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**SITUATION OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL WOMEN TEACHERS
DURING THE ECONOMIC CRISIS IN TANZANIA**

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DURING THE ECONOMIC CRISIS IN TANZANIA**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 TEACHERS POPULATION:

According to the basic statistics in Education (June, 1996) there are 105,280 primary school teachers in Tanzania. Out of these 45,482 (43.2%) are men and 59,798 (56.8%) are women. This means that teaching is one of the wage employment jobs in which the number of women is almost the same as the men. Nevertheless, women are more than men. Tanzania cannot therefore ignore the women teachers in development.

1.2 THE ECONOMY:

Tanzania's economy is based on small holder agricultural producers. This sector employs about 90% of the country's labour force and contributes 45% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) 20% of the country's labour force are employed. Teachers are among the employed workers. However, it should be born in mind that Tanzania workers are also engaged in small scale agriculture and livestock keeping to subsidise their salaries.

1.3 THE ECONOMIC CRISIS IN TANZANIA:

The Economic Crisis in Tanzania is historical. The decline of the economy can best be analysed within five phases. First phase was 1961-67 when reliance on private enterprises, tolerance of foreign investment and stress on the objectives of growth in per capita income dominated.

The second phase was 1967-1976 when socialism and self-reliance with rural and agricultural development were key areas of the policy action. The economy had performed relatively well up to the mid 1970s with annual growth rate above 5%.

The third phase was 1976-1984 when there was a general decline in agricultural production coupled with an under utilisation of the available industrial capacity. This was the most crisis ridden phase. The GDP growth rate fell to an average of 2.6% during 1978-1981. There was emergency of pseudo-merchant class. Hoarding and racketeering dominated the economy. This was also the period when the state opted for allocating a larger share of the available resources to the more directly productive sectors of the economy than to the social service sector.

The fourth phase was 1985-1989 when difficult economic conditions were elaborated in the 1984/85 budget. This was followed by policies falling under the Economy Recovery Programme (ERP). Emphasis was placed on directly productive sector leaving the social services such as education and health intact, but dry. In this phase, therefore, the primary school teachers' respect which they were receiving from the public in general and from government leaders in particular started to deteriorate. This was because teachers' input and output is normally intangible and what they render is social service which was ignored by the government in the fourth phase.

In the fifth phase, that is, 1990 to-date the government has opted for a strategy of correcting the negative social consequences of ERP. This is the underlying spirit of the Economic and Social Adjustment Programme (ESAP) which states that the government will not be in a position to restore the social services to levels achieved in the 1970s but it will try its best to improve the social services. Formation of workers' unions such as the Tanzania Teachers Union (TTU) is one of the measures. At least through the TTU primary school teachers will speak out their grievances. Eventually these teachers will restore their old respect as well as be in a better position to alleviate their poverty.

2.0 THE ROLE OF WOMEN TEACHERS IN THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN TANZANIA

Population statistics show that 53% of the Tanzania population is made up of women. This means that the development of this nation cannot ignore the contribution of the largest group. It is the woman who dominate in the backbone of the economy, that is, agriculture. 87.8 % of the womenfolk are engaged in one way or another in agricultural product.

Women teachers are also engaged in one way or another in agricultural activities and other income generating activities such as selling of food stuffs, tuition, shops etc, in order to alleviate the difficulties of the Tanzanian poverty ridden economy.

It should be born in mind that besides income generating activities teachers also have other roles. Teaching more than twenty periods per week and other school extra curriculum activities capture much of teachers' time.

Women teachers have other traditional roles at their homes. These include child care, husband care, care of relatives and sick persons. Due to all these responsibilities women teachers tend to be double disadvantaged in the Tanzania society. The possibilities for primary school women teachers in Tanzania to-day to improve themselves professionally or to enter into managerial positions or big business career are certainly far from being viewed. Both women and men teachers are given equal opportunities for education, cultural and professional advancement. Nevertheless, men teachers, in spite of cultural reasons and gender relations are in a better position to develop themselves than women teachers.

3.0 THE WOMEN TEACHERS' CONTRIBUTION AND PARTICIPATION IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF MZUMBE WARD

Mzumbe Ward is in Morogoro (Rural) District in Morogoro Region, Tanzania. According to government statistics of July, 1996 Mzumbe Ward has 85 primary school teachers among whom 32 are men and 53 are women.

Women teachers in Mzumbe Ward, just like other women teachers in Tanzania are aware of their personalities, the Tanzania's economic crisis, their socio-economic constraints and their position as women and as teachers. They have encouraged each other to undertake various income generating activities in order to improve their economic status. In this section we are going to discuss experiences of the Mzumbe Ward Women teachers' participation in economic development.

3.1 THE WOMEN TEACHERS' SITUATION:

Research findings have shown that the Mzumbe ward women teachers are very busy. Among the 50 women teachers interviewed 45 (90%) women teachers have got 20-30 periods per week. It was also found out that 25 (50%) women teachers stayed far from their schools therefore they spent a lot of time walking to and from schools.

It was also found out that 30 (60%) Women are grade III C hence they receive less than T.shs. 28,000/= per month. In spite of receiving such a meagre salary 30 (60%) of the teachers take care of three and/or above children and other relatives. Therefore all the women teachers (100%) are engaged in economic activities which, due to lack of time generate an average of T.shs.200/= only per day.

3.2 CONSTRAINTS WHICH WOMEN TEACHERS FACE:

3.2.1 Lack of Teachers' Houses:

There are no teachers' houses at the school campuses. Therefore teachers rent rooms far from the school. Sometimes they are obliged to pay bus fare to travel to and from school. This problem is well known but nothing is done to improve the situation. The journey to and from school for five days in a week hampers the teachers' economic development in that the teachers waste a lot of time on the way.

3.2.2 Lack of Capital:

The primary school women teachers income is extremely small. They are therefore too inadequate to start a big economic enterprise. The women teachers in Mzumbe Ward are not given any house or transport allowances.

3.2.3 Lack of Information:

The primary school women teachers do not get valuable information concerning their businesses, markets, technology etc. Besides, they are not access to the donor organisations which could provide loans and/or assistance to them. Therefore they lack financial support. Among the 50 women teachers interviewed 60% are engaged in selling food stuffs like burns and ice cream, selling goods from their gardens and tuition classes. However, they receive about T.shs.200/= only per day. The other 40% remaining do not have any project because they do not see any gain from them.

3.2.4 Lack of time:

Due to the combined roles as mothers, teachers (workers) and business women there is no time for better future plans looking after their economic activities, school activities and participate in other social activities.

From the above constraints, we need to understand the constraints that are faced by women in different fields in which they participate so that deliberate efforts are made to remove these constraints.

4.0 THE ECONOMIC CRISIS, WOMEN TEACHERS IN DEVELOPMENT AND THE WAY FORWARD

Tanzania appears to be still politically stable. A lively debate about the future course of Tanzania's political development has culminated into the adoption of a multi-party democracy. It is not yet known what the drive to political liberalism implies in economic terms. There is more likelihood that an element of continuity with the past and/or present will be preserved in the economic sphere. In any case, addressing past economic mistake is likely to be done in possible policy shifts in the context of the on going economic recovery.

With the emerging teachers' union, women teachers' constraints will be more pronounceable with a consequence of their educational, social and economic development. The future of women teachers in development will depend on the recognition of their importance by the government.

5.0 CONCLUSION:

It is undeniable that education is the bedseed of the development of any country. It is no doubt that teachers are important people due to their contribution in education in the country. There is no question that increasing burden of the country's poverty falls most heavily upon women, women teachers being among them. Poverty cannot be eradicated without the contribution of women in general and women teachers in particular.

Therefore excluding women teachers from development not only leaves the situation worse but also impoverishes the whole society.

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