CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of The Gambia

Located at the western part of Africa, is a tinny little country of 1.3million often referred to as the "smiling coast" of West Africa. This little country is called The Gambia, named after the River Gambia which flows through the length of the country. The Gambia's estimated per capita income is US$800 and gross domestic product (GDP) is US$ 400 million with agriculture accounting for 30 percent, industry for 15 percent, and tourism and other service sectors for 55 percent. Agriculture is the backbone of the Gambian economy but of recent it has drastically decline due to various factors such as low rainfall and the fall of the price of groundnut (peanuts) in the world market (CIA, 2006).

The Gambia gained independence from Britain in 1965. The presence of the British has great influence in the governance of the country. In order to rule the country effectively, the British divided the country into Divisions and Districts headed by Commissioners and District Chiefs respectfully. The system is still maintained though some little changes were effected. As a democratic country, periodic elections are held for the presidency, the parliament and the local government. The various government departments are referred to as Department of State (Ministry) and are headed by a Secretary of State who is appointed by the President. Under the Secretary of state are the Permanent secretary and the deputy permanent secretary working with various units within the Department (DoSE 2006).

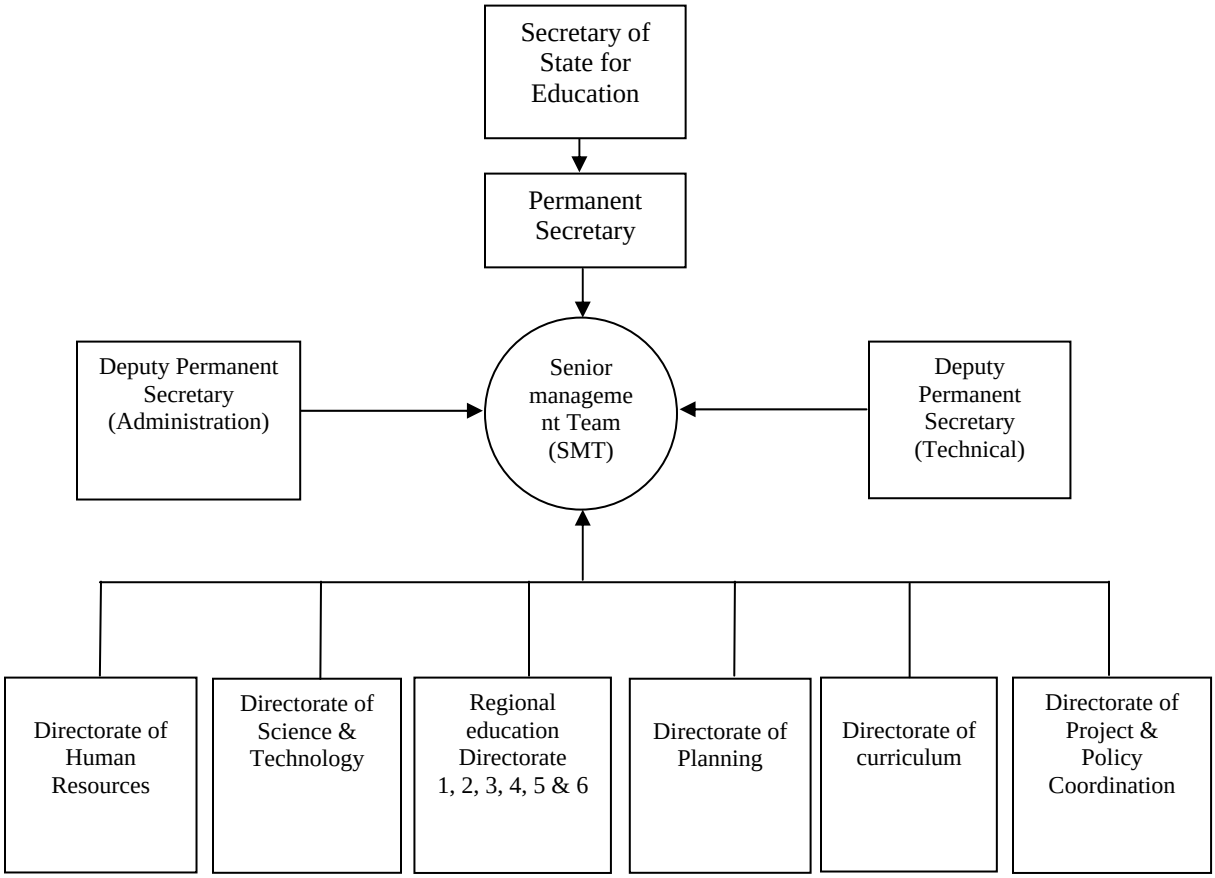
Education in The Gambia

The Mission Statement of the Department of State for Education is embodied in the statement "A Responsive, Relevant and Quality Education for All Gambians". As referenced in the New Education policy 2004-2015, the Department of State for Education is resolved to provide access to quality education to develop a computer literate and technologically competent populace with renewed emphasis on Science, Technology, Agriculture and the Arts in developing a productive and capable human resource base for the new millennium (DoSE, 2004).

The Department of State for Education is charged with the responsibility of all educational matters in the country. Education is the sector that has seen dramatic changes during the second republic. Lot of attention has been shifted to education. The government of the second republic built lots of schools and where finally able to make the dreams of Gambians come through in 1999 by the establishment of the University of The Gambia. The education sector is the major employer of the government. During the first republic, much attention has not been given to education, government could only boost of few high schools, some of which where established during the British occupation of the country (DoSE, 1998)

Thirty years after independence, education in The Gambia did not see any meaningful changes. School enrolment was going down and most of the schools did not have even a single trained teacher or in some only the head teacher was a qualified teacher. This was a serious problem which needed full attention. In 1998, the government of the second republic came up with an education policy to address the serious problems in education in the country (DoSE, 2004).

Figure 2.1 Organizational Structure of DoSE



Source: Department of State for Education 2006.

As highlighted in the New Education Policy 2004-2015, the education of Gambian children was severely hampered by the lack of textbooks, particularly, relevant textbooks and other resource materials. The textbook loan scheme was introduced and textbooks were designed which were more relevant to The Gambian social and economic environment and the young person's experience (DoSE, 2004).

In 1995 a review of the Education Policy took place with extensive consultations with all the stakeholders in education, at government and non-governmental levels. At the same time a Public Expenditure Review took place in tandem with a review of policy. Lack of sufficient trained teachers continued to be a problem in trying to improve on the quality of education in The Gambia. The review revealed that there was inconsistency in spending in relation to spending on third level, which was free, while primary schooling was fee paying. One initiative to overcome this was cost recovery, that all teacher training and other students at Gambia College were obliged to pay their contribution towards their training, this freed up resources to be put into Basic Education. The overall funding of Gambia College was increased. In September 2000, the process of Decentralization of the department was begun. From January 2001, less control is exercised from the centre, and more authority is given to the Regional Education Directors and the Principal Education Officers in each of the six regional Directorates. The rationale behind this was to give more responsibility for managing the education of the regions to the education directorates based in those regions, which are closer to the problems and to the people affected by decisions (DoSE 2004).

School System in The Gambia

In 1988 the Department of State for Education decided to spend the next five years concentrating on three issues; access, quality, relevance**.** Up to that point the school system provided six years of primary schooling before entrance into Junior Secondary. This system was inflexible and adversely affected movement from primary to secondary school. This was changed to 6-3-3-4, which increased primary schooling to nine years with three years at Junior Secondary, three years at Senior Secondary school and four years at university. This is contained in a policy document (DoSE, 2004).

Teacher certification in The Gambia

The Gambia has a very unique teacher certification system which is tailor-made to suit the situation on the ground. For years, The Gambia College has been the major institution that supply trained teachers to public schools in The Gambia. The Gambia College is composed of four main schools. This includes; the Schools of public Health, Schools of Nursing and Midwifery, School of Agriculture and School of education. The School of education has three certification programs, The Higher Teachers' Certificate (HTC), The Primary Teachers' Certificate (PTC) and the Upgrading Program. These were all two year programs with three months internship until in 2000 when it was extended to three years with one year internship (Gambia College, 2006).

All new intakes of Gambian nationality are given full scholarship by the government of The Gambia. This means that the intakes are provided with free tuition, lodging, feeding and a monthly stipend by the Government with an agreement that, upon completion, they will be employed by the government for a number of years equivalent to

the years spent on their respective programs. All graduates from the primary teachers' and higher Teachers' program are deployed to various primary, junior and senior schools respectively to teach (Gambia College, 2006).

The University Extension Program (UEP)

The UEP was started in November 1995. It is a collaborative effort between The Gambia government, the Nova Scotia Gambia Association (NSGA), a non-governmental Canadian organization, and St. Mary's University located in Halifax, Nova Scotia. It was an arrangement in which St. Mary's University will provide undergraduate training to qualified Gambian students in The Gambia at a cost affordable to the government (DoSE, 2004). Funding was mainly provided by The Gambia government. This system provided the first university graduates in The Gambia.

The University of The Gambia (UTG)

The University of The Gambia was a replacement of the UEP system. In 1999, the National assembly passed a bill, establishing the University of The Gambia. This was greeted with skepticism but with the intervention of the World Bank and other development partners, a dream became a reality. In 2004, the first batch of students graduated from the university. Though a bit different, most of the students in the university who are Gambians were given full scholarship by the Government of The Gambia. These set of scholarship recipients were to sign a contract with the government and have to work for the government upon completion of their respective programs. The university comprised of the faculty of medicine, the faculty of Humanities and Social

sciences, faculty of agriculture and the faculty of Business management (University of The Gambia, 2006).

As more graduates were needed in the education sector, the faculty of humanities established a new program called the Bachelor of Arts in Education (BA. Ed). The main aim of this program is to upgrade the standard of teachers in the education sector. This serve as a venue for long serving teachers without higher professional qualification to be trained and redeployed to the junior and senior high schools in the public sector.

Issues in Teacher Turnover

Teacher turnover has been a very serious problem in education for the past decades. No country alone seems to have the answer to it. This is because teacher turnover is a problem that is very complex in nature. This can be attributed to the fact that even the western countries that enjoy the massive brain drain from third world countries are also faced with the same problem in their education sector. Very few countries in the world today can boost of minimal rate of turnover in their education system. There is massive concern about the migration of teachers from third world countries to the United Kingdom and other developed countries. It is argued that the “brain drain” of teachers to the north is negatively impacting on teacher supply and retention in a number of developing countries, which is undermining the attainment of Education For All goals set up by the United Nations (EFA) (Bennell, 2004a).

There is mounting concern that unacceptably high proportions of teachers working in public schools in third World countries are poorly motivated due to combination of low morale and job satisfaction, poor incentives, inadequate controls and other behavioral

sanctions. Often times, teacher turn over have been linked to poor pay but poor human resource management seriously de-motivates employees (Bennell, 2004b).

Teacher Turnover in The Gambia

The issue of teacher turnover has been a serious problem for the Department of State for Education for a long time. The provision of competent teachers and the improvement of serving teachers are crucial for the improvement of learning achievement (Education policy 2004-2015, May 2004). Lots of interventions have taken place to address this issue. The fact remains that not much empirical research has been done to know the root cause of this menace, as such all interventions are based on assumptions. The Gambia has a unique system of teacher recruitment. This is because it is only in The Gambia where government gives full scholarship to teacher-trainees and assures them of employment upon graduation. This is a rare opportunity which most people will go in for either because they are desperate for job or they want to use it as a stepping stone to other employment opportunities. These assumptions can be confirmed by the statistics on the number of teachers who graduate from The Gambia College from 2003 to 2005.

Table 2.1: The number of trained teachers graduated from Gambia College from 2003 to 2005

Year	HTC	PTC	ECD
2003	262	227	41
2004	271	310	54
2005	220	331	73
Total	**753**	**868**	**168**

Source: Registry Gambia College (2006)

The above table gives an insight into the number of trained teachers sent to public schools from The Gambia College from 2003 to 2005. If these figures are to be put into perspective and to be used as an estimate for the number of trained teachers since 1995 per se, why should there be a problem of teacher turnover then? The acute shortage of teachers in The Gambia public schools can be confirmed by the number of both foreign and unqualified teachers in the public schools. The table below gives the latest data on teacher employment based on regions.

Table 2.2: The number of qualified and unqualified teachers in four regions

Region	Qualified teachers	Unqualified teachers
Region 1	980	195
Region 2	N/A	N/A
Region 3	743	272
Region 4	N/A	N/A
Region 5	437	453
Region 6	290	132
Total	**2450**	**1052**

Source: Department of State for Education (2006)

If the statistics in the above table is anything to go by, then the situation of teacher turnover is pretty bad. If 30.04% of teachers in four regions in the country are untrained and therefore unqualified to teach, then one would ask “where are the graduates from The Gambia College going to?” If the reason behind giving scholarships to Gambians to be

trained teachers is to enable the public schools to be staffed with qualified teachers and yet nearly half of the teachers are unqualified, then there is a problem of teacher turnover. Where and why these trained teachers are going? Government spends millions of Dalasi to train teachers only to end up with untrained teachers in the system; there is a big problem that needs urgent attention. One will begin to ask how about the graduates from the BA.Ed. Program at the University of The Gambia? These cohorts are readily absorbed into the teaching field. This can be attributed to the fact that they are assured of promotion and better salaries and on the other hand some of the college graduates can be teachers for more than ten years without substantial pay raise, promotion or further training. Some teachers feel that they don't have any future as teachers because they are not given enough opportunities for career development. Others feel that the salary and the benefit system is not encouraging and the living condition for some areas is unbearable, but the bottom line is teachers are leaving as confirmed in table 2.1 and table 2.2.

Government is engaged in lots of interventions to try to curb the problem of teacher turnover. Workshops has been held, sensitizations have been conducted by both DoSE and other development partners. In 2005, FAWEGAM was sponsored by UNICEF to conduct a sensitization campaign for more Female teachers in Public Senior schools (FAWEGAM, 2005). The situation is worse in junior and senior secondary schools whose staff comprised of higher percentage of foreign teachers from the sub-region. Countries like Sierra Leone, Ghana and Nigeria and even Liberia have their nationals teaching in Gambian Schools. A principal of a Senior secondary school in region five told me " I am a geography teacher now" (personal conversation 2006) Upon further enquiry, he confirmed that his foreign geography teacher left in the middle of the second

term when the Grade 12 students where about to take their final exams and he could not get a new teacher. A senior secondary school in The Gambia in Region One has a total of 48 trained teachers and only seven (7) of them are Gambians. Only 14% of the whole teaching staff of this particular senior school are Gambians and the remaining 86% are foreigners (Gambia Senior Secondary school, 2006). In the Commonwealth Teacher recruitment protocol, both the recruiting country and the source country, and even the recruited teacher have a role to play to ensure fairness and retention of teachers in commonwealth countries. (Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol, 2004, p. 11-17).

Teacher Salary and allowances in The Gambia

All government civil servants in The Gambia are paid based on what is called The Integrated Government Pay Scale. Different job positions in the civil service are allocated different salary scale. The lowest on the salary grade is grade one and the highest is grade twelve (12). (DoFEA, 2006). All college graduates with a Primary Teachers Certificate are put on a start off salary of grade 6. The graduates with the Higher Teacher's Certificate are paid grade 7. The graduates with a bachelor's degree in education are given grade 8 whiles the masters graduates are put on grade 9, depending on the position occupied. All government civil servants from grade 7 and above are labeled Senior Civil Servants. The government introduced the "Hardship allowance" for teachers in remote areas in January 2006. Each region is given a different rate based on the proximity of the region to the capital. Region 6 gets 40% of salary, region 5, 35%, region 4, 30%, some parts of region 2, 25% and region one excluded because that region covers the capital and

other big towns with lots of opportunities. The allowance also focus on the issue of distance from major access roads as some of these teachers are in schools that are 10 or more kilometers from the main highway (DoSFEA, 2005).

Summary

As evident in the above elaborated issues in the developmental stages of education in The Gambia, it is worth noting that it is only through recruitment and retention of well trained teaching force that educational goals of the Government of The Gambia will be achieved. The education policy document (New Education Policy, 2004) of The Gambia clearly spelt out the pressing issues in the Gambia education system, prominent among which the problem of well trained teachers in the school system. It is also evident that all development partners of The Gambia government are working together to achieve the objective of the New Education Policy, 2004.

Previous research on teacher Turnover

A lot of work has been carried out on teacher turnover. A substantial amount of this work focus on which kind of teachers are more likely to leave the teaching profession and the reasons why they want to leave (Ives, 2003; Turner, 2003; Robertson, 2006; Lecompte & Dworkin 1991; Weiss & Boyd, 1990; Murnane, Singer, & Willett, 1988; Murnane, 1997; Hafner & Owings, 1991; Chapman & Green, 19986, Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Whitener, & Weber, 1997b). Ives, 2003 identified parental support, opportunity for professional advancement, in-service support and recognition of work and accomplishments as major issues in teacher turnover. Extreme pressures placed on beginning teachers during induction phase, the negative organizational environment and

the challenges of the teaching profession have contributed to the swift departure of outstanding educators from this profession (Turner, 2003, p. 27).

Personal/Internal

Most of the findings of these researches shows that, there is a very strong correlation between teacher turnover and individual teacher characteristics. In their study, Murnane, Singer, Willett, Kemple and Olsen (1991) tried to establish the role of salary, gender, ethnicity and subject specialization in teacher retention. It is interesting to note that teacher attrition was typically found to be common in special education, mathematics and science (Boe, Bobbitt, & Cook, 1997a; Grissmer & Kirby, 1992; Murnane et al., 1991; Rumberger, 1997). It was also found out that teachers' decision to leave the profession was also linked to age. Younger teachers were found to be more likely to leave (Grissmer & Kirby, 1993). It was also found out that teachers with high academic ability are more likely to leave teaching (Schlechty & Vance, 1981). Family and other related factors also play a pivotal role in teachers' leaving the profession. It was found out that women with children are more likely to remain in teaching than those who are not married and do not have children (Hyens, 1998), this maybe due to less demand for support from their family and as such more freedom to explore other carrier opportunities. School related factors studied included teacher/student ratio, administrative support, teaching level, student characteristics and school location. Teacher's decision to stay in a school was found to be highly correlated with teacher's involvement in decision making (Bacharach, 1990).

Administrative /Management

It is confirmed that one third of teachers who leave the profession is due to non-supportive administration (Ingersoll, 1995, 1999 & 2001). The salary package of teachers also play an important role in teacher's decision to leave (Ingeroll, 2001, Frase 1992.) . Overall, various studies have provided an insight into the issue of teacher turn over. This is limited in nature as most of the research focus on one particular area in a given country. The research also shows that not much study has been done with regards teacher turnover in third world countries (Bennell, 2004c). This is attributed to the difficulty in getting accurate data to do any meaningful study. The researches also tend to be focused on relationship between teacher turnover and different variables. This does not give room for thorough investigation into the problem. This can be attributed to the fact most of these research used quantitative data collection methods and analysis which can best be used to generalize in a given population. In other to go deeper into the problem of teacher turnover, it is vital to apply different measures to collect meaningful data which will give a better understanding to the root cause of the problem and not only to establish relationship between teacher turnover and other variables.

Though the problem of teacher turnover tends to be universal, what is certain is that each country has its own unique experiences and The Gambia is no exception. A comprehensive study is needed to point out all the critical issues in teacher turnover in The Gambia. Most of the research focus on teachers themselves but it is very important to also get the other side of the story from both management and policy makers in education. It is not a matter of why the teachers are leaving only, but it is also a matter of apportioning blame and working out a lasting solution for the education system. The

priority now is to know who should do what? And if not done, how best to make him/her do it to retain the much needed trained teachers for an excellent educational system in our respective countries.