

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

INVESTIGATING CHALLENGES FACING COMMUNITY- BASED SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE SEFWI WIAWSO DISTRICT OF GHANA: A CASE STUDY OF ASAWINSO AND AKONTOMBRA COMMUNITY-BASED SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

HARRISON HENSON OFORI

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BY

HARRISON HENSON OFORI

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DECLARATION

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

Candidate's Signature:..... Date:.....

Name: Harrison Henson Ofori

Supervisor's Declaration

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

Supervisor's Signature:..... Date:.....

Name: Dr. Joseph Ampiah Gartey

ABSTRACT

The 1987 education reforms gave prominence to the establishment of community-based senior secondary schools in Ghana, and the Sefwi Wiawso District had its share of the institutions which were sited in the Asawinso and Akontombra localities. However, the common trend country wide is that, these schools are generally known to be facing difficulties in various forms that have adversely affected their performance capacity, growth and development, Anumuah-Mensah, Sarkodie, Kedem (2002). The development prospects of the schools in Sefwi Wiawso District are equally affected by the negative trend.

It is against this background that this study was initiated in order to investigate and explore the challenges facing the schools. The Asawinso SS and Akontombra SS were schools selected for a case study. The research design employed in the investigation was based on qualitative research methods. The instruments employed were interviews – formal and informal; questionnaires and observation. The data analysis followed the qualitative case study method.

The study concluded that the schools suffer deprivation in various forms including low patronage and lack of effective participation by the community members, and are also poorly equipped in terms of personnel and infrastructure as a result of which they are unable to deliver as expected. Relatively, Asawinso CBSS was found to be performing better than its counterpart Akontombra CBSS. This situation is the result of the fact that Asawinso relatively enjoys better facilities and conditions, which indicates that given the suitable and appropriate development climate, the schools will be in a position to deliver as expected.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family: Auntie Akosua, Kwame, Abena, Akua, Kwasi and Kwasi Fadi.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

A good education is a basic need for development. In Ghana, a good education is a constitutional right (Ghana Republican Constitution, 1992; Article 25) In spite of this, Yeboah (1990), has noted that Ghana's education system which was considered one of the best in Africa at the start of the 1970s had partially collapsed by the 1980s.

Over the years, various governments of Ghana have set up numerous education committees and commissions to examine the educational structure and content in the country. For example, the Kwapong Report called for by the National Liberation Council (N.L.C) in 1966 and the Dzobo Report instituted by the National Redemption Council (N.R.C) government of Colonel I. K. Acheampong (1972 - 1978), reported that the existing education system at the time did not meet national development goals (Quist, Anyagre, Baafi and Opare, 2002).

The Dzobo committee, in its report of February 1974, made a number of recommendations which, among others, sought to make the education more meaningful and relevant to Ghana's socio-economic and political aspirations. The report recognised the importance of a sound foundation of education right from the kindergarten level to the tertiary level. The committee proposed that primary

education, for example, should be general and aimed at encouraging the child to develop knowledge and attitude and skills which derive from concrete experience. Thus according to Mankoe (2002) the specific objectives of primary school education as outlined by the Dzobo Report of 1974 were:

- i .Numeracy, that is, the ability to count and use numbers,and
- ii. Socialization, that is, the development of such skills and attitudes that will enable the individual to be an effective citizen.

In an attempt to arrest the undesirable trend in education, Ghana found it necessary to introduce reforms into her education system. Thus, in 1987, Ghana embarked upon a course of new educational reforms and in the process, a Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) was introduced. The Junior Secondary School (JSS) concept was introduced and there was an expansion in Senior Secondary Education through the building of community schools. Amofa (1999) has noted that under the education system, there was a projected increase in JSS enrolment which was to be absorbed by the Senior Secondary School, especially with the introduction of the community-based ones. According to Anamuah-Mensah et al(2002), one basic aim of the reforms was to increase access to formal education at all levels in the country. They have noted that it was in pursuance of this objective that many new community-based senior secondary schools were established; bringing the number of government senior secondary schools to 474 as at 2000. Out of this number,75 are communityn schools.

Under the new system, Anamuah-Mensah, Sarkodie, Kedem (2000) have outlined the objectives of senior secondary education including the following:

- i. To reinforce the knowledge and skills acquired during basic education.
- ii. To provide a diversified curriculum to cater for different aptitudes, abilities, interests and skills.
- iii. To provide an opportunity for further education and training and to introduce students to a variety of relevant occupational skills necessary for national human resource development.
- iv. To understand the environment and the need for its sustainability
- v. To inculcate a sense of discipline and selflessness in students
- vi. To develop an interest for lifelong learning.

The senior secondary school sub-sector of the educational system in Ghana is a crucial one because it is at this level that some specializations begin. Again, it is from this level that specialized training colleges and tertiary institutions admit their students. In spite of these expectations however, the senior secondary school sub-sector has had its ups and downs since the 1987 educational reforms. Criticisms of the reform have ranged from overloaded curriculum to unhelpful combinations of subjects, leading to problems of admission to tertiary institutions, especially the universities (Anamuah-Mensah et al 2000).

The many community-based senior secondary schools which were established under the reform programme were primarily intended to serve the communities in which they were sited. On their part, the communities were

expected to fully patronize the schools. Apparently, the community-based senior secondary schools have their share of the challenge facing the reform programme in general. A communiqué issued at the end of a 3-day meeting of the Conference of Heads of Assisted Secondary School (CHASS) held at Takoradi in the Western Region from the 11th to 13th August, 1997, noted that community schools were generally faced with problems relating to poor enrolment, poor academic and parental attitude; financial constraints, lack of infrastructural facilities, poor staffing and teaching etc. In the rural and deprived communities in the country, the expected involvement, commitment and participation in the schools as well as the benefits to be derived thereof as enshrined in the community-based senior secondary school concept under senior secondary School (SSS) education remain to be fully realized. The performance of the community-based senior secondary schools in the Sefwi Wiawso District indicates that the institutions are not making the desired impact on the beneficiary communities.

Statement of the Problem

Literature is replete with views in support of the general state of the poor performance of community-based senior secondary schools (CBSSS) in Ghana. (For example, as indicated by Anamuah-Mensah, Adusei Sarkodie, Kedem, (2002); The Teacher, a Newsletter of the Ghana National Association of Teachers -January-April, 2002; Conference of Heads of Assisted Senior Secondary Schools (CHASS) Report (2002); Sefwi Wiawso District Assembly Annual Report (2001). Daily Graphic, January 3, 2005 etc).

The two community-based Senior Secondary Schools in the Sefwi

Wiawso District are generally not better off. The Asawinso and Akontombra communities where these schools are sited have similar socio-cultural environments. Asawinso however, has more urban facilities than Akontombra which is in a typical rural area. However, it has been observed that the community senior secondary schools in these localities are not performing to expectation most especially the Akontombra CBSSS. The performance of the two schools at the senior secondary school certificate Examination (SSSCE) for instance, shows that the schools differ considerably in student's enrolment and pass rate, in favour of Asawinso CBSSS.

The research therefore sought to investigate the causes of the problems that had led to the poor performance of the two CBSSS, and more so, what had brought about the marked difference in their achievement level.

Purpose of the Study

Against the background of these concerns, the study investigated the factors responsible for the differences in the schools in the Sefwi Wiawso District. The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What factors are responsible for the enrolment levels of the Community-based Senior Secondary Schools in the Sefwi Wiawso District?
2. What factors account for the relatively low academic achievements of the Akontombra CBSSS as compared to Asawinso CBSSS?
3. To what extent are the two CBSSS equipped to offer senior secondary school education to students?
4. What is the extent of community involvement in the two CBSSS?

5. What are the relative costs of CBSSS education in the Asawinso and the Akontombra communities?

Significance of the Study

The results of this study will go a long way to make stakeholders, policy makers and development partners aware of the challenges facing the community-based senior secondary education in other parts of the country. In particular, the results have unearthed the peculiar difficulties of the schools under study so that appropriate measures can be taken to address them. In a broader sense, the outcomes of the study will serve as a guide to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, the District Assemblies and other educational authorities in matters of policy formulation as regards the concept of community-based senior secondary education in the country since the study has brought to light the shortfalls of the system and further indicates the underlying factors.

Organization of the work

The research work is organized according to the following order. Chapter one outlines the background of the study, the research problem, the purpose and significance of the study, research questions and the research organization.

Chapter two reviews literature which is organized under the following sub-topics:

1. Education Reforms in Ghana.
2. Observations on Senior Secondary Education
3. Reasons for community support of community -based schools.

4. Community-based Senior Secondary School Education-Historical perspective.
5. Observations on (Secondary) education in the Sefwi Wiawso District.
6. Appraisal of literature.

The third chapter of the study is the methodology. The chapter is treated according to the following sub-headings: research design, rationale for the research design, target population, gender distribution of students, sampling technique and source of data. The others are instrumentation, questionnaire administration and procedure for data analysis.

In the fourth chapter, the results emanating from the fieldwork are presented and analyzed. Finally, chapter five, the final chapter, provides a summary as well as the interpretation of the main findings. It presents the conclusions and recommendations based on the major research findings and outcomes.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this study, materials that are related to secondary school education in general and community-based schools in particular are examined. The review includes, previous educational reports by committees appointed by governments of Ghana, the concept of community based-day schools, observations of concerned state educational authorities, observations on the state of education in the Sefwi Wiawso District of Ghana.

Educational Reforms in Ghana

Kimble (1965) has observed that almost all Africans especially Ghanaians who desired secondary schooling after their basic school education during the nineteenth century had to travel abroad. Many of them went to England, to meet their aspiration. This lent some credence to the criticism that they were detached from their own people. Some Africans therefore complained that those sent abroad for secondary schooling did not meet their expectations. This called for the development of secondary education among Africans, especially in Ghana.

In Ghana, the history of educational development and reform therefore date to the colonial days. So, over the years, both pre and post independence governments of Ghana have made several attempts at instituting the most

appropriate and reliable system of education to meet the aspiration of the people. This led to the formation of various educational committees and commissions by past governments of the country whose reports in one way or the other, form the basis of Ghana's educational system today.

In 1972, the Ministry of Education submitted proposals on a new structure and content of education for Ghana, for public discussion. From the comments and suggestions received, a public committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Rev. Prof. N. K. Dzobo, then of the University of Cape Coast.

The committee was charged to carefully study the government proposals and views expressed by the public and to advise the government where necessary. The report of the Dzobo Committee was presented to the then Commissioner of Education, Culture and Sports in 1973. The report of Dzobo Committee with comments by the Ministry of Education (MOE) was published in 1973 for further public comment. The document that eventually came out of the proposals of the Dzobo Committee, the Ministry's view and those of the public became known as "The New Structure and Content of Education for Ghana". The new system was due to come into operation from September 1975.

The new proposals recognized that secondary education should serve the needs of the individual, the society and the country as a whole. Specifically, secondary education in Ghana should instill in students an appreciation of the need for change directed towards the development of the human and material resources of the country. Secondary education should generate in the student an awareness of the ability of the individual to use the knowledge derived from

science and technology, to transform his/her environment and improve the quality of life of human beings (Mac William and Kwamena-Poh, 1975).

At the primary school level, the proposed objectives of the reforms were to promote numeracy and literacy, inquiry skill, and socialization among children. The reforms further made proposals on the structure of education at the time. It recognized the need for kindergarten education, basic first cycle of six years primary and three years junior secondary and a second cycle education. From the junior secondary level, there was to be a selection into terminal courses in second cycle institutions, that is, senior secondary schools.

These were laudable proposals, yet the government lacked the political will to implement them nationwide. The implementation was only done on experimental basis. So, in 1987, the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) implemented new educational reforms. Like the 1974 reform package, the 1987 reforms were also necessitated by the concerns and criticisms of the education system.

The 1987 education reform programme introduced many changes into the education system of the country. The new ideas introduced became necessary after it was realized through the reports and recommendations of a number of education committees and commissions set up by past regimes, that the existing education system did not meet national development goals. The Dzobo committee of 1972 produced one such report. The new Reforms of 1987 changed the structure of the school education system from 17 years to 12 years at the pre-university level. The 1987 reforms recommended 6 years primary, 3 years

junior secondary school (J S S) and 3 years senior secondary education. This is known as the 6-3-3-4 system of education and it replaced the old system of 6-4-5-2 and 3 or 4 years of University education.

Among other things, the 1987 Reforms were intended to increase access to education. It was intended to provide increased access to education especially in areas where the intake happened to be significantly low, by making basic education available to every Ghanaian of school-going age. Furthermore, the reforms were designed to make senior school education available to at least 50% of Junior Secondary Leavers (Antwi, 1992 p. 44).

After the implementation of the 1987 educational reform, the first batch of students entered the SSS in 1991 and wrote the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE) in 1993. To make education financing efficient and cost-effective, the reforms also encouraged deboardinisation and community based day schools (Amofa, 1999). The community SSS in particular were meant to absorb the increased number of the new JSS graduates and to open up the rural areas.

Being day institutions, the CBSSS are meant to serve the local populations at whose doorsteps the schools are sited. The community people are thus, expected to patronize the CBSSS and assist in their general development by sending their wards to such schools and performing any other functions that are necessary for the schools upkeep and progress. In this direction, Abdalla (1987) indicated that each school will be a community resource, run with public funds but actively supported materially and socially by the community.

Bruce (1987) defines community as a group of people who share common social economic and cultural interests. Its members recognize social obligations to each other, hold at least some common values and identify themselves with each other as 'we'. They normally have some shared institutions. Indeed, the above definition of community implies that members of communities might always possess common aspirations and goals of development as a social unit and will necessarily need to promote all shared values and institutions collectively. Schools are always major centers for social development (Bray 1987). Being always major centers for social development, community members for which schools are established are therefore obligated to accept their upkeep, growth and development as a communal responsibility.

Commenting on the importance of the ideals of the community concept of schools under the new reform, Bruce (1987) indicates that 'some' of the reasons for the educational reforms are to encourage the development of day secondary schools which are less expensive, easier to administer and really community-based. Their conspicuous nature is that they will be 'day' institutions. Local Parent Teacher Association (PTAs) and management communities must therefore insist that the schools maintain this identity'.

However, for some factors, the schools, especially those in the rural areas appear not to be performing according to expectation vis-à-vis the objectives of the 1987 reform. Commenting on the challenges facing senior secondary education in the country, Anamuah-Mensah (2002) again notes that 'this sub-sector has had its ups and downs since the 1987 Educational Reform.....In spite

of the earlier intervention to correct some of the glaring anomalies, there is still hue and cry over the type of education delivery at this level'. (p.60).

Some observations on Senior Secondary Education in Ghana by Concerned Authorities

Several comments, remarks and memoranda have been submitted on community senior secondary education since the implementation of the new reforms programme in Ghana. A communiqué issued at the end of a 3-day meeting of the Conference of Heads of Assisted Secondary Schools (CHASS), Western Region at Takoradi (on the 11th -13th August 1997) observed the following with regard to the state of secondary education in the region. The report enumerated various factors militating against the (CBSSS) generally, these are enumerated below.

Low enrolment

- a. The majority of schools have ridiculously low enrolment; a good number of schools have total enrolment below 100 and some even below 40.
- b. Apart from being low, the total annual intake has been steadily declining in most schools.
- c. Again the citing of the newly established (community) Senior Secondary Schools puts them at a disadvantage with regard to enrolment.

Attitude of parents and community

Most parents and communities in the Western Region have apathetic attitudes to secondary education. Consequently the conference recommends that:

- a. There is the urgent need for the GES, District Assemblies, Traditional Councils, National Commission on Civic Education, Religious bodies and all opinion leaders get involved in educating and sensitizing the public on the importance of secondary education.
- b. Parents must be made to appreciate the value of educating their children.
- c. That where necessary, the communities and the District Assemblies must provide hostel facilities to the day schools to attract more students.

Financial Constraints

The proliferation of attractive economic activities such as mining and trading has rendered secondary education less attractive.

Lack of infrastructural facilities

Essential physical (Infrastructure) facilities are lacking in majority of our schools. Conference recommendations are that the District Assemblies, mining and other companies be encouraged to assist in the provision of infrastructure to enhance teaching and learning in the secondary schools, and to attract and retain qualified and dedicated teachers.

Poor staffing and teaching

Many schools are poorly staffed at both the basic and second cycle levels and that the poor academic performance of students at the SSS stem from the poor foundation laid at the basic school level.

The Conference made the following recommendations:

- (a) The Regional Inspectorate Division of the GES and the District Directors of Education must intensify supervision of schools at both the basic and senior secondary levels to improve teaching and learning.
- (b) The teaching staff establishment should be based on programmes run in the schools rather than the current ratio of 1 teacher to 20 students

In the address at the 1st Quadrennial National Delegates Conference of Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) on 10th January, 2002, p23, on the theme ‘Fifteen years of the New Educational Reforms: The way forward’ Prof. J. A. Anamuah-Mensah highlighted on the need to improve access to basic education. He stressed among other things that, at the senior secondary school level, many of the new SSS in the rural areas are under-enrolled and that most of these schools are found in the Brong Ahafo, Volta, Western and Eastern Regions. According to him, the reasons for the under-enrollment, were distance of schools from population centers, lack of boarding centers, lack of staff and underdeveloped facilities.

On the problem of increasing rural-urban disparity, he lamented that the disparity between rural and urban schools in terms of infrastructure and quality of output seems to be increasing rapidly. That, some of the areas where the schools are situated are difficult and inaccessible. (The Teacher, Newsletter of the Ghana National Association of Teachers-January-April, 2002.)

Reasons for Community Support of Community-Based Schools

Giving reasons for community support in education provision especially in rural areas, Bray (1987) has remarked that community provision often starts at a

time when government resources are not available. During the last century, many governments refused to support rural secondary education because they did not consider it necessary or desirable. Today, governments do recognize the importance of community schools but many are unable to stretch their resources far enough to reach them.

Most communities prefer that governments which have better resources provide all the facilities and staff for their schools. Communities may decide to bridge the gap between what government can offer and what is really needed so that their children do not suffer. Sometimes, the problem is worse than just a shortage of materials in the schools. In this case, a community may resort to self-help to get something started, hoping that the government will take over the school later. Many schools in the public system can trace their history back to a time when they were unaided by government.

In other cases, government funds are available but communities refuse to accept them. The communities choose to establish schools outside the public system because they want to express their separate identity. Such cases are especially common in religious communities. Churches for example, can accept financial help only if it does not have too many strings attached and if they can retain control of curriculum and staffing.

However, the existence of schools outside the main education system can create problems for educational planners and for pupils who want to transfer between schools. Also, some community schools are established for petty rather than noble reasons. Community leaders may open schools only to advance their

political ambitions, and some communities may support institutions only because of rivalries with their neighbours. In these cases schools may divide society and be uneconomic in size. Governments may need to exercise control to find a balance between encouraging community vitality and discourage social divisions.

Girling (1991) has commented on the need for communities and the schools to relate very closely. He pointed out that the establishment of strong school-community relations brings benefit in four important areas. He enumerates them as student achievement, incremental resources to supplement and complement the existing programmes, opportunity for staff renewal and organisational innovation, and political support.

Commenting on the issue of rural education, Bray (1987) dilates on the day schools or boarding school dilemma and cites the experience of a contemporary third world country of Papua New Guinea, where, as in the case of Ghana, the government had embarked on an expanded scheme of secondary school education in its effort to develop the country. Bray relates that during the 1970s, the Papua New Guinea government tried to reduce education cost by insisting that all new secondary schools should be day. It was calculated that buildings for day schools would cost K150, 000 compared to K 1,000,000 for boarding ones. It was argued that if per pupils costs were reduced, secondary education could be spread to more people and more regions. However, in rural areas, the innovations worked poorly. Even in relatively densely populated places, many students found it hard to travel each day because there were few roads or

buses, students from remote areas found daily commuting quite impossible on both practical and financial grounds.

To solve this problem, the students and their families built hostels near the schools. But the hostels were not supervised by the educational authorities. Students often tried to bring food on Sundays to last the rest of the week but found that vegetables got rotten. Also, the hostels were often over crowded and unsanitary, and girls felt vulnerable to unwanted attention. These difficulties contributed to poor performance in examinations. Pupils in day secondary schools felt like second-class citizens. Thus, although the government was to be applauded for its aim to serve more people, its policy created hardship and qualitative problems.

Three main lessons therefore emerged from these initiatives and Papua New Guinea:

- (a) Secondary schools in remote areas cannot be completely day schools unless they are very small, which implies high unit cost. In poor countries, it may be better to have medium-sized schools, and to allow some pupils to board while others travel daily.
- (b) It is dangerous for educational planners to look only at financial expenditure in considering the type of school students should attend. Both qualitative and quantitative costs have to be matched against the benefits.
- (c) It is also dangerous for governments to look only at costs to themselves.

If communities have to finance daily travel or self-help boarding facilities, the total financial burden may in fact be higher.

In Ghana, Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) has found that community day schools serve very important purposes to local communities. He notes that since these schools are largely day, they are cheap to build because apart from classrooms and offices there is no need of any expenditure on boarding and lodging. This allows for a larger intake of students. Many parents will not only find it easy to pay their children's fees but they will also be happy to send more of them to school. The quality of work in day schools can be as good as that in boarding schools if distribution of teachers and other inputs is controlled by the Ministry of Education. It is noted that there are more day schools in developed countries, than boarding ones. Day schools enable children to be educated near their homes. This gives them command over their environment, better understanding of their people, development of community interest and loyalty as well as identification with the society.

Community-Based Senior Secondary School Education: Historical Perspective

In Ghana, the idea of community-based senior secondary school was realized as far back as the 1930s. The idea was necessitated largely by economic factors. The years following the First World War (1914-1918) saw a general decline in world trade. This trend was commonly referred to as the trade slump. Ghana's side of the trade slump was that the price of cocoa fell from £50 a ton in 1929 to £20. This had some effect on the development of education in the

country as a result of the cut-down in money to the education sector by the government.

By 1936 the government had to prevent further educational expansion because of its inability to raise more money for education and this led to the opening of private and community owned schools as many people were anxious to have secondary education in order to get better employment. In the process, a number of private and community-owned secondary schools were opened across the country. Some of these schools were Accra Academy, Accra High School, Abuakwa State College, Ordogornor Secondary School, Accra Royal School and others (Fianu 1988).

Also, in the Gold Coast an Accelerated Development plan was launched in 1951 and under the programme, provision was made for educational expansion at various levels of education in the country. Different types of secondary schools were approved to operate in the country. During the period, different categories of secondary schools were run under the school system and in 1961, the country had the following types of secondary schools: Government Secondary Schools, Ghana Education Trust Schools, Private Secondary Schools and Encouraged Secondary Schools. According to the system, the Encouraged Secondary Schools came under the community owned category of secondary schools at the time. These were non-aided schools which, since the inception of the programme in 1951, only received limited aid from the government in the form of staff salaries. Fianu (1988).

Reviewing the idea of community involvement in formal education in the country, Bruce (1987) observed that community participation in the educational process in Ghana is not a new development. He noted that in the 1930s, at Agona Duakwa in the Central Region, one Nana Kwadwo Amoako, a native chief established one of the first community-based senior secondary school in the country. Buildings were constructed by the community and teachers' salaries and welfare were the responsibility of the chief and his elders.

Bruce, noted that in the Ashanti region in the 1970s, the community day senior secondary school idea caught up with towns like Jachie-Pramso, Nkawie-Toase and Gyamasi. Prior to this period, the 1961 Education Act had made local communities responsible for the provision of buildings while the central government took care of teachers' salaries and the provision of equipment.

The new Education reform of 1987 emphasized the deboardinisation of schools. The community-based day schools idea therefore came to reinforce the notion of the community-based concept of education delivery among local communities in Ghana. Such is the social, economic and political value of community based schools that Ghana's educational system would have achieved little in the area of increasing access to education had the New Reforms failed to promote this concept, taking into account the extent of rural-urban education disparity, the country experienced before the implementation of the programme.

In his speech at the first quadrennial national delegates conference of GNAT on 10th January, 2002, Prof. Anamoah-Mensah pointed out that the disparity between rural and urban schools in terms of infrastructure and quality of

output seemed to be increasing rapidly in the country and that there was the urgent need for a solution to be found to the problem. Promoting community-based schools, to a large extent is seen as a solution to the problem

Socially, community-based schools are important. Bray (1987), notes that if children in a given community have no educational opportunities at all, the community will be left behind in a fast changing world, and if children leave communities to attend boarding schools somewhere else, the population that remains has been deprived of its young. Also economically, for some economic factors too, the establishment of community schools can be rewarding. Bray (1986), has found that, if pupils have to travel long distances each day to attend school elsewhere, they have to spend money on transport and they get very tired. Community-based schools are generally nearer children's homes and can be cheaper.

The concept of community schools, gives greater meaning to government's efforts at preventing rural urban migration, especially in a third world country like Ghana. Bray points out that some parents perceive schools to be so important that they decide to leave rural areas in order to give their children better opportunities in the towns. Commenting on the consequences of the attitude of such people in the community he explains that "when this happens, a marginal community becomes even more marginal" (p 19).

Some Observations on Secondary Education in the Sefwi Wiawso District

The Sefwi Wiawso District annual report for the year 2002 on the state of education in the District is not very encouraging. Under secondary education, the

report notes that the Sefwi Wiawso District has four senior secondary schools in three circuits namely, Akosombo, Asawinso and Wiawso.

General performance at the basic school level was very low. This is indicated by the results of the Performance Monitoring Test (PMT) periodically organized by the GES at the primary school level and the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) results. The PMT results for the 1998, 2000 and 2001 showed 21%, 22% and 31% passes respectively. The low performance at the basic level was therefore most likely to affect performance at the SSS level since the SSS are mostly fed by graduates from the basic schools in the District.

The report noted that the four SSS enrolled a total of 1,077 students. Out of this number, 732 were boys, whilst 345 were girls. This represents an enrolment rate of about 53%. The inadequate dormitory and hostel facilities were cited as contributory factors to the low enrolment at the SSS level.

Infrastructural facilities at the SSS level were reported to be inadequate. Most of the schools lacked workshops for effective practical lessons, and library facilities were woefully inadequate. The existing classroom blocks in all the four schools needed to be expanded to ensure increased enrolment and effective teaching and learning.

Though statistics are not available on the general performance of candidates at the SSSCE, available records on the 2000 SSSCE results for two of the four schools were not encouraging. Of the 65 candidates who sat for the SSSCE, only 6 qualified for the University, whilst 10 qualified for other tertiary

institutions (Sefwi Wiawso District Assembly Annual Report, PCU/BAA/SEP/2002 p.40-42).

However, Dadson (2002) observed among other things that community based schools which are mostly found in the rural areas usually lack adequate equipment, infrastructure and other vital resources necessary for effective teaching and learning in schools. He added that, there was also often discrimination in the provision and distribution of educational materials on the part of educational authorities in the country, mostly to the disadvantage of the lesser known schools like the community- based senior secondary schools.

The literature review recognised that few related studies have been carried out on the concept of community senior secondary schools. Many, however, are the comments that have been made by individuals and authorities on the need for communities to get involved in education provision in localities across the country. In the process, some of the problems of the schools have been identified and some solutions even suggested. However, no studies were identified which addressed in detail the fundamental causes of the problems in community-based secondary schools. More so, in the Sefwi Wiawso District, a study of this nature has never ever been reported “to the best of my knowledge” ever since the inception of the 1987 reforms.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The qualitative study design was employed for the research. According to Pattern (1990) qualitative study design includes ethnographic research, phenomenological, constructivist, participant observation and case study.

The study employed the case study method in the collection of data. Case study is an in-depth study of individuals, units, individual groups, institutions, organizations or programmes. A case may be an individual, a city, an event, a system or any other possible object for analysis. Macdonald and Walker (1975) have stated that unlike experimental method, a case study in the human sciences is pursued through a social process and leads to a social product. Stake (1978) has noted that case studies are useful in the study of human affairs because they are down-to-earth but not suitable for generalizations. The advantage of the case study method is that it allows for more intensive analysis of specific empirical details.

Both primary and secondary sources of data were employed in the study. Secondary data was obtained from the schools enrolment and senior secondary school certificate examination (SSSCE) performance records of the schools. The records of the performance position of the basic schools in the localities (circuits)

in which the CBSS are found were sought from the District Education Office. The primary data was obtained through the responses provided by the subjects on the questionnaires provided them. The respondents comprised students and school authorities. The personal observation made by the researcher especially of the respective school plants constituted one basic source of primary data of the study.

Rationale for the Research Design

Casely and Kumar (1988) have noted that there are two main paradigms that guide scientific research, the quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative methods produce numerical data and qualitative method produces information that is best described in words.

The research was a case study that investigated and explored major causes of the problems of CBSS in the Sefwi Wiawso district in Ghana. The schools' problems were assumed to have been largely due to factors pertaining to the social disposition of the people of the communities in which the schools are found. The study was probing the social issues of a particular target population and hence needed information that could best be examined, analysed and interpreted descriptively. The research therefore required the use of qualitative data and hence the qualitative approach adopted for the study. Borg and Gall (1989) have noted that qualitative data are in reality used when the attitudes, beliefs and perception of a target population must be known in order to understand its reaction to ideas. They explain further that qualitative study is the process of exploring genuinely open questions. Commenting on its use, Merriam,

(1988) has stated that the intent of a qualitative study is not to generalize findings but to form a unique interpretation of events.

Population and Sampling

Being a case study, the population of the study was limited to the targeted community-based senior secondary schools of the Sefwi Wiawso area, namely, Asawinso Senior Secondary School and Akontombra Senior Secondary School. The subjects comprised students and school authorities of the schools under study. The researcher decided to use 60% of the students in each case of the forms samples. The two headmasters were made to complete questionnaires. In both schools, SSS 1 and SSS 3 students were also selected to fill the questionnaires. At Asawinso SSS, a total of 160 students completed the questionnaires. They were made up of 80 SSS 1 students and 80 SSS 3 students. The student girls were, SSS 1, 32; SSS 3, 28. Boys, SSS 1, 48 and SSS 3, 52. At Akontombra SSS, the total number of SSS 1 and 3 students stood at 80. The number of SSS 1 students was 30 and that of SSS 3 was 50. Akontombra girls --- SSS 1, 8, SSS 3, 15, Boys – SSS 1, 22; SSS 3, 35. In all, the study employed 240 subjects (students) and 2 headmasters.

Instrumentation

The main instruments used in this study were the questionnaire that was supported with observation. Two sets of the questionnaires were prepared and administered to the two groups of respondents, namely, the students and school Heads. They contained both closed and open-ended items. The closed ended items demanded either a 'yes/no' responses, or presented respondents with a set of

alternatives to choose from. Respondents were asked to tick a desired response. This category went to the student-respondents. The open-ended aspect of the questionnaire demanded unrestricted and free responses from respondents. This was a major feature of the school heads' questionnaires. The questionnaire items were carefully designed to elicit the desired responses for the study. For instance, the questions set for the students' category were made to cover social and educational issues such as the students' perception of the schools and their basic education and parental background. The questionnaire also explored other areas as the impact of the cost involved in schooling and the general problems that are encountered by both students and parents under the senior secondary school educational programme.

The other set of the questionnaire meant for the school authorities also concentrated on matters that bothered on issues concerning challenges as school-community relations, administrative and management problems etc. This aspect of the questions thus, sought to investigate the difficulties that the school heads faced regarding recruitment and retention of teachers and the background of teachers of the schools. With regard to school-community relations, the questions investigated the community members involvement, concern, interest and support level towards the schools' upkeep and general progress.

The two sets of questionnaires were adopted from the instruments of a similar study by a researchers of the Institute of Education-Cape Coast University in 2000, and modified and adapted for the purpose and objectives of the study. The validity and reliability of the instruments were ascertained as the researcher

pre-tested them on a group of students of Sefwi Wiawso Secondary School to establish their suitability and effectiveness before sending them to the field. Also any doubts about the authenticity of the instruments were largely minimized since they had been used before with results in a similar study by researchers in the University of Cape Coast

The researcher again took a personal observation of the facilities of both schools under study. Moreover the headmasters were interviewed. The interview centered on issues such as cost of living and living standards in the communities and villages in which the schools are found, access to the towns--transportation difficulties and general difficulties associated with the localities.

Questionnaire administration and data collection procedure

The subjects were purposely selected. The two headmasters were purposely selected to respond to the questions as they have first hand knowledge of the schools' circumstances based on their experience as managers of the institutions. The SSS1 and SSS 3 students too were purposely selected as the respondents in both schools to give account of the general performance of the school and to express their views and perception of the institutions. It was important to find out for instance; from the SSS1 what factors led them to choose the schools. The researcher visited the selected schools on a number of occasions to acquaint himself with conditions there. In each of the schools, the questionnaire was given to both categories of respondents, that is, the students and the headmasters, on the same day. In each of the schools, the researcher met with the students class by class and after explaining the purpose of the exercise to them,

supplied them with the questionnaire. They were then allowed some time to write their responses. The researcher encouraged them to express their responses portraying the truth and according to their individual views of the issue raised in the questionnaire. The forms were collected back immediately after the exercise. However, the forms meant for the headmasters were given them and upon agreement, the researcher went back for the documents a week later. The researcher followed the same order in the two schools. Both structured and unstructured interviews were used in the study. The structured interview was directed and administered to members of the communities who were purposefully selected. In the process, the researcher met face to face with the respondents and wrote their responses. The researcher also visited the school for data from school records. School enrolment and senior secondary school certificate examination results for instance, were obtained from the school. The records of the performance position of the Basic School in the localities in which the CBSSS are found too, were obtained from the District Education Office at Wiawso

Data Analysis

Being a case study, the researcher dwelt largely on the qualitative approach to do the overall analysis of the data gathered. The data comprised responses from the interviews, the questionnaires and finding of the observation made by the researcher of the schools' events and situations.

First of all, the questionnaires returned by the respondents were serially numbered to help in identification. Then the responses to the various items were

coded. In the analysis, tables, graphs and frequencies were employed in most of the computations and expressed in percentages.

The respondents' responses to the interview and the findings of the observation conducted for the study were judiciously used to support the process. In using the qualitative approach, the findings from the schools were critically examined, discussed side by side and compared and contrasted. These processes became necessary so that the study could ascertain how good or otherwise, the school could possibly be under any given conditions. Stating the essence of the qualitative approach to analysing situations, Paton (1990) explained that it (qualitative method) is the extent to which the researcher makes sense of situations on the phenomenon or setting more directly and conclusively.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter deals with results and discussion of the study. Data from responses to interviews and questionnaires, and other information gathered from records from the schools under study, the District Education Office and the District Assembly are presented and discussed. The responses which came from the two community schools are compared and discussed; explaining, contrasting and predicting relationships of one kind or another. In using the descriptive method, graphs, tables, frequency distribution and percentages were used. The discussions under the chapter covered the schools' enrolments, their academic performance, and infrastructure. The other areas were community / schools relations and the cost of CBSSS education in the communities in which the schools under study are situated.

Factors responsible for the enrolment levels of the CBSSS in the Sefwi Wiawso District.

Research question 1 looked at factors responsible for the enrolment levels of the community - based senior secondary school in the Sefwi Wiawso District and investigated factors that have influenced the enrolment of students into the two CBSSS in the Sefwi Wiawso District. The Asawinso CBSSS was established

in 1992 and Akontombra CBSS, in 1994 with an estimated intake capacity of 600, 400 students respectively. In 2000/2001, both Aswinso and Akontombra had enrolments up to only 18% of their estimated capacity. Asawinso had 112 (18.6), and Akontombra 53 (13.2%).

The trend of the schools total enrolment from SSS1 – SSS3 from 2000/2001-2006/2007 is illustrated by Figure 1.

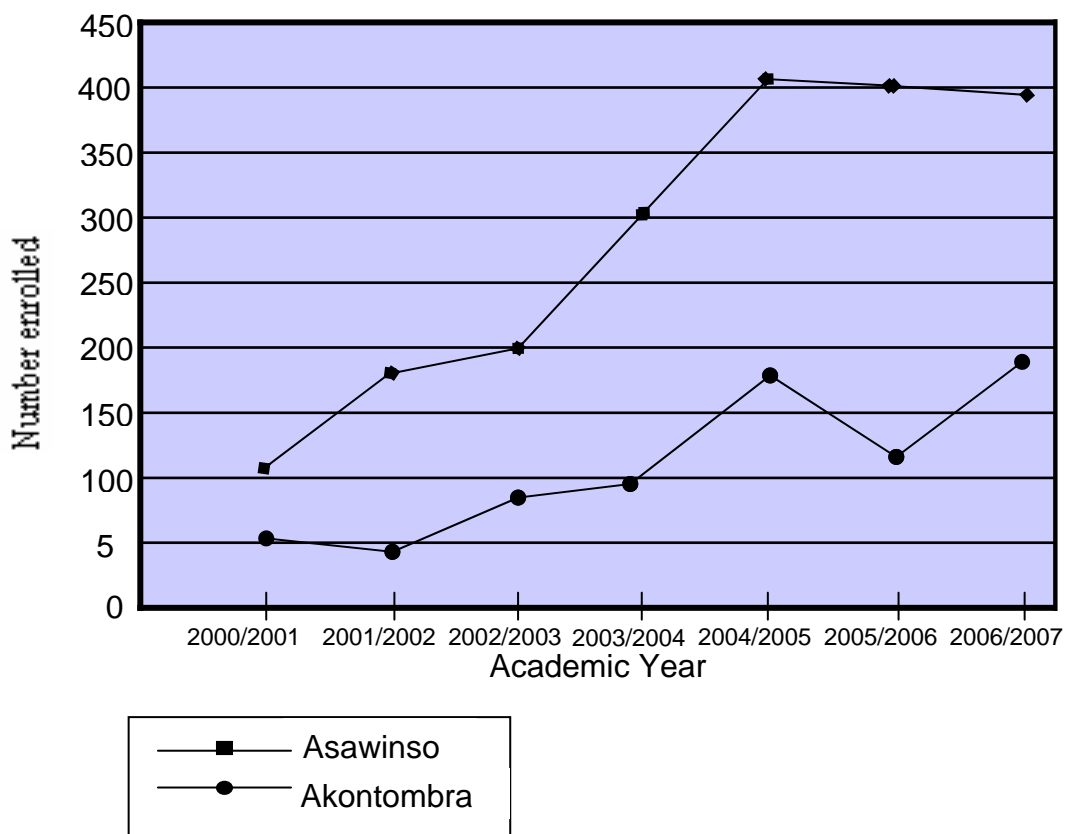


Figure 1: Enrolment rates of Asawinso and Akontombra CBSS from 2000/2001 – 2004/2005.

Generally, the enrolment at Asawinso CBSS rose steadily from 2000/2001 academic year to 2004/2005 academic year. In 2000/2001 the population was 112

and it grew progressively to reach 405 in 2004/2005 where it fell slightly to 396 as at 2006/2007 academic year, which is 62% of its estimated enrolment capacity. But Akontombra had consistently maintained low growth rates and as 2006/2007 had never risen to 50% of its estimated enrolment capacity of 400. The two institutions have never obtained their maximum enrolment capacity.

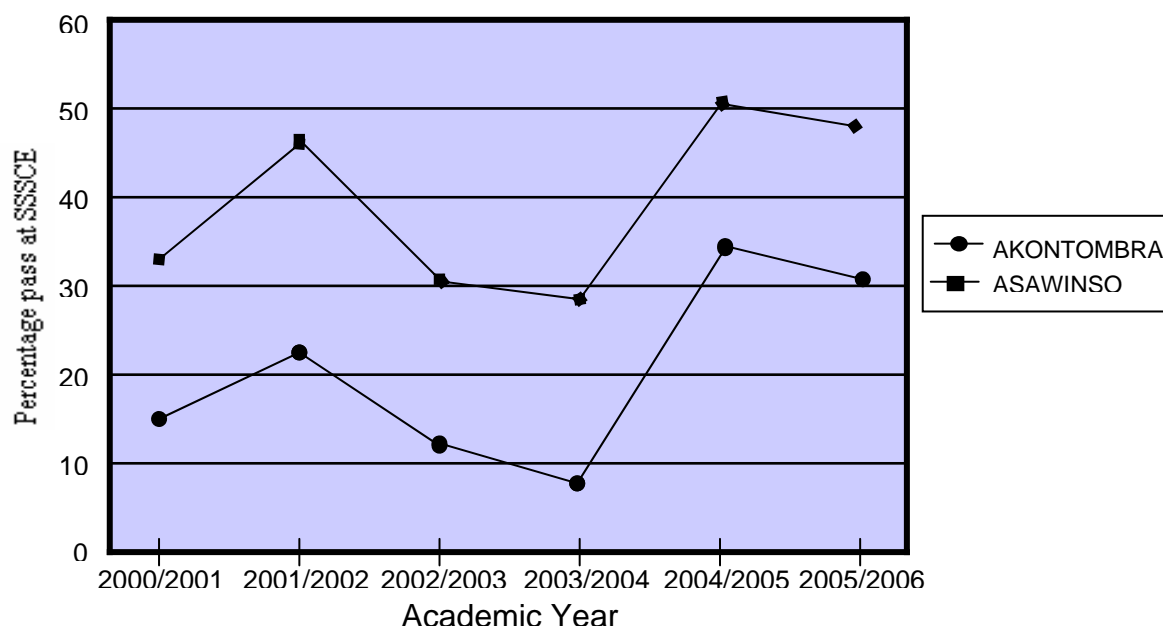


Figure 2. Pass rate of Asawinso and Akontombra CBSSS in the SSSCE from 2000/2001-2005/2006.

The study examined the pass rate when determining the factors that have influenced the school's enrolment because more often a schools' performance especially in external examinations such as the Senior Secondary School Examination (SSCE) when parents and guardians are selecting schools for their wards.

The trend of the pass rates of the two schools shows similar patterns from 2000/2001 – 2005/2006. In 2001/2002, the results rose over the previous year's. But from there, the two schools' performance dropped sharply through to 2003/2004 academic year. At 45.5% in 2001/2002, the results fell by about a third to 28.3% for Asawinso whereas that of Akontombra came down from 22% to 8%, which was a fall of 14 percentage points. From the year 2003/2004 the results improved appreciably the following year, that is 2004/2005, had a 22 percentage points increase from 28.3% of 50.3%. In the 2005/2006 results, the two schools recorded a slight decline against the previous year. The percentage passes of the two schools at the SSSCE between 2001 – 2006 are presented in Figure 2. The best result was 50.3% pass rate by Asawinso and 34% by Akontombra in 2004/2005. In 2003/2004 academic year, Akotombra scored a low 8% as against 28.3% by Asawinso.

Since these two schools in the District have consistently been recording low passes, they will find it more difficult to attract students who may want to attend schools with higher pass rate. Also, a closely related factor influencing students' selection of schools are the programmes a school offers. Asawinso offers three programmes (Business, Agriculture, and General Arts) whilst Akontombra offers 2 programmes (General Arts, Business). Once again students who choose the two schools have very limited programme selection options as compared to other competing schools in the District such as Juaboso and Sefwi Wiawso SSS that offer a wider range of programmes, Sefwi Wiawso Secondary school offers six programmes (Science, General Arts, Business, Agriculture,

Home Economic and Visual Arts). Juaboso too offers (Science, General Arts, Business, and Agriculture). Therefore, Akontombra and Asawinso CBSS are at a disadvantage when it comes to enrolling students to pursue various secondary school programmes as students would normally want to make a choice of programmes without too many restrictions.

The extent to which schools are equipped with infrastructure and teaching and learning facilities to promote effective performance, often influence the choice of schools and hence enrollment. Yet the two institutions studied were found to be seriously lacking vital school infrastructure and teaching and learning facilities. Both schools have inadequate and unattractive structures. Akontombra has no single computer for the schools information technology communication (ICT) course. The quality of education that our children receive bears direct relevance to the availability or the lack thereof of physical facilities. Some other important facilities that were not found in the schools include, assembly hall, science laboratories, cafeteria and administrative block.

With regard to school selection options, student respondents' reaction indicated that at Akontombra only 12% (10) of the sampled current school population selected the school as first choice and at Asawinso 44% (70) selected the school as first choice. In both schools, less than half of the respondents selected the school as first choice which is an indication that at the JSS Level, either the students or their parents did not show interest in the two schools placed at their doorstep. Students' responses also show that a greater number of them schooled in the localities in which the schools were situated. The analyses reveal

that 91% (147), of the Asawinso students come from the neighbouring communities of the town in which the schools was sited. At Akontombra, an overwhelming majority of the students, 98% (156), come from the town and its environs. The trend indicates that even though the schools are community – based, they are unable to attract people from outside the localities in which they are sited. Their catchment area is restricted which in turn negatively affects their enrollment, since they need only to operate within a limited scope. Besides, the analyses show that only a few of the students choose the schools through the direct influence of the old boys factor. The reactions of the student respondents show that those who chose the schools through the direct influence of their relations, who happened to be old boys, were 28% (49) for Asawinso, and 6% (5) for Akontombra,

The researcher interviewed the Headmasters of the two schools to solicit their views on the community peoples' perception of the schools. The intention was to find out how the schools' enrolment issues are influenced by the attitude of the community people. The Headmaster of Asawinso CBSS indicated that the trend was fairly positive in his school. He added however, that parents whose wards got very good grades in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) sent almost all such brilliant children to attend well - endowed schools elsewhere. It was found that very few students with excellent grades ranging between 6 and 15 were enrolled in the school.

Reacting to the same question, the headmaster of Akomtombra CBSS described the situation in this as unfortunate and disappointing and hence very

poor. He recounted that what he saw about the community was that ambitious and capable parents in the community were not prepared to let their wards attend the local senior secondary school. He noted that parents were prepared to bear all costs to allow their wards go outside the community to receive senior secondary school education. Probing further, it was gathered that, among other things, those parents usually complained about the poor nature of the schools, especially the lack of infrastructure and the lack of teachers. A disturbing revelation which came out of the interview with the two Headmasters was that parents rather used the schools as stepping stones to other schools. They maintained that parents whose wards attain very good BECE grades but fail to secure SSS admission into schools of their choice often come down to play tricks on them. They lamented that after granting admission to such students, virtually all of them desert the schools in the course of time. All these negative developments militate against the enrolment situation of the two schools. According to the records at the District Education Directorate, the communities are considered deprived by Ghana Education Service (GES) standards. Conditions in these communities in which the schools are sited do not appeal to the people outside and hence the apathy towards the schools.

In one of the interviews with some staff members of the Akontombra SSS for instance, it was revealed that there was what was known as the *Ko be wo* syndrome among students of the Akontombra community. *Ko be wo* in Twi literally means “go and come back to pound”. The saying is often used to tease and ridicule the local students who receive basic education in the locality and are

also continuing with senior secondary schooling there. The local students appear to be viewed with contempt by their peers schooling elsewhere. Some community people also condone this negative attitude. According to the Headmasters the two schools also lose a good number of their students to other schools, mostly in the second year. The Akontombra CBSS lost almost 10% of its students through transfer to other schools in 2005. Indeed such frustrating situations do not auger well for the enrolment drive of the schools.

From the students' responses, it was also found that the SSS were to a greater extent, patronized only by the immediate communities in which they are sited. Asawinso CBSS was able to attract 9% of its population from outside the circuit or the locality and only about 2% of the Akontombra students came from outside the school's catchment area. This indicates that it is mostly only the few local community people who are prepared to patronize the schools who sent their wards there. To a large extent, the schools were built for the benefit of the communities in which they were sited. Abdalla (1987) stressed that the community schools shall remain a community resource, run with public funds but shall be actively supported materially and socially by the community. This laudable idea seems not to be the case in the Akontombra and Asawinso communities and its environs.

Also, the students' responses indicate that very few of their parents happen to be past students of the schools. Under normal circumstances people would encourage their relations to follow suit in situations where they have been successful. So if more community people had been old students, there would have

been a higher likelihood that they will persuade their wards to select the schools. However, record shows that only 28%, and a mere 6% of students of Asawinso and Akontombra CBSS respectively have relatives who passed out of the schools. Therefore, the old students' factor is weak as a source of encouragement to influence and inspire prospective SSS students to select the two schools. But the community schools should particularly serve some important purposes in the beneficiary communities. Asiedu - Akrofi (1978), has commented that, Day schools enable children to be educated near their homes and asserted that this gives them command over their environment, better understanding of their people, development of community interest and loyalty as well as identification with the society. Yet, currently students' responses show that at Asawinso less than one half of students, i.e. 44% selected the school as their first choice, and only 12% selected Akontombra CBSS. This indicates that, Asiedu - Akrofi's ideas are not the overriding factors parents in the two communities consider in sending their children to senior secondary school.

From the discussions so far, there is an indication the factors which influence the enrolment situation of the schools have largely been the attitude of the community people, the pass rates in the SSSCE, the programme options offered by the school, and the availability of school infrastructure and facilities. However, these factors have not favoured the schools positively.

Factors which account for the relatively low academic achievement of the Akontombra CBSSS as compared to Asawinso CBSSS

Research question 2 looked at the factors that have brought about the differences in the academic performance of Asawinso and Akontombra CBSSS in favour of the former.

Among other factors, performance of senior secondary schools in the SSSCE is often used as one of the most important criteria for assessing their academic performance. Therefore, judging the academic performance of Asawinso and Akontombra CBSSS as depicted in figure 2, it can be seen that the pass rates of the two schools on the whole are not encouraging. For the past four years, the best that has come out of the schools' SSSCE results is the 50.3% that Asawinso CBSS made in the 2004/2005 academic year whereas in the same year Akontombra too made 34% as its best. The trend of the pass rates shows that the schools have been struggling to make any appreciable grades in the SSSCE. Akontombra CBSS particularly has consistently scored pass rates below 35% and even made a woeful 8% in the 2003/2004 year. A number of factors could account for the relatively weak academic achievement of Akontombra as against Asawinso.

The headmasters' responses indicated that Asawinso has 48% (8) of its staff being non - professional teachers whilst Akontombra has 60.2% (5) of its teachers being non - professional. Realistically, given the situation in the two schools, the presence of professional teachers, is likely to enable students to perform academically better than the situation where there are only non -

professional teachers. Since Akontombra has majority of its teachers being non - professionals, the weak academic performance of its students could be attributed to that factor. According to the headmasters responses, the schools have always been in need of teachers beside the fact that most of the national service personnel who are posted to the school every academic year, leave at the end of their service period. They are not motivated to stay, because according to the headmasters, they often complain about the deprived nature of the schools and the communities in which the schools are sited.

Hence the schools always face difficulties recruiting adequate number of professional teachers even though the provision of quality education depends largely on the availability of well - motivated and qualified staff, (Ameyaw - Akumfi , 2001).

Figure 3. Pass rates of students who selected the Asawinso CBSSS in 2006/2007 academic year.

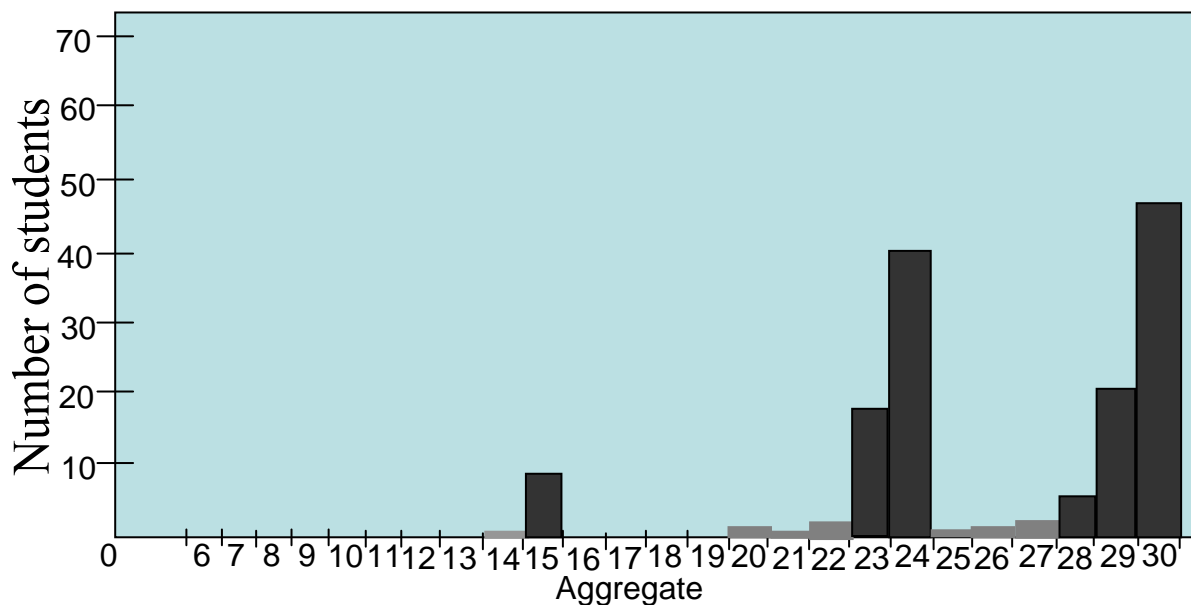


Figure 4. Pass rates of students who selected Akontombra CBSSS in the 2006/2007 academic year.

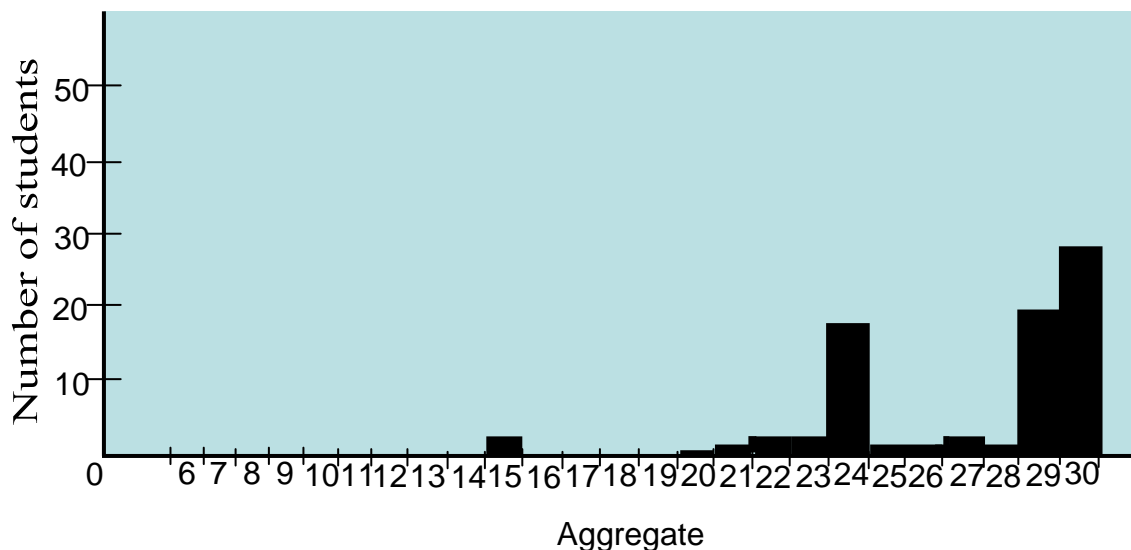


Figure 3 and 4 indicate that the majority of the students who selected the schools' had between aggregate 16 and 30 which the BECE grading system classifies as average performance. Less than 6% of students in each of the schools had aggregates better than 15, which correspond to good performance in the BECE.

In examining the pre - senior secondary school education level of the current schools' population, it was found that the schools were dealing largely with students with very weak basic education background. The schools' records also indicate that the lowest BECE aggregate that the schools for instance, set for the 2006/2007 academic year for students pursuing different programmes was as low as 30. This is however a common problem to the two institutions.

In case of Akontombra CBSS, the records show that it could only attract 5.6% (9) of students who possessed aggregates between 6 -15. Figure 4 compared to Akontombra which had a 3.7% (3) of its students falling between that range, as shown on figure 3. Obviously, the success rate of Akontombra CBSS has been much lower than Asawinso CBSS. This has reflected consecutively on the performance of the schools in the (SSSCE) results for 2002, 2003 and 2004. Asawinso had 31% in 2002, 28.3% passes for 2003 and 50.3% in 2004 whilst Akontombra had 12% in 2002, 8% in 2003 and 34% in 2004 (Figure 2). There is a marked difference in the pass rate of the two schools with Akontombra CBSS consistently falling behind Asawinso CBSS which is a reflection of the lower grades that students used to gain admission into the schools.

Again the study found that the institutions do not have any well resourced libraries, neither do such facilities exist in the local communities. To a large extent, libraries could facilitate academic achievement among learners, so in schools and communities where such facility does not exist, learning among students there is likely to be hampered. Anamuah-Mensah, Kedem, and Sarkodie (2002), pointed out that libraries play a very important role in education. Therefore, for an educational process to succeed, there is the need for the principal actors (teachers and students/pupils) to have access to, and use of a wide range of information resources that are crucial in facilitating the learning process. Commenting on the essence of libraries, Kochhar (1970) noted that a library is the hub of the academic life of a school. Akontombra CBSS completely lacks the

facility but Asawinso has a poorly stocked one. So relatively, the latter should have an advantage over the former.

On the whole, the results indicate that the academic performance of the two schools are not encouraging. Some factors that have been found to be responsible are that the two schools are not well resourced to perform efficiently. They have no good libraries, neither do they have adequate professional staff, besides the fact that majority of the students are admitted into the school with very weak grades. However compared to Akontombra CBSS Asawinso CBSS had relatively better facilities, Akontombra CBSS particularly, appears to be making the poorer academic progress between the two schools as it is the least endowed of the two institutions.

Extent to which Akontombra and Asawinso CBSS are equipped to offer senior secondary school education to students.

The infrastructure of the two schools was examined in the study. The main purpose was to determine whether the appropriate infrastructure necessary for the effective performance of the institutions existed in the schools. According to the Macmillan English Dictionary (1991), infrastructure consists of the set of systems within a place, or organization that affect how well it operates. Within the context of the study, infrastructure constituted the appropriate facilities, so the school facilities that were looked at comprised the following: classrooms, accommodation facilities for teaching staff, hostel facilities, administration block, computer and science laboratories, library facilities, means of transport, and communication facilities.

The study found that both Asawinso CBSS and Akontombra CBSS lacked adequate structures with Asawinso CBSS being slightly better. Asawinso CBSS had a four classroom block, and a semi-finished science laboratory-converted into a classroom, making five. There is a sub-standard administration block. There are hostels for boys and girls in the school. These are sub-standard structures where students are crammed into a few dormitories. The school has a poorly stocked library and a few pieces of computers that are kept somewhere for lack of a computer laboratory.

The observations at the Akontombra CBSS portrayed a more gloomy picture. The Akontombra CBSS has a single school block made up of six classrooms and also one bungalow meant to house only one person. There is no administration block, science, and computer laboratories. The school has no computers. There is only one hostel which was poorly built for boys which can ideally accommodate only a few students. There were no hostels for girls. Female students are rather housed in a privately - owned poor structure near the school which exposes them to all kinds of hazards. None of the two schools has standard and well designed sporting facilities or equipment. The two schools also lacked communication facilities such as telephones. The schools have a pickup truck each. These trucks are more than ten years old and have overrun their lifespan. They have plied the bad feeder roads for such a long time that they were in a terrible state of disrepair. According to the Headmasters, the maintenance costs of the vehicles put considerable strain on the schools' finances.

Ideally, considering the purpose for which the community schools were established, these prevailing state of affairs hardly befit them as senior secondary school institutions. It is therefore difficult for the schools to function effectively to produce the expected results for the communities with such underdeveloped infrastructure

Under the facilities examined, the researcher placed special interest in the building infrastructure and with particular emphasis on accommodation facilities for the schools' teaching personnel. This is because in a school situation, the place of teachers' quarters is very important in determining how comfortable teachers are because the teacher who is posted to a school in a locality has to be housed first before he/she can perform his or her duties. Pointing to the need for teachers' quarters to be accorded a central place in planning a schools infrastructure, Prime Minister Nehru cited in Kochhar (1970) has stated that it is more important to have a proper house for the teacher than even to put up a building for the school. He believed that the teacher could keep the equipment and teach outside. The school, he thinks, revolves around the teacher and hence the need to make teachers' accommodation facilities an essential aspect of school planning. Kochhar comments further that the provision of such quarters will enable teachers to stay in the villages where they are posted and will greatly assist in improving the standard of work in the schools. Emphasizing his point, he observes again that there are no two opinions on the idea that a school building must be excellent; planned spaciously, functionally and with pleasing architectural features. He stresses that building is to education as the body is to

the mind and that a sound mind can only be there in a sound body; a fine building makes a fine school and a poor building, a poor one.

The need to provide good adequate and appropriate school buildings for senior secondary education in the communities cannot be overemphasized. Schools should be housed in beautiful buildings, which are not only stimulating centers of education for children but also vital centers of community life. Infrastructure within an organization or a place affects how well it operates. However, it has been found that the schools are lacking in the provision of adequate, vital facilities as buildings, staff quarters, laboratories, communication equipments etc. The situation could have had a negative impact on the institutions' performance.

These challenges of the schools notwithstanding, Asawinso CBSS where conditions were relatively better, was doing better than its counterpart, Akontombra, CBSS which points to the fact that, given the conducive teaching and learning climate, the community day schools could be better placed to perform as expected.

Extent of Community Involvement in the Two CBSS

The extent of community involvement in the schools' affairs was examined because in the first place, the schools are community-based and hence their very survival was inextricably linked with the community peoples' patronage, participation and goodwill. Therefore it became necessary for the study to determine the extent of community involvement in the schools. The study examined the contributions that the institutions got from community agents such

as Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), philanthropists, alumni and individuals. The responses of the two Headmasters indicated that the contribution of the PTAs was very little. Looking at the community's contributions, it was realized that the PTAs together with some concerned past students had made some insignificant donations in various forms to the schools. In the past three years for instance, Asawinso CBSS had only received some pieces of furniture, a set of football jerseys and a few bags of cement from the PTA. NGOs and other private bodies had done very little for the schools. The discharge of the PTAs' oversight responsibilities of the schools' activities was not the best. The situation was rather worse at the Akontombra CBSS where there was no past students' association. The school has since its inception never enjoyed any assistance from any NGO. The PTAs meagre dues paid per head of a ward was rather too little as a result of the low population of the school. In both communities, individuals and philanthropists' assistance to the institutions was hardly known, which has made the schools to remain in their old state since their establishment, especially in terms of infrastructural development.

These shortcomings of the communities are proof that the schools have been left to fend for themselves. They only have to rely on the meagre grants that come from the central government which are not enough to meet the schools' development needs. That perhaps, explains why the schools are faced with a host of problems especially, in the area of facilities which has adversely affected their overall performance.

Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) has observed that the proper development of schools depends to a large extent on its finances and the manner of funding. He stressed that for schools to achieve any meaningful improvement, the school communities will have to bear the financial burdens of their schools more directly. Community involvement in schools is therefore critical to school growth and overall performance. When parents are closely related to the school, students and organizational performances are augmented. The community involvement in the two schools was not encouraging and fell short of policy expectations. Abdalla (1987), has also noted that the community schools are a community resource, run with public funds but actively supported materially and socially by the communities. Judging from the low patronage of the two communities' people, it can be said that the expected participation as stipulated in the foregoing policy statement by Abdalla is yet to be fully realized. A positive community school relations correlates very well with school growth and development. Mankoe (2002) has said that when parents are closely related to the school, students and organizational performances are augmented. Levin and Young (1994) have also observed that when a school relates closely with its community, students perform better in programmes than those schools where the community is not involved. Herman and Yeh (1983) have similarly found that, parents participation is positively related to both student achievement and parent satisfaction with the school. The needed school – community relations is not forthcoming.

**Costs of community senior secondary school education in the Asawinso and
the Akontombra communities**

Table 2 shows the expenses borne by students during an estimated 100 days for a school term, for day and hostel students in the community senior secondary schools

Table 2. **Expenditure of Day and Hostel students**

Item	Day Students	Hostel
Students		
Expenditure of Students		
1. Daily Expenditure on food	¢600,000	¢900,000
2. School fess	¢24,000	¢24,000
3. Hostel fees	--	¢30,000
4. Transportation (Daily)	¢800,000	--
5. Pamphlets /Books	¢ 300,000	¢300,000
6. Parent Teacher Association (PTA) dues	¢120,000	¢120,000
7. Others (Transportation from home to school and back, chop box items, etc.)		¢200,000
Total	¢1,844,000	1,574,000

The study assessed how the cost of providing the educational needs of students of the community - based senior secondary schools affected parents and guardians. The study sought to establish whether parents' incomes could

comfortably and effectively accommodate the cost of their wards' senior secondary education. Burke (1951) asserted that in educational administration, practically every educational decision has financial implications, and minor financial decisions can hamper educational operations in a major way. It is in the light of these considerations that the cost of schooling was made an important variable in this study. The questions raised to address the problem covered issues as the cost of text books, extra classes, feeding, hostel expenses, school fees and other miscellaneous concerns as pocket money, provisions and stocking of students' chop boxes among others.

The results showed that, on the average, both day and hostel students paid about ₵300,000.00 on items such as pamphlets and supplementary textbooks every term. The daily expenses for going to school amounted to about ₵30,000 a week. In a term of fourteen weeks, the day students therefore spent an average of about ₵200,000.00. Parents additionally paid school fees of ₵24,000 and PTA dues that ranged between ₵100,000.00 and ₵120,000.00. Day students who commuted daily to school bore additional expenses on transportation, as in the case of Asawinso CBSS where some of the students came from the neighbouring communities which were quite far away.

So in a community school, day students who went to school without spending on transportation spent an average of about ₵600,000.00 a term. Those resident elsewhere who paid for transportation daily spent about ₵800,000.00 a term. The two schools have hostel facilities that house quite a number of the students. The hostel students spend just as their counterparts on items as text

books, schools fees and PTA dues. However, they had extra charges to shoulder. In addition to these, they paid for hostel facilities which cost them ₵30,000 per term. The figures in Table 2 reveal that the hostel student spends more on feeding. The average student spent not less than ₵10,000.00 daily. So, for about the hundred or so days that each term lasts, each student spent about ₵900,000.00. Also, it takes about ₵100,000.00 for each student to fill his/her chop box with provision for the term. Pocket monies meant to cater for their incidental expenses was also about ₵100,000.00 per term.

The analyses show that parents of students in the two senior secondary schools in the communities had to pay more than ₵4,000,000.00 per academic year per child as against a student in the traditional boarding school who pays less than ₵3,000,000. for the same period. As the majority of parents' annual income is very low in the rural areas, the question arises whether at such high costs the schools would be effectively patronized by community members.

In an interview with the school authorities, both Headmasters lamented that some parents' inability to honour their financial responsibilities had often resulted in outstanding fee payments to the schools. Thus, according to the Headmasters, it is rather with difficulty that parents meet their financial obligations to schools, making the management of the institutions cumbersome and ineffective. But community schools are expected to be cheaper in order to encourage more community people to send their wards to school. Asiedu - Akrofi (1998), has observed that since these schools are largely day, they are cheap to build and there is no need for expenditure on boarding and lodging. Many

parents will find it easy to pay their children's fees and will be happy to send more of them to school.

The results of the study suggest otherwise as they indicate that one needs to spend not less than ₵4,000,000.00 on Senior Secondary Education per academic year for one student who attends a community day school. On the average, the cost that individuals bear as boarders in schools is less than they would have paid if they were day students. Boarders pay a termly fee of about ₵800,000.00, so for one academic year they pay ₵2,400,000.00. Day schools as in the case of Asawinso CBSS and Akontombra CBSS are therefore more expensive. The annual amount of upwards ₵4,000,000.00 and above which students pay may, ordinarily, be within the means of most parents in non - deprived communities. Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) asserted that school communities differ from place to place and that there are many variables at work at any particular time and place. The income levels of rural dwellers in Ghana are at variance with their counterparts in urban communities as urban dwellers enjoy relatively higher incomes.

The study shows that the people in the Asawinso and Akontombra rural communities, have been paying more for senior secondary education in the two day schools. Naturally, they will be compelled to send their wards to boarding schools elsewhere in order to pay less.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The study aimed at investigating the challenges encountered by the community-based day senior secondary schools in the Sefwi Wiawso District of Ghana. The research was a case study centered on the two schools in the Sefwi Wiawso District, that is, the Akontombra CBSSS and Asawinso CBSSS. The study investigated the problems of the two schools using the following research questions:

1. What factors are responsible for the enrolment level of the Community-based Senior Secondary School CBSSS in the Sefwi Wiawso District?
2. What factors account for the relatively low academic achievements of the Akontombra CBSSS as compared to Asawinso CBSSS?
3. To what extent are the two CBSSS equipped to offer senior secondary education to students?
4. What is the extent of community involvement in the two CBSSS?
5. What are the relative costs of senior secondary school education in the Asawinso and Akontombra communities?

The qualitative case study method which is exploratory in nature, was employed in the data collection. The data was collected through closed and open-ended questionnaires, interviews and documentary evidence. Data also consisted of informal and unstructured interviews and

discussions held alongside those collected through the formal procedures. Respondents of the study comprised students, school authorities and parents.

Summary of key findings

The key findings of the study are as follows:

- i. The low enrolment figures of the schools were largely due to the poor attitude of the communities towards the institutions. Few community people were willing to send their wards to the schools. The wealthy in the community especially, would want to send their wards outside the community for senior secondary education at all cost.
- ii. The two CBSS are not well resourced to perform efficiently. However compared to Akontombra CBSS, Asawinso CBSS had relatively better facilities. Akontombra CBSS appears to be making the poorer academic progress between the schools as it is the least endowed of the two institutions.
- iii. The schools lack adequate vital facilities as buildings, staff quarters, laboratories, communication facilities and others.
- iv. Community participation is critical to school growth and over-all performance. Yet, the study has shown that the expected community involvement and commitment to the institutions is inadequate.
- v. The people in the Asawinso and Akontombra rural communities have been paying more for senior secondary education in the two day schools

than parents whose wards attend the traditional boarding schools elsewhere in the country.

Conclusion

The study investigated the challenges facing community-based secondary school in Sefwi Wiawso District of Ghana. The results have revealed that the schools' development efforts are constrained by factors arising from the poor attitude of the stakeholders as well as the social and economic environments. The neglect, low patronage and the apathy exhibited by the stakeholders have contributed to the institutions' woes. Besides, the cost of senior secondary education in the communities too is expensive. This has not encouraged more people to patronize the schools. It is expected that the awareness so far created by the study will help bring about the needed interventions for the institutions to be able to fulfill their stipulated objectives.

Recommendations

The community-based senior secondary schools were established to serve many purposes in education delivery in communities in Ghana. Among other factors, the institutions were built to increase access to senior secondary in the communities they are located, to open the communities to a range of educational opportunities and to help improve the general social outlook of those beneficiary localities, (Amofa 1999). Commenting on the essence of community schools, Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) observes that, "day schools enable children to be educated near their homes. This gives them command over their environment, better understanding of their people, development of community interest and loyalty as

well as identification with the society”(p 66). Being community resource, the upkeep of the schools was thus, largely entrusted into the hands of the beneficiary communities. Abdalla (1987), has indicated that community schools shall remain a community resource, run with public funds but shall be actively supported materially and socially by the community. So with the expected community involvement and patronage forthcoming, it is hoped that the schools will perform as envisaged.

These laudable objectives of the concept of community-based SS notwithstanding, the study has revealed that the institutions are faced with numerous challenges that hamper their efforts and capacity to function effectively to achieve their stated aims and objectives. To stem the identified problems, the researcher puts forward a number of suggestions and recommendations.

1. It is found that the schools are situated in rural communities where the people's incomes are generally low. Ironically, the cost of community-based SS school education happens to be higher than the traditional boarding institutions in the country. This, rather places the beneficiary community people in a disadvantageous position, as the poor and the rural folk instead, are paying more on education in the country than the wealthy. Measures such as special scholarship schemes should be instituted to serve as a relief to the community people. The central government and the District Assemblies should charge the business organizations operating in localities to assist in efforts at raising funds to meet the challenge.

2. The Headmasters of the schools should learn to grant concessionary fee-payment terms to parents to enable them to honour their financial obligations in a way that will encourage them to allow their wards to attend the schools. This will improve the enrolment position of the institutions. For instance, looking at the occupational background of the Akontombra community people who are predominantly farmers, the school authorities there can adopt a liberal policy to accept fees in kind rather than always demanding cash. The school should accept food items as rice, yam, maize etc. which are cultivated in abundance in the communities especially during the peak season, store them and sell them even at some profit-making rate during the lean season. The schools can generate funds internally this way for development activities.
3. The schools are situated in relatively rural communities where professional teachers usually refuse to take up postings. Teachers complain of the deprived nature of the communities, and among other factors, often cite reasons as the non-availability of opportunities for further studies for the academia there. The phenomenon has resulted in the schools being understaffed or unable to attract qualified teaching personnel which has lowered their capacity to perform academically, enrolment-wise etc. It is recommended that the schools be equipped with things as modern information communication technology facilities by the District Assemblies in those communities, to attract more professional teachers to accept postings to the communities.

4. Libraries play very important role in education. They support the education system. For educational process to succeed, there is the need for both teachers and students to have access to and use of wide range of information resources that are crucial in facilitating the learning process. At all levels of education, libraries facilitate research in various fields of knowledge. In an educational institution, a library provides an environment in which both teachers and students can develop and update their knowledge and skills through independent study. (Anamua-Mensah, Sarkodie, Kedem 2002).

However, the schools do not have any good modern libraries and hence, their inability to function effectively to achieve the above stated goals and functions of the facility in their respective communities. It is therefore recommended that the establishment of vibrant and adequately resourced libraries be made a priority among the schools' needs and on the educational agenda of the local authorities such as the District Assembly. This way, the institutions will become generally attractive to people.

5. A cordial and healthy community-school relationship is critical to school growth and development. To encourage and sustain community peoples' interest and participation in the schools therefore, ceremonies such as Speech and Prize-giving Days, Open Days, Durbars, Forums of Community leaders for instance, should be regularly held to increase school – community relations.

Area for further study

In examining problems of education in the Sefwi-Wiawso District of Ghana, the study particularly investigated the challenges facing the community-based senior secondary schools (CBSSS) of the area. The research explored areas of concern such as the state of community involvement in the schools, infrastructure, cost of education, academic and enrolment achievements.

Discipline on the other hand remains a key factor in school achievement. Further studies can therefore look at the issue of discipline in the schools. The subject of the study could focus on the state of discipline in schools as against the challenges confronting them. The investigation could find out whether the difficulties the schools face create disciplinary problems for them.

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Appendix A

COMMUNITY SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION IN GHANA

COMMUNITY SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL IN GHANA. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

This is a survey on the community Senior Secondary School in Ghana. Your cooperation in answering the following questions would be very appreciated. The data will be handled confidentially and anonymously.

1. Sex:

Male	
Female	

2. How did you get into this school? **Please tick [√] one**

I selected it as my first choice	
I selected it as my second choice	
I selected it as my second choice	
I did not select it at all	

3. Did you attend a private/preparatory/international junior secondary school?

Yes []

No []

4. Is the junior secondary school you attended in the same circuit or locality as your senior secondary school? Yes [] No []

5. .a. Is any of your family member(s) [father, mother, sister, brother, uncle, auntie, etc] an old student of the secondary school you are attending?

Yes []

No []

b. If yes who please? **Please tick [√] as many as applicable.**

Father	
Mother	
Sister	
Brother	
Uncle	
Auntie	
Other [state].....	

6. What is the **highest** academic level reached by your father and mother, if they pay your fees or anyone else who pays your fees?

Level	Father	Mother
Primary School		
Middle School		
Polytechnic/Teacher Training /Nursing Training		
University		
Did not go to school		

General Question about Cost of School

7. Do you spend money on textbooks? Yes [] No []

8. Do you spend money on pamphlets? Yes [] No []

9. Do you spend money on Extra Classes? Yes [] No []

10. How much money have you spent on pamphlets this term? GH¢

11. How much money have you spent on textbooks this term? GH¢

12. How much money have you spent on extra classes this term? GH¢.....

Questions for Day Students Only

13. How did you usually come to school?

By Trotro	
By Walking	
By Taxi	
By Bicycle	

14. How far do you live from the school?

Less than one mile	
--------------------	--

1 – 2 miles	
3 – 4 miles	
5 or more miles	

15. How much money do you spend on feeding each day? ₵.....

16. (a) Apart from feeding and transport, what other things do you spend on at school?

i.

ii.

iii.

iv.

(b) How much is this amount each **term**? ₵

Questions for Hostel Students Only

17. a. How much do you pay for the hostel each **term**? ₵.....

b. Does this money include feeding? Yes [] No []

18. How much money do you spend each **day** on feeding?

a. On the school compound? ₵

b. At the Hostel? GH₵

19. On the average, how much does it cost to fill your chop box for each **term**? ₵..

20. Apart from feeding how much do you spend at the school each **week**? ₵

21. On the average, how much pocket money are you given each **term**? ₵

22. What do you use your pocket money for?

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

(iv)

(v)

(vi)

23. How much does it cost to travel from your town /village/city to school each

term?

[Include luggage] GH¢

Thank you very much for your cooperation

APPENDIX B

**COMMUNITY SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION
IN GHANA**

COMMUNITY SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL IN GHANA

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEADS OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

This is a survey on the community Senior Secondary School in Ghana. Your cooperation in answering the following questions would be very appreciated. The data will be handled confidentially and anonymously.

1. How many students have been enrolled in the last three years? Please fill the table

		2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
SSS1	Male			
	Female			
SSS2	Male			
	Female			
SSS3	Male			
	Female			

2. Please indicate the number of Day and Hostel students

		Day Students	Hostel Students
SSS1	Male		
	Female		
SSS2	Male		
	Female		
SSS3	Male		
	Female		

3. Please indicate the number of teachers in your school.

Male	Female

4. From which geographical area do your students come from? **Please tick [√] as many as applicable.**

From the local town the school is located	
From the district the school is located	
From the region the school is located	
From the neighbouring regions	
From all over the country	

5. Please fill the table.

Total school Enrolment		%
Students with aggregate 6 – 15		
Students with aggregate 16 – 30		
Total		100%

6. Which of the following programmes do your school have? **Please tick [√] as many as applicable.**

General Arts	
General Science	
Vocational Science	
Agricultural Science	
Technical	
Business	
Visual Arts	

7. Please indicate the lowest **BECE** aggregate your school fixed in the 2004/05 academic year for students pursuing different programmes.

General Arts	
General Science	
Vocational Science	
Agricultural Science	
Technical	
Business	
Visual Arts	

8. How much contributions does community make to your school?

None	Very Little	Much	Very Much

Please give the example of what the **community** has done in the last three years.

- v.
- vi.
- vii.
- viii.

9. How do you assess the contribution of the PTA to the school?

None	Very Little	Much	Very Much

Please give the example of what the **PTA** has done in the last three years.

- ix.
- x.
- xi.
- xii.

10. How do you assess the contribution of the Old Students to the school?

None	Very Little	Much	Very Much

Please give the example of what the **Old Boys** have done in the last three years.

- xiii.
- xiv.
- xv.
- xvi.

11. How do you assess the contribution of NGOs, Churches, Private companies and other organizations to the school?

None	Very Little	Much	Very Much

Please give the example of what the **Organisations** have done in the last three years.

- xvii.
- xviii.
- xix.
- xx.

12. Does the school have a relationship with the community?

Yes [] No []

What kind of relationship is it?.....

.....

.....

13. Does the school have problem in recruiting teachers?

Yes [] No []

14. Are all the staff members professionals?

Yes [] No []

Specify

Status	%
Professional	
None - Professional	

Total	100%
-------	------

15. Is the school adequately staffed? Yes [] No []

16. Have students stopped attending the school due to financial or other problems?

(a) Financial Yes [] No []

(b) If yes, state reasons:

.....
.....

17. Do teachers leave the school regularly every year?

Yes [] No []

If yes, what do the teachers commonly complain about? Please state some common complains.

.....
.....
.....
.....

18. Are the teachers in the school decently accommodated?

Yes [] No []

19. How are the teachers accommodated at the school?

Please Specify:

Accommodation by School		
-------------------------	--	--

Have to find own accommodation		
		100%