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THE STATUS OF DECENTRALIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN THE ABURA ASEBU KWAMANKESE DISTRICT IN THE CENTRAL REGION OF GHANA

BY

ISAAC KWAME ADJAH

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for the award of Master of Philosophy Degree,

in Educational Administration

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature:……Date:…….

Name: Isaac Kwame Adjah

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature:……Date:……..

Name: Mr. S. K. Atakpa

Co-Supervisor's Signature:…….Date:……..

Name: Dr. G. K. T. Oduro

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to find out the status of decentralization of educational administration in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District in the Central Region of Ghana. The sample for the study was made up of 245 respondents selected from the District Education Office, 50 schools and 50 School Management Committees (SMCs). This consisted of 146 teachers, 48 head teachers, 47 SMC chairpersons and 4 officers of the district education office. The purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the sample for the study.

Five research questions were constructed to guide the study. The researcher used three sets of questionnaire, one each for head teachers, teachers and chairpersons of the school management committees. An interview guide was designed in order to gather information and views of officers at the district education office. The tools that were used for the analysis were frequencies and percentages.

The study revealed that there is deconcentration of functions to the school level. However, devolution of functions to the school level leaves much to be desired because majority of SMCs are not performing their functions. A number of challenges faced by school administrators were unearthed by the researcher and these include the inadequate funds to run the school, increase workload and the late supply of logistics.

Finally, the study revealed that the attitudes of teachers and head teachers towards the decentralization policy were to a very large extent positive. A number of recommendation were made among which is that the Ghana Education Service and District Assemblies should create the necessary conditions that will allow schools to raise funds from local sources.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my wife, Mary Afi Normenyo and my children, Francis and Peter.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Recent developments in the world have brought various political and administrative reforms in the education sector. A significant number of these reforms focus on decentralization, which has more or less become a tune among policy makers and international agencies. It is generally claimed that decentralization can facilitate better management and governance of education, improve efficiency and enhance the performance of schools.

Making schools work better is not easy, but it is believed that giving schools greater autonomy can make a difference if they are well supported. Leadership is critical in the management of schools, particularly in the context of greater school autonomy.

In Ghana, the first schools were established by the European Trading Companies in the Castles in 1529. The early schools were not permanent as their existence depended on the chaplain in the castle. The arrival of the missionaries marked a more permanent attempt at establishing schools in Ghana, even though that period had its own problems (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975).

In order to bring about uniformity in the running of schools that were being managed on the basis of rules and regulations of the various missions, the Government passed the 1882 Education Ordinance which was aimed at regulating

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education in Ghana. This Ordinance called for the appointment of an inspector of schools to supervise school work and manage the disbursement of grants to schools, based on a criterion set out under the Ordinance. This Ordinance was replaced by the 1887 Ordinance which gave powers to the Board of Education to make its own rules concerning grants-in-aid (Abosi & Brookman-Amissah, 1992). The Board of Education gave legitimacy to two types of primary schools, that is, 'government', run by government and 'assisted' run by mission managers. Under this Ordinance, the first Director of Education was appointed in 1890 to oversee the Education Department which was established to be responsible for the management of educational development in the country.

The Board of Education, as a routine, made changes in the rules governing the disbursement of grants to schools on a regular basis and one of these changes was the introduction of the obnoxious policy of "payment by results". Consequently, grants were based on the number of children who passed in each subject in each grade in the examination conducted by the inspector of schools at the end of the year (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975).

In 1925, a new Ordinance was passed by Governor Guggisberg to reform the system of education in the country as a whole. The Board of Education under this Ordinance was given the mandate to make rules to manage education under the supervision of the Legislative Council. The Ordinance made it easier for schools to access grants since the qualification for support was based upon a certain standard of efficiency (Graham, 1971).

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The first effort to decentralize education was made when the Education Committee of 1937-41, recommended the setting up of District Education Committees under the Chairmanship of District Commissioners, to advise on local needs and plans. The first of such committees was set up in 1942 in Akyem Abuakwa. These committees were given the responsibilities to advise government on educational needs of their areas and the establishment of new schools. Even though they had no powers of action, it was the first time that local communities had a voice in the administration of education (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh 1975).

Another attempt at consolidating decentralization was made when District Councils were established in 1952 based on the recommendations of the Watson Commission (1948) and the Coussey Committee (1949). The District Councils were made up of the Education, Finance and Staff Committees. They took direct part in the administration of primary and middle schools, particularly in the Northern part of the country (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh 1975)..

After independence, the Government of Ghana passed the Education Act of 1961, which gave more powers to local communities in the administration of education. Under the Act, the Minister of Education in consultation with the Minister of Local government could appoint any Local Authority to be the Local Education Authority. Section 7 of the Act empowered the Local Education Authority to:

(a) Establish primary, middle and special schools required in the area after consultation with the Ministers of education and local government.

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(b) Build, equip and maintain all public primary and middle schools in its area.

(c) Advise the minister on all matters relating to primary and middle school education in its area and such matters as may be referred to it by the Minister (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh 1975).

In 1967, the Mill-Odoi Commission appointed by the National Liberation Council government recommended the decentralization of the management of schools from the Ministry of Education to the Regional and District Authorities. As a result, each of the nine Regional Education Offices was headed by a Deputy Chief Education Officer and the District Offices were headed by Senior Education Officers. The Deputy Chief Education Officers supervised the Senior Education Officers in their respective regions.

A major shake-up of the local government system occurred in 1988, when theProvisional National Defense Council (PNDC) government instituted a package of reforms aimed at decentralizing Ghana's political and administrative systems. This major change was based on the need to accelerate the pace of development and the belief that by moving government closer to the people, governance would improve and consequently create the type of environment that would unleash the potentials of the people for national development.

As part of the reforms, the government increased the number of districts from sixty-five (65) to one hundred and ten (110) and devolved 86 functions to the District Assemblies (Local Government Law, PNDC Law 207). The 1992 Constitution of Ghana, under Article 240(2), stipulates that the District Assemblies "should have

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sound financial basis with adequate and reliable sources of finance" (p.4). As a result of this provision, the government instituted the District Assembly Common Fund so that the Districts would get regular funds from government to fund their projects and activities. The District Assemblies have been given a say in the management and development of schools in the Districts. They are mandated to build, equip and maintain schools.

In the light of the changes that took place in the local government system, it became imperative to reform the District Education Offices to conform to the new trends. The District Education Offices were formerly headed by Assistant Directors who needed not be graduates but the position is now designated District Director of Education who should be a graduate. Under each District Director there are four-line Assistant Directors:

1) Assistant Director responsible for Administration, Budgeting and Financial Control.
2) Assistant Director responsible for Planning, Monitoring, Data Collection, Research and Record.
3) Assistant Director for Human Resource Management and Development
4) Assistant Director responsible for Supervision and Management of Teaching and Learning.

The districts are divided into circuits and circuit supervisors are put in charge of supervision in the circuits. Circuit supervisors should not be below the grade of Principal Superintendent.

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The 2002 Educational Reforms indicated that any effective teaching and learning is contingent upon efficient management and administration of educational institutions. The reforms therefore recommended the appointment of those who were academically and professionally qualified, that is, those who have been trained in educational administration and management, to positions of trust. Again, the reforms highlighted responsibilities conferred on metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies in the provision of school infrastructure and equipment. In addition, the reforms recognized the contribution of the private sector in education delivery at all levels of the educational ladder, and believed that the sector could do more if a congenial environment is created.

One of the Districts that came into being during the 1988 local government reforms is the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District which was curved out of the Mfantseman District on 30th December, 1988 and established by the legislative Instrument (1381). The District has three traditional areas namely Abura Asebu and Kwamankese with Abura Dunkwa as its capital. With the formation of the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District, the District Directorate of Education automatically came into existence. The Directorate has sixty-three (63) primary and thirty (30) Junior High Schools.

Like most schools in rural districts, schools in Abura Asebu Kwamankese District are confronted with a number of problems which include lack of teachers, inadequate educational infrastructure, shortage of school equipment, limited funds to run schools and teacher tardiness. The Abura Asebu Kwamankese District Directorate of Education, like most other District Education Offices in the country,

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has adopted decentralization as a component of general reforms. The adoption of the policy of decentralization is aimed at getting communities, parents, teachers as well as pupils to participate in taking key decisions that affect the day–to–day workings of the administrative machinery of schools. Some of the activities and programmes that have been undertaken in the District under decentralization can be classified under the following:

1. Whole School Development Programme (WSDP)
2. School Performance Appraisal Meeting (SPAM)
3. School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP)

A number of structures have been established as part of the decentralization process at the district and school levels among which are:

1. District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC)
2. School Management Committee (SMC)
3. District Education Planning Team (DEPT)

The District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC) is a committee under the Ghana Education Service Act, 1995 (Act 506), with the aim of working closely with SMCs and Board of Governors (BGs) to promote effective teaching and learning in schools. It operates at the district level with the District Chief Executive as its chairman. Other members include District Director of Education, District Director of Health, District Social Welfare Officer, District Inspector of Schools, two representatives of the District Assembly (one of whom shall be a woman), one representative of Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) in the District, one representative of traditional rulers in the District, one

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representative of the Christian group, one representation of the Moslem group, one representative of the District Parent-teacher Association and one woman involved in social development in the District.

The DEOCs shall, subject to the directives of the Ghana Education Service Council, be concerned with and oversee:

1. Conditions of school buildings and other infrastructural requirements of the schools.
2. Provision of teachers and the regular and punctual attendance of teachers and pupils at schools.
3. The proper performance of duties by staff at the school.
4. Moral behaviour of staff and pupils in matters relating to general discipline.
5. Complains relating to or from teachers, non-teaching staff and pupils.
6. Environmental cleanliness of schools and facilities therein.
7. The supply of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials.
8. The full utilization of the proportion of the District Assembly Common Fund allocated to education.

The School Management Committee (SMC) is a committee designated under the Ghana Education Service Act of 1994. It is a school community-based institution aimed at strengthening community participation and mobilization for education delivery.

The SMC is a representative of the entire school community of a particular school or cluster of schools. The school community therefore, becomes its

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constituency. The Ghana Education Service SMC/PTA Handbook mentions the following as the membership of the SMC:

1. District Director of Education or representative as ex-official member
2. Headmaster/head teacher
3. District Assembly representative (usually assembly person)
4. Unit Committee representative
5. Representative appointed by the chief of the town/village
6. Representative from Educational Unit (if school is a unit school)
7. Two members of teaching staff (JHS and Primary, one each)
8. Past pupil association representative
9. Representative of PTA
10. Co-opted members to perform specific functions (optional).

The SMC/PTA Handbook stipulates some of the roles that the SMC is supposed to play in the management of schools. The SMC in consultation with the head teacher can plan a suggested timetable to suit the local condition subject to the approval of the District Director of Education. Another function of the SMC is that it is responsible for making sure that the school is run in the best interest of the school before any personal benefit.

As part of its functions, the SMC contributes to, or decides on the following:

1. School policy – religious policy, dress code, learner's code of conduct and school goals
2. School development – development plans, voluntary helpers, partnership with community and relationship with other schools

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3. School administration – looking after school buildings, grounds and other property, deciding when others use property, appointing school staff, organizing annual general meetings of parents and reporting to school community.

In addition to DEOCs and SMCs, the Ghana Education Service has also established District Education Planning Teams in all districts. The establishment of DEPT was to enhance the capacity of districts to generate education action plans.

The DEPT is composed of 15 members consisting of three permanent members and twelve others. The permanent members include, the District Girls' Education Officer, the District Planning Officer and one representation of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Unit. The others are selected one each from the District Assembly, SMC, Health sector, Social Welfare Department, Ghana National Commission on Children, Community Development Department, PTA, Unit Committee, NGOs operating in the district, Religious Bodies, Traditional Authority and other personalities supportive of education in the district.

The DEPT concept has the following objectives:

1. To make consultation, planning, implementation and evaluation effective at the district level.
2. To fill the consultation and planning gap in the structures established for the implementation of educational activities at the district level.

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3. To assist the District Director of Education in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of educational activities that will promote effective teaching and learning.
4. To create the environment for harnessing resources to enhance ownership and commitment to the implementation of all educational measures at the district level.

DEPT has numerous functions, among which are community sensitizations and the training of community structures like SMC, PTA and Unit Committee.

The various attempts that have been made to involve the various constituents of the school in decision making in the district even though laudable, do not seem to be making any impact. This is because from personal observations, decisions at the school level are made in most cases by the head teachers.

Statement of the Problem

Currently, there is a call for Quality Education for All by the year 2015. This implies that there should be more efficient management of educational institutions, which can be achieved through effective decentralization. The government of Ghana has put in place a number of strategies to decentralize the management of educational institutions with the belief that the involvement of the various stakeholders will improve school management, but there are still some areas of management that are controlled by the headquarters of the Ghana Education Service.

One of the core problems with Ghana's education, particularly the basic education sector, is the nature of decentralization model used in the basic educational system. If anyone poses the question, "who actually controls or manages our

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education system?" to any top official at the Ministry of Education (MOE) or Ghana Education Service (GES) headquarters, most of them are likely to sharply answer that "even though the Minister of Education at MOE and Director-General at GES are the overall bosses, we have decentralized our educational system".

Even though decentralization has been adopted with the hope of bringing about improvement in school achievement and efficient management, evidence on the ground suggests that this is not the case. In a number of discussions with teachers in the district, it came to light that the headquarters of the Ghana Education Service still maintains absolute control over decisions in the service. To what extent is this true?

The concern of this study was to find how the process of decentralization of administration of basic education in Abura Asebu Kwamankese district of the Central Region is being implemented.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to find out the status of decentralization of administration of Basic Education in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Find out roles and functions that have been deconcentrated to basic schools in the district.
2. Find out how roles have been delegated to various stakeholders of education in the district.
3. Identify those functions that have been devolved to the basic school level in the district.

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4. Identify any challenges faced by school staff in the implementation of decentralization of administration of basic education in the district.
5. Investigate the attitudes of various stakeholders of education towards the decentralization policy.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions.

1) What roles and functions have been deconcentrated to basic schools in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District?
2) How are duties delegated in basic schools in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District?
3) What roles and functions have been devolved to the basic school level in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District?
4) What are the challenges faced by school staff in the implementation of decentralization of administration of basic schools in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District?
5) What is the attitude of teachers towards the concept of decentralization of administration of basic schools in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District?

Significance of the Study

It was envisaged that the findings would benefit the Ghana Education Service since it would show whether the process of decentralizing administration of basic education has become a reality or still remains rhetoric by officials of the service. The Ghana Education Service would also benefit by getting to know some of the

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challenges that school staff face in the implementation of decentralization of administration of basic education.

Also it was hoped that the research would set the stage for further research in the area of decentralization so as to enhance the process of improving the management of basic education.

Delimitation

The study was delimited to basic schools in Abura Asebu Kwamankese District of the Central Region. The researcher decided to focus on basic schools because most of the research on educational decentralization in Ghana had been in respect of second cycle institutions. The study focuses specifically on the status of educational decentralization. The findings arrived at and the generalizations made are limited to basic schools in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese district. However districts with similar characteristics could adapt the findings to their own circumstances.

Limitation

One limitation of the study was the inability of the researcher to involve all schools in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District in the study. This would have enriched the data and made generalization of the findings widely applicable.

Organization of Study

This thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter one deals with the introduction, which includes background to the study, statement of problem, purpose of study, research questions, significance of study, delimitation, limitation and organization of study.

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Chapter two focuses on the review of related literature on decentralization in general and on educational decentralization in particular. Chapter three describes the methodology used for the study. It covers the research design, population, sample, sampling procedure, data collection instrument, pre-testing of instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis plan. Chapter four deals with the presentation and discussion of data while, chapter five covers the summary of findings, suggestions and recommendations.

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CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews theoretical and empirical literature on decentralization in terms of its definition, types, rationale or motives and effects. The review looks at conditions supporting decentralization, obstacles to its implementation, role of school administrators, school-based management and attitude of teachers.

Definition of Decentralization

The term decentralization has been defined variously by various writers as the concept embraces a variety of terms. This makes the concept very difficult to grasp and tends to make it ambiguous. However, it is prudent to present definitions given by some outstanding scholars.

Decentralization can be said to be a process of re-assigning responsibility and corresponding decision-making authority for specific functions from higher to lower levels of government and organizational units. Educational decentralization is a complex process that deals with changes in the way school systems go about making policy, generating revenues, spending funds, training of teachers, designing curricula, and managing local schools. Such changes imply fundamental shifts in the values that concern the relationships of students and parents to schools, the relationships of communities to central government, and the very meaning and purpose of public education (Fiske, 1996).

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Mcshane and Glinow (2000) posit that decentralization is the process of dispensing authority and power throughout the organization. The definition by Mcshane and Glinow (2001) shows that authority and power are not in the hands of a small group of individuals but are shared among the various sections of the organizations so that each individual in the organization can become part of the decision making process.

The situation in which power and authority are given to many people could bring about inconsistency as many players in the same field of endeavour try to exhibit administrative skills. Mcshane and Glinow compare centralization to decentralization by stating that centralization is when the authority to make decisions is held by a few people, specifically those at the helm of affairs of the organization

Gershberg (1998) compares decentralization with the concepts of empowerment and sustainability, which seem to be desirable, but which can be mere rhetoric as they are used in the absence of accompanying action. This is indeed a major problem with both advocacy and implementation of decentralization policies (Chapman, 2002; Bray, 2003a).

Hanson (1998:112) gave a general definition of decentralization as "the transfer of decision making authority, responsibility, and tasks from higher to lower organizational levels or between organizations". This definition distinguishes redistribution of powers within the government machinery from the redistribution of functions between government and non-government organisations.

Bray (1984), cited in Fiske (1996:2), gives a working definition of decentralization as: "The process in which subordinate levels of a hierarchy are

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authorised by a higher body to take decisions about the use of the organization's resources".

Perhaps the most acceptable definition of decentralization is by Rondinelli (1981), who sees the term as the transfer of responsibility for planning, management, and fiscal control to (a) field units of central government ministries or agencies; (b) subordinate units or levels of government; (c) semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations; (d) area-wide regional or functional authorities; or (e) Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs)/ Public Voluntary Organizations (PVOs).

Types of Decentralization

Bray and Mukundan (2003) believe it is important to separate functional from territorial dimensions. Functional decentralization, according to them, refers to a shift in the distribution of powers between various authorities that operate in parallel. Territorial decentralization, by contrast, refers to a redistribution of control among the different levels of government, such as nation, regions, districts and schools. A transfer of power from higher to lower levels would be called territorial decentralization.

Bray and Mukundan, and Forestal and Copper (1997) in separate writings agree that territorial decentralization includes three major sub-categories; deconcentration, delegation and devolution. Rondinelli (1981, 1989), cited in Parry, (1997) and Cummings and Riddel (1994) mention privatisation as the forth type of decentralization.

Bray and Mukundan consider deconcentration as the process through which a central authority establishes branch offices and staffing them with its own officers.

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Thus, personnel of the Ministry of Education may all work in the same building, or some of them may be posted out to regions and districts.

Rondinelli, Nellis and Cheema (1984) describe deconcentration as spatial relocation of decision-making, that is, the transfer of some administrative responsibility or authority to lower levels within central government ministries and agencies. Decentralization here implies that people given additional responsibilities are part of the central ministry and are therefore answerable and accountable to that ministry.

Deconcentration or the dispersion of line ministry agencies in the field is almost automatically, the first form of decentralization to occur. Manor (1997) finds that this is a very useful first step because it permits the deployment of bureaucratic capacity in the field. He cautioned against what happened in the Philippines where local governments were elected before any meaningful deconcentration had taken place. As a result, newly elected mayors hired low-skilled staff that was readily available, thereby creating a situation conducive to underperformance.

On the other hand, when deconcentration happens without any minimal accountability of bureaucrats to elected officials and the people, it serves as an instrument of state penetration. It further enhances the control of the local level by those at the central offices and thus serves as a process of recentralizing authority and power.

Tendler (1996) has expressed doubt on the virtues of decentralization. She contends that most, if not all, of the expected benefits can be better attained by good deconcentration alone that involves motivated bureaucrats. Competent and motivated

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public servants are an important asset for decentralization to be successful. In Manor's words, the challenge is to make them accountable to elected local officials, and make the latter accountable to the people.

Delegation implies a stronger degree of decision making at the local level. Nevertheless, powers in a delegated system still basically rest with the central authority, which has chosen to give it to those at the lower level on a temporary basis. The powers can be withdrawn at any point in time without resort to legislation (Bray & Mukundan, 2003).

According to Rondinelli et al. (1984), delegation is the assignment of specific decision making authority that is, the transfer of managerial responsibility for specifically defined functions to public organizations outside the normal bureaucratic structure of central government. Delegation normally implies a transmission of tasks and administrative responsibilities related to specific functions, usually defined by central authorities. In this sense, the decentralization of tasks does not necessarily mean a shift of power because the local agents generally are only given the role of executing decisions that have previously been made at a central level (Lauglo, 1995). On the other hand, delegation may indicate an extended local autonomy simply because total central control is difficult.

Bray and Mukundan (2003) describe devolution as the most extreme of these three forms of territorial decentralization. Powers are formally held at lower levels, the officers of which do not need to seek approval from central office staff for their actions. The lower level officers may choose to inform the centre of their decisions,

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but the role of the centre is chiefly confined to collection and exchange of information.

Decentralization as devolution implies the transmission of authority and responsibility from central to local bodies (McGinn, 1992). Devolution is the only category of decentralization in which local authority and independence are clearly increased.

Rondinelli, et al. (1984) asserts that devolution is the transfer of responsibility for governing of sub-national units of governments, whose activities are substantially outside the direct control of central government. Devolution can therefore be said to be a process of empowering lower levels of government to take absolute control over certain aspects of management.

According to Forestal and Copper (1997), devolution implies that those receiving new powers and authority are by law separate from the state agency that initially held those powers and authority. As a result, those at the lower levels need not report to the center on decisions and actions they have taken in the performance of their duties.

Parry (1997) sees devolution as the actual decentralization through which state agencies give full authority to officers at the lower level to perform specific public services that were previously provided by the central government. In addition to the workload, authority and responsibility is conferred on administrators at the lower levels of governance to make their own decisions.

Forestal and Copper (1997:27) assert that devolution has four main features:

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> The body that exercises responsibility is legally separate from the central ministry; the body acts on its own, not under the hierarchical supervision of the central ministry; the body can exercise only the powers given to it by law; and the body can act only within the geographic limits set out in the law.

Cummings and Riddell (1994) describe privatisation as another type of decentralization. Their rationale is that privatisation can lead to a reduction in state authority over schools, and therefore to a redistribution of powers. Recent years have brought considerable proliferation of both for-profit private schools and not-for-profit community and voluntary agency schools.

Decentralization as privatisation involves the process of shifting responsibility for performing certain functions from governmental agencies to private organizations such as non-profit or voluntary organizations, trade associations, professional groups, religious organizations, cooperatives, or business firms (Parry, 1997). In the field of education, decentralization as privatisation gives credence to the existence of private schools.

The Table below summarises the distinction among the concepts deconcentration, delegation, devolution and privatisation.

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Table 1

Summary of contrast among types of decentralization

Type	Officials	Accountability	Seeking Approval	Level of Authority
Deconcentration	Belong to Central ministry or agency	Answerable to Central ministry	Seeks approval for Actions	Low
Delegation	May or may not belong to central Ministry or agency	Answerable to central ministry	Need to seek approval	Low
Devolution	Do not belong to central ministry or agency by law	Not answerable or accountable central ministry or agency	Do not need to seek approval for actions	High (Especially those given law)
Privatization	Do not belong to Central ministry Or agency	Not answerable to Central ministry or agency	Does not need to seek approval for actions.	Very high

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Rationale of Decentralization

The phenomenon of decentralization is not unambiguous. Politicians have given various arguments for the policy of decentralization, while researchers have tried to give broad and universal explanations for the process (Lauglo & McLean, 1985; Weiler, 1990),

Forestal and Copper (1997) explain that countries decentralize their basic education systems for a number of reasons among which are reduction in expenditures, improvement of efficiency in management, transfer of authority to those who are capable at the lower level of administration, generation of adequate revenues and to allow communities to have a greater say in their own affairs.

Weiler (1990) gives explanation of the underlying motives for decentralization process within the educational context in Norway. He explains the different motives by dividing decentralization initiatives into three categories. The first category of initiatives is characterized by the redistribution of authority from central to local levels. Normally this occurs through legislative action or allocation of resources. The second category includes initiatives where decentralization is used as a strategy to obtain more efficiency in the educational sector. The assumption is that decentralization will mobilize local resources and the use of available resources in a more efficient way. The third category focuses on initiatives where decisions concerning the curriculum and culture of learning in schools are made locally by those most affected. Decentralization of these decisions provides more room for local variance and relevance and, it is believed that it will make students more motivated to contribute meaningfully to the learning process.

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Another explanation is presented by Lauglo and McLean in their book *The Control of Education* (1985). They describe three rationales behind decentralization. Firstly, the administrative rationale has the underlying assumption that administration in a centralized system is unnecessary, extensive, elaborate, and slow working. From this perspective, decentralization is a strategy to avoid these effects. Secondly, in the political rationale, decentralization is seen as a way to reduce professional power and to maintain and even reinforce political control and power. Giving more power to parents and the local community is one way to achieve this. Thirdly, the ideological rationale is based on some fundamental assumptions about human beings and the society in which the individual is perceived as responsible and holistic. From this perspective, decentralization on the individual level creates conditions promoting activity and responsibility, and on the societal level conditions that sustain the rural sector and weaken urbanization.

Winkler (1989) has added that decentralization is commonly advocated as a way to reduce unit costs, particularly when centralised bureaucracies find themselves having to make decisions on even the most minor matters relating to schools in distant locations. However, some decentralization initiatives have been found to increase costs, because they demand more coordination and staffing.

In many settings, the pressure for decentralization comes from political forces rather than from administrative ones. Among the most dramatic examples of politically motivated reforms have been territorial decentralization schemes in Russia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Sudan. Regionally based separatist movements in these countries were sufficiently powerful to threaten secession if not

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granted strong autonomy. The central authorities conceded power in order to persuade the secessionist groups to remain within the national framework. However, secessionist threats can lead to different reactions. At points in the history of Ghana and Indonesia, for example, threats of secession have caused national authorities to centralise various controls and to stress a need for national unity within a common framework.

According to Bray and Mukundan (2003), one element which is both a cause and effect of this retreating role of the state is finance. Many governments have sought ways to reduce taxation, and even those, which have not made reduction of taxation an active policy, have commonly found their income bases eroded by economic recession and constraints in capacity to collect taxes. The combination of fiscal tightness and philosophical reorientation towards the private sector in education has encouraged the growth of non-government actors in countries where it was previously unheard of. This is especially obvious in the former socialist countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, but is also evident in countries, which officially remain socialist such as China, Laos and Vietnam.

Bray and Mukundan believe that at the institutional level, decentralization is commonly advocated in order to allow schools to link more closely to the communities they serve and to give parents and other stakeholders greater avenues for involvement. Decentralization may take the form of giving head teachers control over the preparation of annual budgets. It may also involve strengthening school management committees and similar bodies. Schools may be allowed greater

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autonomy in curriculum planning, employment of teachers, admissions of pupils, medium of instruction, and structure of the school year.

Effects of Decentralization

Fiske (1996) points out that educational decentralization leads to an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. This is because teachers and administrators are energised to perform their functions better as a result of the opportunity given to them to make educational decisions. According to Fiske, it had been reported that decentralization actually led to a positive impact on learning in New Zealand and Minas Gerais. Fiske, however, reminds readers that researchers are quick to point out that there are other factors apart from decentralization that is responsible for student performance, one of which is availability of funds.

The argument is proffered that centralized systems are wasteful and time consuming and that giving power and authority to local agencies will result in an efficient system of administration. This is because delays will be eliminated and education officials will be motivated to become more productive (Fiske, 1996).

According to Fiske (1996), decentralization led to efficient educational administration in Mexico, where there was an improvement in the payment of teachers, and in Minas Gerais, where the process resulted in lower costs and improved services. The success of Mexico in educational decentralization was due to the training of personnel at the lower level to equip them for their new functions (Fiske, 1996). The decentralization of education in Jamaica failed as a result of the absence of training for principals and the poor school community relationship (Fiske, 1996)..

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Jimenez, Paqueo, and de Vera (1988; cited in Fiske, 1996) discovered that the funding of education by the communities in the Philippines resulted in savings. Thus the decentralization of education could lead to the reduction in educational costs.

There is the argument that centralized planning policies have led to education that is very expensive, thus resulting in a decrease in quality as countries find themselves faced with financial constraints. This rationale holds that making schools more responsive to the local community and parents and eliminating the need for centralized decision-making can improve administration and accountability (Winkler, 1991).

Decentralization according to Fiske leads to financial efficiency by generating additional revenues through local taxation and reduction in operating costs. This is exemplified in the case of Argentina where financial responsibility was shifted to the local level and this led to increased spending on education (Fiske, 1996).

In a centralized system all decisions must be made outside of the area where they matter the most, often far away from the actual issue. Thus, allowing the local government units to decide on resource allocation will result in better efficiency since they know better the specific needs of their particular system. Another issue deals with the application of national standards for education provision. This prevents cost savings that could be achieved through adjustments of educational inputs to local or regional price differences (Winkler, 1991).

Fiske (1996) revealed that decentralization effort in Colombia gave legitimacy to the government, and subventions to local authorities in Chile served the

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ideologies of the military leaders. Decentralization achieved political ends in Spain because the people believed it would result in the improvement of management and education (Hanson & Ulrich, 1994) cited in Fiske (1996).

One negative effect of decentralization according to Fiske is the worsening of the rich-poor gaps. He explains that worthy localities are in a more advantageous position than poor communities to make maximum use of the authority and power that has been transferred to them under decentralization. Countries like New Zealand used substantial reform of its educational system to improve the quality of education in both rich and poor localities with the intention of bridging the rich-poor gaps.

Prawda (1993, cited in Fiske, 1996) in his research in Mexico and Argentina found that decentralization of education resulted in a reduction of regional differences in preschool and primary school coverage, repetition and dropout rates and primary completion rates. He revealed that in Mexico decentralization led to effective management and better dissemination of information at the lower levels of governance.

There is the general trust among writers that decentralization will increase the demand for education, however, what happened in Burkina Faso was to the contrary. The shifting of financial responsibility for education to the local communities made poor students to drop out of school for good (Maclure, 1994; cited in Fiske, 1996).

Fiske found out that decentralization in Chile did not improve the problem of educational equity as poor school districts continue to perform abysmally in national test of mathematics and Spanish. The level of education in each community therefore was a reflection of its wealth and power.

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Manor (1997) believes that decentralization has little promise for a reduction in disparities among various groups within the regions. He cautions that prejudices against disenfranchised and vulnerable groups are often stronger at the local level and are often replicated through the election mechanism. This is not surprising since democracy means the rule of the majority.

Empirical Basis of Decentralization

Empirical results reported from a wide variety of decentralization experiences throughout the world are also mixed. Rondinelli et al. (1984) report that Indonesia, Morocco, Thailand and Pakistan showed perceptible, but small, improvements in resource distribution, local participation, the extension of public services to rural areas, project identification and implementation, and employment generation after implementing decentralizing reforms of the public sector. Studies of decentralization in Algeria, Libya and Tunisia show that the performance of decentralized administrative units has been positive in some cases, but have not always met the goals of the original policy reformers.

Devolution in Papua New Guinea increased popular participation in government, and has improved the planning, management and coordination capacity of provincial administrators. Reform there does seem to have made government more responsive to people's local needs, but has also added an additional layer to the state bureaucracy, thus weakening government's ability to attract foreign investment and stimulate long-term economic growth.

Manor (1997), in his worldwide review, finds that local governments have a poor record at mobilizing local taxes. Part of the explanation lies in the fact that the

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setting of local tax base and rate remains under central government control which undermines any flexibility local governments might have. However, Manor shows quite convincingly that politicians are reluctant to raise taxes since this could cost them their reelection and generate discontent. In addition, they, sometimes, lack legitimacy and credibility when the decentralization process is still new.

According to a World Bank study of decentralization in Ethiopia by Gerishanker et al (1999), the educational system in the Woredas, one of the four levels of sub-national government in that country, was mainly in the form of top-down control systems. Schools do not have the power to purchase inputs for teaching and learning in spite of the fact that Woredas and schools demonstrated capacity to monitor budgets, manage personnel, and undertake monitoring and evaluation.

The 1996 South African Schools Act (SASA) established school-site councils in each school and such councils comprised of school staff, parents and students. These councils can make decisions around curriculum, personnel, budgeting, and finance and school calendar. The decisions are guided by national and provincial level guidelines, which imply that the councils had limited authority. For instance, personnel decisions are subject to nationally-negotiated salary, hiring and promotion standards. Applicants for the position of school Principals were interviewed and recommended by the school-site councils but approved by provincial ministry. Schools which were financially capable could hire additional teachers who were to be paid from the schools own resources.

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Tailor (2001), describes the financing system in South Africa by saying that it is provided centrally. This happens in a number of ways; first, provinces get an equitable share revenue allocation to fund their general budget; the central government funds schooling directly through a funding formula based largely on the number of students; additional weight is given to poor and rural provinces; the central ministry sets curriculum and evaluation guidelines, credentialing standards for teachers and has attempted to target central funds to priority areas of concern

According to the Ministry of Education (2002) the school-cite councils can set fees and school calendars, recommend teachers and school staff for appointment, and recommend language and religious policies. School governing bodies which satisfy conditions of the Ministry of Education could apply additional functions such as the ability to maintain school property, determine curriculum, buy textbooks and equipment, and pay for services rendered to the school.

Azfar et al (2000) contend that in Uganda, the School Management Committee, now appears to be the most important governance mechanism dealing with education locally. They mentioned some of the roles that the School Management Committees perform. These include the signing of checks for the headmaster, overseeing the schools, overseeing school construction and improvements and investigating problems that hinder the smooth running of schools.

Therkildsen (1998) posits that Primary Education is the most important responsibility of local governments in Tanzania. Half of all their funds is spent on this activity (although most funds are provided by the central government), and two-thirds of all local government employees are teachers. Local government decision-

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making is vested in the district council. At the school level the school committee, in which parents are represented, is supposed to oversee the running of the school. Unfortunately, as implemented, education reforms in Tanzania often suffer from poor relations and coordination between the various agencies that are responsible for the development and management of Education. According to Therkildsen, the local governments have little real influence on educational issues such as curriculum, examinations, the emphasis that is placed on academic and practical activities in the schools and the length of class room instruction.

Ethiopia

Some observers assert that Tanzania exemplifies deconcentration rather than devolution because the autonomy of the districts has been more formal than real. The autonomy of local political authorities is severely limited and there is a state of deep crisis (DAC, 1997). As a consequence, it has been argued that it is still a deconcentrated system in which political, fiscal and administrative controls remain firmly centralized (McLean, 1997).

According to AED (1996) the administration of elementary and secondary education in Ethiopia shall be decentralized in line with the ongoing regionalization process. Schools will be strongly linked with the community which will take responsibility in its well-being and upkeep. They will be made responsive to the local needs and requirements and shall act as centers for all educational activities of the community. The management of each school will be democratized and run with the participation of the community, the teachers, the students and the relevant government

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institutions. In as much as possible educational institutions will be encouraged to run on an autonomous basis.

Conditions Supporting Decentralization

McGinn and Welsh (1999) are of the opinion that two conditions need to be met in the implementation of any kind of decentralization. First, there must be political support for the proposed changes. Second, it is necessary for those involved in the implementation of the reforms to be capable of carrying it out. Most decentralization reforms have failed, because they did not meet adequately one or both of the two conditions.

This point matched observations in case studies, such as those by Lamichane, Pradham and Thapa (1997) in Nepal, and Gershberg (1999) in Mexico and Nicaragua. Mukundan's (2003a, 2003b) work on Kerala State in India showed that even in this state, which has a reputation for democracy and in 1996 launched a People's Campaign for Decentralised Planning, implementation was left at the level of rhetoric rather than reality. This was partly because actors at the local level lacked the capacity to take the powers, and partly because both the lower-level and the higher-level actors were unconvinced that decentralization was desirable.

Lawler (1986) mentions one model of decentralization as the high-involvement model. This model focuses on increasing employee involvement in organizational decision making. According to this framework, efforts to improve organizational performance are more likely to be successful if employees are actively involved in the process. Furthermore, the requisite employee involvement is more likely to occur if it is supported by a decentralized approach to management

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and organization that focuses on four key elements. According to Lawler's high-involvement model, the four key elements are power, knowledge, information and rewards.

1. **Power**

The main focus of school-based management has been the decentralization of power. Power is shifted most often from the central administration to a council at school site. Councils may be composed of administrators, teachers, parents, community members and sometimes students. In this way, SBM empowers groups who tropically have not had much power in managing schools. An effective leader can set the school's vision, serve as an instructional leader, coordinate reform efforts and support for the school (Lawler, 1986).

2. **Knowledge**

In the private sector, three kinds of knowledge and skills are important to decentralized management. First, employees need training to expand their job skills and increase the breadth of their perspectives, so that they can contribute in more ways to the organization and more knowledgeably to decisions about improvements. According to Asiedu-Akrofi (1978), Ghana in its effort to support serving teachers provides periodic courses and seminars organized by training departments, subject organization or association, university and other interested bodies. Secondly, individuals need teamwork skills for participating in high-involvement management: problem-solving, decision-making and communication skills. Finally, individuals need organizational knowledge. This includes budgeting and personnel skills, as well

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as an understanding of the environment and strategies for responding to changes in the environment (Lawler, 1986).

Although there is yet very little research about the role of new knowledge in SBM, lessons from the private sector suggests that participants in the process need a complex understanding of both decentralized school governance and instructional reform. However, it does not appear that the only strategy for increasing knowledge lies in moving curriculum and instruction expects from the central offices to the schools. Rather, studies indicate that the more promising approaches are joints efforts. These efforts draw upon the knowledge of teachers, administrators and outside experts and feature ongoing staff development in which participants at all levels enrich the system with their acquired knowledge and insight, while drawing on new sources of understanding.

3. **Information**

Power can be decentralized if the individuals to whom power is entrusted have access to the information necessary to make good decisions. In the private sector, as well as in public education, much information historically has been available only at the top of the organization.

Companies practicing high-involvement management have developed ways to collect and share information about organizational goals, finance and cost structure, environment issues, the customer and organizational performance. The companies provide trend and "benchmark" data to allow units to compare their performances over time, and with other organizational units and other organizations in the field.

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Furthermore, they find ways to disseminate innovations that are occurring in their organization and in other organizations that are dealing with the same issues.

Public schools implementing decentralized management have not focused attention on sharing information among participants, particularly at the school site. All information, need to be available to schools in a timely fashion, so that modifications can be made to improve organizational performance.

4. **Reward**

Translating decentralized reward structures of business to education is probably the greatest challenge to SBM. Skills-based pay schemes in decentralized private sector organizations reward employees for knowledge and skills they possess. In education, reward system tend to use direct, proxy measures of knowledge and skills, namely the years of education and experience a teacher has accumulated. Decentralization of management plan in the private sector often includes components that reward employees collectively for performance. A key lesson from private sector is that decentralized management is most effective when there is consensus on performance measures and units can be held accountable for performance.

Employees need to see the relationship between pay and performance. Such conditions, however, do not often exist in education. Furthermore, it is understood in the private sector that high performance will lead to greater profits, but funding in public education is rarely affected by evidence about performance.

The high-involvement model serves as a useful framework with which to analyze the conditions necessary for SBM to be utilized effectively. A recent review of the SBM literature indicates that knowledge, information, and rewards are often

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not adequately decentralized in SBM efforts. However, schools are not making much progress in terms of developing reward systems to reward individual and/or schools as a whole for better performance (Wohlstetter & Mohrman, 1994)

Site participants often fail to address subjects' central to their instructional programme, note Malen, Ogawa, and Kranz (1990) and many other researchers, and such changes are as proposed are frequently not implemented. Moreover, these researchers point out that school-based management can actually impede the development and implementation of instructional improvements in settings where it diverts attention from teaching and learning.

Apart from the conditions mentioned in the high-involvement model, another condition has to do with the nature of the school principal's leadership role (Wohlstetter & Briggs, 1994). This orientation incorporates both an internal and an external focus. Internally, these principals motivated their staff, created a team feeling on campus, and worked to shield teachers from concerns in which they had little vested interest or expertise. Externally, they gathered information regarding educational research and innovative practices to share with their teachers. They were also entrepreneurial in that they sought out grant opportunities and encouraged faculty to write proposals to gain funding for desired innovations.

For educational reform to be fruitful, it requires new skills, behaviour, beliefs and in-depth understanding and building capacity to manage the volatile and unpredictable feelings of change and finding purpose and hope. These characteristics are essential keys to deal with change constructively. Change requires both individual and organizational initiatives and at the same time top

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down and bottom up processes. However, it is only by individuals taking action to alter their own values and beliefs, that there is any chance for profound change (Fullan, 1993).

Obstacles to Decentralization

Much of the literature on school-based management is concerned with the problems districts and schools have experienced with it. Some of these are implementation problems, some arise in connection with operating SBM structures, and still others have to do with the failure of many SBM arrangements to bring about the results desired by school and district personnel and other stakeholders.

The major source of trouble is time, says Ceperley (1991). The activities associated with school-based management require school staff to devote additional hours each day on top of an already hectic schedule. The stress produced by these extra time demands has led to doubt and exhaustion in some settings, particularly on the part of teachers.

For any educational reform to work successfully, implementers require more time to work collaboratively, plan with colleagues, and discuss concerns and new strategies to use in the classroom. This is especially the case at the outset of a new education reform. They require time to learn about and practice the new learning behaviours, introduce and institutionalize the new strategies, and time to reflect on the reform initiative, assess its outcomes, further growth and development. Principals need to be sensitive and aware as reform initiatives are designed and implemented and allocate the necessary time that it takes. This

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frequently requires a rethinking of the way one looks at time. Hargreaves (1994) recommends that it may be more helpful if principals provide more responsibility and flexibility to educators in the management and allocation of their time, thereby offering them more control over what is to be developed with that time. He makes this point in the context that it is difficult for principals working outside of the classroom to understand what time feels like to those working inside classrooms.

Along with insufficient time, training and latitude, another obstacle frequently encountered in school-based management efforts is lack of adequate financial resources. This may take the form of insufficient release time for planning and insufficient resources to implement plans once they are made. At worst, these constraints can lead school personnel to view school-based management as unreal that is something in the guise of an innovation. If districts and boards do not extend considerable decision-making latitude to schools, or they fail to provide the resources to enable staff to carry out decision responsibilities, school-based management becomes:

> ...just another moderately helpful public relations and communications vehicle tinkering with the peripheral issues of school governance and management (Lindquist 1989: 414)

The Role of the School Administrator

Administration has been described by different writers in various ways.

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Educational administration can be explained in terms of the roles and competences that are necessary for the school to run efficiently and effectively. These roles and competences are to be played by those in charge of the day – to – day running of the school (Knezevich, 1984, cited in Osei-Tutu, 2004).

Ghana Education Service (GES) Handbook for Head teachers (1994) specifies the roles of head teachers and teachers in the administration of the school. Some of these roles include managing people, instructional time, co-curricular activities, learning resources and financial matters. In addition the head teacher is to perform such duties as increasing school intakes and attendance, assessing teacher performance, staff development and improving relationship between school and community.

The trend towards greater school autonomy and school-based management has significant implications for head teachers in terms of their workload, the nature of their responsibilities and the skills and knowledge required to fulfill new and more complex roles. Good school leadership is about transforming feelings, attitudes and beliefs, as well as practice, to improve the culture of the school (Hopkins, 2001); promoting teacher behaviour that focuses on a broad spectrum of learning outcomes (Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999) and building close working relationships with all stakeholders – parents, teachers, and learners. But for head teachers working in relatively isolated, poorly supported schools with resource constraints, the motivation and incentive to become an innovative pedagogical leader and a proactive, participatory manager may be severely limited. Indeed, pressure to fulfill new roles without support may be a disincentive to becoming or remaining a head teacher.

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Farrant (1980) posits that it is the duty of the head teacher to allocate teachers to various classes by identifying school years that are critical and therefore need the best members of staff.

School-based Management

Contemporary school-based management (SBM) is considerably more than a new name for an old and recurring phenomenon. Proponents of school-based management argue that, unlike previous approaches to decentralizing education, school-based management invokes fundamental changes. As described by White (1989), previous attempts to decentralize were aimed at transferring authority from a central board of education to local boards which is the same as replacing one form of bureaucracy with another. Past reforms did not include a transfer of power to the school site as part of the changes. SBM is different as it changes the entire system of district and school organization and restructures most roles in the district.

What happens when a school system elects to implement school-based management in some or all of its schools? According to the growing body of implementation research, the major impact is that the roles of all educational stakeholders--superintendents, other central office personnel, board members, principals, teachers, other school staff, and often parents, community members and students--are profoundly affected. Indeed, as Mutchler (1990:4) reports following an extensive school-based management survey that, 'school-based management and shared decision making strategies directly challenge and seek to change the complex and well-entrenched patterns of institutional and individual behavior that...have remained untouched by top-down reforms'.

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According to the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), and other sources, school-based management can:

1. Allow competent individuals in the schools to make decisions that will improve learning;
2. Give the entire school community a voice in key decisions;
3. Focus accountability for decisions;
4. Lead to greater creativity in the design of programmes;
5. Redirect resources to support the goal developed in each school;
6. Lead to realistic budgeting as parents and teachers become more aware of the schools financial status, spending limitations, and the cost of its programmes;
7. Improve morale of teachers and nurture new leadership at all levels.

The frequent failures of school-based management efforts to address the school's program of instruction are related to one basic problem. This is the tendency of those implementing school-based management to forget that it is not an end in itself, but rather a means to improving student performance through bringing about improvements in the quality of schooling. Mojkowski and Fleming (1988) speculate on the reason for this loss of perspective, pointing out that implementing school-based management is a complex undertaking. This is because considerable time and energy will be required to negotiate the details of new responsibilities and relations. There is a tendency, therefore, to place inordinate attention on the ‘technology' of

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school-site management and forget the goal: an improving school where students learn at their potential.

SBM Budgeting

In most SBM systems, each school is given a "lump" that the school can spend as it sees fit. In a budgeting process outlined by Spear (1983), the district office determines the total funds needed by the whole district, determines the district wide Costs (such as the cost of central administration and transport), and allocates the remaining funds to the individual schools. The allocation to each school is determined by a formula that takes into account the number and type of students at that school. Often the district is responsible for purchasing and warehousing supplies and equipment specified by the school.

Each school determines how to spend the lump sum allocated by the district. Funds can be spent on personnel, equipment, supplies, and maintenance. The school's instructional and administrative priorities are expressed through its budget priorities. Surplus funds can be carried over to the next year or be shifted to a programme that needs more funds; in this way long-range planning and efficiency are encouraged.

At the local level, the effectiveness of school-based management depends strongly on the accountability the school feels towards the community, as well as the influence the community can exercise on the school through knowledge and skills, power, information and rewards (Lawler, 1986). More concretely, the community generally exercises its influence through involvement in the school board or council. The precise powers of such bodies vary. In Australia and the USA, for instance,

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boards can play a positive role in recruitment of principals or head teachers, in some budgetary decisions and in extra-curricular matters. But constructive engagement is not always present; at worst, boards provide opportunities for misuse of community resources, and transparency may be lacking especially in the use of funds. In addition, communities are far from homogeneous. Elites can manipulate boards to reinforce their power. Evidence from New Zealand and Australia shows under-representation of minority groups in the composition of school boards (De Grauwe, 2004).

In both developing and developed countries, the demands that reforms place on school staff may limit the time and the energy they can give for quality improvement (Leithwood & Menzies, 1998). This is because new management tasks, especially those concerning decision making, financing and staffing have increased.

Attitudes towards SBM

Several researchers addressed the subject of the attitudes toward school-based management held by those who have been involved in SBM efforts. Some of the most notable attitudes of teachers toward certain types of decision-making responsibility have been touched upon. Findings about attitudes are cited by Arterbury and Hord (1991); Brown (1987); Conley (1990); Malen, Ogawa, and Kranz (1990); Peterson (1991).

School staff members generally perceive their schools as being more responsive under decentralized arrangements, with responsiveness defined as the ability to adapt resources and procedures to student needs. However, enthusiasm for SBM on the part of school staff has been shown to decline if the practice continues

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over a significant period of time and few or no improvements are noted in working conditions or student outcome.

1. Parent and student satisfaction with the schools has been shown to increase under school-based management.
2. Surveys of principals have consistently shown a high degree of satisfaction with the move to school-based management, even though they also say that their workload has increased.
3. Teachers, as previously noted, want to be able to make or influence decisions regarding curriculum and instruction and have often reacted negatively to participation in decision-making about organizational matters that bear little relationship to the classroom.

However, teacher surveys also reveal that the decision areas in which teachers feel most deprived are those that address the interaction between the school and the classroom decisions about how children are assigned to classes, how teachers are assigned to classes, and how students are disciplined and promoted (Conley, 1990).

Site council members, whether they are teachers, parents, community members, or students, express resentment (1) if allowed to make decisions only about trivial matters, or (2) if their decisions have only very minor impact on school policy and operations, or (3) if they are told they are a decision-making body, but then have their decisions vetoed by the principal.

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Impact of SBM on Performance

The ultimate measure of the value of school-based management will be the outcome observed in students who attend site-managed schools. As expressed by Arterbury and Hord (1991:7), "site-based decision making should be explicitly considered as a means to increase learner outcomes".

Thus far, researchers have identified no direct link, positive or negative, between school-based management and student achievement or other student outcomes, such as attendance. In some settings, student scores (on standardized or local tests) have improved slightly, in others they have declined slightly, and in most settings no differences have been noted. In sum, Peterson (1991) thinks that research as a whole does not indicate that site-based management brings permanent improvements in student performance. Indeed evidence continues to show that the impact of decentralization is more noticeable in areas of governance and organizational structures than in changed classroom practices and improved students' achievement (Wohlsletter & Mohraman, 1996).

However, arguments have been put forward in support of the superiority of decentralization over centralized structures (Murphy, 1991). First, decentralization gives communities, parents and teachers a say in decision-making. Second, it is believed that teachers would become more committed to their professional work if they are allowed to take part in the decision-making process. Third, it is believed that the closer the levels of decision-making are to students the more their needs will be taken care of. Fourth, decentralization has the value of bringing about more efficient utilization of resources. This is because those who make decisions are

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aware of the needs of students and would therefore provide services that will meet those needs. Firth, since centralized structures are perceived to be ineffective in satisfying the needs of students, decentralized structures are considered to have the prospect in meeting the needs of students than centralized systems. Sixth, decentralization will improve governance through greater accountability and responsiveness.

The positions held by various writers on the advantages of decentralization of school administration discussed above bring out some important theoretical assumptions. It is an undeniable fact that, the notion of decentralization in education decision-making and governance issues is of interest to the social democratic principles of egalitarianism, which gives local communities the legitimacy to participate in institutional building and operation (Seddon, Angus & Poole, 1990). If this principle is put into practice by the creation and development of democratic decision-making structures, there would be the likelihood of a significant change in the type of power relationships that exist between the various levels of authority. Specifically, the coordinated effort of community groups and school authorities will replace the dominance enjoyed by educational bureaucratic elites in school administration issues. Therefore the devolution of authority from centralized to decentralized structures enhances the chances of the communities to become part of the decision-making process and at the same time curtails the authority of educational bureaucrats. By achieving this, the balance of power between educational bureaucrats on one hand, and local community and school authority on

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the other, is redistributed to the advantage of the latter group (Seddon, Angus & Poole, 1990).

Theoretically, this redistribution of power corresponds to a re-conceptualization of the organizational units deemed to be most important administratively for the improvement of learning. Under centralization, central office units were considered to have the administrative responsibility for ensuring that the conditions needed to promote effective learning were in place. However, with decentralization, the schools as a suburb now assume this role.

Organizational and economic arguments have also played a role in framing some of the assumptions on which the concept of decentralization of authority structures in educational system is grounded. Some organizational theorists argue that a decentralized environment is optional for efficiency in operations, since employees who are empowered to make decisions have more control over their work and hence become more accountable for decisions (Murphy, 1991). The premise of these arguments is that by flattening the decision-making process, and bringing it closer to the site where client needs are met, the effectiveness of the organization is improved, as employees based on their knowledge and interactions with clients can reshape their products and services to meet the task of clients.

Ball and Symth (1993) advanced a politic-economic perspective of decentralization. Both writers have indicated their support for the notion that decentralization ought to be viewed within the context of resource availability, social responsibility and accountability. It is the belief of these writers that the social democratic principles on which decentralization is premised, and which appear to

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those at the local levels who seem to be gaining their lost pride as they now have a say in their affairs, seem to cover the hidden plan of those at the state and government level who advocate for decentralization. Specifically, the argument is posited that the devolution of authority from the state level legalizes state agencies in many ways. First, it gives the indication that these agencies are sensitive to the concerns and needs of local communities. Second, by transferring decision-making responsibilities to the schools, these agencies can disassociate themselves from unsuccessful policies by blaming schools for poor management and defective decision-making. This works in favour of state elites and central agencies by absorbing them from criticisms that are generated by the formulation of poor policies.

Moreover, both Ball and Smyth regard the process of decentralization as putting undue pressure school administrators especially in the instance of resources scarcity. However, in doing so decentralization provides local administrators with experiences that develops their creativity and resourcefulness and particularly in the area of problem solving.

Summary

One difficulty is that the term decentralization means different things to different people and it can therefore be said to have many faces. Thus, the review first brought to the fore the various definitions to clarify some of the alternative meanings. However, even with clear definitions, decentralisation is still not unambiguous because it comes in such forms as deconcentration, delegation, devolution and privatisation.

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The review highlighted the motives underlying decentralization which includes improvement in managerial and financial efficiency, legitimization of governments as well as giving users a greater voice in decisions that affect them. The review further indicated conditions that support successful implementation of decentralization. Some of these are power, knowledge and skill, information and rewards. Again major issues that relate to school-based management such as its impact of learning outcomes were reviewed. Finally, literature on obstacles to effective decentralization the most notable of which is time was also reviewed.

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the method adopted for the study. It describes the research design, population, sample and sampling procedure, data collection instrument, pre-testing of instrument, the procedure for collecting data and data analysis plan.

Research Design

A descriptive survey employing quantitative methods was used. Cohen and Marion (1991) describe the descriptive survey as data gathered at a particular point in time aimed at describing the nature of existing conditions or identifying a standard against which existing conditions can be compared or determine the relationship that exists between specific events. This can be achieved through the use of structured or semi-structured interviews, self-completion or postal questionnaire, and by telephone.

According to Thompson (1999), descriptive survey has a number of disadvantages. One of them is that, it is expensive to undertake and the other is that, the results may have low external validity. McColl et al. (2001) posit that due to the variations in individuals and their response to interventions, fairly large groups of individuals are needed to provide valid results. However, the researcher used the descriptive survey because it produced good responses from wide range of people.

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Also the researcher was able to ask in-depth follow up questions and explained items that were unclear.

Population

The study had as its population the District Director of Education, the four frontline Assistant Directors heading the four sections of the District Office, heads and teachers of basic schools and Chairpersons of School Management Committees (SMC) in Abura Asebu Kwamankese District in the Central Region. The total population of the study area was seven hundred and forty-three (743).

Sample

Altogether, the total sample was two hundred and forty-five (245). This sample size was used because (Krejcie and Morgan 1970) stated that for a population size of 750, a sample size of 254 should be considered when conducting research.

The sample was drawn from the various categories of the population as outlined above.

(a) From the District Education Office, the District Director of Education and the four frontline Assistant Directors responsible for Administration, Budgeting and Financial Control; Planning, Monitoring, Data Collection, Research & Record; Human Resource Management and Development; and Supervision and Management of Teaching and Learning were involved in the study. They were chosen because the four frontline officers in partnership with the District Director constitute the top management of education in the district and as a result they had requisite knowledge about government policies on education, which includes decentralization. They

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also constitute a group that is confronted with most of the educational problems especially in administration of basic education in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese district.

(b) Fifty SMC chairpersons were selected for the study. They were selected to provide information for the study because the chairpersons were more involved in the day-to-day running of the schools than the other members.

(c) All the fifty heads of the selected Primary and Junior High Schools also provided information for the study. They were chosen because they were in charge of administration in their respective schools and therefore exercised the ultimate power and authority in the schools.

(d) Three teachers in each of the schools were selected to provide information for the study. This is important because they constituted one of the groups that benefit from effective decentralization. This group numbered one hundred and fifty (150).

Sampling Procedure

According to Ary, Jacobs and Razavich (1990), sampling is very important to the researcher. Factors such as time, money and effort which are very crucial for the completion of the study most often do not permit a researcher to study all possible cases to be able to come out with the research findings. Sampling helps researchers to select a fraction of the total population that is representative of the population.

The researcher used a combination of purposive and random sampling techniques in the selection of the sample. In order to obtain a representative sample of the population, the characteristics of the population was taken into consideration.

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The District Director of Education and the four frontline Assistant Directors responsible for the four divisions of the District Education were chosen through the purposive method.

Thirty primary and twenty Junior High Schools were selected through simple random sampling after each group had been sub-divided into two: namely urban and rural. The lottery method was used to select the schools by placing slips of paper with the identification number of each school in the appropriate container, mixing the slips thoroughly, and drawing the required numbers from each category.

The head teachers were selected through purposive from the fifty selected schools. In the case of teachers, three from each of the selected schools were selected by using the table of random numbers. This was done by listing the number of teachers in the selected schools according to urban and rural. Then with the table of random numbers, the required numbers that corresponded to particular teachers were chosen.

From the SMC, thirty rural-based and twenty urban-based Chairpersons were selected by random sampling. The researcher used the lottery method as in the case of the selection of schools.

Data Collection Instrument

The instruments used to collect data in the study were questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire was chosen and personally administered because it allowed the researcher to establish rapport, indicate the purpose of the research and explain the meaning of items that were not be understood (Best and Kahn, 1993). The questionnaire was composed of close-ended and open-ended items which were

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used to collect data from head teachers, teachers and SMC chairpersons. The District Director of Education and the four frontline Assistant Directors were interviewed. The close-ended questionnaire was in the form of Likert scale. Best and Kahn posit that the Likert scale is easy to fill, has economy of time and keeps respondents focused. They also reveal that the open-ended questionnaire has the advantage of providing greater depth of response.

The questionnaire that was designed for head teachers and teachers consisted of six main sections – Section A, B, C, D, E and F. Section A consisted of respondents' personal data on gender, rank and work experience. Sections B, C, D. E and F were based on five (5) research questions eliciting opinions and views of heads and teachers on general administrative issues in basic schools of the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District (See Appendix B and C).

The questionnaire for the SMC chairpersons consisted of two sections – Section A and B. Section A consisted of respondents' personal data on gender, and number of years served in position. Section B sought views of chairpersons of School Management Committees on general administrative issues and it became necessary to separate this set of questions from the others because they performed different functions (See Appendix D).

According to Borg, and Meredith (1983), the interview involves a conversation between individuals and it helps to get information that the respondent will otherwise overlook. The researcher used the interview for the District Director of Education and the four frontline Assistant Directors so as to get in-death

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knowledge about the administration of basic schools in the district. An interview guide containing thirteen items was used in the interview (See Appendix A).

Pre-testing of Instrument

A pre-testing of the instrument was carried out at the Mfantseman District of the Central Region. Twenty-five (25) respondents were used as the sample for the pre-testing. This involved five officers from the district education office, four head teachers, twelve teachers and four chairpersons of the school management committees of the selected schools. The choice of the district was due to the fact that it had a lot of common characteristics with the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District.

All the questions were grouped according to the issues that were raised in the research questions. Theses include the functions that were deconcentrated, devolved and delegated; the attitudes of stakeholders towards decentralization and some challenges that teachers face in the implementation of decentralization. Responses to open-ended questions were coded for analysis.

The Statistical Package for Service Solutions (SPSS) computer software was used to analyze the data into frequencies and percentages. It was also used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire for teachers, head teachers, and SMC chairpersons. The reliability co-efficient for teachers' questionnaire, head teachers' questionnaire and SMCs' questionnaire were 0.71, 0.73 and 0.74 respectively.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher used two sets of questionnaire and one interview schedule to collect data on decentralization of educational administration in the Abura Asebu

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Kwamankese District. The questionnaires were distributed personally to heads of schools, teachers and SMC chairpersons.

To facilitate the process of administering the questionnaire and interview, a letter of introduction from the Director of the Institute of Educational Planning and Administration was presented to the District Director and the various heads of schools. In the case of the District Director of Education and the four frontline Assistant Directors, the researcher interviewed them personally by visiting them on days which were convenient for them.

Data Analysis Plan

A descriptive survey is the design for the research and as a result, quantitative analysis involving frequencies and percentages were used. The Statistical Package for Service Solution (SPSS) computer software was used to analyze the data into frequencies and percentages.

Responses to open-ended questions were coded for analysis. All the questions were grouped according to the issues that were raised in the research questions which include functions that were deconcentrated, devolved and delegated; the attitudes of stakeholders towards decentralization and some challenges teachers face in the implementation of decentralization. The results of the analysis are presented and discussed in chapter four.

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CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter deals with the presentation and discussion of data. The presentation is carried out in two sections. Section one deals with the biographical data of respondents, while section two focuses on the general administrative issues based on five research questions. As illustrated in Table 2, 245 respondents (consisting of 183 males and 62 females) participated in the study.

Biographic Data

Table 2

Gender of Respondents

	Male		Female	
Respondents	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Officers of District Office	4	2.1	0	0.0
Head Teachers	34	18.6	14	23
Teachers	98	53.6	48	77
SMC Chairpersons	47	25.7	0	0.0
Total	183	100	62	100

Table 2 above shows that 183(74%) of the respondents were men, while 62(26%) of the respondents were women. Despite the current empowerment of women in the country, it is surprising to note none of the forty-seven SMC

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chairpersons was a woman. The dominance of men in the sample is clear and is an indication of the fact that the contribution of women towards decision making is still marginal.

Table 3

Rank of Teachers

	Teachers		Head Teachers	
Rank	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Assistant Directors	0	0.0	18	37.5
Principal Superintendent	9	6.2	18	37.5
Senior Superintendent	13	8.9	10	21
Superintendent I	25	17.1	2	4
Superintendent II	79	54.1	0	0.0
Untrained Teacher	20	13.7	0	0.0
Total	146	100	48	10

From Table 3 it can be observed that 9(6.2%) of teachers are of the Principal Superintendent rank, 13(8.9%) of teachers are Senior Superintendents, 25(17.1%) of teachers are on the Superintendent II rank while a majority 79(54.1%) of teachers are of superintendent I rank. The 20 Untrained teachers constitute 13.7 percent of the teachers.

The Table also indicates that majority 36(75%) of head teachers were either Assistant Directors or Principal Superintendents with the minority 12 (25%) being Senior Superintendents. The finding shows that majority of teachers are junior rank

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that is, Superintendent while majority of head teacher are of senior rank, that is, Assistant Director and Principal Superintendent Rank.

Table 4

Teaching Experience

	District Education Officer		Head Teachers		Teachers	
No. of years	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
0-5	0	0.0	0	0.0	125	85.6
6-10	0	0.0	2	4.2	15	10.3
11-15	0	0.0	4	8.3	4	2.7
16-20	1	25	20	41.7	1	0.7
21 or more	3	75	22	45.8	1	0.7
Total	4	100	48	100	146	100

From Table 4 above, it can be observed that teachers representing 85.6 percent of the respondents had taught for a period up to 5 years. Exactly 2(4.2%) and 15(10.3%) of head teachers and teachers respectively had taught from 6-10 years. Respondents who had taught from 11-15 years were equally shared between head teachers and teachers. Forty two (87.5%) of head teachers had taught for 16 years or more while 2(1.4%) of teachers had taught for the same duration. It is clear from the analysis on the teaching experience of respondents that officers of the District Education office and head teachers had more experience in teaching than majority of the teachers.

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Table 5

Length of Time Served in Position as SMC Chairperson

No of years	Frequency	Percent
0 - 2	2	4.3
3 - 4	37	78.7
5 - 6	8	17.0
Total	47	100.0

Table 5 shows that 2(4.3%) of SMC chairpersons had served in their position as chairperson for a period up to two years. A majority 37(78.7%) of SMC chairpersons had served from 3 to 4 years while 8(17.0%) of them had served from 5 to 6 years. The analysis shows that majority of the chairpersons had served for a period of four years and below. This could be attributed to the fact that the formation of SMCs started recently.

Research Question 1

What roles and functions have been deconcentrated to basic schools in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District?

Schools have been established in every nook and cranny of the country to make education accessible to every child. This is appropriate and mandatory as it satisfies constitutional provision of making education free and compulsory for every child of school going age. The administration of schools will be difficult and cumbersome if powers are not transferred to the schools so as to enhance effective decision making. This question, therefore sought to find out functions that had been transferred to the school level.

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Table 6

Deconcentration of Functions to the School

	Head teachers				Teachers			
	Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree	
Functions	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Supervises work	43	(89.6)	5	(10.4)	137	(93.8)	9	(6.2)
Organizes in-service	42	(87.5)	6	(12.5)	78	(53.4)	68	(46.6)
Budgeting	40	(83.3)	8	(16.7)	130	(89)	16	(11)
Staffing decisions	45	(93.8)	3	(6.2)	125	(85.6)	21	(14.4)
Education Research	42	(87.5)	6	(12.5)	112	(76.7)	34	(23.3)
Provide Incentives	46	(95.8)	2	(4.2)	56	(38.4)	90	(61.6)
Select TLMs	42	(87.5)	6	(12.8)	139	(95.2)	7	(4.8)
Provide feedback	44	(91.7)	4	(8.3)	132	(90.4)	14	(9.6)
Create Congenial environment	45	(93.8)	3	(6.2)	116	(79.5)	30	(20.5)
Encourage collaboration	46	(95.8)	2	(4.2)	116	(79.5)	30	(20.5)

One of the goals of education is to produce individuals who will contribute to the development of society and this will only succeed if there is effective supervision of instruction. Effective supervision therefore becomes a necessary tool for making sure that pupils are imbued with the skills and knowledge that are required for the development of society.

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Table 6 shows that majority 43(89.6%) and 137(93.8%) of head teachers and teachers respectively agreed with the statement that school authorities supervise school work. However, 14 (16.8%) of both teachers and head teachers disagreed with the statement that school authorities supervised school work. The responses in relation to the supervision of school work by school authorities corresponds with literature review by Knezevich (1984), cited in Osei-Tutu (2004), who said that educational administration can be explained in terms of the roles that are played by those in charge of the day-to-day running of the school. One of these roles has to do with the efficient supervision of teaching and learning so that school performance will be enhanced. The involvement of pupils and teachers in supervision will bring efficiency in school work since they constitute the most important stakeholders of the school.

Supervision is a means through which school environment, activities, pupils and teachers are monitored to make sure that things are done properly. Effective supervision by school authorities will therefore ensure that quality work is done with the needed dispatch. It is incumbent upon head teachers to not only mobilize human and material resources but improve human relations and morale of teachers as well as pupils in order to achieve maximum results.

On the statement regarding the organization of in-service training by head teachers, 42(87.5%) of head teachers and 78 (53.4%) of teachers agreed that head teachers organized in-service training for teachers, while 6(12.5%) of head teachers and 68(46.6%) of teachers disagreed that head teachers organized in-service training for their teachers, 42(87.5%) of head teachers and 78(53.4%) of teachers agreed that

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head teachers organized in-service training for their teachers. The wide difference in the proportion of teachers and head teachers' responses is an indication that there was something that was not going on properly. It is possible the head teachers wanted to show that they were performing their duties or that the teachers were trying to undermine their heads.

The responses confirm in part the literature review by Hopkins (2001) that good leadership is about transforming feelings, attitudes and beliefs, as well as practice to improve the culture of the school. This transformation can take place when teachers are given the appropriate in-service training by their head teachers. In this direction, the Ghana Education Service in collaboration with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is currently piloting a programme on School-based in-service training in ten districts in the country.

The importance of in-service training is again supported by Leithwood, Jartzi and Steinbeck (1999) who stressed that good leadership should promote teacher behavior that focuses on a broad spectrum of learning outcomes. This standpoint is also corroborated by the Head teachers Handbook (1994) which mentions in-service training as one of the main functions of a head teacher.

In their responses officers at the District Education Office confirmed that head teachers on the whole organized in-service training for their teachers. They were, however, quick to add that the inadequacy of funds for school administration affects the regularity with which heads organized such courses.

With regard to the preparation of school budget according to priorities established, majority 170(87.6%) of both head teachers and teachers agreed that

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school budget was prepared by establishing priorities in consultation with other members of staff. This agrees with the view by Bray and Mukundan (2003) that decentralization may take the form of giving head teachers control over the preparation of annual budgets.

In response to interview questions, the officers at the District office indicated that head teachers had been given the authority to prepare their budgets in collaboration with other stakeholders of the school such as teachers, SMCs and PTAs. This shows that the power to manage funds of the school was no longer with those at the central ministry or even the district but at the school level. The officers, however, indicated that the Capitation Grant that was allocated to each school by the district education office depended on the number of pupils in the school. The views of the officers is strengthened by a budgeting process outlined by Spear (1983), that the district office determines the district-wide cost (such as the cost of central administration and transportation), and allocates the remaining funds to the individual schools. The allocation to each school is determined by a formula that takes into account the number and type of students at that school. Often the district is responsible for purchasing and warehousing supplies and equipment specified by the schools.

It is important for the school head to prepare school budget in collaboration with other stakeholders of the school so that limited resources will be used judiciously. This will bring higher returns and thus promote effective teaching and learning.

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The statement with regard to the head teacher taking staffing decisions also recorded a similar pattern of response as the previous statement. Forty-five (93.8%) of head teachers and 125 (85.6%) of teachers were of the opinion that head teachers took staffing decisions. A very small proportion (6.2%) of head teachers and (14.4%) of teachers disagreed that head teachers took staffing decisions. Farrant (1980) acknowledges that it is the duty of the head teacher to allocate teachers to various classes by identifying school years that are critical and therefore need the best members of staff. This suggests that the appointment of teachers to various positions of trust shall be made based on capabilities and interest in situation where excellence is the standard; however, those without the requisite qualities could be helped to learn on the job.

The views of respondents are affirmed by the position taken by White (1989) that taking decision allows heads of institutions to determine the distribution of various responsibilities in the school. The school is a place where teaching and learning takes place and for this enterprise to be effective and efficient there is need for the head teacher to plan and organize school activities in collaboration with his or her teachers. This calls for team work with different sections of the school under the supervision of various teachers. The success of this collaboration depends on the head teacher's ability to assign teachers to responsibilities for which they have the requisite knowledge, skills and interest. For instance, it will be advisable to assign a more experienced teacher to class one where pupils need to be handled with much more care than those in senior classes.

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On the issue of head teachers gathering information regarding educational research and sharing with other teachers, 42(87.5%) of head teachers agreed that they gather information regarding educational research and share with their teachers. While smaller proportions of the respondents 12.5% and 23.3% of head teachers and teachers respectively disagreed with the practice of gathering and sharing information regarding educational research in their schools.

In response to a statement on the provision of incentives for high performance, a majority of head teachers (95.8%) said they provide incentives for high performance. On the contrary, the majority of teachers 90 (61.6%) disagreed with the head teachers' assertion that they provided incentives for high performance. Indeed a minority (4.2%) of head teachers and 56 (38.4%) of teachers indicated that head teachers did not provide incentives for high performance. Incentives are an important part of an organization since it spurs workers on to higher performance as well as meeting set targets. According to Lawler (1986), it is important for rewards to be instituted for behaviours, outcomes and capabilities required for higher performance. This he believes will provide incentive for employee involvement in organizational performance.

Responding to a question on the selection of teaching and learning materials, a majority of head teachers respondents (87.5%) agreed that teachers selected the teaching and learning material for their lessons. A higher proportion (95.2%) of teachers also corroborated the responses of their head teachers. A minority of both respondents constituting 6.7 percent of the 194 head teachers and teachers disagreed that teachers selected their own teaching and learning material. It is possible that

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those who disagreed do not use of teaching and learning materials in their lessons or do not consider it as part of their functions.

The selection of teaching and learning materials by teachers allowed them to use the resources that were available in the school as well as those that were found in the school's environment. These also allowed teachers to adapt teaching and learning to local conditions and thereby reduce cost of making sophisticated teaching and learning materials. The use of resources that were available in the school and its environment also enhanced teaching and learning by making if easier for pupils to understand as well as participate in lessons. It further serves as a reminder anytime pupils go to school and therefore help prevent decay of memory, which is one of the theories of forgetting.

On provision of feedback to stakeholders of the school, 44(91.7%) of the 48 head teachers said that stakeholders are provided with feedback to enhance their performance. Similarly, 132(90.4%) of the 146 teachers identified themselves with the response of the teachers. Few of the head teachers (8.3%) and about a fourth of the teachers (9.6%) did not agree that stakeholders were provided with feedback to enhance performance. The provision of feedback to all stakeholders becomes obligatory in a situation where decisions are taken by the various constituents of the school administration at the school level. This will serve as an impetus for sustained interest in and concern for improvement in all aspects of school life. It will also serve as a source of reinforcement of the performance of stakeholders of the school hence, lead to better school performance.

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The lack of feedback to stakeholders will bring about a lukewarm attitude on the part of the various actors in school administration towards the decentralization process. This will result in a situation where the process of decentralization will be mere rhetoric rather than practical, as stakeholders of the school will not be able to contribute meaningfully to the process. The consequence will be the centralization of decision – making in one person (head teacher) at the local level.

In table 6, 45(93.8%) of head teachers and 116(79.5%) of teachers believed that the school could create congenial environment for teaching and learning to take place. On the other hand, 3(6.2%) of head teachers and 30(20.5%) of teachers did not consider the school capable of creating a congenial environment for teaching and learning to be effective. There was the need for an environment that was conducive for teachers and pupils to operate in without any obstacles. The right type of conditions that should be in place for effective teaching and learning can best be created at the school level.

Table 6 shows that majority, 46 (95.8%) of head teachers and 116(79.5%) of teachers agreed that head teachers encouraged collaboration among the various stakeholders of the school. A small proportion of head teachers and teachers, 4.2% and 20.5% respectively disagreed that head teachers encouraged collaboration among stakeholders of the school. The progress of any school will depend to some extent on the type of relationship that exists among the various stakeholders of the school. Cordial relationship ensures the involvement and commitment of the actors of the decentralization process towards school performance.

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From the above analysis, it can be seen that supervision of school work, organization of in-service training, budgeting and taking staffing decisions were functions that were transferred to the school level. This was because majority of both teachers and head teachers agreed that these functions were performed at the school level. In an answer to a question on functions that had been transferred to the school level, officers of the district education office mentioned supervision of school work, admission of pupils, budgeting and administration of Capitation grant. Other functions the officers stated include organization of in-service training, selecting teaching and learning materials, setting performance exams and evaluation of teacher and pupil performance.

The conclusion that was drawn from the analysis was that there was the transfer of authority to the school level hence deconcentration was taking place at the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District.

Research Question 2

How are duties delegated in basic schools in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District?

The functions of the school are numerous and cannot be handled by the head teacher alone as an attempt to do so will lead to a-one-man show that will result in apathy among the other teachers. Apathy can be a recipe for inefficiency in school administration and management. It is therefore important for every efficient head teacher to delegate his responsibilities to other members of staff and pupils so as to create a congenial school climate for effective teaching and learning to take place.

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The question was therefore to solicit responses that would determine the extent to which duties had been delegated in basic schools in the district. The findings are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7

Delegation of Duties by Head Teachers

	Head teachers				Teachers			
	Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree	
Committee	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sports Committee	45	(93.8)	3	(6.2)	120	(82.1)	26	(17.9)
Canteen Committee	22	(45.8)	26	(54.4)	65	(37.7)	81	(62.3)
Welfare Committee	39	(81.3)	9	(18.7)	102	(69.9)	44	(30.1)
Disciplinary Committee	46	(95.8)	2	(4.2)	104	(71.2)	42	(28.8)
Garden Committee	23	(47.9)	25	(52.1)	65	(44.5)	81	(55.5)
Prefectoral System	48	(100)	0	(0.0)	101	(69.2)	45	(30.8)

Table 7 indicates that majority, 45(93.8) and 120(82.1) of head teachers and teachers respectively agreed that their schools had a sports committee in charge of the organization of sporting activities. Whiles the minority 3(6.2) of head teachers and 26(17.9) of teachers said that they did not have a sports committee. The majority of head teachers in the sampled schools therefore delegated their responsibilities in the area of sports to teachers and pupils. This is in consonance with what is prescribed by Ghana Education Service in the Handbook for Head teachers that head teachers should form a sports committee to be responsible for sporting activities in the school. The necessity of sporting activities in the school in emphasized in the

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words of St. Catherine of Sienna who said in Latin: "Amina sana in corpora sana" (Mercieca, 1997). This saying means "a healthy mind is found in a healthy body". In order for people to have a healthy mind they need to exercise to keep their body in good shape, to avoid illness so as to feel in the best of good health on a continuous basis. Hence, it becomes imperative for the school to develop its pupils physically so as to enhance their mental development. The school can do this if it has congenial sporting environment that is supported fully by teachers and pupils who are given the responsibility of organizing sports.

From the responses to the items in relation to the availability of canteen committee in the school, 22(45.8%) of head teachers and 65(37.7%) of teachers agreed that the committee was in existence in their schools while, 26(54.2%) of head teachers and 81(62.3%) of teachers said the canteen committee was not in their school. This shows clearly that the establishment of the canteen committee in schools in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District is yet to become a dominant feature in the district. The Head teachers' Handbook on the contrary, prescribes it as one of the main committees that should be established in the school. The introduction of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) School Feeding Programme by the Government of Ghana makes the establishment of the canteen committee in schools more crucial now than ever. This is because the efficient running of the feeding programme would depend on a well organized canteen committee in the schools. The type of food that would be prepared for pupils under the programme will depend on whether the members of the canteen committee have the knowledge about what constitutes a nutritious diet. A well balanced diet is what children need

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most to develop both physically and mentally. It will be necessary to put in place a canteen committee that would be able to draw up a menu to provide balanced diet that would adequately benefit school children.

The next statement was on the existence of welfare committee in the schools and this resulted in majority 39(81.3%) of head teachers and 102(69.9%) of teachers agreeing with the statement that they had a welfare committee. The minority 9(18.7%) of head teachers and 44(30.1%) of teachers however, disagreed that they had a welfare committee. The welfare committee had therefore a part of the schools in the district. This situation was supported by the head teacher's handbook in which the welfare committee is mentioned as one of the committees that should be formed in schools. The existence of the welfare committee in most schools implied that problems of individuals could be solved by the committee and not necessary the head teacher alone.

The staff and pupils of any school can work with much enthusiasm if they are aware their welfare is adequately being taken care of. The welfare committee in this light becomes one of the panaceas to attitude that teachers and pupils sometimes display when no one is concerned of their wellbeing. It should therefore be the concern of any teacher who wants good performance and active participation of all to make sure that the welfare committee is not only formed but working for the good of all teachers and pupils.

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On the existence of a disciplinary committee in schools, table 8 shows that 46 (95.8%) of head teachers and 104 (71.2%) of teachers agreed that their schools had the committee while 2(4.2%) of head teachers and 42(28.8%) of teachers disagreed that their schools had a disciplinary committee. Discipline is necessary for the smooth running of the administration of the school and there can be effective discipline if staff and pupils are involved in the planning and implementation of appropriate disciplinary measures in the school.

A disciplinary committee would engender confidence of both pupils and teachers in school administration. The availability of a disciplinary committee will also allow for a thorough investigation of any cases of misbehavior so that appropriate measures will be taken to restore sanity and order in the school. Besides, the disciplinary committee would ensure impartiality since members are most likely to listen to issues involved and consider both sides of the case before reaching a verdict.

The statement on the availability of a garden committee in the school elicited responses that showed that 23(47.9%) of head teachers and 65(44.5%) of teachers indicated that they had the committee. Table 7 shows that 25(52.1%) and 81(55.5%) of head teachers and teachers respectively said they did not have the garden committee. This is contrary to the GES head teachers handbook which stipulates that the Garden Committee should be formed in basic schools. The non-compliance with this directive might be due to the trend of diminishing importance of school

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gardening rather than the tendency of some heads being opposed to delegating their responsibilities.

In response to the question as to whether the school has a prefectorial system in place all respondents 48(100%) of head teachers said they had school prefects in their schools. About two-third 101(69.2%) of teachers also gave a similar response as their head teachers. While forty-five (30.8%) of teachers stated that their school did not have school prefects. These responses seem strange since one of the basic structures of any school is the prefectorial system which serves as the mouth piece of the students. The involvement of pupils in the administration of school is very important because it make the pupils feel that they have a stake in the promotion of a healthy school climate which is a pre-requisite for good school performance. Again the involvement of pupils in the administration of school helps to prevent pupils' unrest.

Education first and foremost benefits the recipients. It is therefore necessary for pupils to be part of the decision making process of the system in which they constitute the immediate beneficiaries. This will be the very way to ensure that they will wholeheartedly contribute their quota for achievements of the objectives of the school. Asiedu Akrofu (1978) supports the participation of the pupils in the administration of schools by saying that the prefectorial system is adopted in schools to make student participate actively in maintenance of discipline. According to him it is helpful to encourage pupils to be involved in the planning and directing of school activities and programmes.

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In their answer on delegation of duties, officers of the district education office mentioned some of the duties that had delegated to teachers as supervision of pupils' work, organizing sports and games, setting class exams, selection of teaching methods and methods of evaluation. The officers also indicated that the disciplinary, sports and welfare committees are among most common committees in the schools.

From the discussion above it is clear that there is the involvement of teachers and pupils in activities and programmes in relation to sports, welfare, and discipline. It is also the case that decisions on issues relating to gardening and canteens were taken without the concern of stakeholders. It is also clear that duties were to a very large extent delegated by head teachers to their teachers and pupils in basic schools in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District.

Research Question 3

What roles and functions have been devolved to the basic school level in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District?

One of the main institutions that carry out functions that have been devolved to the school level is the SMC. The SMC/PTA Handbook stipulates some of the functions that the SMC is supposed to play in the management of schools.

The SMC in consultation with the head teacher can plan a suggested timetable to suit the local condition subject to the approval of the District Director of education. In addition, it is responsible for making sure that the school is run in the best interest of the school before any personal benefit.

Table 8 summarizes the findings of research into the activities of the SMC in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District.

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Table 8

Devolution of Functions to the School Level

Functions of SMC	Head teachers				Teachers				SMC Chairperson			
	Agree		disagree		Agree		disagree		Agree		disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Planning	2	(4.2)	46	(95.8)	5	(3.4)	141	(96.6)	1	(2.1)	46	(97.9)
Conduct	22	(45.8)	26	(54.2)	42	(28.7)	104	(71.3)	27	(57.4)	20	(42.6)
Dress code	18	(37.5)	30	(62.5)	41	(28.1)	105	(71.9)	13	(27.7)	34	(72.3)
Set goals	28	(58.3)	20	(41.7)	82	(56.2)	64	(43.8)	19	(40.4)	28	(59.6)
School dev.	22	(45.8)	26	(54.2)	69	(47.3)	77	(52.7)	44	(93.6)	3	(6.4)
Property	21	(43.8)	27	(56.2)	66	(45.2)	80	(54.8)	41	(87.2)	6	(12.8)
Employment	2	(4.2)	46	(95.8)	4	(2.7)	142	(97.3)	13	(27.7)	34	(72.3)
Finance	22	(45.8)	26	(54.2)	67	(45.9)	79	(54.1)	15	(31.9)	32	(68.1)

In Table 8, it can be observed that the majority, 46(97.9%) of SMC chairpersons, 46(95.8%) of head teachers and 141(96.6%) of teachers said that the SMC was not involved in planning school time-table. While the minority, 1(2.1%) of SMC chairpersons, 5(3.4%) of teachers and 2(4.2%) of head teachers were of the contrary opinion that the SMC was involved in planning school time-table. The view point of the respondents contradicts what the GES handbook for SMC/PTA stated about the function of SMCs, that they can plan school time-table in consultation with head teachers. This may be as the result of the fact that many community members of school management committees did not possess the knowledge and skills that are required for making certain school decision. In situation where they were even

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capable, they tend to believe that teachers can best take such decisions and should therefore be left alone to do so.

The next statement on the SMCs influencing the determination of learners' code of conduct elicited responses that showed that, 22(45.8%) of head teachers, 42(28.7%) of teachers and 27(57.4%) of SMC chairpersons agreed that the SMCs were involved in the determination of learners' code of conduct. Twenty-six (54.2%) of head teachers 104(71.3%) of teachers and 20(42.6%) of SMC chairpersons were of the opinion that SMCs are not involved in the determination of learners code of conduct. The difference in opinion held by the teachers and head teachers as compared to that of SMC chairperson could be the result of the SMC chairpersons wanting to show that they are involved while the teachers are portraying the actual situation on ground.

On the issue of the SMC influencing the determination of dress code, 18(37.5%) of head teachers, 41(28.1%) of teachers and 13(27.7%) of SMC chairpersons were of the view that the SMC was involved in the determination of the school's dress code. Thirty (62.5%) of head teachers, 105(71.9%) of teachers and 34(72.3%) of SMC chairpersons however were of the opinion that the SMC was not involved in the determination of dress code. The way pupils dress to school is a very important factor in the assessment of the level of discipline that prevails in a school. It will be necessary for the community through the SMC to make an input towards the determination of the dress code for pupils. The low level of involvement of the SMC in the determination of dress code is quite unfortunate and needs to be given the needed attention.

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In response to the question as to whether the SMC contributes to setting school goals, 28(58.3%) of head teachers, 82(56.2%) of teachers and 19(40.4%) of SMC chairpersons agreed that the SMC contributed to setting school goals. While 20(41.7%) of head teachers, 64(43.8%) of teachers and 28(59.6%) of SMC chairpersons disagreed that the SMC contributed in setting school goals. The setting of the school goals is an important aspect of the school work which needs the input of the community so as to enhance the performance of the school. This implies that the SMC should have a major say in the policy direction of the school.

In Table 8, 22(45.8%) of head teachers, 69(47.3%) of teachers and 44(93.6%) of SMC chairpersons agreed that SMC contributed to school development plans. While 26(54.2%) of head teachers, 77(52.7%) of teachers and 3(6.4%) of SMC chairpersons disagreed that SMC contributed to school development plans. It is interesting to note that the response of the SMC chairperson contradicts that of teachers and head teachers. The SMC chairperson on one hand say the SMC contributed to school development plans, which is in consonance with what the SMC/PTA handbook recommends: that the SMC should contribute to school development plans. The teachers and their heads on the other hand believed that the SMC did not contribute to school development plans. This contradiction may be due to self-aggrandizement on the part of the SMC chairpersons. It could also be due to the fact that head teachers and teachers did not involve the SMC in the drawing of school development plans.

As to whether the SMC contributes at looking at school property, the responses were similar to that of the previous item. Twenty-one (43.8%) of head

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teachers and 66(45.2%) of teachers were of the view that the SMC contributed to looking after school property. A little over 50% of both respondents were of the view that the SMC did not contribute to looking after school property. The views of these respondents is contrary to what was stated in the SMC/PTA handbook, that the SMC should contribute to, or decide on looking after school building, grounds and other property as well as deciding when others may use them. A majority of SMC chairpersons, 41(87.2%) indicated that the SMC contributed in looking after school property. The explanation given for the difference in pattern of the teachers and their heads as compared to the SMC chairpersons in the previous statement holds for this one.

On the issue as to whether the SMC employs school staff, a minority 2(4.2%) of head teachers 4(2.7%) of teachers and 13(27.7%) of SMC chairpersons stated that the SMC employed school staffs. While the majority 46(95.8%) of head teachers, 142(97.3%) of teachers and 34(72.3%) of SMC chairpersons were of the view that the SMC did not employ school staff. There is the need for community to employ teachers since government has over the years not been able to provide enough teachers for Ghanaian schools.

Precisely, 22(45.8%) of head teachers, 67(45.9%) of teachers and 15(31.9%) of SMC chairpersons constituting less than half of the respondents agreed that the SMC did oversee the schools' income and expenditure. A little more than half of the head teachers, teachers and SMC chairpersons indicated in their response that the SMC did not oversee the schools' income and expenditure. The influence of the communities in the management of school funds is therefore minimal if any at all.

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This situation is not desirable because the involvement of the SMC in the management of the School's income and expenditure is likely to result in prudent financial management. This is because there will be checks and balances in the spending pattern of the school. It can also be said that the overall; performance of any school will depend to a large extent on the efficient and effective management of financial resources of the school. It would therefore be beneficial for accredited committees to be involved in monitoring and scrutinizing school finances.

When officers of the district education office were asked to give their views on the roles that are being performed by the SMC in the schools, they mentioned the involvement of the SMCs in setting school goals.

On the devolution of functions to the SMC in the district, the only function that has been devolved to a very large extent is the setting of school goals. Other functions such as planning school time-table, determination of dress code and code of conduct, contribution to school development, looking after school property, employing school staff and overseeing finances are not fully devolved.

The devolution of 88 functions to the District Assemblies in 1987 under the 1987 Local Government Reforms (PNDC Law 207), made metropolitan/ municipal/ district assemblies major partners in the provision of educational facilities in the country. The table blow contains the summary of findings on aspects of the research question relating to the contribution of the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District Assembly to the development of education in the district.

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Table 9

Devolution of Functions to the District Assembly

	Head teachers				Teachers			
	Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree	
Functions	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Provides furniture	25	(52.1)	23	(47.9)	81	(55.5)	65	(44.5)
Provides Infrastructure	18	(37.5)	30	(62.5)	46	(31.5)	100	(68.5)

From table 9, it can be observed that a little over fifty percent of the 194 teachers and head teachers agreed that the District Assembly provided school furniture. However, 23(47.9%) of head teachers and 65(44.5%) of teachers indicated that the district assembly did not provide school furniture. Responding to a question on the provision school furniture by the district assembly, all four officers interviewed said the district assembly has provided furniture to few schools in the district. The views of respondents are indicative of the fact that the district assembly has provided some furniture to schools in the district.

A small proportion of the respondents, 18(37.5%) of head teachers and 46(31.5%) of teachers stated that the district assembly provided school buildings. However a larger proportion of both respondents put together 130(67%) disagreed that the district assembly provided school buildings. The response of the four district education officers on the issue of the district assembly providing school buildings was the same as that on the provision of school furniture.

As to whether the district assembly is involved in the employment of school staff, the officers of the district education office stated categorically that the district

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assembly has employed ten untrained teachers who are paid by the assembly from its own resources. In addition, they indicated that "the district assembly is involved in interviewing prospective candidates for employment by the government as untrained teachers". The supply of teachers by the district assembly to fill vacant positions in the schools clearly demonstrates the district assembly's commitment to education delivery in the district.

In the case of functions that have been devolved to the District Assembly, involvement in the employment of school staff, provision of school furniture and infrastructure are some of the activities being undertaken by the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District Assembly.

Research Question 4

What are the challenges faced by school staff in the implementation of decentralization of administration of basic schools in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District?

For effective decentralization to take place certain conditions must be wet. One of them is political support which is necessary to convince the various actors in the process that decentralization was desirable and important. In addition, decentralization will be successful if teaches, parents, community members as well as pupils are actively involved in the process. Moreover, those who participate in decision-making at the school level should have the knowledge and skills necessary to take good decisions. Furthermore, the various groups involved in the process need the requisite information on time to attain the objectives of the school. Incentives in

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the form of rewards are also necessary to induce the various actors towards high performance.

Respondents were asked to identify the various challenges that tend to impede performance of their roles. The findings are summarized in Table 10.

Table 10

Challenges of Decentralization

	Head Teachers				Teachers			
	Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree	
Responses	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Adequate Funds	2	(4.2)	46	(95.8)	11	(7.5)	135	(92.5)
Knowledge and skills	46	(95.8)	2	(4.2)	142	(97.3)	4	(2.7)
Interference by Community	8	(16.7)	40	(83.3)	16	(11)	130	(89)
Increase in Workload	40	(83.3)	8	(16.7)	84	(57.5)	62	(42.5)
Timely supply of Logistics	20	(41.7)	28	(58.3)	42	(28.8)	104	(71.2)

From Table 10, we can observe that a minority of head teachers and teachers, 2(4.2%) and 11(7.5%) respectively agreed that their schools had adequate funds for their school budget. However, a majority 46(95.8%) of head teachers and 135(92.5%) of teachers disagreed that their schools had adequate funds to implement school budget. The inadequacy of funds for the running of schools was confirmed by

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officers of the district education office who said that "one of the major challenges facing school administrators is inadequate funds".

The views expressed above is in contrast with what Fiske (1996) said that the financial argument for decentralization is that it will generate more revenue for the school by mobilizing resources from the various stakeholders at the local level. One danger however according to Fiske is that schools in rich localities will perform better than schools in poor localities because the former will be able to generate adequate resources. Students in wealthy areas will therefore get better education than those in poor areas and thus resulting in better opportunities for the better educated students. The consequences of this situation will be the widening of existing performance gaps between wealthy and poor areas.

In response to the next statement on whether teachers and head teachers had the knowledge and skills to make school decisions, 46(95.8%) of head teachers and 142(97.3%) of teachers indicated that they had the knowledge and skills to take school decisions. A very small percentage 2(4.2%) and 4(2.7%) of head teachers and teachers respectively were of the view that they did not possess the requisite knowledge and skills to take school decisions.

The views expressed by the respondents above, is supported by what Lawler (1986) said that, in the decentralization process the various actors need knowledge and skills required to make good decisions so as to enhance performance. In a situation where the various actors in the decentralization process do not have the capacity to take meaningful decisions school performance is usually affected leading to poor student performance.

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The Table above indicates that 8(16.7%) of head teachers and 16(11%) of teachers agreed that the community interfered with school work. A greater proportion of both categories of respondents, (87.6%) said the community did not interfere with school work.

When the community unduly interferes with school work it affects the cordial relationship that needs to be in place to in order for teachers and community members to collaborate in training pupils. Community interference may take the form of parents questioning certain actions of teachers unnecessarily. It may also be the result of the community dictating to the school head instead of conferring with him or her so as to arrive at a consensus on issues affecting the school. A good school community relationship enables the community to be much more involved in school work by influencing what is taught and the teaching materials that are used in the schools. In addition the community will be encouraged to contribute in diverse ways towards the provision of school infrastructure.

On the issue of increased workload, 40(83.3%) of head teachers and 84(57.5%) of teachers said that their workload had increased as a result of decentralization. However 8(16.7%) of head teachers and 62(42.5%) of teachers indicated that their workload had not increased as a result of the decentralization process. The views expressed by respondents support what was said by Ceperlay (1991) that the major source of trouble in school-based management is time. Activities associated with school-based management require school staff to devote additional hours each day on top of an already hectic schedule.

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In an interview with officers at the district education office, the officers asserted that "the work of head teachers and teachers has increased". This is because they have to meet regularly with the SMC and PTA to plan school budget and in addition prepare a School Performance Impermanent Plan (SPIP).

A minority of head teachers 20(41.7%) and teachers 42(28.8%) said that logistics were supplied on time to the schools. The majority of head teachers and teachers, 28(58.3%) and 104(71.2%) respectively were of the opinion that the supply of logistics to the schools were not timely. The views of respondents imply that the schools were not able to implement planned activities on schedule as a result of delay in the supply of teaching and learning inputs.

These views are corroborated by the responses given by officers of the district education office in an interview conducted by the researcher. They claimed that materials like lesson notebooks and registers were usually not supplied at the beginning of the term when they are urgently needed. This is a source of frustration for head teachers and teachers in the performance of their duties.

Findings with regard to the challenges of decentralization show that the inadequacy of funds, increase in workload and the late supply of logistics constitute major challenges to administrators of basic schools in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District.

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Research Question 5

What is the attitude of teachers towards the concept of decentralization of administration of basic schools in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District?

The type of attitude that one has determines his or her performance in a particular endeavour. A positive attitude is a prerequisite for high performance in any activity that one is confronted with. This is because with hard work and perseverance, what initially was considered impossible will become an easy task even if the task is not enjoyable. Again, a positive attitude is required when confronted with a difficult job which in most cases is likely to put many people off. A positive attitude is therefore an important ingredient in the processes designed to improve school performance.

A negative attitude on the other hand serves as a hindrance to the accomplishment of activities that have been planned in order to attain the goals of an organization. This is because individuals are likely to consider personal goals as more important than group goals. As a result, negative attitudes are inimical to the implementation of any policy that is introduced to bring about changes in performance.

The researcher asked this research question to find out the attitude of teachers towards the implementation of the decentralization process since how they see the process will determine its success or other wise.

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Table 11

Attitude of Teachers

	Head teacher				Teachers			
	Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree	
Responses	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Does not mind taking decisions	36	(75)	12	(25)	95	(65)	51	(35)
Decision at School level	44	(91.7)	4	(8.3)	126	(86.3)	20	(13.7)
Resent decision being vetoed	40	(83.3)	8	(16.7)	92	(63)	54	(37)
Decentralization is desirable	42	(87.5)	6	(12.5)	131	(89.7)	15	(10.3)
Decisions should have major impact	46	(95.8)	2	(4.2)	114	(77.8)	32	(22.2)
Decision regarding curriculum	42	(87.5)	6	(12.5)	111	(76)	35	(24)
Provide good learning environment	38	(79.2)	10	(20.8)	121	(82.9)	25	(17.1)

Table 11 indicates that precisely 36(75%) of head teachers and 95(65%) of teachers were of the opinion that they did not mind taking decisions with other stakeholders of the school. Twelve (25%) of head teachers and 51(35%) of teachers

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expressed a contrary opinion that, they did mind taking decisions with other stakeholders of the school.

The type of attitude that both respondents have towards making decisions with others is positive and this will tend to have a positive impact on the implementation of decentralization process in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District. This will also enhance collaboration among the various stakeholders which is a necessary factor for the success of any reform.

A majority of head teachers and teachers, 44(91.7%) and 126(86.3%) respectively were of the view that when decisions concerning the school are taken at the school level it will enable them perform better. While a minority 4(8.3%) of head teachers and 20(13.7%) of teachers believe that when decision concerning the school are taken of the school level it will not have any consequence on their performance.

The views expressed by respondents are indicative of the fact that the head teachers and teachers have confidence in their own ability to make meaningful decisions which they believed would lead to an improvement in the performance of the school. It can be argued that the importance of school based management can be evaluated in terms of student outcomes.

Artebury and Hord (1991:7) gave a boost to the principle of taking decisions at the school level by arguing that, “Site based decisions making should be explicitly considered as a means to increased learner outcomes”. It should be noted that if school based management will enable teachers make decisions at the school level, then teacher output will improve leading to a resultant improvement in student performance.

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In response to the question on whether stakeholders resent their decisions being vetoed, 40(83.3%) of head teachers and 92(63%) of teachers indicated that they will express resentment if their decisions are vetoed. While 8(16.7%) of head teachers and 54(37%) of teachers said they will not express resentment when their decisions are vetoed.

On the issue of decentralization being desirable, a large proportion of both head teachers and teachers 87.5 percents and 89.7 percent respectively agreed that decentralization was desirable. A small proportion of both head teachers (12.5%) and teachers (10.3%) were of the opinion that decentralization was not desirable. The views of respondents confirm a study in Kerala state in India by Mukundan (2003a, 2003b). The study found that implementation of decentralized planning was left at the level of rhetoric rather then reality, partly because both local - level and the higher – level actors were unconvinced that decentralization was desirable. Indeed, it is only when one is convinced that a particular process is desirable that one will be ready to invest time and energy to bring it to fruition. The belief of various stakeholders of education that decentralization is desirable is likely to impact positively on the process in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District.

In Table 11, it can be observed that, a majority 46(95.8%) of head teachers were of the opinion that they want their decisions to have a major impact on school policy and operations. One hundred and fourteen (77.8%) of the 146 teachers were of the same opinion as their head teachers. A minority of both head teachers and teachers (17.5 percent) put together were of the opinion that they did not want their decisions to have a major impact on school policy and operations. In support of the

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views of respondents the review of literature on the attitude of teachers revealed that stakeholders of education express resentment if their decisions have only a minor impact on school policy and operations.

The next statement was on teachers' attitude towards their decisions regarding curriculum and instruction. Forty-two (87.5%) of head teachers said they want to make decisions regarding curriculum and instruction. Precisely 111(76%) of teachers also stated that they wanted to make decisions regarding curriculum and instruction. However, 6(12.5%) of head teachers and 35(24%) of teachers expressed a contrary opinion to that of the majority, that they did not want to make decisions regarding curriculum and instruction.

The views expressed by respondents support the assertion by Bray and Mukumdan (2003) that decentralization is commonly advocated in order to allow schools greater autonomy in curriculum planning and medium of instruction. To emphasize this point further, Weiler (1990) in a study of decentralization within the educational context in Norway, identified one of the categories of initiatives that explains the underlying motives of decentralization as the process where decisions concerning the curriculum are made locally by those most affected.

In Table 11, 38(79.2%) of head teachers and 121 (82.9%) of teachers were of the view that their schools could provide good learning environment to enhance learning. While, 10(20.8%) of head teachers and 25(17.1%) of teachers did not believe their schools could provide good learning environment to enhance learning.

The analysis of the attitudes of stakeholders towards decentralization revealed that stakeholders did not mind taking decisions with others, want decisions

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to be taken at the school level and resent their decisions being vetoed. In addition they believe decentralization is desirable, school could provide congenial learning environment, their decisions should have a major impact on school policy and should be allowed to take decisions regarding curriculum and instruction.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study employed descriptive survey methods to investigate the status of decentralization of administration of basic schools in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District. To assess the extent of implementation of decentralization it was important to find out if deconcentration, delegation and devolution were taking place at the basic school level. Furthermore, it looked at the challenges faced in the management of education and the attitudes of stakeholders of education towards the decentralization policy.

The respondents involved in the study were officers of district education office, head teachers, teachers and chairpersons of the school management committees sampled from the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District. In all, 245 respondents made up of 146 teachers, 48 head teachers, 47 SMC chairpersons and 4 officers of the district education office constituted the sample for the study.

The researcher used a combination of purposive and random sampling techniques in the selection of the sample. Officers of the district education office and head teachers of selected schools were selected through the purposive technique, while random sampling was used to select SMC chairpersons and 3 teachers from each of the selected schools.

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The instruments used in the collection of data were questionnaire and interview guide, which were developed and structured by the researcher with the assistance of his supervisors. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section A was based on the biographic data of respondents involving gender, rank and teaching/working experience of respondents. Section B was based or the five research questions of the study which were to elicit or gather information or views of head teachers, teachers and SMC chairpersons on general administrative issues in basic schools in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese district. A pre-testing of the instruments was carried out in 4 basic schools and at the district education office of the Mfantseman District of the Central Region. This was to help restructure the instruments so as to make them valid and reliable, by replacing words which provoked questions from the respondents giving rise to the need for explanation. The pre-testing also helped the researcher to identify words and statements that were likely to be given different interpretations by the respondents.

The questionnaire and the interview guide were administered personally by the researcher which resulted in a high return rate of 96% and 80% respectively. The data collected was coded and with help of the Statistical Product for Service Solutions (SPSS) software. It was analyzed using frequencies and percentages.

Summary of Findings

The findings from the study revealed that there was the involvement of the various actors at the school level in the administration of education in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District. The extent to which the various actors were involved was, however, mixed. It is important to note that a number of structures had been put

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in place to enhance the involvement of stakeholders and these include the prefectorial system and school committees. These structures were indicative of the fact that there were deconcentration and delegation of functions. The school management committees and the District Assemblies were also involved in the administration of education.

One of the major findings of the study was that there was the transfer of functions such as supervision of school work, organization of in-service training, budgeting, taking staffing decisions and the selection of TLMs to the school level. Since the school can be said to be responsible for the functions mentioned above it can be said that there is the deconcentration of functions to the school level.

Again, the study revealed that there was the involvement of pupils and teachers in the administration of the schools. Apart from the canteen and garden committees which were in existence in only a few of the schools, the other committees, which include sports, welfare and disciplinary committees were available in majority of the schools. This is a clear indication that functions were increasingly being delegated to pupils and teachers. It was also found out that the prefectorial system which is one of the main avenues of involving pupils in the administration of schools was in existence in the majority of schools.

Furthermore, it was realized from the study that the involvement of the SMCs in areas such as planning the school, determination of dress code, determination of code of conduct, school development, looking after school property, employment of staff, overseeing income and expenditure was not encouraging. The involvement of the SMCs in setting school goals was not encouraging. This is an indication of the

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fact that most of the SMCs were not functioning as had been prescribed in the PTA/SMC Handbook. Since the work of the SMC members did not attract any remuneration, it is obvious that SMCs without committed members would find it difficult to function.

In addition, it came to light that the District Assembly provided furniture and school infrastructure. It was also involved in the employment of teachers who are paid form the Assembly's own resources. It is clear that the rate of devolution of functions to the school level is slow.

Moreover, the study established that the major challenges that school administrators face were inadequate funds to run their schools, increase workload and the late supply of logistics for school activities. However, it was found out that majority of teachers and head teachers had the knowledge and skills to make school decisions. Again, the interference of the community in school work was minimal and did not constitute a problem in the running of schools.

Finally, the study revealed that the attitudes of teachers and head teachers towards the decentralization policy were to a very large extent positive. This was because majority of teachers and head teachers do not mind taking decisions on school activities with other stakeholders. In addition, they believed they were capable of taking decisions at the school level and that such decisions should have a major impact on school policy. They also believed that decentralization was desirable and as such did not want their decisions vetoed by their superiors. Again the teachers and head teachers were of the opinion that their schools could provide

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congenial learning environment and that they should be made to take decisions regarding curriculum and instruction.

Conclusions

From the findings, the following conclusions can be drawn. The level to which a particular reform attains, depends on the commitment of the various actors involved in its implementation. The success or otherwise of the decentralization process is therefore dependent on the stakeholders of the schools. The findings from the study show that there is deconcentration of functions to the school level at the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District.

The head teachers also delegated their functions to other members of staff and pupils mainly through various committees. Pupils also performed school functions by taking part in the maintenance of school discipline. The delegation of functions by head teachers is to ensure that both teachers and pupils are involved in the administration of the schools so as to foster cordial relationship and thereby promote the environment needed for effective performance.

It could also be realized that devolution of functions to the District Assemblies had enabled them to provide schools with infrastructure and furniture as well as contribute to the employment of teachers. The SMCs on the other hand had not done much as their contribution to the administration of basic schools in the district leaves much to be desired.

Apart from increase in workload and late supply of logistics, inadequate funding constitutes one of the major problems that school administrators face in the running of basic schools. The attitude of teachers and head teachers towards the

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decentralization process were positive and is likely to enhance the implementation of the process.

Recommendations

1. The findings of the research revealed that most schools had not established the canteen and garden committees, it is therefore important that the District Education office sees to it that all schools put in place the two committees. This will lead to the pooling of ideas of the various actors of the decentralization process so as to enrich the process. In democratic situations, broad-based participation allows for the expression of different viewpoints thus increasing the likelihood of making informed decisions.
2. Efforts should be made by bodies such as the Ghana Education Service, District Assemblies, NGOS and local companies to train SMCs to develop and execute school decisions. This will enable the SMCs participate effectively in school programmes and activities.
3. District Education Oversight Committees (DEOCs) should create the necessary conditions that will allow schools to raise funds from local sources to supplement the Capitation Grant. Funds could be raised by organizing fund raising activities that would enable individuals, non governmental organizations and corporate bodies make donations and financial contributions towards the implementation of school programmes.
4. With the increase in workload of teachers, there will be the need for the Ghana Education Service to enhance the conditions of service of teachers so that they would be motivated to perform their roles efficiently.

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5. The early supply of inputs is a necessary ingredient for the smooth running of any organization. The Ghana Education Service should therefore make it a point to provide logistics to schools on time to enhance the work of teachers.

Suggestions for Future Research

1. Since the present study was conducted in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese district, a study could be undertaken in other districts of Ghana to ascertain how respondents will react to questionnaire and interview guide on the contribution of the SMCs towards school administration.
2. Further research could be conducted to assess the status of privatization of basic education in Ghana.
3. It should also be possible to investigate the actual contribution of community members of school committees as compared to teachers towards decision – making at the school level. In addition a study could be done to find the input of pupils towards administration in a decentralized school environment with reference to the districts in Ghana.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND THE FOUR LINE ASSISTANT DIRECTORS

The interview guide is intend to elicit information that will form the basis for finding the status of the ongoing educational decentralization programme in the administration of basic schools. Your view will be very much cherished. You are assured of the confidentiality of any information provided.

Section A: Biographic Data

Please tick [ ] or fill in the blank spaces where applicable.

1. Gender of respondent: Male [ ] Female [ ]

2. Position and /or rank of respondent: ……..

   …….

3. Teaching experience: …… years

Section B: General Administrative Issue

4. What is the role of the head teacher in the preparation of school budget?

   …….

   ……

   …….

5. Which of the following functions are transferred to school level by the district office?

   (i) Supervision of school work [ ]

   (ii) Admission of pupils [ ]

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(iii) Budgeting [ ]

(iv) Administration of the Capitation Grant [ ]

(v) Organizing in-service training [ ]

(vi) Selection of teaching and learning materials [ ]

(vii) Set performance exams [ ]

(viii) Evaluate teacher performance [ ]

6. Which administrative duties are delegated to teachers?

(i) Supervision of pupils' work [ ]

(ii) Organizing sports and games [ ]

(iii) Setting class exams [ ]

(iv) Selecting teaching methods [ ]

(v) Selecting methods of evaluation of pupils [ ]

7. Which of these committees are formed in basic schools?

(i) Disciplinary Committee [ ]

(ii) Sports Committee [ ]

(iii) Welfare Committee [ ]

(iv) Garden Committee [ ]

(v) Canteen Committee [ ]

8. What is the role of the SMC in the employment of teachers?

……..

……..

…….....

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9. What is the role of the SMC in the management of schools?

(i) Planning school improvement plan [ ]

(ii) Contribute to the generation of school funds [ ]

(iii) Influencing budget disbursement [ ]

(iv) Contribute to handing down disciplinary actions [ ]

10. How is the district assembly involved in the recruitment of teachers for the various schools in the district?

……

……

……

……

11. How has the implementation of decentralization influenced the work of teachers?

……..

……..

12. How has the implementation of decentralization influenced the work of head teachers?

……

……

13. Which challenges are faced by heads in the administration of schools?

……

……

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APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEADS OF BASIC SCHOOLS

This questionnaire is intended to elicit information that will form the basis for appraising the status of the ongoing educational decentralization programme in the administration of basic schools. Your views will be very much cherished. You are assured of the confidentiality of any information provided.

Section A: Biographic Data

Please tick [√] or fill in the blank spaces where applicable.

1. Gender of respondent: Male [ ] Female [ ]
2. Rank in the GES: ……
3. Teaching experience: ……

Section B: Deconcentration of Functions

The following statements show the functions that have been transferred to you. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to the statement by ticking [√] where applicable.

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
4	I supervised teachers and pupils to perform their duties				
5	I organize in-service training for my teachers				
6	I prepare school budget in collaboration with stakeholders				
7	I take staffing decisions in consultation with the SMC				

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No.	Statements	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
8	I gather information regarding educational research and share				
9	I provide incentive to teachers				
10	I select TLMs				
11	I provide feedback				
12	I create congenial working environment in my school				
13	I encourage collaboration				
14	I develop programmes of instruction				

Section C: Delegation of Functions

The following statements show the various ways in which you delegate your functions to teachers and pupils. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to the statements by ticking [√]

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
15	I have set up a sports committee				
16	I have set up a canteen committee				
17	I have set up a welfare committee				
18	My school has a disciplinary committee				
19	I have set up a garden committee				
20	My school has prefects				

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Section D: Devolution of Functions

The following statements show the functions that have been devolved to the local level. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to the statements by ticking [√] where applicable.

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
21	The District Assembly provides school furniture				
22	The District Assembly provides school buildings				
23	The SMC plans school time-table				
24	The SMC employs teachers				
25	The SMC influences code of conduct				
26	The SMC influences dress code				
27	The SMC influences is involved in setting school goals				
28	The SMC influences is in planning school's development				
29	The SMC influences looks after school property				
30	The SMC oversees school's income and expenditure				

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Section E: Challenges

The following statements show the challenges you face in the implementation of the decentralization process. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to the statements by ticking [√] where applicable.

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
31	My school has adequate funds				
32	I have the knowledge and skills to make decisions				
33	Community members interfere with my work				
34	My workload has increased				
35	Provision of Logistics is on time				

Section F: Attitude

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to the following statements by ticking [√] where applicable.

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
36	I want my decisions to have a major impact on schoolpolicy				
37	School could provide learning environment that will maximize the capabilities of the child				
38	I can work better when decisions are taken at the school level				

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Section F continues

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
39	Decision regarding curriculum and instruction should be made at the school level				
40	I resent my decisions being vetoed by the District Director of Education				
41	I do not mind taking decisions with others				
42	I am convinced decentralization is desirable				

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APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS OF BASIC SCHOOLS

This questionnaire is intended to elicit information that will form the basis for appraising the status of the ongoing educational decentralization programme in the administration of basic schools. Your views will be very much cherished. You are assured of the confidentiality of any information provided.

Section A: Biographic Data

Please tick [√] or fill in the blank spaces where applicable.

1. Gender of respondent: Male [ ] Female [ ]
2. Rank in the GES: ……
3. Teaching experience: ……

Section B: Deconcentration of Functions

The following statements show the functions that have been transferred to you. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to the statement by ticking [√] where applicable.

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
4	My head supervises teachers and pupils				
5	My head organizes in-service training for teachers				
6	My head prepares school budget in collaboration others				
7	My head takes staffing decisions				

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No.	Statements	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
8	My head_ gathers informationon oneducation research and share				
9	My head provides incentive				
10	I select TLMs				
11	My head provides feedback				
12	My head creates congenial working environment				
13	My head collaborates with us				
14	I develop instructional programs				

Section C: Delegation of Functions

The following statements show the various ways in which you delegate your functions to teachers and pupils. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to the statements by ticking [√]

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
15	My head have set up a sports committee				
16	My head have set up a canteen committee				
17	My head have set up a welfare committee				
18	My school has a disciplinary committee				
19	My head have set up a garden committee				
20	My school has prefects				

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Section D: Devolution of Functions

The following statements show the functions that have been devolved to the local level. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to the statements by ticking [√] where applicable.

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
21	The District Assembly provides school furniture				
22	The District Assembly provides school buildings				
23	The SMC plans school time-table				
24	The SMC employs teachers				
25	The SMC influences code of conduct				
26	The SMC influences dress code				
27	The SMC influences is involved in setting school goals				
28	The SMC influences school's development plan				
29	The SMC influences looks after school property				
30	The SMC oversees school's income and expenditure				

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Section E: Challenges

The following statements show the challenges you face in the implementation of the decentralization process. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to the statements by ticking [√] where applicable.

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
31	My school has adequate funds				
32	I have the knowledge and skills to make decisions				
33	Community members interfere with my work				
34	My workload has increased				
35	Provision of Logistics is on time				

Section F: Attitude

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to the following statements by ticking [√] where applicable.

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
36	I want my decisions to have a major impact on school policy				
37	School could provide learning environment that will maximize the capabilities of the child				
38	I can work better when decisions are taken at the school level				

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Section F continues

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
39	Decision regarding curriculum and instruction should be made at the school level				
40	I resent my decisions being vetoed by the District Director of Education				
41	I do not mind taking decisions with others				
42	I am convinced decentralization is desirable				

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APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MEMBERS OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES (SMC)

SECTION A: Personal Data

1. Period served in position: ……..

2. Gender of respondent: Male [ ] Female [ ]

SECTION B: General Administrative Issues

3 What supervisory roles do you play in your school?

(i) Influencing code of conduct of pupils

(ii) Influencing the dress code of pupils

(iii) Looking after school property

4. What is your role in the disbursement of funds at the school level?

……

……

5. Which of the following aspects of authority are devolved to your committee?

(i) Construction of school buildings

(ii) Provision of furniture

(iii) Planning school improvement plan

(iv) Recommending change in headship

(v) Staff employment

(vi) Setting school goals

6. What is your perception of the authority devolved to you?

(i) Adequate [ ] (ii) Inadequate [ ]

7. State your reasons in support of your answer to question

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……

……

8. Do you contribute to overseeing the school's income and expenditure?

(i) Yes [ ] (ii) No [ ]

9. If "yes" Q (a) above, indicate the how you perform this function.

……

…….....

……

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