

The Current Situation of Sudan's Teacher Education Policy and Practice:

Rural Areas



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The Current Situation of Sudan's Teacher Education Policy and Practice: Rural Areas

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Abstract

According to the World Bank, the Sudanese population reached close to 38 million in 2014. 63% of them are still living in rural areas and 40.8% are below the age of 15. These young people possess great potential in shaping the future of their country if their own potential is fostered by quality education. To deliver high quality education, schools must attract, develop, and retain effective teachers. Rural teacher professional development is regarded as one of the key factors that help in achieving quality in rural education, where a large number of teachers do not have any teacher education. This paper is a policy analysis study to analyse the current situation of teacher education policy and practice in Sudan focusing on rural areas. It is more focused on teachers working conditions in rural schools, recruitment and retention of teachers and rural teachers professional development in Sudan including; pre-service teacher preparation, in-service teacher training and perceived impact of professional development. It is also an attempt to briefly review and analyse some barriers and difficulties facing rural teacher, policy issues, and new reform for rural teacher training. The paper concludes that, poverty and conflicts continues to be powerful factors that impacts on access to quality of education and affect the recruitment of more qualified teachers in rural areas and areas affected by conflicts, therefore, there is a dire need to improve education and teachers' quality in rural schools of Sudan.

Keywords: Rural Education, Poverty, Conflicts, Teacher Professional Development, Pre-service Teacher Education, In- service Training, Recruitment, Retention, Working Condition.

1.0 Introduction

Sudan is situated in northern Africa, with a coastline bordering the Red Sea. It sits at the crossroads of sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, with fertile lands, abundant livestock, and manufacturing. However, the country has been beset by conflicts for most of its independent history and, under the terms of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the southern states seceded to form the Republic of South Sudan in July 2011. As of 2014 Sudan has a population of 38 million, of which 62% are less than 25 years of age. About two thirds of Sudanese live in rural areas (63%). The population is growing quickly-2.5% per year-reflecting the relatively high fertility rate and the large population in the reproductive age group. If the current growth rate continues, the country's population will double in only 29 years. Sudan is a country of great ethnic and geographic diversity, with a history of large-scale population movements and numerous development challenges. Poverty remains widespread; almost half of Sudanese live below the national poverty line, with 75% of the poorest living in rural areas. Poverty varies widely across regions; the lowest poverty incidence is in Khartoum State (26%), and the highest is in North Darfur (69.4%) (UNFPA, 2014a). One quarter of the population has no access to health facilities.

Sudan is an extremely poor country that has experienced protracted social conflict, civil war, and, in July 2011, the loss of three-quarters of its oil production due to the secession of South Sudan. The oil sector had driven much of Sudan's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth since 1999. For nearly a decade, the economy boomed on the back of rising oil production, high oil prices, and significant inflows of foreign direct investment. Since the economic shock of South Sudan's secession, Sudan has struggled to stabilise its economy and make up for the loss of foreign exchange earnings. Ongoing conflicts in Southern Kordofan, Darfur, and the Blue Nile states, lack of basic infrastructure in large areas, and reliance by much of the population on subsistence agriculture keep close to half of the population at or below the poverty line.

The basic education system in Sudan continues to exclude vulnerable children, including former child soldiers, children in remote areas, displaced children, demobilized children, street children or nomads, and especially girls. As a result, more than 1.8 million primary

school-aged children in Sudan have no access to primary education. The drop-out rate is high, and more than one in seven children complete primary education. For basic education through traditional means to reach these children, the formal education system would need to overcome the following barriers: 110,000 teachers are currently undertrained and need further training, 15,000 classrooms would need to be constructed every year, and the present government education budget would need to increase at least five-fold. Currently, neither the infrastructure nor the budget is in place to realistically expect these developments to occur (e-learning, 2015). The 2012 Education Status Report of World Bank notes the compounding negative impact of poverty, rural-urban disparities, and gender; poor girls living in rural areas are among the least likely to access educational opportunities. Indicators for nomadic and displaced populations are also poor.

Rural schools face difficulties recruiting and retaining a qualified teacher workforce. Government attention and reaction to rural teachers demand are very rigid and teaching profession is not so convincing enough in rural areas to attract talented young people, because of the low salaries paid to teachers, social isolation, poor schools environments, and students' low motivation. This paper is an attempt to analyse the current situation of teacher education in Sudan, it is focused on rural teacher by discussing the issues of teachers working conditions, recruitment and retention of teachers, rural teachers' professional developments and how poverty and conflicts affect rural education policy and practice in Sudan?

2.0 Understanding the Context: a Brief Background to Education in Sudan

Education is a basic human right and that its function is to develop the talents of the individual to the fullest extent possible to enable everyone to participate in the society. Schools instil basic values according to criteria of principles and not of expediency. Sudan has set objectives for general education to provide equilibrium of the character by satisfying physical, spiritual and intellectual needs and inculcating good conduct and cooperation to enable each member of the society to fulfill his/her role in life; to assert the respect of humanity in the social system through empowerment of the learner with the knowledge

that enable him/her to know the right and duties to act accordingly and to be self-reliant in the acquisition of knowledge.; to develop a spirit of patriotism and caring of Sudan culture heritage together with awareness of the culture link with African, Arab and Islamic nations (UNESCO, 2012).

The objectives of general education as stated in the 1992 Education Act and the educational strategy are as the follows:

- *To instill in the young people religious ideas, believes and morals, and social values so as to build a responsible character.*
 - *To develop the thinking abilities of learners through experience and science and to strengthen their bodies by physical education;*
 - *To encourage self-esteem and national pride and to develop a sense of patriotism and loyalty within an improved spirit of national unity;*
 - *To build up a self-reliant community and to activate the spiritual and material energies and encourage ambition;*
 - *To encourage creativity and to build up the individuals abilities and skills through technological training so as to fulfill the goal of comprehensive developments;*
- To develop environmental awareness and promote the preservation of natural resources.*

Source: UNESCO (2012).

Efforts are being made to develop life-skills, literacy, numeracy and vocational training for such young people, with a special focus on demobilized child soldiers, returnee children and other vulnerable children.

2.1 History and Background of Education in Sudan

Education in Sudan has a long history of over twenty eight centuries. At that time our ancestors had their own way of writing which was different from ours now, they even knew the Egyptians writing (Hieroglyphics) at that time, but formal education at that time was not affordable to all people, it was restricted to the royal families and some other elites. But education in its modern form was known in Sudan during the era of the dual reign of Turkey and Egypt in Sudan (1805), when the first formal school was established in Khartoum the

capital. Beside the formal form of education there was the religious education, which was and still very important in the transmission of culture and preaching religion among the community members. With the beginning of the British colony period (1889) education in Sudan witnessed a great improvement in terms of modernization and school expansion, almost there was a school in every big town but unfortunately education was directed to serve the colonial interest rather than educating the Sudanese citizens.

After the country independence (1956), up to late 1980s, no big change happened to the education system in Sudan. By early 1990s, the beginning of the recent government, education in Sudan witnessed great change and improvement in all aspects. The holistic vision of the current Sudanese education philosophy aims at creating a unified Sudanese nation which respects, admires all its Arab and African components and its religious, cultural and ethnic components, commits and be aware to direct this diversity towards national unity as a fateful option (Ministry of General Education, 2007), supports this diversity and enriches its intellectual and material energies in order to build a developed, urbanized, unified and safe nation that endeavors to achieve its far objectives and goals.

2.2 Education System in Sudan

According to the Presidential Decree No. 12 of 2001 the Ministry of General Education is responsible for: educational planning and formulation of general educational plans; coordination between the educational authorities at both the central and state levels; preparation and development of general education curricula; literacy, adult and special education; coordinating the training of teachers and educational administrators with higher education institutions and the state's ministries; technical supervision of private education in coordination with the states; formulation of policies and development of indicators for educational evaluation and the administration and evaluation of the Secondary School Certificate examinations; and the establishment and running of schools for Sudanese communities abroad. The states are responsible for: (a) the establishment of general education institutions in their territories according to federal plans; (b) authorization of the establishment of the non-governmental schools; and, (c) the supervision of the basic education certificate examinations. Each state has its own minister of education and director-general of education.

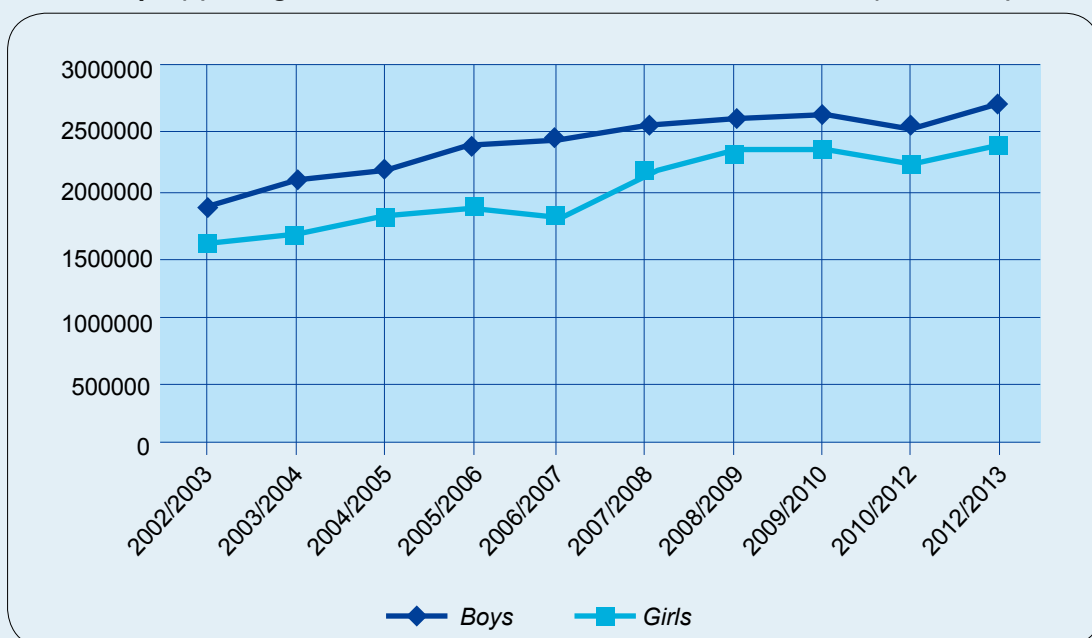
a- Basic education

It's divided into three levels as the following:

1. Pre-School	It lasts for (2) years children age group (4-6) and most of the kindergartens in the capital (Khartoum) and some other big towns are private.
2. Primary level	It lasts for (8) years and the pupils' age group (6-14). It is compulsory.
3. Secondary level	It lasts for (3) years and the student's age group (14-17) and the secondary level has two tracks; the academic track and the vocational track.

While basic education is officially free in Sudan, parents incur 'out of pocket' costs including contributions towards text books, examination fees, school uniforms and even teacher salaries in most of rural schools. In larger families these costs are known to be a major barrier to enrolment, with girls often suffering in favour of boys' education (UNICEF 2009).

Graph (1): Progress of Students in Basic Education in Sudan (2002-2012)



Source: Ministry of General Education, statistic book, 2012.

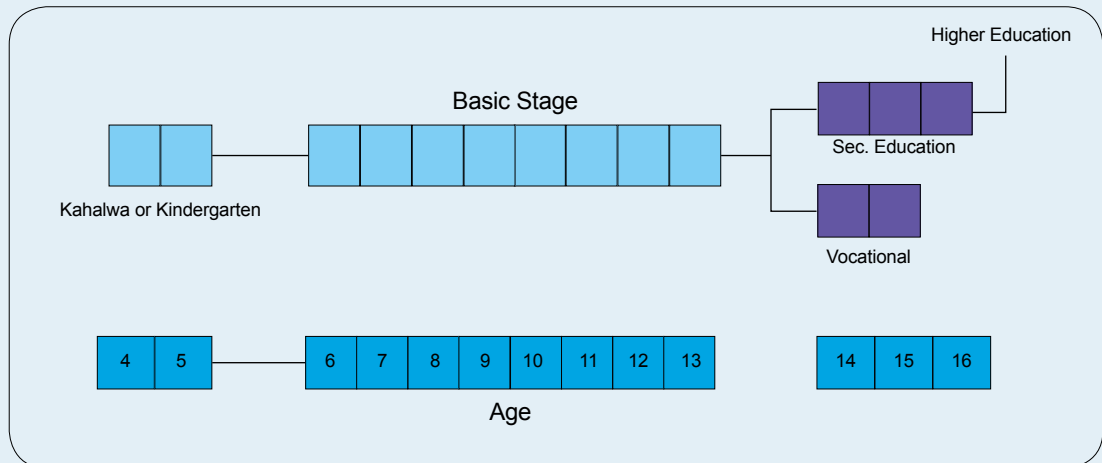
b- Higher education

Students enroll higher education at age (17); they spend between 4-6 years according to the college system. Types of institutions of higher education are the following:

1. Universities of the State.
2. Colleges and higher institutes of the State.
3. Private and foreign universities, colleges and higher institutes

The total number of higher education institutions is 125, among these universities there are 31 universities offering bachelor, master and PhD programmes, (ministry of higher education and scientific research, 2015). Arabic language is the medium of instruction at all levels of education, with emphasis on studying some foreign languages, such as English, Chinese and French.

Educational Ladder For General Education



The Sudanese government made great efforts to increase access to education, particularly in areas previously affected by conflict. The five year (2007-11) Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) prioritized the country's Commitment to the Education for All goals and outlined Activities to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) education targets. There has been a considerable increase in public education spending since 2005. In real terms, total education spending almost doubled, from Sudanese Pound (SDG) 1.3 billion to SDG 2.4 billion between 2005 and 2009, equivalent to 16 percent average annual real growth. The

positive impact of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) has been demonstrated through significant increases in basic school enrollment in Sudan, especially in communities previously affected by conflict. Basic school enrollments for Sudan increased by almost 1 million between 2004/05 and 2008/09, corresponding to average annual growth of 5.7 percent, compared to the pre CPA period spanning from 2000/01 to 2004/05, when annual enrollments increased 4.2 percent on average. However, regional disparities in access to education persist, especially in rural areas, where girls are most disadvantaged (World Bank, 2013). The ratio of pupils to teachers with a professional teaching qualification in Sudan is 1:37 (UIS, 2011), and according to the Ministry of General Education (2011) are 1:58, 1:66 and 1:72 in some rural areas.

Table (1): Summary of General Education in Sudan

Level		Schools		Students			Teachers		
		Formals	non-formals	Boys	girls	Total	Males	Females	Total
All Sudan		35022	11192	3664076	3312012	6976088	87680	157369	245776
All Formal Edu		35022		3578999	3145564	6724563	81925	150354	233006
Formal Edu	Pre-School	14615		425518	390556	816074	881	25637	26518
	Basic Education	16749		2700003	2337615	5037617	53635	96354	149989
	Acad. Sec. Edu.	3269		405432	390345	795777	26002	27637	53639
	Tech. Sec. Edu.	136		19076	6029	25105	1366	647	2013
	Islamic Studies Edu.	18		1964	109	2073	41	79	120
	Special Need Edu.	235		27006	20910	47916			727
All Non- Formal Edu			11192	85077	166448	251525	5755	7015	12770
Non-Formal Edu	Adolescents Edu.		2205	23876	22790	46666	2349	2437	4786
	Adult Edu.		8987	61201	143658	204859	3406	4578	7984

Source: Ministry of General Education statistic book, 2012.

The Ministry of General Education seeks to implement the general education policies as the following:

General education policies in Sudan:

- *To provide compulsory and accessible education opportunities to the different states and population groups;*
- *To adopt strategic educational planning that requires development of the educational database;*
- *To promote education quality by providing inputs, improving the school environment and promoting performance;*
- *To ensure education opportunities of vulnerable groups such as those affected by conflict, adults and those who are in general education schooling age;*
- *To link education with the needs of them communities;*
- *To constantly develop the content of the curricula, the methods and evaluation procedures;*
- *To improve the skills of those who work in general education by training;*
- *To develop curricula for pre-school children, and to develop parallel curricula for the children outside the school;*
- *To create a coherent educational structure on the federal level;*
- *To professionalize education and to conduct adequate selection of teachers, preparation, qualification, and training; and to improve the working conditions for teachers;*

To achieve justice and equality in education opportunities by giving due concern to the education of the persons with special needs and children affected by conflicts and natural disasters.

Source: The Education Sector Strategic Plan 2007-2011.

The development of a full education sector strategic plan will require articulation and coordination of 18 state plans within an overall national framework. The government of Sudan has undertaken a programme to develop a five-year plan for the period 2012-2016 based on its vision through 2020, and the ministry of general education is engaged in developing, with support of its partners, a framework for the education sector component of this plan. This plan will feed into the ongoing process of finalising the National Development Plan.

The increased capacity for basic education enrolment will also require recruitment and deployment of additional teachers, especially in rural areas. This process will be balanced by the development of a programme to redeploy teachers from areas of low student-class ratios to areas of high student-class ratios. The strategy currently calls for an additional 13,100 teachers to be recruited over three years. This includes 4300 new teachers to support the growing number of student enrollments, and 8800 teachers to replace teachers leaving the sub-sector, assuming a 2 percent per year attrition rate of teachers (Ministry of General Education. 2012). It has supported by piloting of incentives for teachers, and by targeted construction of teacher accommodation to facilitate more equitable teacher allocation, especially in rural areas. Recurrent costs of teachers will be covered by the states drawing from federal block transfers, and from state own resources. External and other domestic resources could subsidize costs of targeted incentives and construction.

2.3 The Current Situation of Teacher Education in Sudan

Teacher training colleges became affiliated with universities to offer A Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) courses (UKNARIC, 2007). This shift set Sudan apart from other countries in the region; twenty years later a certificate or diploma remains the minimum qualification for teaching at the primary level across much of Sub-Saharan Africa (Freda & Alison. 2013). Hence, only B.Ed. qualified teachers are being recruited as basic school teachers since 1997 when teacher training colleges start offering B.Ed. courses.

There are twenty four 24 colleges of education accepting untrained teachers and there are totally fifty- eight in-service training institutes spread over the country, technically supervised by the ministry of general education. These colleges awarded bachelor degree in education. The minimum education qualification for the appointment of basic school teachers has been raised from secondary pass to B.Ed. degree (UNESCO, 2003). The major courses provided to student teachers are subject matter courses and Educational courses such as; General Curricula, General teaching Method, Special teaching Method, An-Entry to Educational Technology, Computer in Education, Modern Educational Technology, General Philosophy of Education, Learning Psychology, Educational Measurement and Evaluation, Entry to Teaching Practice, and Teaching Practice.

Better trained teachers – whether they are male or female – are more likely to have the ability to create a learning environment in which students are willing to voice their concerns about the obstacles they face. According to the UNESCO (2008), only 12% of the estimated 140,000 basic education teachers hold the required qualifications of a four-year university degree. Approximately 50% of the basic education teachers are concerned untrained. Similarly, also 50% of the estimated 34,000 secondary school teachers are not trained. And since that time the ministry of general education has been struggling to reform the teacher education policy. The Teacher Training Assessment for Sudan found that there may be as many as 110,000 unqualified teachers in the education system in Sudan. The Assessment indicated that in order to achieve universal primary education without placing additional strain on class sizes, a further 9,500 qualified teachers would be needed every year until 2015 (UNICEF 2009). And since (2007) the ministry of general education started to take action for improving teachers training programme, and two policy plans for (2007-2011) and (2012-2016) were formulated.

Table (2): Total Number of Primary and Secondary Schools and Number of Teachers by State, 2014

NO	State	NO. of primary schools teachers	NO. of secondary schools teachers
		NO. of primary schools	NO. of secondary schools
1	North Darfur	8583	2467
		1197	164
2	South Darfur	8057	2419
		1183	145
3	West Darfur	2617	525
		379	52
4	East Darfur	384	639
		40	36
5	Middle Darfur	3006	603
		296	42
6	Kassala	6852	2441
		731	95
7	Sinnar	7650	285
		770	238
8	Elgadarif	7684	2000
		825	125
9	Blue Nile	6200	1545
		340	50
10	Aljazeera	24727	9517
		2130	616

11	North Kordufan	9684	2828
		1480	136
12	South Kordufan	5306	1130
		632	83
13	West Kordufan	6715	1612
		609	126
14	Northern	7774	2106
		506	110
15	Red Sea	4054	1044
		463	67
16	Wight Nile	11611	3486
		1050	233
17	Khartoum	26282	9700
		2085	420
18	River Nile	8879	3085
		785	148
	Total	159765	49697
		15861	2886

Source: The General Directorate for Training and Education Qualifying- Ministry of General Education, 2014.

educators and teaching personnel for service in the teaching profession. Designing training programmes and curricula, and qualifying professionals for the educational training process, are among the directorate's mandates. Teachers and tutors for elementary and intermediate schools, holders of Sudan's Certificate of Higher Education, school headmasters, directors and supervisors, are enrolled for both short-and long-term training courses in faculties of education throughout Sudan.

The Open University of Sudan (OUS) was created in 2003 to become the main provider of the B.Ed. qualification. It is a government-funded institution that provides in-service Teacher education through distance-learning methods that enable teachers to study while remaining in their post; it is also aimed at upgrading the teaching skills and qualifications of primary teachers currently in employment who are not degree holders (TESSA, 2010). Based in Khartoum it operates through 73 training centers and 350 sub regional centers across the country. The B.Ed. is



Female teacher in public school classroom at Khartoum city

a four-year program; student teachers attend tutorials and receive study materials at sub-regional centers. Over the four years students undertake three phases of teaching practice each lasting 3- 4 months, assessed by OUS supervisors who visit up to 3 times during each teaching practice period. This is seen by OUS staff as a key component of the programme, programme leaders believe firmly that teaching skills are developed in practice rather than learnt in lecture halls (Wolfenden & Buckler, 2012). In 2008 nearly two thirds of Sudanese primary school teachers had studied with OUS (TESSA, 2011).

For the availability of teachers the data shows that teachers are unevenly distributed across schools. A comparison between the need for teachers, based on pupil numbers, and the supply of teachers in each school reveals a low correlation, described in Education Sector Report (ESR) as a degree of randomness in teacher deployment. This teacher distribution is also uneven across states, with, for example, very high randomness scores in Khartoum and relatively low scores in Red Sea. This suggests that while the market for teachers is attracting a large number of qualified persons to teaching (in Khartoum state there were some 7000 applications, with 4000 completing the test for some 1400 posts, in Gezira some 21,000 applications for 1,600 positions in 2011), the regulations and incentives currently in place are not functioning to promote efficient teacher deployment. According to the Ministry of General Education (2012), two of the main constraints to effective deployment of teachers appear to be:

- That there are no incentives (financial or otherwise) provided by the government to work in rural or remote schools ; and
- The policy that deploys female teachers close to their spouses.

3.0 Rural Education in Sudan

Poverty in Sudan is deeply entrenched and is more widespread and deeper in rural areas and in areas affected by conflicts, drought and famine. The incidence of poverty varies considerably according to region, in part because economic growth has been unevenly distributed, but also because of the economic and social devastation caused by the conflicts in certain parts of the country. There are severe inequalities in terms of access to education,



Classroom in rural school in western of Sudan

sanitation and clean water, infrastructure and natural resources, income opportunities, justice and political protection. The incidence of high poverty rate seem to be the most important factor determining or limiting the demand and enrolment, notably, in basic education. It is imply that especially among the poor regions, economic reasons were considered to be the most important factor limiting poor students and especially, girls' potential to complete their primary, secondary and tertiary education.

According to the Ministry of General Education (2012) there are several demand side factors which affect the quality of learning in rural schools, including children's individual characteristics. International evidence shows that malnourished children tend not to reach their potential either physically or mentally are less likely to go to school, and once in school, register lower levels of learning achievement. A large proportion of children ages 0–59 months in Sudan are malnourished, with negative consequences for learning at preschool and beyond. The percentage of children who are underweight and stunted in Sudan is high compared to other countries with variation between the states. 55 % of children in North Darfur are underweight while 69 % of children in Kassala are stunted. These figures are higher than the averages in sub-Saharan Africa (28 % underweight and 9 % wasting), and much higher than the averages for the Middle East and North Africa region (17% underweight and 8 % wasting).

3.1 An Overall Picture of Rural Education

There about 36.5% of the total number of students (6,976,088) are from rural areas, 33% of 245,776 teachers and 35% of 46,214 schools are rural (Ministry of General Education, 2012). Sudan's children in rural areas, children from poorer households, and girls are at a disadvantage in terms of access to schooling. The strongest predictor of access to schooling is whether a child lives in an urban or rural area, and according to an official report issued by the ministry of general education in Sudan's eastern, Kassala State, that there are many children in eastern Sudan miss out on education.

One third of girls aged 15-24 years and almost one quarter of boys in Sudan are illiterate. Only half of young people complete primary school (47% for girls and 53% for boys), which indicating high dropout rates, especially amongst school-age girls. An estimated 46% of girls and 54% of boy's age 14-19 years are currently attending secondary schools. The uptake in secondary and post-secondary education in Sudan remains low, particularly in rural and nomadic areas where many young people receive little or no education after primary level. 31% of youth ages 20-24 years are not in schools of any type but they also have difficulty finding employment (UNFPA, 2014b). In some rural communities, the role of girls is seen as being limited to domestic helpers, and future wives and mothers, playing a supportive role to the men of the family. There is a low premium, especially in rural areas, on sending girls to school. Lack of single-sex classes, or female teachers, also act as a barrier to girls attending school especially as they get older. In some rural areas especially, boys and girls are expected to work in support of their families. This often keeps children out of school unless class schedules are adapted to fit around key times such as planting and harvesting (UNICEF, 2009). For those children that do access school, a large number drop out before completing basic education.

The high rates of dropout in both basic education and secondary education are of serious concern in the rural areas of Sudan because of poverty, conflicts, low attendance and poor rural environment etc. However, international evidence suggests that students are at risk of dropping out of school when parents do not perceive that additional schooling is worth the investment in terms of time and money—when the cost of schooling exceeds the expected benefits. A high dropout rates could therefore indicate that the quality of the schooling is too low to justify the student's time and the direct costs in terms of parental financial contributions or the opportunity costs of a child who would otherwise be contributing to the household income or helping with chores. Other factors also put children at risk of dropping out. For example, late entry to school by overage children is strongly associated with dropout, Also when schools do not offer all the grades of the basic cycle (as is the case for village and nomadic schools in Sudan) and children have to change schools to access the higher grades, the students' travel time to school increases, which may lead to their dropping out (World Bank, 2012). In some rural areas, high percent of primary students have to walk every morning more than 3 kilometers to attend the nearest school, while in urban areas class sizes can exceed 100 students.

An estimated 1 million youth between ages 10 and 17 in Sudan have never attended basic school and most of them are from rural areas. This group needs support in the form of literacy programs if they are to become literate adults (World Bank, 2012). In Darfur very few children outside of cities had access to primary education. Clearly, there are many more out-of-school children; and in particular, the share of children who have never had access to schooling is relatively much larger in rural than in urban areas.

Educate A Child (2015) programme supported by Qatar Airway reported that, In Sudan, approximately 1.8 million children are still out of school, for various reasons depending on the context that they live in. In eastern Sudan, where nomadic lifestyles predominate, school enrolment has its particular challenges. The nomads of Sudan have age-long traditions of shifting their families and livestock from place to place, and the transient nature of this way of life makes it difficult for nomadic children to stay long enough in one place to be enrolled in school. For the parents of nomadic children, the benefits and importance of formal education may even seem irrelevant. To address this situation, and with the aim of enrolling 600,000 children presently out of school into basic education, the UNICEF, Educate A Child and the Sudanese Ministry of General Education have partnered for three years to raise awareness about the value of education in 12 out of 18 states in Sudan. Raising awareness is an important first step, but the way schools are run also makes an important difference in keeping rural children in school.

3.2 Disparities between Urban and Rural Schools

Creating and properly funding for education systems that offer students the opportunity to obtain a high quality or “adequate” education is perhaps the most, challenging, yet vitally important issue facing policy makers. According to Ministry of General education (2012), There are compounding effects of gender and rural location in terms of access to education, for example, being a girl is more of a disadvantage in a rural than in an urban setting: girls are 4 percentage-points less likely than boys to attend school in urban areas whereas the gender gap is 11-12 percentage-points in rural areas. The poor rural girl is the most disadvantaged and is about 25 percentage-points less likely to ever access basic school than the higher income urban boy.

Table (3) illustrates significant cross-regional variation and inequity between rural and urban areas or states across a range of criteria, underlining the challenges to equitable access to education in Sudan. The gray cells indicate states that perform notably worse than the national average on a given indicator. Some states perform worse on several measures and are faced with a particular challenge as there is a combination of underlying extraneous factors affecting effective service delivery in education.

Table (3): significant cross-regional variation and inequity between rural and urban areas or states across a range of criteria

	Gross Intake Rate	Gross Enrollment Rate	Basic educ completion rate	% pop which is classified as rural	Student to class ratio	Teachers per class	Retention	% of total pop in Sudan	Poverty Incidence	Prob of being out of school (age 10-24)
Sudan	80.0%	72.0%	54.0%	63.0%	47.7	1.47	67.6%	100%	46.5%	
Northen	79.4%	83.8%	65.8%	82.0%	31.9	1.93	83.0%	1.8%	36.2%	32.4%
Sinnar	75.3%	73.8%	62.6%	79.0%	49.8	1.54	83.2%	4.2%	44.1%	48.6%
River Nile	92.2%	87.3%	69.9%	72.0%	36.8	1.65	75.8%	3.6%	32.2%	35.6%
White Nile	92.8%	80.7%	64.5%	66.0%	51.3	1.71	69.5%	5.6%	55.5%	39.3%
Khartoum	96.6%	93.3%	88.3%	18.0%	50.6	1.70	91.4%	17.1%	26.0%	27.8%
Gezira	94.0%	83.8%	70.1%	82.0%	46.7	1.68	74.6%	11.6%	37.8%	38.9%
South Kordofan	79.6%	79.3%	73.0%	77.0%	38.6	0.99	91.7%	4.6%	60.0%	43.2%
West Darfur	83.7%	80.5%	69.9%	79.0%	63.8	0.99	83.6%	4.2%	55.6%	41.0%
Blue Nile	80.5%	56.3%	32.0%	74.0%	48.7	2.33	39.8%	2.7%	56.5%	43.7%
Red Sea*	65.8%	47.3%	20.4%	23.0%	40.6	1.56	31.1%	4.5%	57.7%	40.0%
Kassala*	80.0%	54.3%	24.6%	71.0%	49.4	1.74	30.8%	5.8%	36.3%	59.4%
Gadarif	78.3%	68.1%	40.1%	73.0%	48.4	1.33	51.2%	4.4%	50.1%	47.0%
North Kordofam	75.8%	71.8%	54.4%	80.0%	45.7	1.11	71.8%	9.5%	57.9%	48.8%
South Darfur	57.0%	39.9%	21.7%	65.0%	56.1	1.28	38.1%	13.3%	61.2%	35.3%
North Darfur	79.7%	65.0%	44.4%	83.0%	49.1	1.05	55.6%	6.8%	69.4%	26.0%

Source: Ministry of General Education (2012)

*denotes indicative numbers given issues with enrollment or population data.

Poverty and School Resources: In Sudan, poverty is indicating that more than 15 million people are poor. But within this the disparities are striking; poverty incidence numbers mask significant regional disparities. Poverty in urban areas (especially Khartoum) is significantly lower than rural areas, which account for 63% of the country's population and 80% of its poor. According to the World Bank (2015), Poverty incidence in North Darfur is approximately three times that of Khartoum and more than twice that of River Nile State. Also of note are the disparities between settled and nomadic populations who constitute 9% of Sudan's population and 14% of its poor. In the World Bank (2011) reported that, there is about 27 % of the urban dwellers live under the poverty line of US\$2 per day, compared with 58 % of rural dwellers.

About how much do teachers spend on resources for their classroom? Average consumption levels in urban classrooms are significantly higher than those in rural. Rural and remote schools need better levels of resources and greater certainty in on-going funding.

Table (4) : Retention: Interaction of Gender with Poverty and Rural Location

	Rich		Poor	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Boy	63%	44%	64%	
Girl	62%	43%	45%	
			64%	
			44%	
Gap (%-points)	1	1	1	1

Note: The table gives the probability of still being in school by the last grade (for those who have attended grade 1).

Source: Status of the Education Sector in Sudan, 2011

School environments: Rural schools face very poor conditions; these schools lack the facilities, course materials, and programmes that urban schools have. A critical factor as to why rural schools have such problems is the funding that they receive. Because of the lack of funding, the condition of the schools is terrible. Usually rural schools have dilapidated buildings, which makes the learning environment unsafe and not motivated for students.

Access to School: Very large gaps in school enrollment exist between rural and urban children. Within the rural segment of the population, girls are less likely than boys to enroll in school. In

public schools boys and girls are educated separately in urban areas but often together in rural areas, where resources are more limited.



rural schools in northern state of Sudan

The educational sector in Khartoum State (the capital city of Sudan) is beset by a host of problems that leaves much to be desired in terms of quality and coverage. One of the problems that characterise the education sector in Khartoum State is the low percentage of students' intake. In early 2009, only 79% of those at school age (6 – 9 years) were registered in schools (Al-Intibaha, 2009). This means that one in every five school age children was not registered in schools. Nevertheless, this was still the highest registration percentage in the whole country where the percentage of those in the age group 6 – 13 years who were registered in schools stood at 71% in 2007/2008 (Ministry of General Education Achievements Report, 1989 – 2008). Another prevalent problem is dropping out of schools at an early age. Although the statistics here are sketchy, it is widely recognized as a considerable problem in rural and Khartoum State. Low registration percentages and high dropout rates can be attributed to the relatively high cost of education which many households cannot afford (World Bank, 2011).

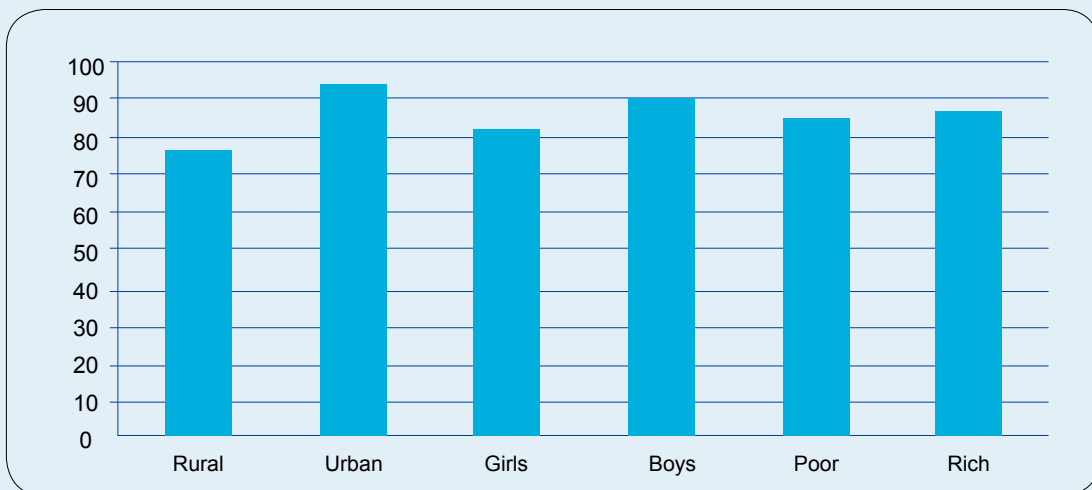


urban school students in capital city of Sudan

According to the Sudan National Household Survey 2009, approximately 2.0 million children and adults, ages 10-19, were out of school. Of those out of school, 1.2 million (17 % of all 10-19 year olds) never attended school and the remaining children either having dropped out of school or completed school at the time of the survey. Of those out of school who never attended school, the rural/urban disparities are glaring, with approximately 55 % of children in rural areas never attending school compared to 6 percent in urban areas. Further, 61 % of those out of school were girls with most living in rural areas thus corroborating that access to education for girls in rural areas is a major challenge in Sudan (Ministry of General Education, 2012).

Aside from regional disparities in education access, children in rural areas, girls, and vulnerable groups (such as internally displaced persons, disabled and nomads) are at a disadvantage in terms of access to schooling. Urban children are 17 percentage-points more likely than rural children to access school and boys are 8 percentage-points more likely than girls to access school. The graph below shows that the urban-rural location is the best predictor of a child's chance of ever going to school, but gender and poverty also matter.

graph(2) Access Probability % of ever enrolling in basic school (grade 1) according to location, income group and gender



Source: Ministry of General of Education (2012)

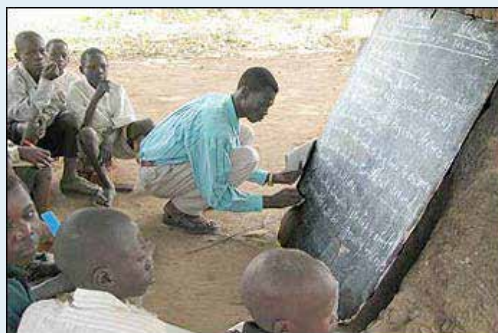
Working Conditions and Teacher Quality: The nature of teaching can be different in rural areas than in urban areas. Because of the small size of rural districts and schools, teachers often need to teach multiple subjects and possibly multiple grades, sometimes in multigrade, mixed-age classrooms. Urban areas frequently supplement their teachers' salaries while rural teachers languish at the bottom of the pay scale. This phenomenon has created a wide and persistent teacher pay gap in many states. School districts in urban areas have a competitive advantage over rural schools in efforts to attract and retain quality teachers. Supporting high quality teaching in rural schools through professional development is essential in an adequate education programme and providing teachers with high quality opportunities may require marginally higher levels of funding in rural areas.

Student–textbook Ratio: The average student– textbook ratio in Kassala state was 3:1 for mathematics and 2.5:1 for reading, which is higher than the official policy. Students in observed classrooms in North Kordofan had it the worst: the average student–textbook ratio in rural/peri-urban classrooms was 9:1 and in urban classrooms was 5:1. Considering that education councils also provided textbooks for students in several of these schools (World Bank, 2012), but in some few urban schools, especially private schools the ratio is 1:1. The higher-than-recommended average student–textbook ratios point to a serious failure of the public education system, with negative consequences for student learning.

Students Achievements: Students' achievement is greatly affected by the area in which a student lives. rural areas have lagged behind urban schools in educational achievement in Sudan; Students live in urban areas are higher achiever than those who live in rural, reasons for the variations in achievement are geographic location, resources, schools environment, and quality of teachers.

4.0 Teachers Working in Rural Schools

If schools and classrooms are unsafe, unhygienic, in poor condition, overcrowded, or have a shortage of equipment, not only is access and attendance, especially of girls reduced, but student learning is adversely affected. The status of school infrastructure in Sudan is generally poor. Some schools in rural areas of Sudan are classified as 'open air' learning spaces and nearly all teachers are untrained and most of them are volunteers, some of them do not have any degree from educational college, in some rural primary schools usually unpaid.



Rural school classrooms in Darfur

4.1 Teacher Working Condition in Rural Areas

Teachers' working conditions are important to students as well as teachers because they affect how much individual attention teachers can give to students. Working conditions vary considerably within the rural school, depending on the school's size and location and the percentage of low income students in the school. Some rural schools have more than 90% of low income students, or poorest family which looking for jobs to help their families is better for them to be in the classroom. In addition, many rural teachers moan the poor condition of their housing facilities and the long distance between their residence and their schools.



rural school teachers and the school classroom in Darfur

Salary and remuneration: in rural areas teachers are not particularly well paid, and it has become a job that you only do if you could not get another job. Many teachers take on additional work to add to their income, and this leads to significant teacher absenteeism in some places. Irregular payment of salaries in most of rural schools also contributes to teachers taking additional work, or even abandoning the profession altogether. In most of the rural areas, teachers personally have to collect their wages at the central or regional administration, leaving the children unattended for days because of the long journey that must be undertaken.

Class size and teaching hour: generally, basic education teachers whether in rural or urban area have to teach 18 hours per week. Teaching workload has several dimensions, including the amount of time spent working, the number of classes taught, and the number of students in each class. The amount of time a teacher devotes to his or her job is partly self-determined, reflecting not only what the school requires or expects but also the teacher's efficiency, enthusiasm, and commitment. Student-teacher ratios are relatively low in both elementary and secondary schools that enroll few students in most of rural areas in Sudan. The lower student-teacher ratios in smaller schools affect different aspects of teacher workloads.

Career development: urban and regular rural teachers have the same policy for career development, it is normally confined to the usual ladder of levels by which teachers advance, normally based on seniority, years experience, and the number of training courses. In order to gain a real raise in wages, teachers must obtain promotion to other kinds of position, like head teacher or school inspector.



rural classroom in south Kordofan



rural school classroom in White Nile State

Physical facilities and working environment: in most, if not all of the rural schools there is a lack of financial resources, they cannot produce an ideal working environment for teachers and all need improvement in quality.

Encouraging teacher professionalism: in Sudan, there is a need to encourage teacher professionalism in order to improve the working conditions of teachers in rural areas. Because of the lack motivation, Sudan's rural school teachers are not the ones who have to carry out the changes in practice, and thus most of them did not participate in planning and organizing them through their professional bodies.



rural school classroom in White Nile State

Teacher performance: In some rural areas student attendance rates are quite low, often due to weather conditions, seasonal agricultural work, family situation etc. School performance of students in these areas may thus suffer independently of the quality of the teacher. It is difficult to recruit qualified teachers to work in these areas, and the possibility of losing merit pay will certainly not make it easier. Teachers seem to react negatively when they are not awarded merit pay. Instead of working harder to qualify for this incentive, they tend to refuse to co-operate. An inspection system for rural schools and teachers is one time per-year and some “hard-to-reach” rural schools missed out, moreover, rural districts supervisors themselves are not well prepared to support school development and teacher performance.

4.2 Recruitment and Retention of Teachers in Rural Areas

In rural schools of Sudan, School administrators have difficulties finding qualified teachers who are appropriate for rural school and community and who will stay on the job. July 2015, one rural district in Kassala state in the east of Sudan has about 40 schools including more than 4,000 students closed the door, because of that, there are no teachers to teach, even lack quality teachers (Altayar. 2015), the reasons is that, teachers in rural areas face many challenges such as low salaries, lack of access to professional opportunities, and the responsibility to take on multiple duties. In 2015, there are more than 8,000 teachers have applied to move from rural to urban schools because of the above mentioned reasons as the

minister of general education said. The problem with rural teachers can be broken down further into recruiting and retaining these teachers. Rural schools have struggled to find an adequate supply of teachers, their struggle now is to find a quality or lack quality teacher which is difficult.

Only B.Ed. qualified teachers are being recruited as basic school teachers from 1997 onwards (UNESCO, 2003). But this policy is hard to be implemented in rural schools and all new qualified teachers want to be in big cities. Along with enhancement in the qualifications of teachers, their salary scale has also been raised (UNESCO, 2003). But still not so much rise is happening for rural schools teachers.

Moreover, in recruiting teachers for rural schools, it has been suggested that candidates should be recruited from within each region, in the hope that personal history and family connections will entice them to return to teach in their home area after certification. The presumption is that those individuals will have family roots in these rural areas and be willing to return and remain in these rural settings (Craig, Kraft and Plessis, 1998) and that is what is happening in most of Sudan's rural schools. One of the attractions of this approach is that if teachers become established within their own community, they may gain extra benefits from the proximity of relatives, which may help to ensure long term stability.

However, this strategy often involves a trade-off between entry qualifications for rural roots. If it is necessary to adjust the teacher recruitment system to favour teachers from a particular area, and if the system was a merit based system, then the adjustment entails recruiting teacher of lower quality. Qualified and more experienced teachers are concentrated in urban schools, which tend to be overstaffed. By contrast, schools in rural areas face major problems in attracting and retaining adequately qualified and experienced teachers.

4.3 Professional Developments of Rural Teachers in Sudan

Effective teacher professional development involves teachers both as learners and teachers, and allows them to struggle with the uncertainties that accompany each role. Teachers are learners on their own professional journey and teacher professional development is an ongoing and continuous process throughout a teacher's career. Teaching is, essentially, a learned profession as well as learning to teach is a lifelong developmental process that involves the continual deepening of knowledge and skills.

In Sudan's rural areas, high quality professional development is critical in providing teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to meet students' educational needs and rural teachers are facing many challenges for professional development.

4.3.1- Pre-service Teacher Preparation

Improving teaching and teacher education are ongoing agendas for education systems, as both teachers and pre-service teachers have direct contact with students, as the facilitators of education. High quality pre-service teacher preparation provides beginning teachers with the knowledge and skills needed for effective teaching in today's heterogeneous classrooms.

In Sudan since the last decade, much criticism has been directed towards the institutions of teacher education; because of the poor quality of the teachers they are producing. Most of these institutions are preparing teachers based on the traditional method of teacher preparation, focusing on inadequate content of subject matter, ancient theories of psychology of learning and teaching pedagogy and then a short period – two months – of teaching practice at schools. This teaching practice is lacking of a well organized and accurate supervision of both the educational institutions and the schools, because of the weak coordination between the two. As a result the graduate teachers produced by these institutions are of poor quality, they are lacking of the adequate knowledge of the subject matter.

Rural schools recruit poorest teachers; teachers are lacking of knowledge on the current pedagogies and teaching methods and subject matter, add to these their poor knowledge in the application and use of technology in teaching and learning process, which is very essential for the 21st century teacher. Besides all these, those new teachers are also lacking of the sufficient and effective guidance in their induction phase. When a new teacher starts his/her teaching practice, he/she needs guidance, help and encouragement from the senior teachers and the school head teacher; but unfortunately he/she rarely finds. All the above mentioned factors together, have a negative impact on teacher quality; which is considered as a key element in improving students' achievement.

Great and heated debate has been taking place for years in the country, concerning reconsidering the role of the education institutions. Many studies have been carried out on the evaluation of the quality of the educational programs offered by these institutions, and

most of these studies have recommended reform to these programs. Some educators went so far and argued about changing the current system of teacher preparation adopted by these institutions, which is the concurrent one; with the consecutive system; which was used before the emergence of faculties of education within comprehensive universities, as a result of the revolution of higher education in 1990. Supporters of changing the system think that the consecutive system is better in qualifying the teacher in the subject matter only.

4.3.2- In-service Training



In-service training for Primary school teachers



In-service training for secondary school teachers

While pre-service training is the responsibility of higher education institutions, the Ministry of General Education is responsible for in-service teacher training. The idea of in-services training was supported by UNESCO in early 1970s. In Sudan, the system help in training of primary and intermediate or general secondary school teachers, help in upgrading under qualified teacher and provide them with continues (Osman, 2005). In the early 2000s, the federal ministry of education adopted a new policy for in-service training for rural schools teachers through open learning. This was a kind of cooperation with OUS which has many teacher training centers in different states of the country. The OUS organizes short courses during summer vacations, and it broadcasts lectures on radio and distributes recorded lectures on tapes for teachers. This policy has contributed much in bridging the gap in training opportunities between teachers at urban and rural areas.

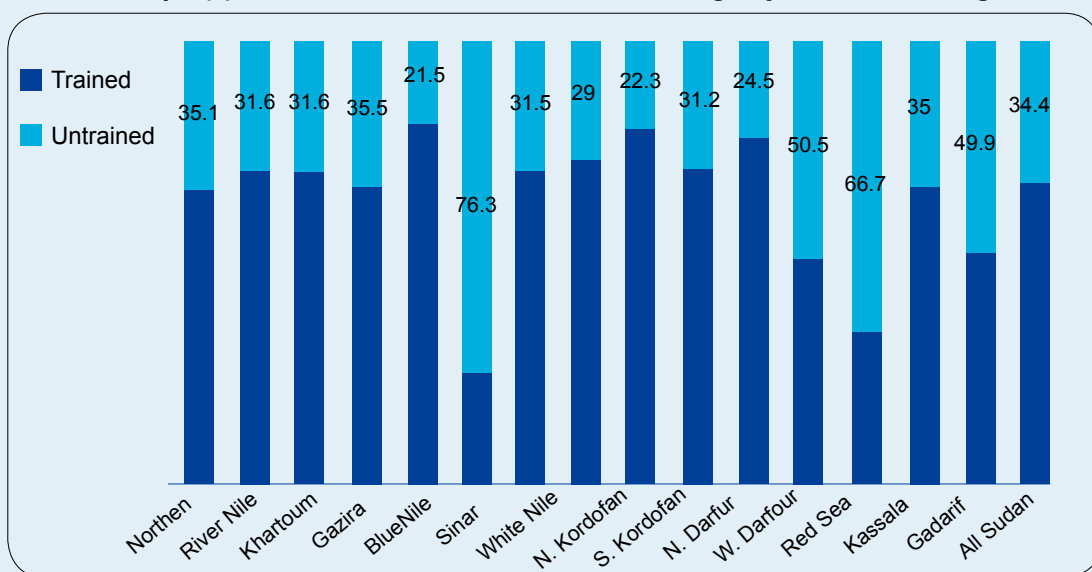
The prominent form of rural teacher professional development in Sudan is organizing training courses for teachers during summer vacations; these training courses usually last for between two weeks in general, and six months as special training on teaching methods, psychology of education and educational pedagogy for teachers holders of non-educational degree. The courses are organized, funded by ministries of education at states level and

supported by some of the National Government Organizations, with coordination with higher education represented in colleges and faculties of education, because each state is responsible for the professional development of its teachers.

The ministries of education at states ask their districts to recommend a number of teachers to attend free training courses, and teachers who need to be trained in provided courses have to register at their districts and wait to be selected. By the end of each training course, teachers get a certificate of course completion and with more training courses they get promotion which will help much to raise their wages. Usually, very few number of rural teachers get chance to participate in these training courses and most of them unwilling to attend because of the long distance between their schools and training centers and there have no rewards or encouragement given to teachers from ministry of general education.

In spite of these efforts paid by the ministries of education in teachers training, yet much more effort is needed concerning teacher professional development, because of the total number of teachers in Sudan is 159765 primary school teachers and 49697 secondary school teachers, according to The General Directorate of Training and Education Qualifying 2014, only 65.6% are trained, still there are 34.4% of the teachers are untrained (Graph 3) and most of them are from rural areas.

Graph (3) Teacher in Basic Education Percentage by State & Training



Source: Ministry of General Education, statistic book, 2012.

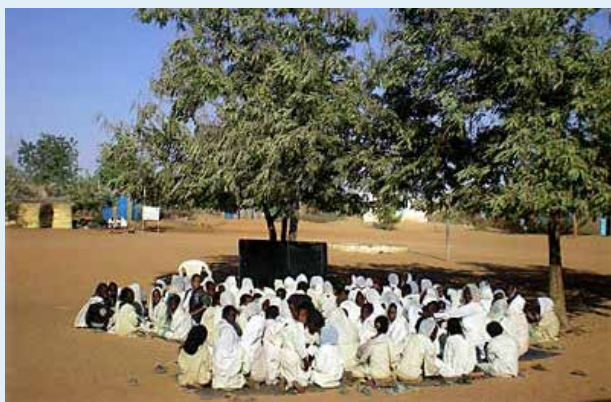
4.3.3- Perceived Impact of Professional Development

Although educational policies aim at training teachers to ensure high quality education, only 54% of the teachers received training courses (Niveen, 2014). The quality of teacher training in rural areas is crucial, and in many cases needs significant improvement. The lack of training can be seen in student's low learning outcomes, high levels of repetition of grades, and the high level of schools drop-outs in rural areas.

More training courses can only help rural teachers to get a promotion and increase their salaries instead of improving the teaching and learning practice. Teachers who got extra training have a good teaching experience for rural students, but whatever the quality of professional development that teachers have, it is very difficult to change the teaching practice because of the poor conditions that Sudan's rural schools face. Hence, the real challenge that rural schools face is how to create environments for teachers to grow and develop in their practice so that they can help students grow and develop their knowledge and thinking ability.

In some rural areas, more professional development courses have helped teachers to face the poor learning environments that rural schools have, and professional development that is longer in duration has a good impact on advancing teachers' practice. This is likely because extended professional development sessions often include time to practice application of the skills that rural schools need.

5.0 Barriers and Difficulties Facing Rural Teacher in Sudan



rural school at south Kordofan state

Rural schools face difficulties recruiting and retaining a qualified teachers, and those who has being recruited are facing many barriers and difficulties as summarized in the following:

Low salaries and social isolation: low pay is the most common explanation given by teachers for leaving rural schools, their salaries is not enough

for life needs; teachers in rural areas are also isolated from families, friends and the world at large as they cannot communicate due to network challenges.

Poor school environment and students low motivation: Limited teaching aids and sources of material for teachers to effectively discharge their duties is another challenge confronting the rural teachers in Sudan. In some areas there is no classrooms, they do not even have access to boards and chawks making teaching an oral process devoid of illustrations. At worst some students learn under trees exposed to bad weather conditions and lessons are sometimes abandoned in bad weather, they are unwilling to attend the school. The bulk of the teachers in rural areas are less experienced, under qualified and unmotivated to work under such conditions, thereby subjecting pupils to low quality education.

The low reputation of teaching profession in rural areas: the teaching profession is not so convincing enough to attract talented young people, because of the low wages paid to teachers; as a result most of those who join teaching profession in rural schools are lower achievers, so they are already lack of high motivation.



rural school at south Kordofan state

In terms of barriers facing rural teacher professional development, there are many difficulties, which can be summarized in the following points:

- *Lack of financial resources: one of the biggest challenges that face rural teacher is the lack of sufficient budget; the amount of money allotted to teachers training is insufficient, especially when the states ministries are responsible for training their teachers, in terms of financial issues and all other things. Some states or actually most of the states are poor; therefore their ministries of education have no good financial resources for teachers training.*
- *Lack of continuity for the training programs (fragmented)*
- *Weak background and knowledge of teachers about teaching profession*
- *Lack of diversification of professional development forms: the federal ministry of education focuses much on short courses and workshops, which are usually theoretic, fragmented and do not provide practical solution for problems facing teachers in rural community and classroom.*
- *There have no rewards or encouragement of any kind given to teachers when they finish the training session, and this makes the teachers unwilling to attend these professional development courses.*



One rural school at south Kordofan state, some students standing up to attend the classes

6.0 Policy Issues

Education is a thorny issue for all governments, as it a factor of stability to the political ruling group if the educational programmes satisfy the needs of the individual person and serve the practical needs of the community (Ahmed Gumaa. 2011). On the other hand, education can be an element of social turmoil in the country, when it fails to secure the personal and communal needs of the society. This happens when the educational objectives mismatch the political orientation and direction of the ruling factions.

Currently, only 57 percent of 6 to 16 year olds are attending school, and the school attendance rate gradually declines after peaking during early adolescence. Only three out of four children of primary school age are receiving a formal education. Among the children who are of primary school age (6 to 13 years old); almost 2 million are out of school. This number increases to more than 3.3 million if children of secondary school age (14 to 16 years old) are included. At all ages, attendance rates are much higher in urban areas than in rural areas and are much higher for children from the wealthiest quintile than for those in the lower quintiles (World Bank, 2014). Although the state government insists in the Interim National Constitution of 2005 that basic education is free in public schools, many localities and rural schools impose charges on students in order to keep the schools operational and provided with the essential supplies.

Training issues and poor distribution of teachers to underserved and hard-to-reach communities may hamper the supply of educational resources and expansion of the system. Moreover, data management systems policy within the teacher education edifice as a whole remain weak, with poor forward and backward linkages between Federal government and the States, as well as across the evidence collection, planning, implementation, and monitoring and oversight processes, and all these issues have much negative impact for rural teacher professional developments.

Pre-service program for Basic education teachers in Sudan face some difficulties, Faisal and Alsiddig (2013) conclude that, there is a lack of coordination between the ministry of general education and the faculties of education in preparing and executing the current programme

of teacher education, as the Faculties of Education designed it alone. The programme is based on preparing the student teacher to teach single subjects, where the reality of basic schools in Sudan is that teaching at basic education is done based on teaching more than two subjects. Teaching practice is insufficient to prepare the student teacher for teaching in all grades, and the educational environment is poor, in terms of well-equipped lecture rooms, good laboratory, modern library and instructional technology.

In Sudan rural and urban schools the economic and sociopolitical factors and teacher migration are very considerable issues. The Sudanese teacher had developed long history of good teaching practice, a thing that was reflected in being demanded in the petro-dollar Arab states where the best teaching personnel were recruited as contractors with good pay compared to their status in the country. This foreign recruitment of our best teaching force caused great harm to economic, social and cultural domains in the country. Many qualified teachers deserted the country due to economic, social and political factors which were/ are behind this severe brain drain, and the government still cannot make any kind of policy that help in teachers' retention.

7.0 New Reform for Rural Teacher Training

According to the presidential decree No (12) 2001, the Ministry of General Education is responsible for education planning and formulation of policies, with coordination between educational authorities at both federal and state level; this including coordinating the training of teachers and educational administrators, with higher education institution and the states ministries of education. So the federal ministry of education is the direct responsible organization for teacher professional development at both the federal and the state level. In 2007 the federal ministry of education started to take actions for reform in rural and urban teacher professional development as a part of the country 5 years strategy plan. But again for the lack of the financial resources, the plan is not being well implemented.

The Ministry of General Education has made the Interim Basic Education Strategy in June 2012; it specifically targets improved training and distribution of teachers through the piloting

of incentives for teachers, local recruitment of teachers and targeted construction of teacher accommodation to facilitate more equitable teacher allocation in rural areas. It has addresses the weaknesses of teacher education policies through the provision of a rapid Education Management Information System assessment instrument to extract critical data while the overall system is strengthened to bring it fully online.

Rural teachers and tutors for elementary and intermediate schools, holders of Sudan's Certificate of Higher Education and school headmasters, are enrolled for both short-and long-term training courses in university faculties of education throughout Sudan. By requiring enrollment in such training courses for teachers and tutors who have never completed their professional qualifications, the Ministry of General Education hopes to raise the level of instruction in the public education system. Grants and scholarships are made available to teachers from rural areas for further professional development in areas such as education diplomas, math, science and languages.

The second five years plan for the development of basic education in Sudan (2012-2016) has too much focused on the reform of teachers training and especially rural teachers, it is more focused on increasing the number of trained teacher by improving teacher preparations programme, teacher professional development, encouraging the use of ICT in education and providing more funding for teachers training.

8.0 Conclusion

No education is possible without an adequate number of qualified and motivated teachers. Teachers are the key to meaningful learning and education whether in rural or urban areas. Education levels in Sudan are very low, and poverty rates are highly correlated with education (World Bank, 2012), especially in rural areas. Yet while there has been significant progress in education as a result of peace initiatives between north and south Sudan, conflicts continues to be a powerful factor in Sudan that impacts on access to quality of education provision, it affects the recruitment and retention of qualified teachers in rural areas and areas affected by conflicts. The war-induced poverty of Sudan has translated for teachers into unpaid salaries and poor working conditions, leaving teachers to rely on

students' families for support and subsidy, and resulting in an exodus of qualified teachers amidst the civil strife and instability.

There is a dire need to improve teachers' quality and students' achievement in rural schools of Sudan. The problem of attracting and keeping qualified teachers in rural schools, poor funding, poor quality of education, poor teachers' status, poor infrastructural facilities, poor monitoring of teachers' attitude and performance in rural schools are the most common problems in the rural areas of Sudan, and all these challenges should be faced by the government education agencies in order to transform rural education.

9.0 Recommendations on Restructuring Rural Teacher Education

To improve access to education in rural schools and enhance professional preparation of teachers for rural teaching, this paper recommends the following points:

- Ensure initial pre-service training for all new teachers that covers subject knowledge, pedagogy and training in diagnosis of rural students' learning needs, with sufficient time to develop these skills. All preparation programmes should provide evidence that they prepare candidates with the fundamental knowledge and skills to positively affect rural students learning.
- Once future teachers have completed the pre-service phase and taken full responsibility for teaching one or more classes in elementary or secondary school, they enter what is known as the induction phase. Ministry of General Education should provide ongoing in-service training and professional development for all teachers in rural areas, making use of communities of practice and following up on training given. Teaching research group, lesson study, university school partnerships and exchange programme are more importantly; rural teachers having different experiences and understanding can meet and work together whilst sharing their expertise on particular subject matter hence creating motivation in working areas eventually. It is less expensive and is good as the school/colleges get to exchange ideas with different educational experts with diverse knowledge and profound understanding.

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- Standards for teacher training must be clear. Governments need to work with rural teachers – preferably through professional bodies such as Teachers’ Councils – to establish national standards that, where necessary, raise both the level and the quality of training and are applied consistently to the whole cycle of teacher development and management.
 - Training must therefore, at a minimum, include training in the subject areas to be taught, in pedagogical methods including “positive discipline”, and in diagnosis of students’ needs so as to determine how best they will learn: these are the skills that distinguish high quality teachers and improve learning outcomes. It must also include training in child rights, gender sensitivity and respect for diversity. This is particularly important where inequality is marked; teacher understanding of gender and diversity is crucial to ensuring respectful, equitable treatment for all children, and to furthering social goals.
 - More women teachers: recruitment of more women teachers in rural schools is proven to have a strong association with better rates of enrolment, retention and academic achievement for girls. Teachers can act as role models for girls, and can help to provide supportive learning environments and encourage girls’ participation. However, ensuring that those women teachers who are recruited stay in teaching, and teach the most disadvantaged girls, requires good working conditions for women teachers, opportunities for professional development, job-security and promotion.
 - For rural schools to work properly there is a need to provide workable strategies that will improve the conditions of teachers and teaching in the schools. In recruiting teachers for rural schools, two things must be considered. First is the education needs in rural schools, and second is teachers who are trained to meet these specific needs. Osterholm, Horn and Johnson (2006) reports that, retention is cheaper than recruitment, particularly in rural schools, further highlighting the likely impact of targeting and providing in-service training for teachers as a means to boost their retention simultaneously increasing their teaching capacity.
 - More research on policy, practice and need in the professional preparation of teachers for rural teaching is needed, and more data is required to help solve the most egregious failure of our current teacher education system.

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