania. issue number 3182 of 12/02/2005).

The above statement was proved during the budget session for the financial year 2008/2009, when the Government of Tanzania budgeted an impressive amount of Tanzania shillings 506 billion (\$390 million) for allowances for government officers. This was equivalent to the annual (maximum) basic salary for 109,000 teachers or over two thirds of all teachers, according to findings produced by Policy Forum ([info@policyforum.or.tz](mailto:info@policyforum.or.tz)-[www.policyforum-tz.org](http://www.policyforum-tz.org)). We can conclude, as argued by Professor Shivji's that priority is not the language when government prepare its budget, but it is worth to remember that priorities should be action oriented.

According to Marilee (1986) the decisions and actions of the governments are international political results, in the sense that what happens is not chosen as a solution to a problem but rather a result from compromise, conflict, and confusion of officials with diverse interest and unequal influence among individual members.(Marille, 1986).

According to findings produced by education Research Networks for West and Central Africa (Ernwaca) in their article number 382 it is emphases that “Teachers play a crucial role in fostering access to education and in improving its quality”. Moreover, several studies and reports from international professional bodies, such as

specialized United Nations (UN) and other international development agencies, have testified fact that with the right qualifications, adequate wages and other incentives, professional teachers will play a fundamental role in achieving the goal of Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The qualification of teachers and their training in adequate numbers are, therefore among the indicators of quality education. The problems faced in most African countries are many and varied and they also include the absence of a training policy, the lack of a connection between initial training and in-service training, inadequate academic and pedagogic preparation, obsolete and ill adapted training programmes (<http://www.earnwaca.org>, 10.12 2010).

Moreover, the shortage of housing, persistence problems in paying their dues, and heavy burden of personal debts are fuelling the teacher's absence from schools as well as thinking about boycotting their obligations of teaching. Teachers resort to absenteeism in order to keep watch and make follow up on their personal issues. This is unprofessional; the situation has led them to such life. Meanwhile, on the other side, creditors threaten them to confiscate their assets, while their absences from classrooms also derail them from teaching profession. Even those who report for duty sometimes, fail to concentrate on teaching because of personal grievances. Some of the teachers opt to seek loans to supplement their small wages for survival. This, however, leads to desperate lives as they struggle to make both ends meet.

Sometime in the year 1995, the Tanzania Teachers Union (TTU) has then requested the former President of the United Republic of Tanzania (URT) Honorable Benjamin William, Mkapa to establish a single organ to cater for teachers' affairs before stepped down in the year 1995.

Magreth Sitta the then TTU President, told President Mkapa that her organization was disappointed by officials who did not care about the teacher's problems; she said that "there is a lot of bureaucracy and teachers are suffering". She listed a number of authorities in charge of teacher's affairs: the Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Finance, The President office Regional Administration and Local Government, and The President office Public Service Management department arguing that "There is confusion and frustration stemming from the numerous authorities involved" (The Guardian, January, 15 2005).

According to the Guardian, (January 29, 2005), the government owed teachers by then about Tanzania shillings nine billion (TShs 9 Billion/=) accumulated as salary arrears, transport allowances and other claims. However the then Minister of Finance assured the teachers that the Treasury had set aside the money and it was only a matter of administrative procedures and their claims would be settled. That came to be an empty promise. Teachers were paid only little amounts and the whole promise did not materialize. The same statement was issued by the then Deputy Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs (The Guardian November, 19, 2008) assuring the teachers, and the public in general, that "government does not deny being owed by teachers neither it did not said that it would not pay them. But what the government needs is to verify the claims before issuing payments. The government does not want school children to suffer as a result of the teacher's crisis, yet the teacher's debts are left to accumulate and only few teachers were paid.

The Tanzania Teachers Union did not abandon their efforts; they announced a countrywide strike on November, 17, 2008 to pressurize the government to settle their claims, amounting to over Tanzanian shillings eighteen billion (Tsh18 billion which is equivalent to \$16 million) in salary arrears and other accumulated claims dating back to year 2000. The teachers, who constitute about half of Tanzania's civil servants, last staged a major industrial action in 1995 when they officially launched their (CWT) Chama cha Waalimu Tanzania. The government immediately filed a case with the Labour Division of High court seeking revocation of the strike. (The Guardian, November, 19, 2008).

According to the TTU President Mr. Gratian Mukoba, over 150,000 members of the union based in public primary and secondary schools the TTU President tabled six demands: promotions, payment of arrears, re-registration of teachers whose names had been scrapped from payroll, establishment of Teachers Joint staff Council and involvement of TTU in the assessment of their claims.

Mukoba argued that despite the promises made by the government since the year 2000, and recently in its 2008/09 budget speech that the government was determined to settle the claims, there was no plan or a schedule of payments which could convince TTU and the teachers in general on the assurance of their being paid. The paper added that the experience of teachers in Tanzania is that the government never fulfills its promises, "We are aware of the tricks some of the government officials apply in trying to kill some teacher's demands including removing evidence of travel tickets and receipts from files, (The Guardian, November, 17, 2008).

However the government tried its level best to reduce the outstanding balances on teacher's debts between November 2008 and January 2009 which also leave behind many complaints from teachers, for example, the Government was forced to issue a statement through the Prime Minister who announced in the Parliament in Dodoma (July,2009) that the government had set aside funds to pay what it described as "genuine" outstanding arrears to the teachers in addition to what it had paid in a recent debt examination exercise conducted throughout the country during the year ending in November 2008. The next plan by the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) to examine teacher's records concerning the same issue would be implemented during the end of 2009.



But according to (The Guardian, 24 Feb. 2012), the latest assessment conducted in February 2012 demonstrate that teachers' arrears shows the government owes them 52.7bn/-, which is slightly higher than 49.6bn/-, the amount announced in November last year by Tanzania Teachers Union (TTU) President Gratian Mukoba.

The government also disputed the figure being claimed by TTU, saying it was arrived at unilaterally by the teachers and that the government has to conduct again an audit of the claims to establish the exact amount owed to teachers currently.

In the year 2008, the government formed a committee to establish why the teacher's claims accumulated. The committee was formed by Prime Minister's Office Regional Administration and Local Government (PMO-RALG) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. One of its tor was to look at the reasons as to why teacher's claims such as night out allowances, medical allowances, training allowances, transport and transfer costs were left to accumulate without proper and immediate action being taken by the responsible authorities.(Prime Minister's Office- Regional Administration and Local Government, Task Report, 2008).

The committee reported that the claims were accumulated because the budget for general or operational expenses (i.e. other charges (OC)) for education department was very little to pay such claims, and the bureaucratic process of raising the teacher's status worsened the situation. This forced the teachers to unite to come together to press the government to pay their debts and also claims for raising their salary.

Along with this problem, in October 2008 TTU agreed to call upon a strike throughout the whole country for its members to come together and press the government to pay their claims, but the plan for that strike was abandoned due to a court order issued during the night. To avoid the likely bad situation that would happen if the strike took place.

Professor Safari commented on that government step saying that, "he did not see why the ruling of the case was delivered around 10.00 pm during the night and he said that it seemed the government was under pressure to the point of making the Labor Division of the High Court operate until night hours" (The Guardian, November, 28, 2009).

According to Saha *et al* (2009), teachers concern about their working condition, their expression of concern about job security, salary and benefits and their reliance on their unions to serve as their public face, are often viewed as evidence that they are not behaving as professionals. True professionals do not complain; their first concern is always to be for the public good; they should seek "intrinsic" (professional satisfaction) rather than "extrinsic" (specific concrete reward); discussing their salaries in public is not only not polite, but suggests they care more for their own pocketbooks than for their students (Saha, *et al* (2009).

Indeed action such as walkouts and strikes, the withholding of services not spelled out in their collective agreements known as "working to rule", challenging the authority of governments , school officials and also embarrass many (but not all) teachers, not least because they seems so ineffective and again unprofessional.( Saha ,et al 2009).

#### Teacher's Debts Presented and Accepted by Verification Team. 2008

District	Amount presented	Amount Accepted
ILALA	1,068,095,915	914,242,247
TEMEKE	1,131,463,023	331,652,949
KINONDONI	1,414,150,357	582,552,983
TOTAL for DSM	3,613,709,295	1,828,448,179

SOURCE Govt. Committee by P/S MoFEA (December 2008)

#### Teacher's Debts Presented and Accepted by Verification Team. 2009

District	Amount Presented	Amount Accepted
ILALA	2,113,364,230	1,782,739,211
TEMEKE	2,878,175,357	2,143,817,871
KINONDONI	1,562,214,396	1,298,498,456
TOTAL for DSM	6,553,753,983	5,225,055,538

SOURCE Govt. Committee by CAG, P/S MoFEA, MoEVT and PMO-RALG. (December 2009).

Sample is considered as a group of respondents drawn from a population in which the researcher is interested in collecting information and drawing conclusions on a larger unit (McMillan, 2005).

The sample consisted of 96 respondents with the following distributions:

NAME OF INSTUTION	TARGET SAMPLE	RESPONDENT	PERCENTAGE (%)
Prime Minister's Office Regional Admin. And Local Govern.	5	5	100
Ministry of Finance Officials	3	3	100
Ministry of Education and Vocational Training	3	3	100
Municipal Officials	15	12	80
Tanzania Teachers Union Officers	5	4	80
Teachers (Primary schools Teachers from each Municipal DSM.)	50	46	92
Pupils	15	10	67.0
TOTAL	96	73	76.0

**SOURCE: RESERCHER, DATA, 2009.**

Purposeful sampling technique was employed in drawing samples from the main four categories in the following areas:

Primary school teachers were selected in this study because they were the main focus of the study while the government officers were selected because they were the planners and were fully involved in management and decision making regarding the well being of primary school teachers. Therefore they were in a good position to provide information related to the study. Trade Union leaders were selected in this study because they handled the teachers' complaints concerning debts and other issues and the last category was the pupils who are the beneficiaries of the services rendered by the above mentioned officers.

### THE MAJOR CAUSES FOR DELAY OF PAYMENTS

On the notion of the major causes of delays in payments of primary school teachers by the government, fifty six percent (56%) of the respondents replied that under budgeting was the main reason for delays in payments of claims, while twenty two percent (22%) attributed the delays in payments to theft or fraud. Similarly another twenty two percent (22%) of the respondents argued that diversion or mismanagement of funds was the main cause of delays in payments of claims. Therefore majority of the respondents attributed the causes of delays in payments are due to under budgeting on the part of the government. However, combined together theft or fraud plus mismanagement of funds plays have a significant role in the delay of payments of the claims.

### CONCLUSIONS

Within the context in which this study was carried out, the following conclusions may be presented: this study indicates that teacher's outstanding debt to the government is still a problem. The study revealed a big unpaid outstanding balance amounting to Tshs 32,415,104,382/= at the end of the financial year 2008/2009. This situation is due to two basic reasons. The first is that the government does not put its first priority in timely paying the teachers dues and the second is allocation of small budget to the education sector in relation with the pace of increase of pupils and teachers employment. The researcher concludes that if, and only if, these two reasons mentioned above are solved by the government the teachers debts can be a history.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher is recommending that there should be a proper budgeting of government funds. The government should also institute proper management of funds to avoid diversion that create deficiencies in other budgets particularly in the teacher's salaries and other emoluments budgets. While the researcher suggests that the government should carry out proper budgeting as a means of deterring debt accumulation problem, he also does ignore the fact that timely payments of claims and prudent and proper management of funds have a significant role to play in alleviating the above problem as it was indicated a significant number of respondents.

Still, a significant number of primary school teachers are owed by the government. The researcher, therefore, has revealed that there are a significant number of primary school teachers who are owed by the government and therefore, recommends to the government to take immediate action to effect payments of claims so as to resolve the problem of debt accumulation among the primary school teachers.

The researcher also recommends that the Government should take action on the challenges that teachers are facing in their career. Among these are accommodation, transportation, training and promotions. This will lead to the improvement of the level of education and teachers morale at work.

The researcher recommends that there should be a policy manual that stipulates all of the teachers' rights and obligations and this manual should be made available, as a staff handbook, to each newly recruited teacher and all of the existing teachers should be conscious of their rights.

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