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GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN GHANA:
THE POLICY AMBIGUITIES OF PRIMARY ENROLMENTS

A Research Paper presented by

Francis Babongte Avura
(Ghana)

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for Obtaining the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
Specialization: Public Policy and Administration

Members of the Examining Committee

Professor J. Bjorkman
Professor L. Eldering

The Hague, December 2000

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Studies; the views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

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DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to my beloved and cherished Father,

The Late MADUINA DEVERO,

For his support and inspiration.

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List of Acronyms

FCUBE	= Free Compulsory and Universal Basic Education
BESIP	= Basic Education Sector Improvement Program
IDA	= International Development Association
JSS	= Junior Secondary School
SSS	= Senior Secondary School
EDSAC	= Education Sector Adjustment Credit
SFEPS	= School Feeding Programs
NGO	= Non-Government Organization
GES	=Ghana Education Service
PREP	= Primary Education Project
EIP	= Equity Improvement Project
GER	= Gross Enrolment Ratio
ADPE	= Accelerated Development Plan for Education
PTA	= Parent Teacher Association

Chapter one

Background and Scope of the Study

Introduction

Literacy rates represent the most telling indicator of a country's educational status. The core of mass public education, and hence the starting place for literacy for most of the world 's population, is primary education. However, a large number of countries have yet to ensure universal primary education, and educational systems with high enrolment are often plagued by high dropout rates. Political commitment, the first and most important requirement for universal primary education should be given the highest priority in policy formulation and implementation by governments.

Education is one of the social services that underwent reform as part of management innovations in the organizational structures and systems of government. These were aimed at delivering greater efficiency as well as more responsive and flexible public services. Their focus was to make education more accessible, better quality, cost-effective and responsive to productivity and economic growth.

Expanding school systems and improving the quality of education are important goals of governments in developing countries. They have been so since the 1960s. Access to good-quality primary schooling is of central importance to national government. Development theorists argue that improving education is a primary means of building human resources, which Harbison (1973:3 cited in Rondinelli, A and others 1990) calls the "ultimate basis for the wealth of nations". Education is more crucial to long-term sustainable economic growth than capital, natural, and material resources. There is now a substantial body of evidence that primary schooling is productive in an economic sense, and that it effects people's behavior in ways which support a wide range of development goals (Colclough 1993).

Ghana embarked on an Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) in 1983 as part of IMF and World Bank conditionalities. During its first phase (1983-6) there was a strong emphasis on the economic sectors, using conventional macroeconomic instruments to

liberalize the economy. The second phase placed much greater emphasis on social sectors, including education. The key objectives were to expand access to primary schools, to improve educational quality and efficiency of educational financing, and to strengthen the planning and educational administration.

In response the Government of Ghana launched the Free Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) Programme, which is a ten-year program from 1996 to 2005. One of its major objectives is making schooling at the basic stage 1 through 9 free and compulsory for all school-age children by the year 2005.

My focus is why educational reforms failed to achieve universal enrolment at primary school level in Ghana. Is it lack of qualified teachers as a result of a decrease in government expenditure from 6 % of GDP in 1976 compared with 3 % in 1985 or due to declining salaries and poor motivation of teachers. The problem has to do with lack of educational materials like textbooks. The construction of classrooms and libraries has also failed to cope up with the growing population while the existing facilities deteriorated due to unplanned cuts in maintenance expenditures.

The severity of economic recession which Ghana experienced towards the end of 1970s caused by domestic mismanagement were exacerbated by the sharp increases in petroleum prices in 1973 and again in 1978. In addition, the need to absorb over one million Ghanaians who unexpectedly returned from Nigeria contributed to the country's economic problems. By consequence, between 1970 and 1982 real per capita fell by 30 per cent, inflation was running at about 40 percent per annum over the period. These circumstances brought serious problems for access to education and enrolment.

1.1 Statement of the problem

When Ghana attained self-rule in 1946, a five-year Development Plan aimed at developing the socio-economic base of the country was initiated. Ghanaian educational goals were redefined and an Accelerated Development Plan for Education, which made primary education free and compulsory to all Ghanaian children, was initiated (McWilliam 1967). However, the program did not realize its objectives.

Subsequent attempts made to improve or change the education system and make it meaningful to Ghanaian society, such as the, new education reform do not achieve its major goal of universal primary education due to poor planning and implementation.

The education sector serves as the principal forum for the acquisition of knowledge and skills that are vital to a nation's development. For the educational system to achieve that important objective it must itself be cost effective, efficient and pragmatic enough to answer to the needs and aspirations of society within stated periods. In this regard, the establishment of schools and the provision of adequate logistics to equip them to contribute significantly to ensuring the existence of an atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning are very important to educational reform.

It is also important to note that the qualifications, efficiency, character and motivation of the teacher, who is at the center of the system, are vital to its success. These factors have of late come more forcefully to the fore largely because of the perceptions (which are real in many cases) that the quality of education in the country has fallen in general. Due to declining salaries and poor motivations, trained teachers were leaving the profession and had to be replaced by untrained personnel. It was estimated that, in the early 1980s, untrained teachers as a proportion of total teachers represented 51 per cent of primary and 25 per cent of middle school teachers. The lack of a corresponding increase or improvement in the numbers and positions of competent teachers, facilities and other logistic in our schools, have tender to impact adversely on the educational system and enrolment in particular.

The unavailability of books and other educational resource materials and equipment and other constraints has plagued the previous attempts at educational reform and prevents them from realizing their full potential. Education materials, essential texts, and library books were often unavailable due to the lack of foreign exchange. The existing facilities deteriorated due to unplanned cuts in maintenance expenditures. The system became increasingly overcrowded owing to the suspension of construction expenditures by the state.

In view of these pressures, the quantitative picture deteriorated: after 1980 enrolments stagnated or declined at all levels of the system. The gross enrolment ratio at primary level fell from a peak of 80 in 1980 to around 70 by 1987. The falling trend in school enrolment has a regional and a rural-urban variation. In all groups, school enrolment was higher in urban areas than in rural areas. 75 per cent of male and 61 per cent of female enrolment respectively are recorded in Accra; and 60 per cent and 49 per cent in rural areas. The gap widens in regional terms, where a north-south divide is evident. Even the basic school age group was affected by high dropout rates. Between 1990-91 and 1991-92 there was a 4.2 per cent drop in enrolment.

The above analysis suggests that universal primary education is a major concern despite a series of educational reforms after independence aimed at achieving universal access to basic education. It is not only poor enrolment in primary education; equally striking is the disparity in gender and geographical enrolment. And as long as enrolment stagnate, current inequalities in access to education are not likely to be eliminated.

1.2 Research Objectives and Question

Access to good-quality primary schooling is of central importance to national development. Nevertheless, it is still far from universally available in Ghana. In fact, only about three-quarters of eligible children attend primary schools in developing countries (Colclough, 1993). This paper seeks to find out the extent to which the objectives of the educational reform are being realized. Specifically, the study is intended to trace and explain low enrolment at primary education.

- Why does low enrolment persist inspite of effort to achieve universal enrolment?
- What factors account for low enrolment of girls in Ghana?

This study seeks to focus on educational reform as it affects enrolment at the primary education level in Ghana. The analysis will explore concepts such as educational reform and implementation.

1.3 Educational Reform:

The theory of educational reform defines two options available to developing countries. The first theory of the technical school concludes that educational structures and processes are relatively independent of political and economic forces. Thus potential reformers need only wait for the technical prerequisites to be met before transforming the educational system. Thus members advocate educational programs that will contribute to the growth in national output, often regardless of the impact on social equality or democracy. Adherents to this school propose more investment in early primary education and vocational training. The second theory of the structural school argues that the educational system cannot be reformed without changes in the political and economic institutions. They propose a closer integration between schooling and working. Thus in addition to arguing strongly for universal primary education, they suggest a heavy component of practical experience, including workshops to train children in certain skills (Simmons 1980).

1.4 Implementation

The literature on implementation by various authors like Iglesias, Grindle, and Bjorkman has shown that many projects or policies have failed because formulation was poor, there was no effective planning which goes beyond economic indicators to cover other crucial socio-economic and other environmental factors that influence policies. The implementability of plans is not assessed at the stage, lack of participation of targets and interest groups, implementors/field officers at the formulation stage. This situation results in conflicts at implementation stage with the emergence of various actors or stakeholders with varied and even contradictory interests, which lead to failure of projects and policies.

1.5 Justification for the study

Previous literature in educational reform in Ghana (Colclough 1993, Avotri 1993, Amooh, 1990) either deals with institutional or curriculum changes. This study seeks to focus on enrolment of primary education in Ghana. The Accelerated Development Plan for Education and the New Educational Reforms all failed to achieve their

objectives of equal access to primary education. The FCUBE Program is in its fifth year of implementation yet it is still far from achieving its objective of access to education for all school-age children by the year 2005. This study seeks to explore universal access to primary education and how it affects development. The study will in this light serve as an impetus to a concerted policy design and implementation by government to enhance equal access to universal primary education.

1.6 Methodology and Data source

Within the broad context of the scope of this research, the first intent would be lay bare the general problem besetting the education system in Ghana in relation to enrolment and retention. Then guided by the research questions the paper will proceed to an analysis the theories and the concepts as outlined, within the context of educational reform and universal primary enrolment. The paper will adopt a case study approach to analysis why low enrolment and high drop out rate persist inspire of the efforts to achieve universal primary education in Ghana. The study will use secondary published and unpublished data. Other source of data will be policy documents, Internet, and other data from the ministry of education

1.7 Organization of the paper

Chapter One introduces the paper and outlines the background to the educational reforms in Ghana.

Chapter Two analyses the concepts and theories underlying educational reform and implementation.

Chapter Three provides a history of educational reform in Ghana since independence, including the successes, failures, and the lessons learnt.

Chapter Four will analyze low enrolment and retention in basic education.

Chapter Five will summarize the findings and suggest recommendations.

Chapter two

Theoretical Framework

This chapter intends to review the theories on educational reforms and implementation. However, the paper will focus on two major theories of educational reform, the structural and human capital theories. The two schools of thought agreed and argue for universal primary education, which is relevant to this paper. Secondly, the two theories talk about the relationship between schooling and working. This is also relevant because, most parents enrolled their children because of the economic benefits when they are working, and indeed one of the major determinants of enrolments. For example, the human capital theory suggests that an investment in education increase labour's productivity by embodying in that labour skills and knowledge.

In recent years reforms in school systems have occupied the energies of a number of policymakers and scholars throughout the world especially in developing countries. Scholars usually choose to reserve the term educational reform for those changes involving normative national and broad structural change, while they reserve the term educational innovation or some other term for lower-level programmatic alterations in education (Simmons 1974; Paulston 1976; Sack 1981 cited in Rust et al 1994). In defining reform, this paper will adopt the definition by Simmons who sees reform "as changes in educational policy that bring about shifts in the way that education budget is allocated; the way the pyramid of enrolment is shaped; what students are taught in school; and the way that economic incentives such as wages and employment affect the supply and demand for education". Ghana at various points in time has initiated reforms to achieve these goals and as observed by Simmons, they are not easy to achieve in the face of economic constraints particularly in the developing countries.

2 Theories on educational reforms

There are two major paradigms or schools of thought that dominate the literature on educational reform. These two are equilibrium school, premised initially on the

nineteenth century writings of Charles Darwin, and the conflict school, which draws on the writings of Karl Marx. Since then, sub-schools like evolutionary or neo-evolutionary theory, modernization theory, dependency theory and Marxist theory. The evolutionary or neo-evolutionary theory of educational reform, which is part of the equilibrium school emphasizes the linear evolution of society and suggests that somehow educational reform and social progress are naturally and positively correlated. Modernization theory begins with the postulate that modern societies are rational and that education is a major force in creating what has been called expert society. Dependency theory hypothesizes that educational expansion and reform are, in fact, a form of neocolonialism that allows core countries to remain culturally and economically dominant over periphery countries, without having to resort to overt military occupation. The Marxist theory on international educational change is that reform movements that originate with the capitalist class will not liberate subordinate groups. True educational reform from Marxist perspective, must aim at creating critical consciousness and help to mobilize the subordinate classes to bring about structural changes.

The human capital or incrementalist theory suggests that an investment in education increase labor's productivity by embodying in that labour increased skills and knowledge. Education or schools are supposed to develop the individual to his or her fullest potential and capacity. While different methods are used to measure human capital, they are all based on the cognitive effects of education, as captured by grades and tests of school achievement. While preferences may change over time, the adherents to this school argues that consumption, investment and work preferences are not the outcomes of social institutions such as schools or individual experience, but are considered only as inputs. The policy implications of this theory include the proposal that increased amounts of schooling for individuals with low schooling will increase their wages and also reduce social inequality.

The structural theory contend that educational systems are not understood in terms providing human capital to individuals or promoting economic equality, but rather in terms of their position in maintaining the status quo by reproducing the social order.

While education does increase the productive capacity of workers, it also helps to diffuse the potential explosive class relations who are generated by wide differences in wealth and authoritarian work relations. Structuralists argue, for example, that many of the supposed inefficiencies and inadequacies of the educational system, like high dropout rates, functional illiteracy among primary and secondary graduates, educated unemployment and the repeated failure of educational reforms, are, in fact, quite rational. According to the theory they can best be understood in terms of the position the school plays in the reproduction of the society and the smooth integration of the youth into the labour force. From this theory come five propositions.

The first proposition is that educational reforms have to be conceived within the context of socioeconomic reforms, and that one cannot view educational policy as isolated from the context of the overall social policy. To change or improve, for example, the egalitarian aspects of schools require an attack not only on education but also on political and perhaps economic life as well. The incrementalist, however, views education mainly as a technical process and therefore its recommendations are limited to technical recommendations like strengthening planning methods, improving teacher training, or raising teachers' salaries.

The second proposition is that there are likely to be a relationship or correspondences between the way the educational system operates internally and operation of the political and economic systems. There is a tendency among educators, not least classroom teachers, to conceive of educational institutions as if they operate in a social vacuum. The structuralist argue that the basic structure of the social relations of the economy and its institutions—the degrees of inequality, the forms of authority, centralization of responsibility, and extent of subordination—are likely to be reproduced in the way schools operate. The problem of student failure in school is case in point. Incrementalists argue that students fail because teachers are inadequately prepared, textbooks are missing from the classrooms, teacher supervision is inadequate, teacher salaries are too low to attract the right kind of people into the profession, students lack intelligence. On the other hand the structuralists argue that all of these points noted by the incrementalists could be improved, but their impact would

not be substantial as compared to changing the factors outside of education, which help determine educational policies and program. Adherents to this school argue that children who fail in primary and secondary school internalize their third-class citizenship for life.

The third proposition of the structural theory is that the primary role of education is to produce work force, and not develop the capabilities of individuals to their fullest potential. Structuralist contend that the apparent returns to investment in human capital tend to be due more to the screening effects of schools in labeling prospective job candidates, rather than to the development of individual talent.

A fourth proposition is that whereas incrementalist tends to see the primary role of education is to generate skills and the major problem of educational policy is being able to generate enough skills, the structuralists argue otherwise. The real problem, they argue, is the over-supply of skills. And that the over-supply of educated labour is a response to the necessity of political regimes getting support from middle and upper income parents regardless of the costs in terms of social inequality and manpower allocation. The tendency is produce over-supplies labour force in order to produce the surplus of job seekers who necessary to keep the labour force in line.

The final proposition is that educational policy does not determine tradeoffs between various social objectives. The structuralists argue that political and economic forces shape both the tradeoffs within the education sector and among the social sectors. For example, when the problems of educational reforms are sufficiently removed, it will permit not only changes in the education system but also changes in health and welfare as well. The policy implications of the structuralist theory is that basic changes have to be made in the power relations of different interest groups and in the structure of the firm and other economic mechanisms before the dysfunction's of the school system will disappear.

2.1 Contrasting the paradigms

The members of the technical school of educational planners have measured inputs in terms of the quantity and cost of resources, including teachers, and output in terms of

student test performance and grades. The structuralists have tended to emphasize the qualitative dimensions of inputs, such as what is taught and how. The two schools of educators have come to very different conclusions about the efficiency of the educational system. However, according to the production function analysis, which suggests that non school inputs like parental influence and child health are more influential on test scores than the school inputs as argued by the human capital school. Thus, replacement of existing school buildings, science laboratories cannot be used well when teachers are untrained and inexperienced. Second, as enrolments have expanded under programs of mass education, a greater percentage of low-income children are in school, particularly at the primary level. These students tend to have less encouragement at home, suffer brain damage as a result low calorie intake, and receive less attention from middle class teachers than do students in upper income groups. The quality of new teachers usually suffers in mass expansion, partly because there are few incentives to keep good teachers in rural and low-income areas where they are needed most.

2.2 The general theories of implementation

Interest in implementation analysis arising out of policy failure in industrialized countries and development plans in developing countries. Implementation has lagged far behind political rhetoric. The difficulties can be attributed to the general lack of knowledge about program implementation and, more specifically, to the lack of attention given to the design of implementation strategies by planners and administrators in developing countries (Bjorkman, 1994). Much of the development administration theory of the 1950s and 1960s focused on macro-economic planning and national political and administration reform. Implementation was assumed to be automatic or mechanistic if enough money were spent. And so implementation consistently continues to play a secondary role in decision making to the enunciation of policy goals and so when policies fail, the answer is "try harder". Now we have discovered that implementation is not a constant; its effectiveness varies by policy and by field. Since implementation cannot be guaranteed as a matter of course, it must be taken into account when policy is formulated and monitored throughout the process (Bjorkman, 1994). During the 1980s, public sector management began to focus

seriously on issues of implementation rather than only on policy-making *per se*. Nearly all-national development plans and acknowledged that implementation is at the core of strategies for development management.

The concept of implementation is characterized by a problematic structure (Lane, 1993.). According to Lane a formal definition might be where implementation refers to the bringing about, by means of outputs, of outcomes that are congruent with the original intention(s). (DF1) implementation = F (Intention, Output, Outcome). According to him two ideas are fundamental to the concept of implementation: that the policy programme is the output that brings about the outcomes so that the outcomes accomplish the objectives of the policy. Secondly, implementation assessment focuses on the operation of a public policy and its consequences. There are three logically separate activities according to Lane, (a) clarification of the objectives (the goal function), (b) statement of the relationship between outputs and outcomes (the causal function), and (c) clarification of the relationship between objectives and outcomes (the accomplishment function). There are two set of actors are involved, the formulators and implementors. Implementation theory assumed that the actors who decide on the policy are different from the actors who are responsible for its implementation. Even though this is far from always the case, the implementation process is built up around an asymmetric relationship between the formulators and the implementors. Whereas implementation as an outcome is rather unambiguous- to carry a policy to effect- the implementation process is a more complex phenomenon (Lane, 1993). Thus, implementation models constitute the missing link between policy decision-making on one hand and policy execution and policy implementation on the other (Hargrove, 1975, Lane, 1993). Pressman and Wildavsky, in their analysis in (implementation, 1973) poured out warnings against any public policy model that regarded implementation as simple or straight forward. According to Grindle and Thomas, the implementation phase of the policy reform process frequently determines the nature and success of a policy reform initiative. Often, in practice, the process of implementation leads to outcomes quite different than those intended and anticipated by analysts and decision-makers. The range of outcomes results from the fact that implementation is an interacted and ongoing process of decision making by a variety

of actors, the ultimate outcome of which is determined by the content of the program being pursued and the interaction of the decision-makers within a given politico-administrative context.

Grindle sees the task of implementation as establishing links that allow for the translation of public policies into outcomes. Therefore, it involves the creation of policy delivery system in which means and ends are logically established as action programs to achieve given objectives and goals. Grindle points out that theoretically policy implementation process can be said to commence when general goals and objectives have been specified, action programs design and monies or necessary inputs made available for program implementation. Also of great importance, and which is very relevant for the analysis of this paper in terms of the process of implementation is the fact that decision made at the design or formulation stage have a considerable impact on implementation process (Grindle, 1980)

2.3 Adoption of Analytical Framework

The above schools of thought on educational reforms raised issues, which are also covered by the implementation theories. Some of the issues are education and employment, and the models use to implement this reforms to achieve its objectives. This paper choose above schools of thought because the emphasized more on the relationship between education and unemployment. Secondly, both theories propose more investment in early primary education and vocational training. For instance the structuralist school's concerns with the process of education. The relative rigidity of the wage and employment structure, and the schools system role in preparing people for and rationing them to a hierarchical job structure parallels their development goal of greater social and economic status for the poorest members of the populations of the developing countries. Thus in addition to arguing strongly for universal primary education, they also propose a closer integration between schooling and working.

Ghana's educational reforms over the years try to increase enrolment as well as establish and strengthen links between schooling and employment. To replace the former purely academic curriculum, there is, now a strong diversified vocation bias

curriculum seen as a means equipping school graduates with the relevant skills for employment either in the formal or informal sector. Practical Agriculture, vocational and technical skills, have been included in the curriculum as compulsory or core subjects at the basic level to expose students to employable skills and expose them also to the use of simple hand tools. In 1974 Robert McNamara called the education and employment problem one of “the most disturbing paradoxes of our time”. With the benefit of recent data it appears that the paradox can now be seen as a dilemma whose solutions extend beyond the confines of the education system to political and economic causes. Hence, the formulation and adoption of education reforms depend more on the kind of political system, the nature of the bureaucracy and power, the kind of economy and the prevailing political objectives for economic development than they do on specific conditions that may exist in the educational system.

However, these variables can be pulled together to form one analytical framework as given below.

2.4 Access and participation

- Enrolment and retention for all children of school going age.
- The causes of low enrolment and retention
- Low enrolment of girls’

Chapter Three

Historical perspective on educational development in Ghana

Different nations grapple with the many changes that confront them, they often look to education as a panacea for their problems. But education of itself cannot resolve cultural and structural contradictions that give rise to social tension and dislocation. Many thoughtful observers recognize that the “crisis in the world education” seems to be chronic and that some may have lost their sense of idealism concerning the efficacy of education to solve major social problems. However, without educational reform, most societies will flounder, especially if they wish to participate in the world market. Describing and analysis the relationship between the market and national educational systems, however, is far from simple.

For a country to move forward in terms of growth and effective utilization of its human resource, the fact that its educational sector needs to be dynamic is unquestionable. Education and its content orientation constitute the irreplaceable source of the supply of manpower and skills, and secondly the avenue for the utilization and transformation of knowledge into technological progress. Unfortunately the case of Ghana since independence has been one of stagnation, rigidity, inconsistency and neglect. Studies of the cost and benefits of schooling, indicate that average rates of return to education are high in comparison with returns to expenditures in other sectors, and that they are highest for primary schooling (Psacharopoulos, 1993)

3 Pre-independence:

The dominant mode of transmitting knowledge in the precolonial societies of the Guinea Coast was through apprenticeship by observing adult skill children learned proper roles and behavior. The missionaries introduced western-style education into the Gold Coast as early as 1765. Many of these institutions, established by

Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries, were located in the southern part of country in what became the British Gold Coast Colony. In 1852 the British colonial government instituted a poll tax to raise money to support schools, but the measure became unpopular and was abolished in 1861. Mission schools continued to spread, however, and by 1881 more than 139 had been established with an enrolment of about 5,000 students.

After World War 1, the development of education was given additional impetus under Governor Guggisbery. His educational policies stressed the need for improved teacher training, equal education for girls, a greater emphasis on vocational training, and the establishment of secondary schools. In the governor's ten-year development plan, which was announced in 1919, education was given a special place, partly because of his goal of replacing Europeans with educated Africans in many administrative positions within the country. The policies were not fully implemented, especially at the secondary and vocational levels, but the Achimota School, a first class secondary designed to train Ghanaians for the lower levels of the civil service, was established in 1927. Although English remained the principal language of instruction in the school system, vernacular languages were also allowed in the primary schools, and the publication of these languages began in earnest. Whereas some parents in the Northern regions of the country resisted enrolment of their children, many in the southern part encouraged formal education because it was regarded as a virtual guarantee of acquiring white-collar jobs and wage-earning positions. By 1950, Gold Coast could boast of 2,999 educational institutions with a total enrolment of 281, 020 out of which 57 were secondary schools with a total enrolment of 6,162.

Table 1
Distribution of Primary and Secondary School Facilities-1950

Area	Number of Schools	Total Enrolment	Estimate of Population	% Total Population in Schools
Colony & Ashanti	2,601	249,376	2,875,000	8.1
Trans Volta (South)	315	26,525	273,000	9.6
Northern Territories(including Northern Trans Volta)	83	5,059	1,093,000	0.5
Totals	2999	281,020	4,241,000	6.6

Source: Foster, P.1968 (for details see pp.117-123)

3.1 Post- independence:

3.1.1 Immediate post- independence:

After independence there was a massive literacy drive because education has been recognized as a cornerstone of economic and social development. Therefore there was a rapid expansion of enrolment. First, to train high level manpower personnel to fill in top public service post and to raise the literary level of Ghanaians to accelerate the development process. Second, out of a UNESCO Conference on Education Development and Population Dynamics held in Addis Ababa in 1961, Ghana adopted the following targets for the period, 1961-1970:

- As much as 71 per cent of primary school-age children to be in school by 1970,
- Enrolment figures in the second and third cycle schools should increased from 9 per cent to 15 per cent and 0.35 to 0.55 per cent respectively by 1970,
- The proportion of GDP spent on education should be increased from 5.78 per cent to 6.96 per cent annually by 1970,
- There should be steady and rapid movement towards universal primary education by 1980.

These goals together with the lessons from the implementation of the Accelerated Development Plan for Education compelled the government to enact the 1961 Education Policy making primary education free and compulsory. The 1961 Education Act initiated by Dr Kwame Nkrumah provided a six-year basic course of primary education for all children above the age of five years. This led to increased in enrolment to 75 pre cent in 1965 with the results that the number of schools could not

match the enrolment. The shift system was therefore introduced which helped to put a lot of children in school.

3.1.2 The New Structure and Content of Education in 1974

Ghana has witnessed profound changes in education since the implementation of the Accelerated Development Plan for Education, which resulted in an increased in enrolment. However, in common with many other African States at that time, the economy sustained a series of external shocks. The difficulties caused by sharp increases in petroleum prices in 1973 and again and again in 1978, and by a sustained fall in the prices of Ghana's major exports. By consequence, between 1970 and 1982 real per capita income fell by 30%, import volumes dropped by one-third, and real export earnings fell by 52%. Meanwhile, inflation was running at about 40% per annum over the period. These circumstances brought serious problems for the education sector in general and enrolment in particular. Total expenditure in education declined, participation rate of school-age children dropped, so did the proportion of trained teachers. By 1979, the proportion of school-age children had fallen from its 1996 figure of 75% to 69.9%. Similarly, the percentage of trained teachers at the primary school level in 1979 had dropped from 90.8% in 1965 to 72% between 1976 and 1983, expenditures by government fell from 6.4% of GDP to 1.4% in the economic crisis of the late 1970s and the early 1980s.

3.1.3 The first pragmatic reform in education (structure and content)

Partly as a result of earlier proposals for reform and partly in keeping with the Government's economic reform program, fundamental change in the educational structure of the country was obvious candidate for reform. The new government, the National Liberation Council commissions an Educational Review Committee to review the educational system. The committee, made up of thirty-two members under the chairmanship of Professor A. Kwapong, the then vice-chancellor of the University of Ghana, was tasked to:

- Conduct a comprehensive review of the educational system,
- Examine the problems arising from the research;

- Make recommendations and suggest reform for improvement and for eliminating inefficiency and waste (Report of the Educational Review Committee, July 1967, p viii)

The White Paper on the committee's report raised long-standing fundamental questions about the relevance, effectiveness and the sustainability of the educational system as it has been operating. The concerns addressed in this initiative included:

a. Length of time spent in school:

Compared with the educational system elsewhere the average Ghanaian child spends far too long a time, a maximum of 17 years on pre-university education as compared to Britain 13, America 12, and Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania 13.

b. Skills Development

The schools old fashioned curriculum have been found to lack the proper attitude and skills necessary to equip them to work with their hands, and to be willing to take up the type of practical work that is available in our society at the moment. As a result, there is a high rate of unemployment and under-employment among the middle and secondary school.

c. The issue of cost

The cost of education, especially on the public purse and the access of the majority of Ghanaians to education are declining. It is estimated that only 13% of the middle school pupils find admission into secondary schools while only about 25% of form five pupils in the public system gain admission into the sixth form. Enrolment and retention in basic schooling has also reduced considerably.

As a follow up from the above concerns therefore the structure of education in the country changed slightly, though at this stage it was only on experimental basis. For example, two experimental Junior Secondary School (JSS) was established in each of the ten regions. The new structure therefore seeks to reduce the duration of pre-university education to 12 years (3 years JSS, and 3 years Senior Secondary School (SSS)).

3.1.4 The reforms since 1980s(features, prospects, and difficulties)

In 1987, the government came out with the new educational policy for the country. The policy had the following principal objectives:

- To shorten the number of years spent on pre-university education from 17 years to 12 years. The structure of the educational system was therefore changed to comprise six years primary schooling, three years JSS and three years SSS, instead of six years of primary, four years middle and seven years secondary school, thus reducing the length of pre-university education from 17 to 12 years. The nine years of primary and junior secondary become the period for which basic education was to be offered to all children.
- To expand access, improve the quality of education and make access more equitable at all levels of education.
- To enhance educational sector management and budgeting procedures and partially recover costs;
- To increase access to basic education;

The major considerations for the restructuring of pre-university education in 1987 thus included the need to increase resources to the sector. To vocationalize education by shifting emphasis from an academic orientation to more practical and technical one, and to reduce the cost of education by shortening the statutory period of pre-university schooling. The reforms also brought about revisions in syllabuses and provision of educational resources ranging from infrastructure such as classrooms blocks and libraries, to school supplies such as books and technical skills equipment. New Senior Secondary schools were built to absorb the expected increase in enrolment.

In order to expand, improve and make education accessible and equitable to all, at all levels in the educational system, there was the policy to increasing the total number of primary, JSS and SSS in the country. The number of public primary schools in the country increased from 9,193 to 11,765 in the decade 1986/97 to 1996/97 an increase of nearly 3% per annum, whilst junior secondary schools went from 5,364 to 5,597, an increase of less than 1% per annum. This shows a remarkable improvement in the number of basic schools made available. Similarly, in the SSS, the number increased

from 235 to 456 in the same decade 1996/97 showing an increase of more than 9% per annum.

Enrolment of boys and girls in basic public schools has also increased tremendously. The government's plan is to raise primary school enrolment to 98% by the year 2000. The proportion of the 6-11 age group enrolled at the end of the 1980s was 68%. Enrolment figures for the decade 1986/87 to 1996/97 for boys increased from 893,015 to 1,087,613 an increase of more than 2% per annum. That of girls also increased from 716,997 to 939,413 representing an increase of more than 3% per annum. At the junior secondary school level for the decade 1986/87 to 1996/97, enrolment for boys increased from 354,150 to 391,763 a 1% increase and that of girls also increased from 249,042 to 303,705 more than 2% per annum increased. Looking at the Senior Secondary School enrolment also increased within the same decade 1986/87 to 1996/97. For boys, enrolment figures increased from 92,879 to 115,881, an increase of 2.5 % per annum. For girls enrolment increased from 43762 to 73027 showing an increase of 6.7 % per annum.

The gross enrolment ratio (GER) for primary education has changed from 69.2% in 1987/88 to 76.5 % in 1997/98. This, according to the World Bank is the higher than average of 67% for sub-Saharan Africa. The transition rate between JSS and SSS over the ten-year period has also increased from 20% to 39.5%. Inspire of the of the overall enrolment increases, demographic factors seem to be causing stagnation of the enrolment ratios. Ghana's population is growing at 3.1%. But the GER for primary education, for instance, is growing at an average rate of 0.3%. This indicates that demand outstrips supply and may remain so for a number of years to come.

3.2 Various interventions to improve enrolment

The implementation of the 1987 education reforms was supported with some other interventions. One of the them was the Primary Education Project (PREP) which was embarked upon in 1991 with a USAID grant to bring about improvement in primary education. Another was the Primary School Development Project, implemented from 1993 with financial assistance from the International Development Association (IDA).

PREP was designed to strengthen the policy and institutional framework required improving the quality, accessibility, equity and financial sustainability of the primary education system in Ghana by the year 2000. PREP addressed key economic, financial institutional and social constraints to improving Ghana's primary education system in principal ways.

1. It supported policy and institutional reform through conditionality on disbursement of \$32 million in sector cash grants;
2. Local currency generated through auction of dollars was to be used to support the primary education budget;
3. PREP provided limited funding (\$3 million) for technical assistance, training studies, evaluations, financial management review. An Equity Improvement Programme (EIP) which was designed to improve national equity in access and retention of Ghanaian children in primary school was supported by PREP. The main objective of the EIP was to remove education disparities by reaching undeserved groups locally, regionally and nationally. The plan attempted to broaden the base of the education educational system by reaching out to Ghanaian children approximately 30% of the children that were still outside the primary education system. EIP targeted key districts and provided resources to test pilot equity improvement activities in an attempt to help identified constraints including;
 - Lack of qualified teachers in under represented areas;
 - Insufficient parent and community involvement in the education of children and
 - Lack of quality evaluation and monitoring capacities in the public primary education.

Specific activities under the PREP included the following

- Scholarship for girls
- Community involvement
- Provision of furniture in schools
- Remote Area incentives
- Supply of basic learning materials

In addition to the PREP, the Government of Ghana concluded an agreement with

The World Bank for a loan of US\$ 65million in 1993 for the funding of its Primary School Development Project under which some 2,183 head-teachers' houses and over 10,000 classrooms were to be built in educationally disadvantage communities throughout the country. So far records indicate that 2,011 head-teachers bungalows and 6,072 classrooms have been completed.

3.3 Underlying bottlenecks in implementation

Despite the numerous interventions to improve education and enrolment in particular, achievement levels of schools children, especially at the basic level were low. Indeed, it was evident that although those reforms had succeeded in resolving some of the problems like reducing the length of pre-university education and expanding access to education, some of the problems still persisted.

a. Poor enrolment;

Among the principal challenges is the high level of child illiteracy. For instance total enrolment figures for both boys and girls fore primary and junior secondary schools were the lowest in the three northern regions compared with the other seven regions in the country. Records indicated that even nine years after the introduction of the Education reforms, in 1996/97, Primary enrolment figures in the Northern, Upper East and West regions were 151,887, 95,257, 54,734 respectively the lowest among the among the regions. In the Junior Secondary Schools, in 1996/97 enrolment figures for both boys and girls in the three regions are Northern 39119, Upper East 22,679 and Upper West 16,532 the lowest among the regions.

b. Problems of logistics;

The shortage of foreign exchange resulted in an acute shortage of textbooks and other instructional materials. There was massive and clear deterioration of buildings, furniture and equipment due to lack of proper maintenance culture and replacement policy resulting learning and teaching. This insufficient of logistics and other instructional materials resulted in the introduction of the double-shift system to reduce overcrowding in classrooms.

c. Poor incentives to maintain personnel

It is crucial important to note that the qualification, efficiency, character and motivation of the teacher, who is at the centre of the system, are vital to its success. There was a mass exodus of trained and highly qualified teachers from the country to Nigerian as a result of poor motivation. More than 50% of the teachers in basic schools had to be replace with untrained teachers, resulting in ineffective instruction at the basic education level.

d. Lack of Policy dialogue;

Inspire of governments policy of raising enrolment to 98% by the year 2000, there has been a cutting back on levels of funding of the educational sector by successive governments. The proportion of GDP voted by Government to education decline from 6.4% in 1976 to about 1.0% in 1983. Political commitment, the first and most important requirement is more than government declarations for universal primary education and pronouncements confirming the right to education. Universal primary education should be made a political priority at the highest level. It is sometimes argued that rapid progress towards universal primary education has been achieved in developing countries only under favourable economic conditions. Such assessments are wide of the mark. In Zimbabwe, progress towards universal primary education was maintained during a period of economic stagnation. In Uganda, President Museveni has made it a priority for his Government to achieve universal primary education, attaching as much weight to this objective as to economic policy goals.

3.4 The FCUBE Program

The current initiative in basic education is another bold attempt by the Government to address the major problems that persisted in the education system in spite of the earlier reforms. The package is called the basic Education Sector Improvement (BESIP) or, more popularly, the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) Program. The main goal of the BESIP/FCUBE Program is provide an opportunity for every child of school-going age in Ghana to receive good quality basic education by the year 2005. The FCUBE Program is set up in fulfillment of the

fourth republican constitution mandate, which states in Chapter 6 section 38 sub-section 2;

“The Government shall, within two years after parliament first meets after the coming into force of this constitution, draw up a programme for the implementation within the following ten years, for the provision of Free Compulsory and Universal Basic Education”

The ten-year program has two phases, the first phase starting from 1996-2000 and the second phase from 2000-2005. However, FCUBE differs from the previous reform programmes in that it is a constitutional requirement and sector-wide and integrated in scope. The policy sets out to address four main constraints to the provision of good quality universal basic education in Ghana. The constraints are:

1. Poor teaching and learning resulting in poor performance of children throughout the basic education level;
2. Inadequate access to educational services and poor enrolment;
3. Weak management capacity at all levels of the educational system;
4. Unsatisfactory financing arrangement for the education sector.

However, in spite of the various reforms since independence aimed at achieving universal primary education for all school-going age children in Ghana as well as various conference declarations like the UNESCO Conference on Educational Development and Population Dynamics held at Addis Ababa in 1961. Ghana is still far from achieving universal enrolment. For example, in figure 3, the growth rate in primary school enrolment decline from about 5.2% in 1998/99 to about 3% in 1999/2000. Therefore, the objective of the first phase of the FCUBE Program of achieving 98% enrolment by the year 2000 fail, therefore making it almost impossible of achieving the overall goal of universal basic education for all children of school going age by the year 2005.

The crucial role of the national strategies and policies in achieving universal primary education cannot be over-emphasized. However, most of the educational reforms in

Ghana did not give it the highest priority it desired both in the formulating and implementing stages. The Policies were vague and ambiguous or untenably and the intention was lip service or a political statement with no political commitment to implement them. For example, the Accelerated Development Plan for Education, did not really make concrete efforts to make schooling “free and Compulsory” to all children of school-going age. While the New Educational Reforms did not also give school enrolment the priority it desired both in the policy and implementation. However, many factors accounted for this, namely in-school and out-of-school facto

Chapter Four

Analysis of the causes of low Enrolment in Ghana

The goal of achieving universal primary education poses a daunting challenge. Tens of millions of new school places must be created, education opportunities must be extended to marginalised social groups, and the quality of education must be dramatically improved. All of this has to happen in countries with high levels of poverty and scarce public finances. Faced with the gap between resources and needs, it is understandable some regard the sorry state of world education as an immutable fact of life-understandable, but wrong.

Access to good-quality primary schooling is of central importance to national development. Nevertheless, it is still far from being universally available. In fact, only about three-quarters of eligible children attend primary schools in developing countries. In 1990, only about three-quarters of children of primary-school-age in developing countries were actually attending school. The remainder, amounted to about 130 million children, had either never attended school, or had dropped out before completing the primary cycle. At the World Conference on Education for All, held in Thailand in March 1990, delegates from 155 governments, and a similar number of non-governmental organizations and agencies, declared their commitment to the achievement of "universal access to, and completion of, primary education by the year 2000". Universal primary schooling, in all countries, is a viable goal for the turn of this century. But if it is to be achieved resources would need to increase, and policies would need to change at a faster pace to meet an increasing demand for schooling.

Education in Ghana has undergone three major reforms. These are the Accelerated Development Plan and the Educational Act, the New Structure and Content of Education under the Dzobo committee in 1974 and the New Educational Reforms launched in 1987 with the FCUBE Programme. All the three reforms were similar in so as their objective were concerned. They all attempted to change the trend of producing students for only white-collar jobs after school and to predispose students to

practical technical and vocational training as a preparation for self-employment or for further training.

Previous educational reforms have failed to achieve universal access to education. For example, the government plan was to raise primary school enrolment to 98% by the year 2000, however, in 1992, out of the total school population of 6.9 million people, some 4.1 million—that is to say 59% were in school. Even the basic school age group was affected by high dropout rates. Between 1990-91 and 1991-1992 there was a 4.2% drop in enrolment. This falling trend in enrolment also has a regional, a rural-urban, and a gender variation. In all age groups, school enrolment was higher in urban areas than rural areas.

4 Causes of Low Enrolment and Retention

The question is that despite various educational reforms of the last three decades, why do a large number of people remain illiterate? While the causes of literacy rates are many, the immediate cause is the low levels of enrolment and retention at primary level. To attain literacy, it is not only important for a child to enroll in school, but it is also necessary to complete a full cycle of primary schooling. There are two major causes and constraints that contribute to low enrolment and retention in primary schooling, namely in-school factors and out-of-school factors.

4.1.1 In-School Factors

4.1.1.1 Lack of Physical facilities

Lack of physical access to schooling is a major cause of under-enrolment in primary schools in Ghana. Children often do not go to school because places are not available or schools are too far away from home. Availability of school places within a reasonable distance is a prerequisite for children's, especially girls', school participation. For example, studies of Ghana (Herz et al.1991, as cited in Chowdhury, 1999) and (Ahmed and Hasen 1984, as cited in Chowdhury, 1999) found that female enrolment is negatively associated with distance. The distance to the nearest school might also explain why enrolments are so low among poorer households. For example, (Lavy, 1992 as cited in Castro-Leal, F et al, 1999) found distance an important

constraint in Ghana. Chao and Alper (1998, as cited in Chowdhury, 1999) found that enrolment was 70 per cent in communities with at least one primary school in 1992, compared with only 43 per cent in those with no primary school. They estimated that reducing the distance to a primary school by one mile would raise enrolment by 3 per cent in Ghana. In Ghana Lavy (1992 cited in Castro-Leal and others 1999) found that leaking, unusable classrooms and lack of electricity had significantly negative effects on decisions to enroll in primary schools and Glewwe and Jacoby (1992 cited in Castro-Leal and others) reported that other variables for example, no desks also influenced primary enrolment.

In addition, there is also insufficient school buildings or classrooms especially in the rural and deprive areas. For example, in 1990/91 there were only 10,623 primary schools in the country and most of them have deteriorated due to lack of proper maintenance culture and replacement. Also, most of the primary schools especially in disadvantage do not have chairs and tables and other furniture for effective learning and teaching. Children either has to sit on the floor or lay on their stomachs to write or their parents have to provide them with tables and chairs. Equally important are instructional materials like textbooks and other logistics.

4.1.1.2 The Quality of Schooling

The quality of schooling is also an important determinant of participation and retention. Poor teaching, curriculum, instructional materials and school infrastructure can have an adverse affect on student learning. In Brazil and Colombia, for example, 80 percent of variances in student achievement have been attributed to school quality variables (Heyneman and Loxley 1983 as cited in Chowdhury, 1999). One study found that the use of textbooks in rural Brazil in 1993 had a positive and significant effect (7-8 points) on achievements scores (Armitage et al 1986 as cited in Chowdhury 1999). A child who performs badly in the tests and other assessments is more likely to dropout than a child who makes progress. Indeed, another Brazilian study indicated that children whose parents had no education were almost three times as likely to complete primary education if they had two or more textbooks than if they had none (Bustillo 1993 as cited in Chowdhury, 1999). According to the Human capital theory, students

fail because textbooks and other instructional materials are missing from the classrooms and low moral of teachers.

4.1.1.3 Gender Bias

Gender gaps have always existed in education in Ghana. These gaps do not only persist. Recent findings indicate the gap continues to widen with boys gaining the upper hand. Girls enroll at a lower rate than boys and are more likely to drop out.

Table 2
PRIMARY: Gross Enrolment Ratios by Level of Schooling and Gender, 1989 & 1992

YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	ALL
1989	86	72	79
1992	93	83	88

Source: Ghana Human Development Report, 1997

Table 3
SECONDARY: Gross Enrolment Ratios by Level of Schooling and Gender, 1989 & 1992

YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	ALL
1989	44	29	37
1992	44	33	39

Source: Ghana Human Development Report, 1997

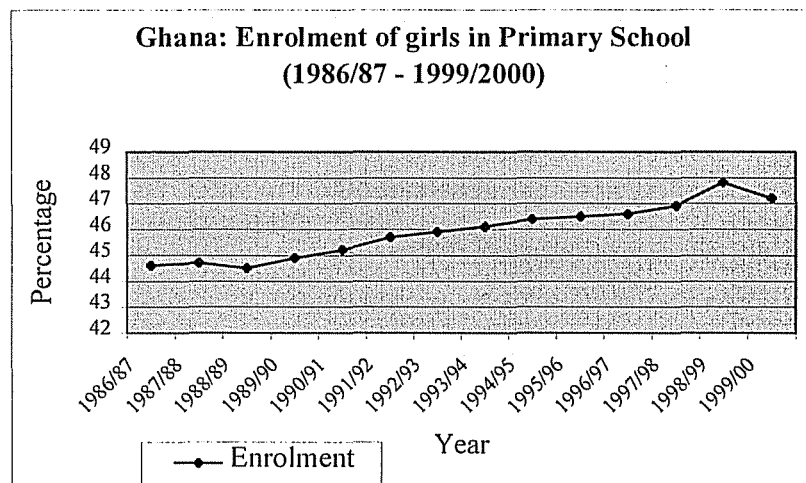
The tables above show the gross enrolment ratios by level of schooling and gender for the period 1989 to 1992. The gross enrolment ratio for boys in primary education in 1989 is 86 that of girls is 72, a difference of 14. In 1992 the gross enrolment ratio of boys is 93, while that of girls is 83.

The falling trend of girls' enrolment has regional and rural-urban variations. In all age groups, school attendance was higher in urban than in rural areas. 75% of male and 56.9% of female attendance respectively are recorded in Accra and 60.9 and 56.9% for boys and girls respectively in rural areas. In 1996/97 the percentage of girls in the three regions (Northern, Upper East and West Regions) was 40.5% of total enrolment in the primary schools and 35.1% in the junior secondary schools. In 1992, for instance, there was no female enrolment in the Upper East Region while 22.2% of males were enrolled.

The dropout rate is greater on the average for girls 72% than for boys 64.5. For example, the 1988 enrolment figure show a 59.7% drop in enrolment for boys from primary to JSS, and a 70.9% drop from JSS to SSS. The drop in enrolment for girls however, was 84.6% from primary to JSS and 80% from JSS to SSS. The high drop out rate of girls has been attributed to high incidence of pregnancy and poor performance.

Several reasons have been assigned for the persistence of the pattern, the most obvious being poverty. The direct and indirect costs of education are high for parents in low-income communities, and since this compels them to make choices, the boys are readily given the opportunity to go to school.

Figure 1



Source: Ministry of Education, SRIMPR Division

Figure 1 above shows the percentage of girls' enrolment in primary school between 1986/87-1999/2000. Girls' enrolment rose to 48% in 1997/98. This may due to Government interventions aimed at increasing girls' participation in education; such as creating a Girls' Education Unit under basic education division of the Ghana Education Service in 1995. Secondly, promoting increased participation of girls' from both junior and senior secondary schools in the annual science technology, mathematics education countrywide. There are numerous organizations, both governmental and non-governmental that support girls and women to acquire

education for development. The forum for African Women Education (FAWE) is at the forefront in supporting policy dialogue and research to improve girls' education. The 31st December Women Movement and the National Council on Women and Development link with the national machinery for the advancement of women in Ghana. In spite of these gains, girls' enrolment lagged behind that of boys at all levels.

Girls are kept at home to help in domestic duties like cooking, washing cloths and looking after younger siblings. Atakpa(1966,p12 as cited in Amua-Sekyi 1998) highlights the fostering system in the Northern Region of Ghana, the region with the lowest enrolment. Some societies have still not discarded the old practice of early betrothal of girls. The perception of many parents, that investment in girls' education will come to nothing because of the possibility of losing them to a husband, is also still prevalent. Teenage pregnancy, absence of role models, hostile school environment and low self-esteem also account in a large measure, for the low participation and persistence rates of girls.

The bias is also apparent in school authority structures, in male/female teacher ratios, in gender stereotyping in textbooks, in the distribution of teachers by subject (science and mathematics are often taught by male teachers), in teacher/student interactions and lastly, in teachers' attitudes and expectations (Chowdhury 1993).

4.1.1.4 Shortages and low morale of teachers

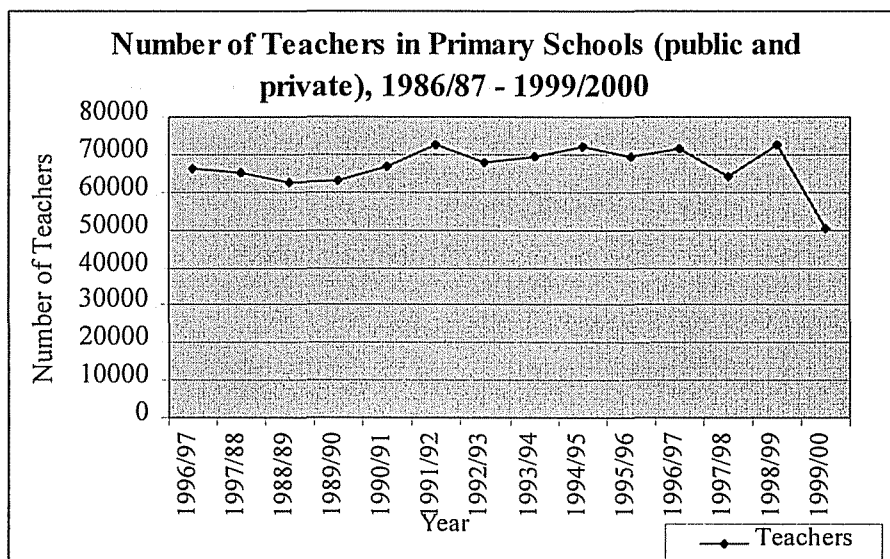
Another major factor for low enrolment among school children is the shortage of teachers especially in the rural and deprived areas. Low teacher morale leads to high rates of teacher absenteeism and attrition. Teacher absenteeism reduces student learning time, which also results in high dropout rate among primary school pupils. The causes of lack motivation are low salaries, poor working conditions, insufficient career advancement opportunities and /or weak support services. For example, when salaries are low teachers are likely to supplement it by holding other jobs. This increases teachers' absenteeism. Evidence show that substantial proportions of primary school teachers hold second, and sometimes third, wage earning jobs.

In addition, most qualify teachers refuse postings too rural and deprive areas where their services are most needed. Therefore over-staffing in urban schools and under-staffing in rural schools is a characteristic problem both at the primary and secondary education levels. While well established urban primary schools are over-subscribed,

Learning time and effectiveness are also affected by other factors such as poor teacher discipline; teachers and pupil's attendance at markets on local markets days during school hours. An almost complete lock of school level supervision accentuated these problems.

Furthermore, a large number of teachers are promoted out of the classroom and appointed to management positions for which they have no training

Figure 2



Source: Ministry of Education, SRIMPR Division, 2000

Figure 2 above show the number of teachers in primary schools (public and private), 1986/87-1999/2000. The figure shows an increased of the number teachers in primary schools. This may be due to the re-introduction of the payment of allowances to students in teacher training colleges. The government has instituted an annual Best Teacher Award to motivate them to put up their best performance. Rural allowances are also being paid to teachers in the rural and deprive areas to motivate them to accept

postings to rural areas. In-service training courses are organized for teachers to up date their skills and method of teaching. In spite of these efforts, there is low morale among teachers because of poor conditions of service. From figure 2 the number teachers' decline from 70,000 in 1998/99 to 50,000 in 1999/2000.

The nation's target and for that matter, the objectives for Vision 2020 regarding Universal basic education for all would be a hoax unless "the teaching profession is made to occupy the pride of place in the country as it used to be. The future of this country depends on our schools and our schools depend on well trained, dedicated and well pay teachers" (Daily Graphic, 19/10/98.).

4.1.2 Out-of-school Factors

Political commitment, the first and most important requirement for success, is about more than government declarations in favor of universal primary education and pronouncements confirming the right to education. All too often, constitutional and legislative rights are of limited relevance to poor communities, for whom they are unenforceable and largely irrelevant. There is a tendency among educators, not least teachers, to conceive of educational institutions as if they operate in a social vacuum. The structural theory first proposition contend that educational reforms have to be conceived within the context of socioeconomic reforms, and that educational policy cannot be view as isolated from the contexts of the overall social policy. To change or improve, for example, the egalitarian aspects of schools require an attack not only on education but also on political and perhaps economic life as well.

Most of the factors of low enrolment and retention in Ghana and indeed in most developing and developed countries are outside the educational system. As the structural theory stated, there is a relationship between the way the educational system operates internally and the political and economic system. This is because in educational reforms basic changes have to be made in the power relations of different interest groups.

4.1.2.1 Direct cost to parents

Schooling is often very costly, even when government pays for much of it. In poverty stricken societies, the cost of schooling can be considerable for poor parents. The lower to family's income, the more prohibitive these costs become. Both governments and households finance public education. Of the total recurrent spending on education in Ghana, the government contributes about 65% and households or parents 35% (Demery and others 1995 as cited in Castro-Leal and others 1999). The economic conditions of the people, especially almost 70% of the population in the rural and disadvantage areas can hardly afford to send their children to school. Parents in the rural areas are unable to meet the financial, material and equipment demands of their children in school. Households spend money on school registration fees, contribution to Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), School fees, and sportswear, books, school supplies and transport to and from school.

Since the initiation of the educational reforms, the World Bank and Western donors have pushed hard for an increasing cost of education to be born by the pupil/parent and the community. Communities benefiting from the Primary School Development Project provide services like materials and labour. These services include; clearing the sites for the pavilion site, mobilizing labour to build walls and other physical amenities, providing cement for mortar and blackboards and maintaining the building when they are erected.

Considerable fiscal pressure is put on relatively poor district Assemblies that have to provide basic education infrastructure as required by law. Since support from central government is inadequate and in order to meet the direct and indirect costs of education including school maintenance, many districts, PTAs, and schools are imposing levies or fees. These additional costs are putting education beyond the poor, worsening an already low enrolment in poor communities.

There is a definite correlation between low enrolment and retention and some basic elements of educational policy, especially in the cost-recovery/cost-sharing framework, which shifts the burden of providing for school facilities and equipment

onto parents and communities. A UNICEF study was done between December 1992 and March 1993 to determine the factors leading to non-enrolment and dropouts among primary school kids in two urban and six rural districts. Community leaders, teachers, parents of dropouts, parents of non-enrolled kids, non-enrolled and dropout kids were surveyed. The factors discovered are high cost of official fees and school fees and lack of facilities.

In 1995 the World Bank poverty study (Ghana Poverty, past, present and future) stated:

“...the reforms are not fulfilling the purpose for which they were designed. in both rural and urban areas, the implementation of the teaching training component, kingpin in the educational reform programme, is largely unsatisfactory. In case after case, in schools, communities and in the Ghana Education Service, informants alluded to the lack of tools, school buildings and trained teachers. This situation...has arisen mainly because , in the cost-sharing framework, communities are not only responsible for financing capital requirements and school furniture, but also for providing tools and other inputs needed for the program. Consistently, therefore, the skills training objective is being undermine by the high incidence of poverty. The strategic vision of education, which is relevant to Ghana, that which creates a skilled work force for economic take-off, is thus being undermined by its precondition of shifting the burden of primary education to the local communities and parents”.

The high direct costs of schooling and the uncertainties about future high earning deriving from participation in basic education, has de-motivated parents from sending their children, especially girls, to school.

The emphasis on community resource mobilization and household payment for schools means that those communities and households that can afford least suffer the most. The World Bank, in its 1993 “Ghana 2000 and beyond” summarizes the point thus:

“The money costs of schooling are not trivial, and may dissuade some parents from sending their children to school”. At least two thirds of private expenditures related to school attendance are devoted to items besides school contribution, textbooks and school supplies. In many communities, residents provide labour and materials to construct school buildings”.

4.1.2.2 Opportunity cost of schooling

The opportunity costs of educating children are higher for poor families because these families rely more on each family member to contribute to the family’s economic survival. Opportunity costs are incurred for boys and girls, but in many cultures especially in the northern regions, the cost are high for girls, who perform a large share of family labour.

Child labour at home is indispensable to the survival of some households. Though boys perform a larger share of family labour, for example herding cattle and ploughing the fields, girls do more home and market place work than boys. Girls cook, clear, and stay out of school to look after siblings. After a series of such absences from school, the girls has difficulty catching up with the rest of the class and in due course, gives up school completely.

A parent who cannot afford school fees and other direct cost of education, and feels the child will learn how to make more money than she would probably make after years of formal education, would withdraw them at the earlier opportunity. To those parents, sending children to school represents an opportunity cost. It is quite clear that parents’ negative perception of the value of education is a strong reason for low enrolment and retention children in schools in the rural areas.

The issue of choosing between secular and religious education seems pertinent in Moslem communities in northern Ghana. A parent in the Bole district of the northern region of Ghana maintained during an interview that secular education is unwholesome and therefore should not be provided for children. According to him

“Moslems in the region feels that formal education is satanic and can never lead one to Heaven. Secondly, it teaches western culture drives children or people to engage in Vices, such as drugs abuse and illicit sexual practices which lead eventually to teenage Pregnancy”(Atakpa, 1996 as cited in Amua-Sekyi, 1998).

4.1.2.3 Sickness and Malnutrition

Other out-of school factors included sickness and malnutrition. Educational interventions have traditionally ignored the fact that children cannot profit from high quality instruction if they are too sick, weak or distracted to concentrate. Studies examining the relationships between Protein-Energy Malnutrition (PEM), which is caused by poor diet, and cognitive development in infancy or early childhood, have found that while mild to moderate malnutrition does not cause primary learning deficits, it does affect cognitive processes. In addition, research shows that worm infections, impaired hearing and sight, and temporary hunger all have serious effects on school performance (Levinger, 1994 as cited in Chowdhury, 1999).

Other social factors like drought because their families have been forced to migrate and war results in children being displaced. The recent conflict in the northern region has resulted in many more children dropping out from school and shepherding animals.

4.1.2.4 Limited economic opportunities

Limited economic opportunities affect children's earning potential and thus the returns from their schooling. This lowers parental expectations of the benefits of their children's education, and so reduces their willingness to invest in their children's future. Girls are particularly affected since, in general, they have fewer opportunities in the labour market than boys. Moreover, any economic benefits accrued from a girl's education may be transferred to another family when she marries.

No policy issue is merely a technical problem concerned with means. This also applies to reform in education, where the problem usually is to handle goal conflicts, not only between goals anchored in different philosophies or ideologies but sometimes goals derived even from the same overall ideology.

Looking at educational reforms since independence, there have been significant achievements in terms of enrolment and retention in primary education in Ghana. For example, the number of primary schools rose from 240 in 1987/88 to 452 in 1991/92 and enrolment from 1,461,185 to 2,118,718 (an increase of 45%). At the JSS level, 1987/88 enrolments were 21.7%. Access to basic education currently stands at 75-78% for children of school going age while in 1987/88 only between 18-20% of middle school pupils gained admission to the senior secondary school. Today, between 35 to 40% of junior secondary school gain admission to SSS, as enrolment at this level has shot up from about 134,736 in 1987/88 to about 200,000.

Since the inception of the reform programme, textbooks and instructional materials have been injected into the education system. New textbooks and teacher guides have been produced for basic education schools and range of tools and science equipment procured and delivered to schools.

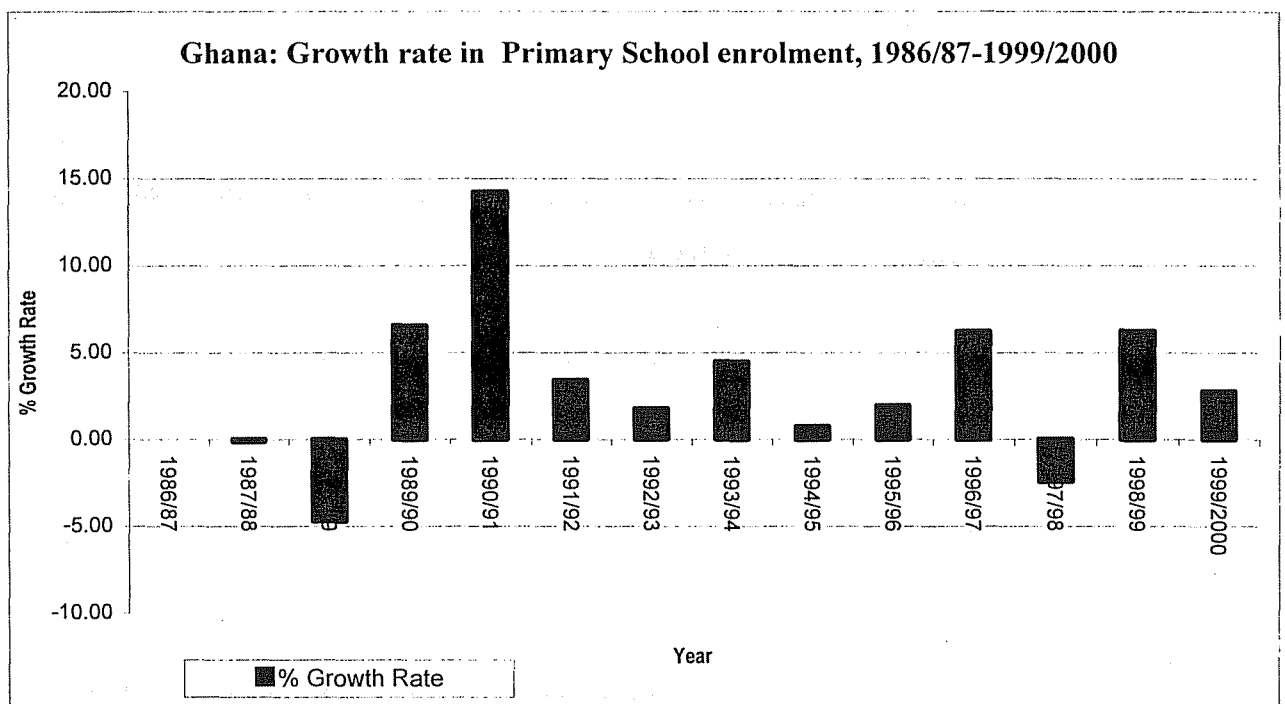
Since the launching of the reform Programme, government has spent considerable amount on teacher training and improving supervision and monitoring, provision of textbooks and other learning materials, and the rehabilitation or provision of classrooms. The Educational Reform Programme of 1987 purported to expand and make access more equitable at all levels of education; change the structure of the school system, reducing the length of education from 17 to 12 years. The reforms also brought about revisions in syllabuses and provision of educational resources ranging from infrastructure such as classroom blocks and libraries.

The Free Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) Programme was launched in 1996 to address the major issues in educational system. The major objective of the FCUBE Programme is to provide an opportunity for every child of school-going age in Ghana to receive good quality basic education. The ten-year programme is intended to reinforce the on-going educational reform programme and achieve good quality basic education for the Ghanaian child. The plan is to raise enrolment in primary education in the first phase (1996-2000) to 98% by the 2000. It

is also targeted that repetition and dropout rates will be reduced, at a rate of 1% annually, till the most minimal reduction rate is reached.

However, There is a general public outcry that in spite of all the inputs being directed towards education and the reform programme as a whole, enrolment and the quality of education within the public education system especially at the basic level had deteriorated or shown no marked improvement.

Figure 3



Source: Ministry of Education, SRIMPR Division, 2000

The graph above shows a percentage growth rate of enrolment of primary education before and the end of the first phase of the FCUBE. In 1988/89 the percentage growth rate fell to -5% and rose to about 15% in 1990/91. The increased may be explained by the new educational reform launched in 1987, which shorten pre-university education from 17 to 12 years, curriculum reform, and expand access to primary education. For instance, a total of 11,218 primary schools and 5241 junior secondary schools at the basic level had been built in 1988/89. However, there was significant drop in percentage growth rate of enrolment from about 15% in 1990/91 to about 2% in

1992/93. This may be due to the lack of qualified teachers in rural or remote areas, lack of basic learning materials and furniture in schools. For example, the percentage of trained teachers in primary schools dropped from 70.8% in 1991/92 to 68.8 in 1992/93. This resulted in a decrease in pupil-teacher ratio from 27.8 in 1991/92 to 30.2 in 1992/93.

Even though there has been increased access to education considering the number of schools that are available, it is an undeniable fact that education is becoming more and more expensive to Ghanaians. Even with the FCUBE Program where basic education is supposed to be free by the standards of the Ghanaian, in fact the only reason it is referred to as "free" is because parents do not pay tuition fees in public schools. Most of the costs such as cost of school uniforms, exercise books, transport and lunch allowances, some educational stationary and levies seem to be barriers to enrolment. All these conditions mean that even though the school buildings may be there, pupils are not making full use of them because their parents cannot afford to incur the different types of expenditure associated with this type of education.

Although government considers primary education to be the highest priority, this does not reflect in the implementation of reforms. The gap between proposed reforms and the ability to implement them is widening because the policy intentions were too vague and the financing implications do not work out. The failure of most reforms in developing countries including Ghana can be attributed to either to deficiencies in the planning process or to obstacles encountered during plan implementation. Implementation consistently continues to play a secondary role in decision making to the enunciation of policy goals. Since implementation cannot be guaranteed as a matter of course, it must be taken into account when policy is formulated and monitored throughout the process (Bjorkman, 1994). Majone and Wildavsky (1967 as cited in Rondinelli et al, 1990) points out that the conventional "blueprint" approach to project planning and design "recognizes that implementation may fail because the original plan was infeasible. According to Lane, there are three logically separate activities (a) clarification of the objectives (the goal function), (b) statement of the relationship between outputs and outcomes (the causal function), and (c) clarification of the relationship between objectives and outcomes (the accomplishment function)

(Lane 1993). Most reform policy goals are vague and ambiguous. For example, “primary education shall be universal, compulsory and free”. This ambiguity may be deliberate for political or other reasons.

Chapter Five

Recommendations and conclusion

Education is central to studies on social stratification, processes of alienation, occupation mobility, social institutions, employment and social development (Bray ET al: 1986). It is a crucial medium for fertility decline (Caldwell 1984) and in addition to the state and family, education is an important site for the formation of attitudes and the reproduction of practices that more or less reinforce the dominant practice of governance and participation (Ghana HDR 1997).

Investments in education are widely recognized as a key component of a country's development strategy. Increases in the quantity and quality of educational provision have been associated with a wide range of benefits including enhanced productivity, reduced poverty and income inequality, improved health and economic growth. Spurred by such evidence, governments in developing countries embarked on educational reforms in the 1990s.

Ghana is no exception; various governments embarked on schools innovation and expansion since independence with different objectives and certain degrees of success and failures. However, they all attempted to secure universal access to higher-quality primary schooling and more equitable, curriculum reform. Shorten the number of years spent at pre-university and to change the trend of producing students for only white collar jobs after school and to predispose students to practical technical and vocational training as a preparation for self employment or for further training.

The central goal of FCUBE is to ensure that all citizens are equipped with fundamental knowledge and skills necessary and sufficient to enable them participate fully in development. One of the major objectives is to raise primary school enrolment to 98% by the year 2000. Educational reforms are part and parcel of social reforms and have to be conceived within the context of social, economic and political reforms. Schools are institutions within very complex organizations. They cannot be reformed by changing and particular educational practice. Changes are brought by changes in their environment, which effect the organization as a whole. This is in line with the

structural theory proposition that one cannot view educational policy as isolated from the context of an overall social policy. To change or improve, for example, the egalitarian aspect of schools requires an attack not only on education but also on political and perhaps economic life as well.

The ten-year Basic Education Sector Improvement Programme known as the FCUBE Programme was launched in 1996 aimed at making schooling from basic stage 1 through 9 free and compulsory for all school-age children by the year 2005. The program has two phases, the first phase starting from 1996 to 2000 and the second phase from 2000 to 2005.

Most education reforms in developing countries are plan and funded by donors like the World Bank. For instance, since the mid-1980s, government expenditure on education has been heavily dependent on donors and funding from multilateral and bilateral sources has amounted to about 10% of GDP. This donor assistance which come with certain conditionalities that tend to stagnate or undermine the nation's human resource development. The Minister of Education, Mr. Spio-Garbrah expressed his displeasure at the imposition of foreign consultants when local professionals are available as part of the aid conditionalities. This, according to him tends to dislocate the planning mechanisms of the educational sector. He said this also increases administrative burden on directors of the ministry who have to keep up with changing conditions and procedures instituted by various development partners. "We require aid, but most importantly, we require aid that acknowledge our sovereignty and which can sustained long after our development partners have left us. We want to be able to design, plan and implement our own programmes". "We need your financial and technical support but let us be seen to be playing the leading roles in the process of our own development", Mr. Spio-Garbrah added.

From the World Bank perspective, educational problems are consequences of the economic situation with a focus on the domestic policies and internal economy. Financial adjustments are required to balance expenditures with available resources. Accordingly, the issues to be addressed dealt with a stagnation of school enrolment

despite population increases and a declining quality of education resulting from inadequate resources. The World Bank proposed policy recommendations involving financial adjustments, revitalizing the education infrastructure, improving academic standards, emphasizing primary education and job-related training. While the African perspective acknowledge the relationship between education and economic problems, their view emphasizes the historical context from which the situation arises and the political and social constraints involved in solving these problems.

5 Recommendations

One major recommendation is political commitment to reforms instead of political rhetoric by politicians to get donor funding. In case government should make the achievement of universal primary education a political priority at the highest level. Reforms, which generated from the people, are likely to succeed than donor imposed reforms.

Secondly, political commitment must be reflected in financial allocations to basic education during the period of transformation. Over the period 1950-70, Costa Rica double the share of public spending allocated to basic education. Cuba increased the share of GDP allocated to education by 3 per cent over the decade up to the mid-1970s. Zimbabwe achieved the same increase over the period 1980-88. Botswana increased spending on primary education at the rate of 11 per cent per annum during the 19970s.

Furthermore, the central role of the public sector involvement in achieving universal primary enrolment is very crucial. Countries, which have achieved rapid transformation in basic education, have done so through public action rather than private provision. There was no private provision at the primary level in Cuba after the revolution. Despite the strong free-market ideologies in Korea, private providers were absents from basic education. Over 90 per cent of primary children attended public schools in Costa Rica in the mid-1960s. Similar levels of public provision were recorded in Botswana during the 1970s and Zimbabwe during the 1980s.

In addition, reducing the costs of education to households and communities is a major factor for achieving a high rate of retention and a Net-Enrolment Ratio. Increased public expenditure was used in each case to reduce the cost of education to households. Free primary education must be truly free. Cuba made free education a right of citizenship. Botswana lowered primary school fees in 1973 and removed them altogether in 1980. In Zimbabwe, rural fees for primary education were withdrawn after independence.

Also, the integration of education reforms into wider human-development strategies is precondition for successful implementation of universal primary education. Education reforms were supported by wider strategies, which reduce poverty. In Zimbabwe, Cuba and Botswana, and Costa Rica, for example, health-sector reforms led to improvements in child health and nutrition, thereby enhancing the capacity of poor households to benefit from education reforms.

5.1 Measures to Improve the Enrolment and Retention Rates

5.1.1 In-School factors

It is critical that access to primary education be improved. Increasing access to schooling requires expanding the supply of school places within children's walking distance. One cost-effective mechanism for expanding the number of school places is to introduce double or multiple shifts. This reform has been widely instituted in Senegal, and has allowed an 11% increase in enrolment, with only a 2% increase in teaching force (Colclogh and Lewin 1993 as cited in Chowdhury, 1999).

Access may also be increased for girls if single-sex schooling is provided. However, before undertaking the expense of building new schools, there is scope to accommodate parental concern for female modesty and security by making creative use of facilities. Organizing advocacy, awareness, and sensitization programs through workshops, the media, newsletters, talks and films. With view to sensitizing and educating the general public, especially parents, educators and policy makers about the need to promote the participation of girls at all levels of the education system as well as in the informal sector. The establishment of girls education unit under Ghana

Education Service (GES) to advocate policy and special programs for achieving participation of girls is a laudable effort by government.

Teacher shortages are common in rural areas, and incentives are required to encourage teachers, particularly female teachers, to work in remote areas. Incentives may include the provision of boarding facilities, increased training, and additional pay. Other benefits such as rural allowance for teachers who have accepted appointments to teach and are teaching in the rural areas. This type of rural allowance is being paid to health workers serving in areas. Extra remuneration to teachers based on the extra pupils in the class given that the Ministry of Education has a fixed number for an average class size. Because extra pupils in a class simply extra workload, teachers should be given extra pay for the additional work done. Admission to Teacher Training Colleges should be made strictly on qualifications, so those high quality teachers can be produced. The re-introduction of the payment of allowances to teachers in training colleges has attracted many students into training colleges and efforts should be made to select most qualify ones. The Best Teacher Award instituted by the government is step in the right direction to motivate teachers to accept postings to the rural areas to help raise the standard of education there. District Assemblies should be encourage to sponsor the training of teachers who would be bonded to serve a fixed number of years in the district. Teacher training, both pre-service and in-service, is essential for improving the quality of education.

5.1.2 Out-of-School Factors

To increase demand for education, steps can be taken to cut the direct costs of schooling. Several countries have taken measures to cut some of the direct costs by eliminating school fees, providing learning materials and free textbooks, free or subsidized transportation, direct subsidies to families for the purchase of materials and uniforms and school feeding programs.

Since government alone cannot do this, it is crucial that government and donor agencies collaborate with experienced Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) whose work in the field has already provided invaluable service of achieving universalization of primary education. To achieve universal primary education, there is a need to

mobilize additional funding for primary education. Government policy and international lending agencies should be focused on the following:

- High priority should be given to measures that would improve children's access, learning and completion of primary schooling.
- Special measures should be taken to achieve parity between girls and boys and between different social groups in enrolment, learning and completion of primary schooling. Efforts should be taken to improve the situation of the most disadvantaged groups, specifically girls in rural area.

However, reducing the opportunity costs to families is often as important as reducing direct costs. Policy options include changing the school calendar to accommodate seasonal demands for child labour, providing childcare for younger siblings and instituting labour-saving technologies. In Bangladesh, flexible scheduling in satellite schools is one of several strategies used to increase the school participation of children (Chowdhury, 1993 as cite in Chowdhury, 1999). Provision of daycare or crèche facilities for younger children siblings not only frees children for schooling, but also prepares the younger children for readiness for later schooling.

Mobilizing community support, by instituting education and information campaigns and encouraging parental participation, is another way of generating demand for schooling. If parents understand the benefits of education and are actively involved in its provision, they are more likely to encourage their children to attend. In Chile, for example, parents interest in their education has increased since they have become involved in the construction and management of schools; student attendance and achievement has improved as a result (Schiefelbein et al.1978 as cited in Chowhury, 1999). Parental education also plays a large role in determining children's schooling from their own personal experience and are more likely to send their children to school.

Improving the overall quality of schooling is another effective mechanism for enhancing children's participation in school. Many countries have addressed the question of the quality of education by providing textbooks, reducing teacher absenteeism, and improving teacher training. For example, a project in Pakistan's incorporated measures

to involve the village education communities to help in identifying motivated female teachers and to supervise teacher absenteeism. Educational decentralization is very much recommended as a way to improve administrative services, increase the quality of education, share power with the local citizenry, and increased flexibility at the school level which will permit decision making to be faster.

Given the evidence relating to the impact of nutritional deficiencies on cognitive processes, school-feeding programs are advocated as a means of improving children's learning capacity. School Feeding Programs (SFPS) are also meant to improve girls and poor children's enrolment and attendance by offsetting some of the costs attending school. To be effective, however, SFPS should be designed as part of broader intervention that also addresses other factors contributing to learning deficiencies (World Bank 1990, King and Hill 1993 as cite in Choudhury 1999)

5.2 Summary and Conclusions

5.2.1 Summary

Literacy rates represent the most telling indicator of a country's educational status. There is clear evidence that literacy raises the productivity and earning potential of a population, and improves the quality of life. The core of mass public education, and hence the starting place for literacy for most of the world's population, is primary education. However, the question is why is it that, more than forty years after the first UN Declarations asserting an urgent need to secure universal primary schooling throughout the world, to which most countries were signatories, more than half of all developing countries have still not achieved this goal?

This paper traces educational reforms in Ghana since independence, particularly in terms of enrolment and retention whether the various reforms achieved universal primary education, and what factors accounted for the failure or success. Like most developing countries the desire to achieve high rate of literacy or universal primary education cannot be overemphasized. Ghana is not exception, various reforms have been undertaken by various governments to achieve this goal with various degrees of successes and failures.

There are various theories of learning and schooling but the Human capital and structural theories are more relevant to this paper. While the structural theory argued that educational reforms are part and parcel of social reforms and therefore cannot be viewed in isolation. Therefore, when the obstacles to educational reforms are sufficiently removed, it will permit not only changes in the educational system but also changes in health and welfare as well. The Human capital theory sees educational reform only as a technical issue. Therefore, low enrolment and retention can be attributed to only in-school factors like lack of qualified teachers, lack of instructional materials and other logistics as well as poor planning and implementation. The structural theory however argued that all the in-schools factors of low enrolment could be improved, but their impact would not be substantial, as compared to changing out-of-school factors (factors outside education) which help determine educational policies and programs. For example, there is a relationship between parents sending their children to school and the opportunity cost of sibling care or contributing to the family's economic survival. Therefore there is a relationship between schooling and employment. Parents send their children to school because of economic benefits that they will get in the future, therefore if there are limited economic opportunities after school, (unemployment) then the opportunity cost of sending children to school will be high.

During the colonial era, basic education was introduced by the European merchants geared towards the training of clerks mainly for the colonial administration. Therefore the emphasis of the training was to produce literate adults to fill the manpower needs of the country at that time. As shown in table 1, by 1950 Gold Coast now Ghana could only boast of 2,999 educational institutions with total enrolment of 281,020. However, after independence, there was the need to improve, expand and to accelerate education. The first president, Dr Kwame Nkrumah who made education free and compulsory at the basic level, initiated the Accelerated Development Plan and the 1961 Education Act. There was a massive literacy drive and communities were encouraged to build schools and provide furniture for basic schools to complement government's efforts. This led to an increase in enrolment with the result that the number of schools could not match the enrolment. The shift system was therefore introduced which helped to put a lot of children in school.

However, even though the program do not achieve it's main objective of free and compulsory education for all children of school going age in Ghana, it achieved enrolment rate of 75% for the 6 to 14 year group in 1965. Until the mid-1970s, Ghana had one of the most developed and effective educational systems in Africa. However, the system was extremely expensive, and was an obvious candidate for reform. This had been attempted on various occasions during the 19970s without success. But it was made inevitable by the severity of economic recession, which the country experienced, towards the end of that decade.

It was based on this that in 1974, a new structure and content of education was approved and accepted by the government for implementation. The main objective of the reform was to make education meaningful, practical and culturally oriented to serve the socio-economic needs. It was therefore to fulfil these needs that the Dzobo Committee was appointed by the government to come out new education reforms for the country. The White Paper on the committee' report raised long-standing fundamental questions about the relevance, effectiveness and the sustainability of the educational system as it has been operating. The committee recommended

- To shorten the number of years on pre-university,
- To expand access, improve the quality of education and make access more equitable at all levels of education.
- To enhance educational sector management and budgeting procedures and partially recover cost

From the early seventies to the mid eighties, Ghana experience a serious national economic decline which affected all social sectors. Along with other sectors, the education system was starved of both human and material resources. In the early eighties, Ghana embarked on a series of IMF and structural adjustment programmes under which the government mounted reforms in all sectors. The Education Sector Adjustment Credit (EdSAC) become operational with the help of development partners notably the World Bank, the Department for International Development (DFID) then (ODA) and grants from other friendly countries. This program aimed at arresting the decline of the education sector. Under EdSAC, the Evans Anfrom Committee undertook a review of the Dzobo Report in 1986 and the resulting proposals implemented in 1987.

Some of the principles, which formed the basis of the reform, were the importance of education for all, the need for education to be relevant to professional employment opportunities, and the importance of scientific and technological education to national development. The major considerations for the restructuring of pre-university education in 1987 thus included the need to increase resources to the sector. To vocationize education by shifting emphasis from an academic orientation to a more practical, technical one, and to reduce the cost of education by shortening the statutory period of pre-university schooling. In brief, the education reform had the following objectives:

- a. To increase access to basic education
- b. To change the structure of pre-university education from 6years primary, 4years middle school, 5 years secondary and 2 years sixth form to 6 years primary, 3 junior secondary and 3 years senior secondary, from 17 years to 12 years.
- c. To make education cost-effective and achieve cost recovery, and be able to sustain the reform program after the adjustment period;
- d. To improve the quality of education by making it more relevant to socio-economic conditions.

The reforms also brought about revisions in syllabuses and provision of educational resources ranging from infrastructure such as classrooms blocks and libraries, to school supplies such as books and technical skills equipment. New senior secondary schools were built to absorb the expected increases in enrolment.

The implementation of the 1987 education reforms was supported with some other interventions. One of them was the Primary Education Project (PREP) which was embarked upon in 1991 with a USAID grant to bring about improvement in primary education. Another was the Primary School Development Project, implemented from 1993 with financial assistance from the International Development Association (IDA).

Despite the numerous interventions to improve education, achievement levels of school enrolment and retention especially at the basic level, were low. For example, between 1990-91 and 1991- 92 there was a 4.2% drop in enrolment. This falling trend in school attendance also has a regional and a rural-urban as well as gender variation. Records indicated that even nine years after the introduction of the education reforms, in 1996/97

primary enrolment figures in the Northern, Upper East and West were 151,882, 95, 257, 54734 respectively the lowest among the regions. Indeed, it was evident that although the reforms had succeeded in resolving some of the problems like reducing the length of pre-university education and expanding access to education, some of the problems still persisted. It is in this light that the Free Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) Program was launched in 1996.

The current initiative in basic education is another bold attempt by the Government to address the major problems that persisted in the education system in spite of the earlier reforms. The package is called the Basic Education Sector Improvement Program (BESIP) or, more popularly, the Free Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) Program. The main goal of the BESIP/FCUBE Programme is to provide an opportunity for every child of school-going age in Ghana to receive good quality basic education. The programme is intended to reinforce the on-going educational reform program and achieve good quality basic education for the Ghanaian child.

As I have already stated, the educational reforms have not achieved its major objective of eradicating illiteracy as shown in figure 3. There is a low rate of enrolment and high rate of retention among primary school children. Two major factors accounted for this, namely in-school and out-of-school factors. The in-school factors include, lack of physical access to schooling in term's availability of school places within a reasonable distance or are too far away from home. The quality of schooling with regards to poor teaching, curriculum, instructional materials and school infrastructure have an adverse affect on enrolment. Gender bias in schools lowers female educational aspirations and so lowers their propensity to complete the primary education cycle. These factors are within the educational system as stated by the Human capital theory and therefore can be solved in education reforms.

However, the out-of-school factors are outside the educational system. The structural theory argues that these factors require an attack not only on education but also on political and perhaps economic as well. Schooling is often very costly and the direct costs to parents include fees, books, transportation and clothing. The high direct cost of

schooling and the uncertainties about future high earnings deriving from participation in basic education, has de-motivated parents from sending their children to school. Opportunity costs of educating children are higher for poor families because these families rely more on each member to contribute to the family's economic survival. Limited economic opportunities lower parental expectations of the benefits of their children education, and so reduce their willingness to invest in their children's future.

5.2.2 Conclusion

Much of the talk, over the past thirty years by donors, developed and developing countries, about targets for enrolments in primary schooling has been the need for all countries to achieve universal primary education. However, the problems of educational reform are placed in an economic and political perspective rather than in merely an educational context. Since educational issues raise profound political questions, it is no wonder that few countries have successfully implemented major educational reforms.

Even though the critical problem that many countries face is how to plan and implement effectively a national reform plan, most of the factors which accounted for low enrolments in Ghana are outside the educational system. For example, the direct and indirect costs of school attendance are too great for poor families to afford. Furthermore, the opportunity costs of school attendance- most usually those associated forgoing child labour in the home or on the land-are much more strongly felt by poor households. However, political commitment by governments is the first and most important requirement for success, is about more than government and international declarations in favour of universal primary education and pronouncements confirming the right to education.

The New Educational Reform, and indeed the FCUBE Program is not likely to achieve its objective of making schooling from basic stage 1 through 9 free and compulsory for all school-age children by the year 2005. This is because the fundamental factors, which accounted for the previous reform for not achieving universal basic education, are still prevalent.

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