

## Chapter 4 Profile of Female Teachers across the Districts

*" One of our major problems up here in the North is our female teachers follow their husbands; if the husband is posted to the village the female will go- if he is not she will not go. It is our culture that the woman should be near the man."*  
*Girls Education Officer, Tamale Vocational Training Centre, Northern Region*

### 4.1 Profile of female teachers in the study

The current study involved a systematic process of locating and interviewing female teachers serving in remote rural areas. Using an ethnographic approach enabled the team to identify categories and themes from the field; the following categories of teachers were identified during the initial stages in the study process and were used to select female teachers and their communities in the six study districts:

- Newly trained female teachers posted to a deprived area
- Untrained female teachers or ‘pupil teachers’ as they are commonly called
- Trained female teacher who have been serving for over 2 years and often long serving and posted in rural deprived areas

Patterns emerged concerning the characteristics of female teachers in these three categories and who had served to varying degrees in deprived rural areas. For instance, long serving female teachers (LSFT) tended to be mature women over the age of 40, married with children and often residing in a nearby town. Some of these women had vast experience working in several rural areas and often had served over 15 years in these areas. Very few had any experience serving in an urban setting but many were living in small towns near to their schools. Teachers posted in Abeteso (Kintampo District), Ningoor, (Sene District) Bankamba and Kojobonikope (East Gonja District) fell into this category. Other female teachers had served in only one or two villages over the period of their careers. Teachers posted to Tichere in Kintampo District and Nketia-akura in Sene fell into this category. These women also had ties to the community they were working in having married a ‘local’ or having parents residing in the surrounding area. Women who were long serving in rural areas were often described as ‘having become like the locals’. The women themselves aspired to be like their urban counterparts but complained of being unable to buy clothing and purchase consumer items, which would separate them from the rest of the community. Those found remaining in rural areas were either married to someone from the community or from rural areas close to where they were serving. Table 4.1 describes the characteristics of female teachers in the study.

**Table 4.1: Characteristics of female teachers in the study**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Newly Trained</b>	<b>Untrained</b>	<b>Long serving Trained teachers</b>
<b>Number of females included in the study</b>	6	7	9
<b>Age range (years of age)</b>	Between 22-27	Between 34 and 53 years of age One is 27 years old	35 to 46 years of age
<b>Professional Status (rank)</b>	5 serving as classroom teachers 1 Head teacher	6 are class room teachers 1 Head teacher	3 class teachers 6 Head teachers
<b>Family Background</b>	All are from rural areas around the country	5 out of 7 are from rural areas	Most are from rural areas except for two
<b>Family Status</b>	All unmarried No Children	6 are married 1 is unmarried 6 have between 3-6 children	8 married and one divorced. At least three are married into the community (chief)
<b>Educational background and training</b>	All with SSSCE and A 3 year certification	4 have MSLC 3 have O level	8 had MSLC with four years at training college (A4) 1 had MSLC with a 2-year modular course.
<b>Native or non native to the community<sup>24</sup></b>	5 non native 1 from near by community	5 are native to the community 2 are non native	4 are native 5 are either married or have settled in the community
<b>Location of residence</b>	5 living in the community and provided with accommodation 1 living in town over 7 km away	3 living in the community 3 living within 2 kms from the community 1 lives over 20 kms	6 live in the community 3 live in towns between 3-5 kms.
<b>Number of years in the service</b>	Between one month and 2 years	6 females have served 10 to 20 years 1 served for only 2 years	All have no less than 10 years in the teaching service most are between 10-20 years
<b>Number of postings to rural areas</b>	First posting	Between 2 to 3 postings in rural areas	Between 2-4 postings in rural areas
<b>Number of posting to urban areas</b>	None	No posting in urban areas	2 have been posted to urban areas once
<b>Type of in-service training</b>	One day orientation at district office or with religious unit	4 have no in-service training 3 with a few in-service training programmes	3 have had several in-service training Others have not had them frequently

Most of the untrained female teachers were MSLC holders and only a few had O level certification. Most of the long serving female teachers (LSFT) had MSLC with four years at teacher training college after a period of service as a pupil teacher; several of

<sup>24</sup> Native means that the person is from the community or district.

these women were head teachers at their respective schools. A positive finding was that some districts were promoting trained female teachers to headship in deprived rural areas. Juabeso Bia District Director reported that he had made this a strategy to attract more women to serve in rural areas of the district.

There were a few newly trained female teachers (NTFT) posted to deprived rural areas; NTF teachers were often found in schools along the main road, not considered as deprived as more remote areas. Dwene Woho was slightly more deprived than Paniamisa and Pando but all were easily assessable to markets in Kintampo District. Newly trained females were all unmarried and posted within the last two years.

Female teachers interviewed found it difficult to accept postings to rural areas. Only two teachers out of the 22 interviewed said they would like to stay in the community; one because she wanted to continue farming activities and the other because she wanted to remain close to her parents. Untrained teachers had little choice since they were often recruited primarily for the purpose of serving in a rural area. Only a few newly trained female teachers reported that they had accepted posting because they wanted to assist in improving the educational conditions of their children in these areas. These teachers set a conscious limit of remaining in the community for only two years and then transferring to a more urban area or proceeding on study leave. Almost all the teachers were keen to transfer to more urbanised areas with better facilities such as electricity and potable water. Those already residing in towns and traveling to the school each day were happy to remain in the same area. A few female teachers reported that any change to a new area would depend on their husband's decision. One long serving female teacher residing in a deprived community remarked if "the government lets me be like the town lady teachers I will stay". Female teachers serving in rural areas perceived their town counterparts as living a much easier life and having access to a number of benefits which were not available in rural areas such as: credit, markets and better social services.

### **How they became teachers**

Female teachers serving in deprived rural areas were asked to explain how they became teachers. This allowed the study to explore the ways females had progressed through the various levels of education to reach a high educational level; it also enable the study to explore the sources of their inspiration in becoming teachers. The responses revealed that the vast majority of female teachers were encouraged and guided by family members in order to become teachers. Some women had taken up teaching as untrained pupil teachers and discovered their interest in teaching before entering training college. Others had been assisted and encouraged by a priest or religious leader to enter the teaching profession. Table 4.2 describes the main results:

**Table 4.2: Becoming a teacher**

How did you become a teacher?	Number of female teachers responding
I applied to work as a pupil teacher and realized I enjoyed the work	8
I was encouraged by a family relation	5
A minister or religious leader encouraged me	2
Husband or mother was a teacher and I admired him/her	2
Started as a KG teacher and worked without pay for sometime before being hired as a pupil teacher	1
Self motivated and had the required results	1
I liked children	1
Saw no other female professions beside teaching	1
Wanted to be a secretary but developed an interest after teacher training college	1
TOTAL	22

## 4.2 Deployment Trends of female teachers across the districts

The vast majority of district directors revealed a "soft spot" when posting female teachers. There was little variation across the districts concerning what was perceived as posting policy regarding female teachers. Some DDE's and Manpower officers believed it was policy to post females where 'they would find suitable husbands'. District Education officers were finding it difficult to keep track of the most up to date guidelines on posting procedures due to the number of circulars from GES headquarters. One consistent pattern was that district education officers were hesitant to post newly trained females to deprived rural areas where they could not be accessible. Kintampo district was posting newly trained female teachers along the main road to Kumasi; other districts continued to keep most of their newly trained female teachers in the main district capitals. DDEs and manpower officers explained that the "newly trained female teachers **are not** posted to remote rural areas because they will come back crying to the district office". GES Manpower officers in several districts cited examples of female teachers complaining about postings even if they were to go to district circuit centres (e.g. Tolon Kumbungu, Kintampo, and East Gonja). Most female teachers preferred closer posting to the regional or district capital where they had access to electricity, entertainment and remedial classes for re-sitting the SSSCE.

### Location of female teachers within the districts

When the government changed the policy towards pupil teacher recruitment in the mid-1990's, attempting to replace all untrained with trained teachers, most female teachers opted to go to the Kindergarten level in order to avoid unemployment. Most female teachers at KG level were unwilling to serve at basic education level. Table 4.3 presents posting patterns of trained and untrained female and male teachers across the six study districts.

**Table 4.3: Teacher participation by KG, Primary and JSS levels across the study districts**

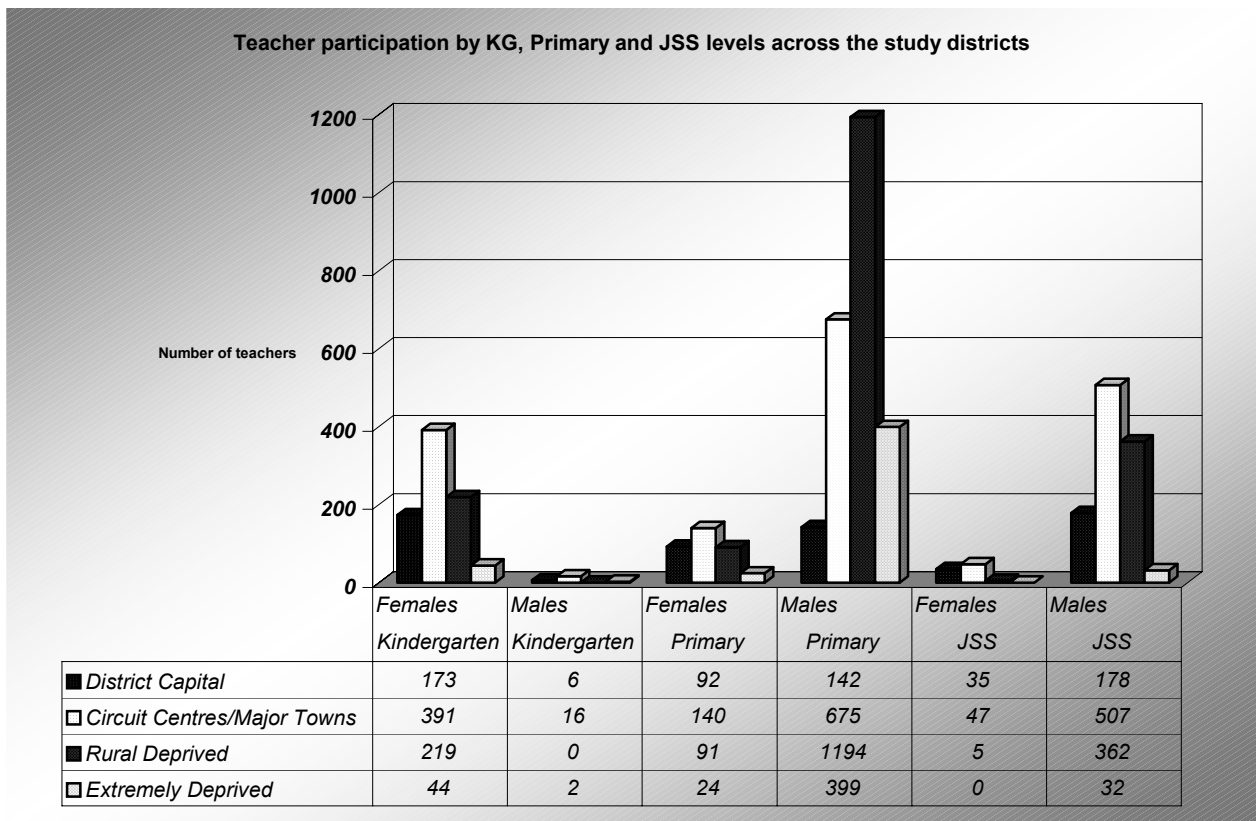


Table 4.3 reveals that the vast majority of teachers serving in rural deprived areas were male teachers. The majority of female teachers were serving at the circuit centres and at the Kindergarten level.

Most districts were not posting female teachers to deprived rural areas. They posted newly trained female teachers in the circuit centres and along the main road. Two districts (Sene and East Gonja) were not even posting female teachers to circuit centres but sending them to schools in the district capital due to the poor road network and high levels of deprivation. Tolon Kumbungu District reported difficulties in retaining female teachers at some of the circuit centres due to the lack of basic facilities (i.e. water and electricity).

The study found that there are degrees of deprivation, which require significant adjustment for teachers from different backgrounds particularly those who are not used to harsh rural circumstances. District Manpower officers were found using applications from training colleges to assess the background of newly trained female teacher and their

ability to endure rural conditions. The address and type of training college she had attended would often signal the type of background she was from. For instance, on some applications the name of a prominent person (e.g. Professor) would signal to the officers that they better be careful in posting that lady to a rural area.

Newly trained teachers from outside the district were rarely posted to schools outside the district capital. Interviews with newly posted female teachers in extremely deprived districts capitals (Sene and Juabeso Bia) stated that they would only be willing to serve in the district for a period of two years. NTFT posted to much more rural areas within the districts of Kintampo, Wassa Amenfi and Tolon Kumbungu stated that they were also only willing to serve in the community for between one or two years. They would then feel impelled to seek transfer to larger towns where they could access facilities and begin preparations for study leave (i.e. extra classes, computer classes).

District Director in Wassa Amenfi stated that female teachers from the district and "who are used to the place" aspire to be posted to the towns while female teachers from outside the district have difficulty even remaining in the capital. Reports from female teachers in all the six districts confirmed that some female teachers were unable to remain in the district capital and had left to find easier postings often in less remote areas. There were different degrees of deprivation and different levels on which NTFT could endure. Interviews conducted with female teachers confirmed that the three categories of female teachers who were serving in rural deprived areas were:

- Pupil or untrained teachers who were from the district or married into the locality
- Long serving trained female teachers
- Newly trained female teachers

These categories of female teachers became the main focus of the study--their needs and living conditions reflect differences and variations regarding strategies to meet their needs as teachers. These needs mainly are reflective of their family status and level of training -- the topic of discussion of the next section.

### **District Posting procedures**

District manpower officers across the six districts reported the following key factors when posting newly trained females:

- Marriage status and location of husband
- Background of the female teacher (training college, ethnicity, parent socio-economic status)
- Distance from the district capital and accessibility to town centers (e.g. along a main road and near a 'junction')
- Reasonable level of social services.

District manpower officers cited several different "policies" which were guiding their judgement, particularly the circulars from GES Manpower division stating that females

should not be posted to deprived rural areas<sup>25</sup>. The GES circular stating that newly trained teachers should be posted in pairs was proving very difficult to implement due to the low number of teachers being posted to deprived districts (GES Manpower Circular, 1999).

Ethnicity and language skills were also taken into account by manpower officers when posting newly trained female teachers, particularly in districts where there were several ethnic groupings and settler farmers (e.g. Kintampo, Juabeso-Bia and Wassa-Amenfi). For instance, in Sene district the Ewes speaking teachers were posted to communities where there was a high proportion of Ewe's. East Gonja was experiencing a peculiar problem due to the ethnic conflict, which had deterred several teachers from serving in areas where conflicts had erupted (i.e. Kpandai).

Interviews with manpower staff and other district officers confirmed that in order not to 'scare them (newly trained female teachers) away' careful consideration should be made of their **ability to cope** with difficult circumstances. One senior education officer in Sene district stated that 'if you are posted outside the district you are dead', and most officers took it upon themselves to 'protect' the newly trained females. East Gonja senior education officers stated that they look upon female teachers as "their own daughters" and therefore do not post females to areas where they would be "handicapped or fall victim to local chiefs or rich farmers who want to take them as their second wife."

A widely held perception of both educationalists and prominent community members was that females would fall victim to unwanted marriage with men from a lower socio-economic status. This was seen as a severe handicap for females who had just managed to complete tertiary level education only to fall back to "village life". Interviews with national level and community level stakeholders revealed strong perceptions of females as having a 'weak moral character', which caused them to **feel lonely** and vulnerable to local men. None of the newly trained female teachers were married but most of them had ideas and aspirations to find a partner in the near future. Several long serving female teachers had married 'local men' during their initial years of teaching (Kojobonikope, Nketia-Akura, Tikobo and Ningoor). Most of these women married farmers, cocoa purchasing clerks or local sub chiefs and complained of 'being no different from the locals'.

Education officers and female teachers themselves could always identify female teachers who had 'fallen victim' to these 'undesirables' or local men. The greatest fear of teachers from macro to micro level appeared to be that females would be severely "handicapped" if they were to marry below their socio-economic status and take a husband from the 'village'. The study revealed that only one long serving female teacher serving in deprived rural areas was unmarried and she had only recently been divorced. The 21 other female teachers were married to men from the village or living in nearby towns. Our investigation at the district level across the three regions confirmed that only women who were married, or divorced appeared to be serving in deprived rural areas. There were several stories of women who had lost their husbands and were finding it difficult to

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<sup>25</sup> Several officers in the districts quoted this circular but no one was able to provide this for the team.

continue teaching in remote isolated areas. Cases from both the national and district level revealed that women who were serving in remote rural areas alone often experienced psychological imbalances or took to drinking.

The research revealed a need for women to have some type of **support system** from both the GES and their immediate family in order to cope with extended periods of time in deprived and often remote rural areas. Circuit supervisors were beginning to acknowledge this need and addressed it by making frequent visits to teachers serving within their district. For instance, one circuit supervisor in Kintampo district had set up a good support system for female teachers serving in the area; he would conduct regular visits, prepare communities for accepting female teachers, and organise accommodation before the female teacher arrived. In some cases Head teachers also exhibited a supportive and protective role particularly when it came to NTFT. Some district education offices (i.e. Juabeso-Bia) were attempting to place NTFT with female head teachers already serving in deprived rural areas. This appeared to be a useful and effective strategy for assuring their safety and security.

One limiting factor for many districts was the problems experienced in ‘extremely deprived areas which included the “overseas” or island communities. Most of these areas were inaccessible during the rainy season and had a high level of untrained teachers. Some districts such as Sene and East Gonja had over 50% of the district within this category.

#### **Allocation of teachers at district level**

Another major concern was the number of teachers not reporting to deprived rural districts after being posted. Manpower officers explained that there had been problems in the past in attracting teachers to deprived areas but this is being partially solved by the new policy to pay salaries only when teachers report to the district<sup>26</sup>. Sene district used to only receive 60% of the teachers who were allocated to the district but this year they have close to 100% due to the new procedures. The following table reveals the number of teacher vacancies and those posted and arrived at post in each of the districts over the last two years.

**Table 4.4: Teachers posted and arriving at post in six study districts**

<b>District (2000/2001)</b>	<b>Number of teachers posted to the district</b>		<b>Number of teachers arriving at post</b>
	Total	Female	Total
Kintampo	60	14	58
Sene	32	2	28
Tolon Kumbungu	57	14	47
East Gonja	53	8	49
Juabeso-Bia	123	6	109
Wassa Amenfi	82	10	62

<sup>26</sup> Payment of salaries now required the signature of the District Director of Education.



Very few female teachers were posted to the six districts in the study by the regional office and the religious units. Interviews with Manpower division GES headquarters revealed that very few females are willing to serve in these areas (Western Region and Northern Region) and often drift back to headquarters complaining that it was too difficult.

Most of the districts studied only attracted female teachers who had husbands or close relations living and working in the district. For instance, two female teachers who were posted from the regional to Sene district both had husbands serving in the district capital. There were rare occurrences when newly posted female teachers chose to experience a new area (Juabeso Bia and Wassa Amenfi)—one NTFT had selected Western region as her first choice because she wanted to "experience a new district in the country". Very few NTFT were quite so adventurous. The vast majority of females interviewed across the six districts had accepted postings due to family circumstance and a desire to join their husbands or family.

### **Recruitment Constraints**

The following were the findings of recruitment of untrained teachers for three of the study districts over the last two years (1998-2000):

**Table 4.5: Untrained teachers recruited by gender in 1998-2000**

<b>Districts</b>	<b>Number Male teachers recruited</b>	<b>Number of females recruited</b>	<b>Total</b>
Sene	16	2	18
Tolon-Kumbungu	46	4	50
Wassa Amenfi	27	0	32

The large number of teacher vacancies in the deprived districts across the country was beginning to be filled by untrained teachers but only with prior approval from GES<sup>27</sup>. Interviews with the Manpower officers in the districts revealed significant constraints in recruiting untrained female teachers in the districts. The following were the main findings:

- Districts are unable to find females with basic requirements (SSCE, O and A level holders)
- Few females having SSSCE had the grades to obtain positions as untrained teachers (a pass in core subjects (or a 'D'))

Some districts did attempt to recruit women who had submitted grades of E but these applicants were rejected at national level.

<sup>27</sup> Only within the last two years have districts been given authority to recruit untrained teachers from within the district. After selection the applications are sent to GES for final approval.

Districts were finding it difficult to recruit untrained female graduates from SSS due to their poor performance at SSS level and also the low number of female graduates from SSS. Some districts such as Tolon Kumbungu, and Sene appeared to be having difficulty finding enough male or female SSS graduates from within the district. District Directors of Education and the Directors of Teacher Education suggested the need to run special courses to improve the results of female SSS graduates in order to qualify either as untrained teachers or enter the training college. Most women identified in the districts as potential untrained teachers were holding Middle School Leaving Certificates (MSLC), which was no longer accepted by the district. Modular programmes, which had once been in place to train ‘pupil teachers’ in the basic content and methods of teaching, have also disappeared. Sene and Kintampo had sponsorship programmes for SSS level but had difficulty-recruiting females to enter these programmes. In Sene district, 16 SSS graduates had applied for sponsorship to teacher training and only one was a female. The same pattern was repeated in all six districts. Sponsorship programmes at the district level were not attracting enough female applicants since there were very few eligible women within the district. Interviews with SSS Headmasters and District education officers confirmed that very few females qualify for the district sponsorship programme. Interviews with JSS and SSS female students also revealed that very few students knew the programme existed. There was also a need to create greater awareness of the options and support for female students at the JSS and SSS level—a topic further explored in Chapter 7.

### Factors in deploying newly trained female teachers

The following table describes the main factors considered in posting newly trained female teachers within each of the six districts surveyed:

**Table 4.6: Posting procedures for newly trained female teachers across the districts**

District	General Posting Procedures for newly trained teachers (specific to women)
Kintampo District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Consider the socio-economic background</li> <li>➤ Along the main road where there are basic amenities</li> <li>➤ Close to major towns</li> <li>➤ Location of husband, potential marriage partners</li> </ul>
Sene District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Most located in the District Capital</li> <li>➤ Location of husband, potential marriage partners</li> <li>➤ Accessibility</li> </ul>
Tolon Kumbungu District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Mainly in district capital and circuit centres</li> <li>➤ Location of husband, potential marriage partners</li> <li>➤ Accessibility</li> </ul>
East Gonja	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ All in the district capital</li> <li>➤ Marriage status and suitable partners</li> <li>➤ Basic amenities</li> </ul>
Juabesu Bia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Along the main road close to the junction or district capital</li> <li>➤ Consider the background and ethnic grouping</li> <li>➤ Compatibility and ability to cope in rural areas</li> <li>➤ Marriage status</li> <li>➤ Schools with female head teachers</li> </ul>

District	General Posting Procedures for newly trained teachers (specific to women)
Wassa Amenfi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Along the main road and places where females are easily accessible</li> <li>➤ Consider the marriage status and ability to find a suitable partner</li> </ul>

(Based on interviews with District Directors of Education and Manpower officers, October 2000)

The most common factor mentioned by DDEs and manpower officers in posting newly trained teachers was the issue of marriage and concerns for females finding a suitable marriage partner. Officers were keenly aware of the danger of posting a female to areas where she may become 'morally weak' or pressured to marry a village man or "palm wine tapper". Untrained 'Pupil' teachers had "no choice" as to where they were posted. Female untrained teachers were often posted to communities in close proximity to their own homes. Very few pupil teachers were recruited from outside the districts except for Tolon Kumbungu, which had a large pool of SSS graduates seeking employment from the regional capital, Tamale. District Education Directors preferred to recruit pupil teachers from within the district but sometimes were forced to look outside (i.e. Tolon Kumbungu).

District manpower officers reported that once a female untrained and trained teacher is married they are not likely to repost her to another area, which is far from her family place of residence. This investigation revealed that some females remain at the same post for over 10 years due to their personal commitments and family situation (husband and children). Despite the policy of teachers not spending more than ten years in one post. Female teacher living in towns and serving in rural areas were unwilling move to other villages if it means uprooting themselves; most had stable accommodation, secure living conditions most importantly schools for their children's education.

#### **Box 4.1: Districts Unofficial Policy of posting newly trained female teachers**

Example from a District Education Office

The district follows the policy of posting female teachers to areas which are accessible, since they are able to travel to visit their families and potential partners. "There is an unofficial policy to place female teachers to the towns in order to facilitate marriage. We want them to get proper husbands or their whole future is at stake". (District Education Officer, October, 2000)

All six study districts conformed to this unofficial policy and used a sympathetic yet pragmatic approach to the posting of females in the district. Manpower officers and district directors were keenly aware that forcing a newly trained female teacher to a rural area against her will could result in her exodus from the district and possibly out of the teaching profession. More serious still would be the result of a female teacher getting married to a 'local man and detract from her hard earned status'. Several interviews with newly trained females (NTFT) confirmed that they did not have the strength or

willingness to serve in rural areas for an **unlimited time**. Most had set their own personal limits on how long they would remain before seeking a transfer or leaving the profession all together. Most NTFT had plans of pursuing their academic education at university.

The following vignettes highlight the cases of ladies who were all posted to the same district but found different ways of coping with their posting to remote rural areas. The stories reveal that accepting posting in deprived rural areas is often related to their level of commitment, dedication to the community, background and the ability to adapt.

#### **Box 4.2: Stories of Newly trained female teachers posted to deprived rural areas**

##### **Stories of newly trained female teachers posted to a deprived rural areas: levels of endurance**

###### **Case 1:**

The newly trained female teacher was sitting cooking her stew while we interviewed her. She explained how difficult it had been in even bringing her items to the district. She was a 'Ga' from Labone and trained at Foso. She and another friend had been posted to the Western Region since they thought it would be an experience. She arrived after 8 hours of uncomfortable travel from Accra, which cost approx. 80,000 Cedis in order to reach the district capital -- no bigger than a small suburb of Accra. Her colleague Kate was posted about seven miles from the district capital-- Assankragua but did not last one week before she asked for a transfer. Kate decided to leave and find another posting in another town (Winneba) closer to her home (Volta Region). Abena was left behind to endure in this remote district. They were both from the same training college but one decided to "stick it out" and give what little she could to the community. Her only regret was there was no computer school in the district capital since she wanted to learn how to operate a computer and further her studies. One other male colleague from the same training college was also posted to town and was helping her adjust to life in the District Capital. She complained of her inability to find ready accommodation and the inconvenience of having to live with the education officers before securing accommodation.

###### **Case 2:**

Another newly posted female explained that she was from Kete Krachi in the Volta region but she attended Holy Child training college in Takoradi. She was posted to a very deprived rural area by the religious unit. The research team visited one Friday and found her teaching on her own at a school with over 100 pupils while her male colleagues had all found reasons-- poor health and collection of salary-- why they could not attend school. Esther was inspired to serve in a rural area partly as a result of her religious conviction and hoped that she could make a small difference to the peoples lives in the area. Her brother had accompanied her on her first visit to the community (Pisasso) where she spoke to the chief and the community members. They were very happy to have a female teacher especially one heading the school and promised to do everything possible to make her stay comfortable. She was given a bungalow, which was constructed by a wood working firm and left vacant. The community supplied her with foodstuffs until she was settled. But the community itself had a severe water problem (Onchocerciasis) and she was not taking precautions by boiling the water.

When Esther came to the village on her first visit she was convinced her services as a teacher were badly needed. She was especially inspired after the chief told her the children had never had a female teacher and that she might be able to make a small difference. She has been happy serving the community, and helped to organise the people in order to improve the school structure and facilities, one of the JSS girls had told her that she would go into teaching after completing the SSS. She was facing some difficulties with the male

Esther's case proved to be a very unique case out of the 22 females who were interviewed, she and one other female in East Gonja were the only teachers with a strong service orientation. Esther was not thinking of her own comfort but was more concerned about how she could make a positive impact in the community. Her case revealed the following that:

- Given the proper orientation to service, a newly trained teacher could make an impact in the community
- Given leadership, community relations and organisational skills she was able to mobilise the community to assist the school
- She was particularly concerned about the girls in the village and was attempting to act as a good role model
- She was willing to live in a deprived rural community and serve the school for a period of two years based on her strong religious conviction despite her personal and professional plans.

### **Factors, which assist women, adjust to remote rural areas**

Most newly trained female teachers interviewed did not have the same background as Esther—having been trained in community mobilisation and growing up in a rural community. Women coming out of training college would have to be better prepared in both professional and psychological terms to serve effectively in these areas. Interviews with several newly trained female teachers revealed that they were focussed on their own needs: lack of water, lack of accommodation and other facilities; they were not prepared to consult the community over ways to improve conditions for themselves or for the children.

The study found that the most important quality of NTFT was her ability to engender good community-school relations. Female teachers who had been serving for over 10 years in the same community were sometimes unable to get the community to undertake a simple construction and repair job for the school despite numerous attempts by the teachers. This often resulted in bad feelings between the teacher and the community sometime ending in threats and absenteeism until the school was repaired. Community relation's skills were essential for both male and female teachers in order to improve and carry out their functions in a comfortable and effective manner. Table 4.7 highlights some of the factors, which assist female teachers, adapt to deprived rural areas.

**Table 4.7: Factors which assist teachers adapt to deprived rural areas**

	<b>Female Teachers comments concerning factors which assist them adapt to life in deprived rural areas</b>
Long Serving Female <b>Pupil teacher</b> Posted to remote and deprived rural	<p><i>" If you feel proud you will face problems but if you get into a community and are friendly you will have no problem with them. For example the previous teacher had to leave due to a poor relationship with the community".</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Parents live in a nearby village; she is a native to the area and familiar with the conditions. (*)</li> <li>➤ Was born in the community and has a rural background (**)</li> </ul>

	<b>Female Teachers comments concerning factors which assist them adapt to life in deprived rural areas</b>
area in Kintampo (18km from the main road)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Not living directly in the community</li> <li>➤ Speaks the local language</li> <li>➤ Husband/ Parents are residing in the area (*)</li> <li>➤ Community provides food stuffs to the female teachers</li> <li>➤ Circuit supervisors are making regular visits.</li> </ul>
Long Serving Trained Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Comes from a village herself (*****)</b></li> <li>➤ Husband also lives in the community (**)</li> <li>➤ Easy to obtain food stuffs from the farm and acquire land for farming (**)</li> <li>➤ Serves in community development capacity (**)</li> <li>➤ Married into community (**)</li> <li>➤ Speaks language of the community (**)</li> <li>➤ Motivated to assist the community (**)</li> <li>➤ Not living directly in the community</li> <li>➤ Supported by church members from the community and other members of staff.</li> <li>➤ Not a social or outgoing person so does not feel that lonely</li> <li>➤ Originally from a town in the same district</li> <li>➤ Husband is supportive and moved to the same village to undertake farming activities</li> </ul>
Newly trained female teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Made friends with some JSS school leavers'</li> <li>➤ Keeps some social distance and limits interaction with the community (**)</li> <li>➤ Made conscious decision to stay for only two years (**).</li> <li>➤ Has plans for further studies.</li> <li>➤ Learned from teacher training college to adapt to different situations</li> <li>➤ Lived in a village most of her life</li> <li>➤ Supported by other male colleagues in the community</li> <li>➤ Supported by the head teacher and helped to adapt (**)</li> <li>➤ Based outside the village living in an urban area</li> <li>➤ Member of a religious group</li> <li>➤ Helping organise community groups and self help activities</li> </ul>

(Based on interviews with female teachers in study sites) (\*) marks number of women who responded

There were several newly trained female teachers who did not appear well adjusted to their new communities. They complained of loneliness and did not see themselves as potential change agents or role models themselves. NTFT were also found to have made a conscious decision to leave the community after two years of service. Two years appeared to be the longest time frame a newly trained female teacher could commit to living in a particular community. Most of them spoke of their plans to pursue higher education at the University College of Winneba or Cape Coast.

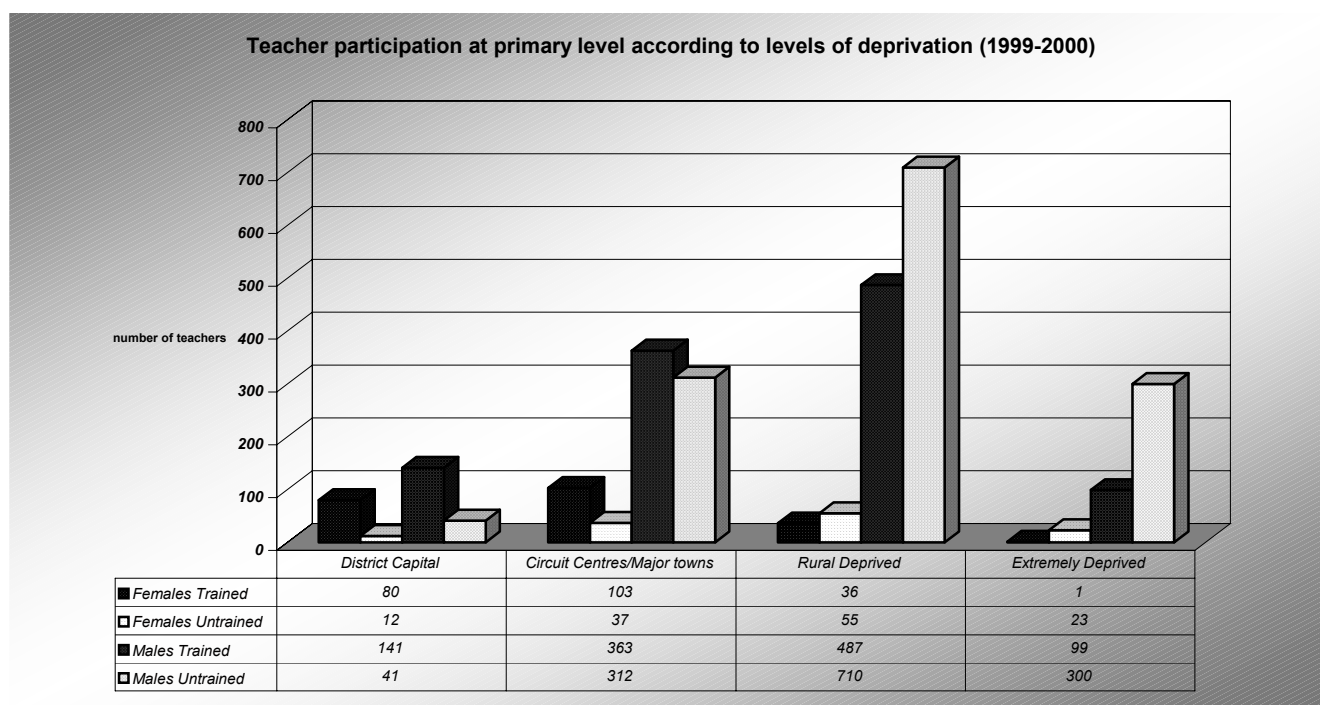
The study revealed that most LSFT were from rural areas themselves and often had family living in nearby communities. This made their adaptation to the community much easier than the newly trained females who were often from outside the district or urban areas. District Directors of Education sighted the background of NTFT as a key factor in posting them within the district. Females from large city centres of Ghana (i.e. Accra,

Kumasi) were rarely posted out of the district capital. Only NTFT who were from areas, which could be considered more, deprived (e g Volta region, Upper East or Upper West) were found to be posted out of the district capital.

### 4.3 Breakdown of male and female teachers in the Deprived and Extremely deprived areas

The following table reveals the trends in female teacher participation across the six districts based on levels of deprivation developed by the each district education office.

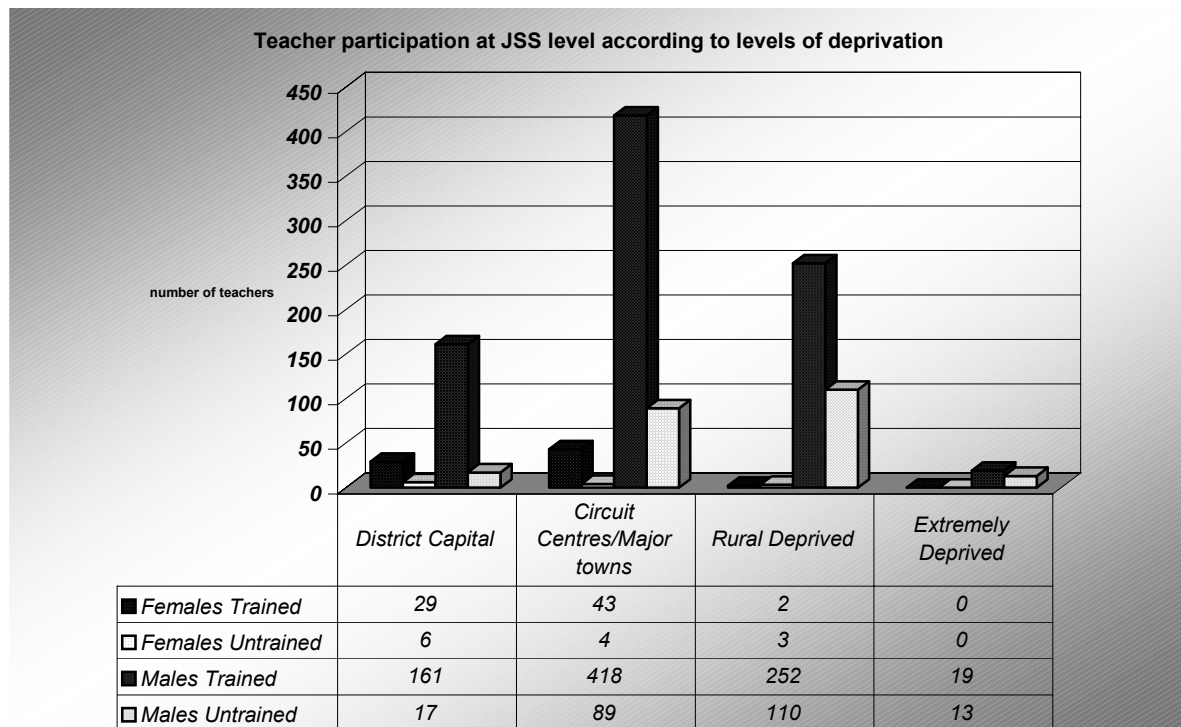
**Table 4.8: Teacher participation at primary level across various levels of deprivation**



(Based 1999/2000 Statistics and in collaboration with District Manpower Offices in six districts, 2000)

Table 4.8 reveals that the number of male teachers serving in the district increased as one moves from the district capitals out to the rural deprived areas while the number of female teachers serving in these areas declines. The findings reveal that the majority of trained female teachers were serving at circuit centres and major town centres in the district. The vast majority of circuit centres are located in main towns and often located at junctions along the main road. There were only a few exceptions of circuit centres, which fell outside the categorisation of “rural deprived” across the six districts. The field data also reveals that the vast majority of untrained female teachers were serving in rural deprived areas. These trends were similar across the six districts.

**Table 4.9: Teacher participation at JSS level according to levels of deprivation**



(Based 1999/2000 Statistics and in collaboration with District Manpower Offices in six districts, 2000)

The JSS data reveal an even more distressing picture regarding the participation of female teachers in rural deprived areas. There were virtually no female teachers –trained or untrained serving in rural deprived areas at JSS level. Although the vast majority of JSSs are located in District centres and major towns there are a significant number of male teachers serving at Junior Secondary Schools located in areas categorized as “rural and deprived”. Districts did not allow untrained female teachers to serve at JSS level although there were a significant number of men serving at this level. Untrained female teachers often did not have the requisite knowledge in subject areas taught at the JSS. The few untrained female teachers who were serving at JSS level in deprived areas were mainly teaching catering and life skill subjects. Manpower officers across the six districts explained that trained female teachers were usually posted to primary schools and in some cases managed the KG levels where there were several untrained females (Wassa Amenfi).

### **How the poor get poorer**

Tables 4.8 and 4.9 reveal the problems in attracting female teachers to serve in rural deprived areas. The data revealed a clear relationship between the levels of deprivation and female teacher participation in schooling. The investigation also revealed that as one moved out of the district capital towards more remote areas there were fewer "trained" teachers--further depriving areas attempting to arrest poverty through education and using



education as a means to their own human development. The findings confirm studies undertaken by Casely-Hayford (2000) in Northern Ghana and Croft (Work in progress) in Malawi. Fewer trained female teachers would further handicap girls' educational experience and continue to reproduce the cycle of deprivation in rural areas<sup>28</sup>. The relationship between poverty and education was clearly linked in this study whereby districts with lower levels of female teacher participation were also experiencing highest rates of deprivation, poor quality of education and poor socio-economic status with little hope of breaking the poverty cycle unless a higher quality of committed teachers (particularly female) made sacrifices to serve in these areas. Several studies point to girls' education as being the key strategy to arrest poverty in rural Africa and the most crucial investment governments can make to arrest the intergenerational cycle (Avotri et al, 1999).

Manpower officers across all six districts reported, "trained teachers do not often accept postings to deprived rural areas. Pupil teachers will go out because they have 'no choice' but the trained teachers come with a lot of needs." The following were the major trends in posting teachers, which affected the poor districts:

- Newly trained female teachers (unmarried) are not posted to rural deprived areas unless they are stationed along the main road
- Trained female teachers are rarely posted to extremely deprived rural areas
- The majority of teachers are untrained and posted to deprived rural areas--only a few female teachers in each district with families living in the area were found serving in these areas
- Trained male teachers who go to deprived rural areas often have a reason (engaged in petty trading or farming activities)--based on interviews with circuit supervisors in Tolon Kumbungu and Kintampo districts.

## 4.4 Quality of Female Teachers

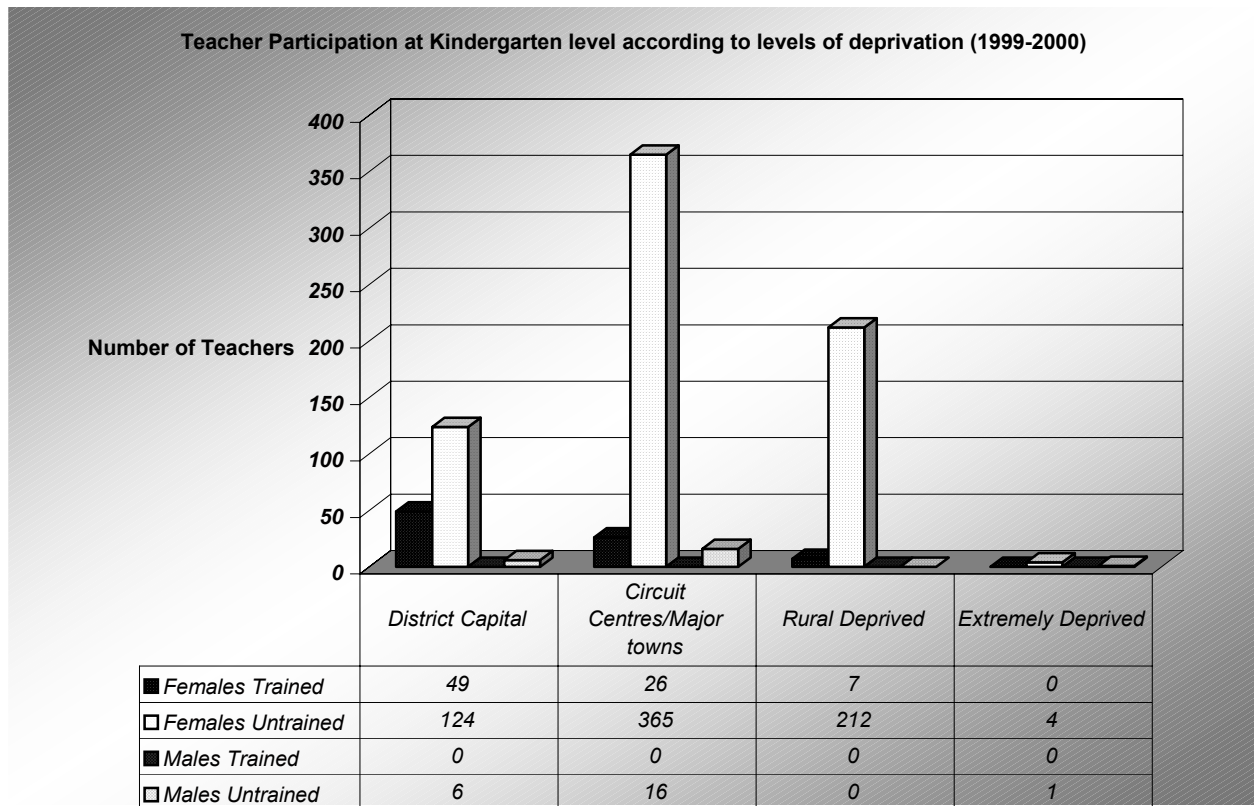
### The KG factor

DDEs explained that the vast majority of female teachers were serving at the Kindergarten (KG) level. See table 4.10 below. DDEs and community members complained that the poor status of the female teacher was related to the poor quality of teachers at the KG level. Some districts had so many female teachers serving at KG level that they had to appoint trained female teachers to head the KG levels (Wassa Amenfi). Directors complained of their inability to move KG female teacher to the basic level. DDEs in Sene and East Gonja had attempted to upgrade the KG teachers to serve at the Basic level but it was clear that the female teachers preferred to work at the KG level due to previous issues around job security. Male teachers--trained or untrained-- were rarely appointed to teach at this level.

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<sup>28</sup> Findings from the study reveal that there were very few females able to enter JSS or SSS and teacher training college. This is explored in Chapter 6.

**Table 4.10: Teacher participation at Kindergarten level according to levels of deprivation**



(Based 1999/2000 Statistics and in collaboration with District Manpower Offices in six districts, 2000)

The problem of moving female teachers from the KG to the Basic level was particularly difficult in the case of untrained female teachers who feared the policy of being retrenched once a trained teacher was available to replace them. The shift of female teachers from the Primary / JSS into the KG level occurred in the early 1990's when there was a policy to retrench all untrained teachers in the system. Studies from Akyeampong et al (2000) show a significant drop in the number of untrained teachers during the early 1990's see Table 1.4 Chapter 1. This had a severe impact on teachers serving in rural areas particularly for the men who were retrenched. We met some very capable MSLC holders who had served as teachers for several years and were continuing to volunteer their services but were let go due to the change of policy in the early 1990s. Untrained female teachers found some escape from retrenchment by continuing to work at the KG level.

Over the last two years the GES has allowed Districts to recruit pupil teachers but older untrained female teachers are cautious to maintain their positions at the KG level. Another factor, which detracted from the professional recognition and perceptions of female teachers, was the poor quality of teaching at the KG level. Interviews with parents, head teachers and female teachers themselves confirmed that little more than "a, b, c" was going on in the KG classrooms and teachers were satisfied singing a few songs

and then letting the children play. Parents observed that few female teachers were engaged in 'training children' instead they were simply baby-sitting. Interviews with female teachers themselves described working at the primary level as 'classroom' work while KG level work was simply 'taking care of children'. Female teachers also reported a preference to teach at this level since they found it less demanding than the Primary level. There were only a few exceptions found in the Middle zone where head teachers had promoted some KG teachers to the "classroom" level<sup>29</sup>. Interviews with some parents suggested that they preferred male teachers at the Primary and JSS level.

District Directors of Education and manpower officers reported that they had placed most of their female teachers at this level due to the female teachers' interest in young children, and the low academic standard of English. Observation and interviews with the female teachers revealed that most found it "easier to teach at the KG level", they did not have to prepare as many lesson notes and often did not feel confident in teaching English and Maths. Head teachers also reported a certain laxity of teachers at the KG level.

Observation and data from the community sites revealed a very low teacher pupil ratio at KG level. DDE's in some districts (Western region) complained that female teachers were "untrainable" and could not be moved into the basic level so they had kept them working at the KG level. This revealed a certain level of wastage in the system. The question of whether the Government could sustain both the KG classes and improve the quality of the Basic Education was posed—with high levels of need and scarcity of resources particularly human resources. The 31<sup>st</sup> December Women's Movement, World Vision and other NGOs' were supporting some day care centres in the districts but more teacher training was needed to improve the standard of the KG level.

### **Literacy practices of female teachers**

Female teachers serving at basic level also reported limited access to newspapers and books. Out of the 22 female teachers interviewed only NTFT reported purchasing newspapers but these were only available when they traveled out of the community. The rest of the female teachers interviewed relied mainly on radio for information and had very little reading materials. NTFT posted to deprived rural areas all spoke of their interest to continue their studies and upgrade their knowledge but were limited due to the absence of books, and remedial or preparatory classes.

Very few untrained female teachers sighted reading materials such as newspapers since these were not readily available in their communities. DDEs and district education officers sighted problems of low literacy levels among female teachers they had attempted to retrain. District officers and head teachers reported poor language skills among female teachers at the primary level since they were unable to read and speak in English. Lack of proper language skills was also sighted as a problem for teachers who

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<sup>29</sup> Most female teachers spoke of the 'classroom' when referring to primary and JSS levels as the arena for real teaching; the KG level was never referred to as a classroom inferring that they did not really teach there.

were posted to areas where they could not speak the local language making it difficult to teach in the mother tongue language particularly at lower primary level.

### **Lack of in-service training**

One of the major recommendations from the DDE and District Education Officers was that the GES should concentrate on upgrading the standard of females from SSS level onwards. There was clear evidence that very few untrained and long serving teachers had been trained or given an opportunity for in-service training over the last ten years. Tables 4.1 and 5.4 describe some of the characteristics of females serving in rural deprived areas across the six districts and reveal the poor professional training record.

Several teachers at both KG and Primary level reported never having been trained since their initial engagement with the GES. World Vision, an NGO working in the Sene District, recognised this severe problem and had organised a one-week training for "pupil teachers" within the district to upgrade their skills. The district office had helped to facilitate the programme by organising the tutors from the nearby Atebubu Training College and providing some portion of logistical support. UNICEF had carried out a similar training for pupil teachers in the 'Childscope schools' and neighbouring communities in the Tolon Kumbungu District. These training programmes were badly needed according to the findings of this study. Training for KG teachers is being planned for the Kintampo district but at a charge to the teachers of 200,000 cedis, which may prevent a large number of them from participating.

### **4.5 Poor Quality of teaching and rift within the community/school relationship**

Interviews with urban and some rural female teachers in Kintampo district (Kintampo town and Paniamisa) revealed that community members had been defecating on their classroom chairs and in their rooms as an expression of dissatisfaction with the school. Deeper investigation revealed that the community (particularly in Paniamisa) was deeply discouraged by the poor performance of the teachers and sited examples of the laxity and poor attitude of teachers toward their profession. Signs of poor quality of teaching were also found displayed on the boards in the Kintampo town schools. Female teachers and heads knew that they were not performing but complained that the community was uncooperative and unsupportive.

The answer to this deep dissatisfaction with the teachers was best explained in communities in the Northern Region whereby the chief explained that the *"teachers do not respect themselves so how can the community respect them."* The Chief of Bongnayilli explained that despite their having 4 teachers serving at the English Arabic School and 4 teachers in the Local Authority school, there is never more than one teacher at any one time teaching at the schools. Despite the community's efforts to offer accommodation and food to the entire teaching force, teachers had all opted to live in Tamale, which was over 12 miles away. He believed that the teachers were rotational. The only teacher who was "serious and always regular was the untrained teacher who

always was at work at 8:30 in the morning"; he explained that these teachers fear being sacked if they do not perform and for this reason the chief preferred the untrained teachers. The chief went into great detail as to the reasons why the teachers were not regular (poor salary and remuneration). He explained all the various methods were attempted to change the behaviour and attitudes of the 'trained teachers' but with no result-they still remained irregular. Interviews with the Newly trained female teacher who was posted to this district revealed that she had no regular transport from Tamale and had to rely on private vehicles which were not always regular. This scenario was quite common in the Northern Region particularly near major town centres (Casely-Hayford, 2000).

### **Attitude of newly trained teachers towards serving rural communities**

DDE from Tolon Kumbungu stressed the main problem in his district was the poor attitude of teachers toward assisting their rural folk and the communities they are posted.  
**"If they (the teachers) are committed and want to help, they should live near them or be close to them"** (DDE, Tolon Kumbungu) Tolon Kumbungu district had even greater problems since many teachers were from the Tamale area and refused to live in the deprived areas.

The DDE in Tolon Kumbungu had served in several remote areas of the north like Gusheigu Karaga and had a long history of educational experience in these areas. He like others across the six districts recognised that the problems stemmed from the poor attitude and orientation of teachers toward the rural poor and their inability to give of their services to the community. These fundamental attitudes toward work in rural communities were reflected back to the community members in the teachers' behaviour--continual absenteeism and lack of interest in teaching. These same patterns have been extensively documented in other studies concerning rural education in Ghana (Casely-Hayford, 2000).

Building teacher accommodation or providing incentives may be a temporary solution to a deeper problem confronting the teaching force in Ghana---lack of commitment and poor attitude toward service to the children and communities in rural Ghana.

### **Preference for male or female teachers at community level**

The vast majority of focal group discussions with men and women revealed a preference for male teachers compared to female teachers due to:

- Punctuality
- Fewer causes for absenteeism
- Perception that male teachers know their subject and can speak English better.

Community members, parents and teachers themselves believe that female teachers are better at taking care of the young children in KG or P1 since they are more sensitive to their needs. Kintampo district meetings with community members (Paninamisa) indicated a very poor perception of female teachers. They complained bitterly that their

children could not read simple road signs or names despite the fact they had completed JSS. Head teachers admitted that the female teachers were not performing at the KG level and this had brought a rift between the teachers and community.

Although some communities were beginning to understand the importance of providing role models for their girl children, the large majority of parents were still debating over whether to send their children to school when teachers were consistently absent. Newly trained females with the proper attitude helped to spawn awareness in parents about the importance and potentials of the education of girls but the large majority of parents still clung to old attitudes, patterns and practices fueled by the poor behavior of teachers. Some JSS schools reported that male teachers had impregnated JSS girls. (Kintampo and Sene District).

The accumulated result was a very low demand for female teachers in most of the districts surveyed. It was only in Juabeso Bia that the DDE reported that some communities were demanding female teachers. Most communities did not want female teachers due to their poor performance and behavior towards men in the community (Abakoase and Piniamisa, Kintampo). Focal group discussions with female members of the community revealed that female teachers were flirting with local men causing women to feel threatened and uncomfortable.

#### **4.6 Socio-economic status of the female teacher**

Another prominent characteristic of rural female teacher was their low socio-economic status in the community. Several LSFT reported their inability to survive on the salary provided by GES. Untrained female teachers received 160,000 to 180,000 cedis net salary and in some cases were found to use teaching as a supplementary source of income to their primary activity of hairdressing and/or trading. Trained female teachers were given a salary of between 270,000 and 320,000 depending on the female teacher's rank. All teachers complained that the salary was low in comparison to their health counterparts who were serving in rural areas and receiving extra allowances, accommodation and other benefits. They also complained that as much as 5-10% of their salary was used to travel to the district capital to collect their salary at the end of each month. These monthly trips also took them away from their school duties since they had to travel during the week when Banks were open. Some teachers reported that they had to remain absent for up to three days in order to collect their salary (i.e. East Gonja, and Sene District).

##### **Supplementing income**

Most female teachers were also found to supplement their teaching salary with farm and off farm work. Urban-based female teachers were at a great advantage to their rural counterparts. Rural-based female teachers complained of their inability to engage in petty trading activities (e.g. selling of ice water and ready-made food) as compared to their urban counterparts. Interviews with urban based female teachers in Kintampo and East Gonja confirmed that part of the reason women (trained and untrained) would not

accept postings outside the district capital was due to these income generating activities. Female teachers in rural areas pointed out that the advantages of living in an urban area were:

- Availability of credit from wholesalers in order to purchase and sell goods
- Easy access to transport to major town centres to buy items
- Access to a variety of materials to sell (i.e. second hand clothing, plastic items)
- Inability to purchase consumer items without credit (i.e. sewing machines, television, pots etc)
- Engaging in certain trades where there was high demand such as ice water, sewing and hairdressing
- Electricity and basic amenities to carry out income generating activities and larger market access to selling goods

Urban-based female teachers interviewed explained that income generated from petty trading activities was one of the main reasons they wanted to remain in the urban areas. Several female teachers posted to schools around the district capital in East Gonja were engaged in petty trading and income generating activities. They would walk or ride bicycles into the district capital immediately after school engaging in their income generating activities until well into the night. For some female teachers these activities were their primary income source and saw teaching as a supplementary activity.

Rural based female teachers compared themselves to their urban counterparts who had been able to build their own homes, purchase bicycles, clothing and purchase televisions and other consumer items on credit. Female teachers were at a great disadvantage since they did not have access to credit or a large market to sell items. No one in the rural areas was willing to give building materials on credit and therefore they found it difficult to build and maintain their homes. They suggested that a consumer credit schemes or small loan schemes be set up for rural teachers in order to purchase building materials and some consumer and productive items. The issue raised some questions regarding whether teachers were being paid a 'living wage' or would have to constantly depend on supplementing their income-- taking away valuable time and focus from their main responsibilities as a teacher.

Most of the rural female teachers were engaged in farming activities for both consumption and market purposes. There were also reports that the children would assist them farming even during the school hours. One community, in the Western region had agreed that instead of the community providing food stuffs for the teachers the children could farm for the teachers on Fridays. The school used the children on a rotational basis and farming activities became a main source to of income, which supplemented their salary and food supply. Many communities were found not selling food to the teachers and therefore they were either forced to go to the nearest market or cultivate their own land.

Supplementary income-generating activities were contributing to the **low status of the teacher** in the community. District education officers gave examples in Kintampo of

how female teachers were found carrying out degrading tasks such as selling ice water in the evening at the local lorry station. Several teachers themselves mentioned that they felt embarrassed when walking to their farms in shabby clothing and on the same path they found their own school pupils. Observations in communities revealed that immediately after school closed female teachers would open up their own small shops, which sold petty items to people in the community.

Interviews with both SSS students and community members revealed that income and social status were closely related. The social status of the teacher was intimately linked to how much wealth or status symbols they could demonstrate to the community. Several examples of how the teacher's status was being lowered were related to the teachers' own clothing and personal presentation. Several LSFT spoke of their inability to buy suitable clothing for school due to lack of access to ready made garments which were only available in the large towns. There was also a significant difference between the quality of school uniforms rural and urban-based teachers were wearing.

Newly trained females serving in rural areas kept their image up in the village by always dressing properly for school. Discussions with SSS3 female students in Kintampo and East Gonja revealed that this had a significant impact on female perceptions of the teacher. When asked why they were not opting for the teaching profession SSS female students explained that teachers had to walk to school while their own pupils were driving around in cars. Another indicator of the teacher's low socio-economic status was their inability to support their own children through higher levels of education (i.e. SSS and Tertiary level institutions). The inability of teachers to support their own children through SSS and tertiary level institutions was the main reason teachers gave for not encouraging their own children in the teaching profession.

Where teachers had prospered economically they appeared to wield a higher level of respect. For instance, in the Western region some female teachers and their families had done extremely well in cocoa farming activities and plantain cultivation. These teachers were role models of successful farmers and had achieved a level of respect from the community.

### **The social status of the female teacher**

The social status of the female teacher often depended on her own perceptions of herself and her capacities to serve the community. In some communities where female teachers married into the village they were treated the same way as other local women---often with disrespect. Female teachers described how male pupils at primary and JSS would call them names and make fun of them in the community (Kojobonikope, East Gonja).

Other teachers who had maintained some distance from the community and demonstrated leadership capacities were able to establish a better social status for themselves. They still confronted discrimination and derogatory remarks by elders and men but they were able to contain these and wield some level of respect due to their community leadership roles as women organisers, and/or district assembly representatives.



The most important factors in the social status of the female teacher appeared to be the perception of the community had towards the female teacher's professional abilities and performance at school. Newly trained female teachers commanded respect and insured that they maintained some distance from the community in order to maintain this. NTFT usually remained astute and careful in interacting too closely with the community until they established their position. Some NTFT took an active role in assisting communities improve their schools but this required experience in community mobilisation which most NTFT were lacking.

Community members appeared conscious of their child's performance and most parents were aware of whether a female or male teacher was performing based on their level of discipline, promptness and attitude towards work. Finally, the teachers' social status was also determined by the quality of interaction with the local community such as engaging at local drinking spots and interaction with the married and unmarried men in the community. The interviews with men and women's focal groups in the 20 communities revealed that community members kept a keen eye on their female teachers. The case of Wassa Amenfi District Assembly best describes this level of awareness and how they attempted to improve the plight of the teacher.

#### **Box 4.3: Attempts at teacher improvement in Wassa Amenfi District**

##### **Attempts of Teacher Improvement in Wassa Amenfi District**

The District Chief Executive (DCE) of Wassa Amenfi described the problem of rural teachers in the following way:

" If we are to study the plight of the teacher we should look at the person holistically which includes their psychological, and moral character. If you send a teacher that does not have a strong moral code to a remote area and he or she starts acting as a ' local' --engaging with the people in drinking bars and being free with the women-- what have you done for the community? We need to orient and prepare the rural teacher. We also must give the teacher hope by helping them realise their personal aspirations. We must assist them make a life for themselves in the community they are posted. This requires a careful study of the person in order to help them develop their skills. "

The Wassa Amenfi District Assembly used the poverty alleviation funds to provide loans for teachers to start small businesses. Their experience revealed that teachers were found in the markets trading during market days instead of at the school. The district assembly learned that a strong community school relationship was needed in order to assist teachers improve their livelihood. "The teacher has to depend on the traditional leaders and chiefs in order to improve their living conditions." The District Chief Executive had observed that the relationship between the teacher and the community is often not healthy because the GES has not advocated on the teachers behalf. The experience of the Wassa Amenfi District Assembly revealed that where the community school relations were strong the teacher would learn to adjust him or herself to rural life.

The District Chief Executive spoke of the need for policies in education to have a more "human face" taking into consideration the plight of the teacher, their family and life aspirations. This would require close contact with teachers serving in rural areas. The district had closely studied the reports from circuit supervisors and had noticed that most of their reports were focussed on infrastructure and problems of lack of books in the schools; the circuit supervisors were not " going down to see the lives of the teachers and taking keen interest in their welfare."

The district had started several schemes to assist teachers including a self-help scheme for communities who were able to construct accommodation and repair the school. They were also running a sponsorship scheme to assist teachers who were proceeding to Winneba College of Education for Higher Studies. The district was conducting joint meetings with the different stakeholders in order to discuss the problems concerning education in the district. They have also constructed a youth leadership center for JSS graduates and had noted that very few girls were able to proceed to SSS. The youth leadership-training center was focussed on providing employable skills training to these youth.

#### **The professional status of the teacher**

The following factors emerged as key elements of the female teacher's professional status in the eyes of the community. The factors included:

- Their attitude to work or work ethic

- Number of in-service training programmes attended
- Performance of the children in reading and writing
- Commitment to their job: absenteeism, lateness
- Interest in the children.

Factors critical to the teachers' perception of their professional status were:

- Lack of basic upkeep of school facilities
- Neglect of parents to provide basic materials for the child (i.e. pencil and exercise book)
- Level of interest demonstrated by the chief, PTA or SMC
- Payment of school fees.

Female teachers in most communities reported a lack in interest taken by parents in their child's education. Teachers reported that parents were not paying school fees and demanding that the teachers pitch in. One female head teacher reported having to pay her children's sports and culture fees over the last two years since the community had not been forthcoming. Teachers had to strike a delicate balance between **acceptance by the community and respect as a professional teacher**. This was a challenge much harder for female teachers, particularly untrained, residing for long periods of time within the same community.

## **Conclusion: lack of good role models**

The main finding from interviews and observation of female teachers within the six districts across the country was the lack of 'good female role models' even within districts where female teachers existed. Most LSFT complained of becoming "too much like the locals" and that their students could not see a difference between them and the other villagers. The only exceptions were NTFT.

The poor appearance and complaints of laxity from community members regarding the KG teachers contributed to poor perceptions. Many female teachers were not able to act or behave as good role models and they were acutely aware of their dilemma. The female teachers presentation, her social distance from the community and location of residence were all critical factors in maintaining a level of respect from community members. Most importantly was her performance and attitude toward her own work, which was reflected, in all the above factors. A striking difference of female teachers presentation and composure was in Tolon Kumbungu district where rural based female teachers were told of the importance of dress by the previous DDE. Interviews with the Girls Education Officers and female teachers themselves revealed that the good role models must have the following characteristics:

- Proper Dress
- Avoidance of absenteeism
- Proper relations with men in the community (married or staying with one partner)
- Humility and good relations with the community
- Willingness to take up responsibility in the community

- Basic level of proficiency in their teaching duties.

Very few long serving female teachers exhibited these qualities. Some of the NTFT were able to maintain some social distance from the community and maintain these qualities. Focal group discussions with the SSS 3 female students revealed that they had experienced very few good female role models in their careers as students. The low social and economic status of the female teacher was a serious deterrent for girls entering the teaching profession. The subject of the chapter 6.