

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Before Independence, various interventions on education were implemented to reform Ghana's education system. Particularly, in 1951, Dr. Nkrumah's implemented an Accelerated Development Plan of Education to rapidly expand recruitment into elementary and secondary education.

The Kwabong Review Committee in 1966 addressed the issue of the majority of pupils from elementary schools who could not gain entry to the restricted number of places in secondary "grammar" schools by introducing the concept of Continuation Schools. This policy was later criticized as elitist. But the problem of nurturing Ghana's teenage population through some process of post-primary training for the majority still remains with us and must be resolved in the present round of educational reform.

The Dzobo Review Committee of 1974 introduced the concept of "comprehensive" Junior Secondary Schools to teach academic and practical skills to all pupils.

This followed the latest education reforms in 1987, reforms which introduced the Junior and Senior Secondary School (JSS) concept. All these reform interventions sought to strengthen Ghana's education system. However, a number of problems seemed to have been created in an attempted to reform the education system.

DEFECTS IN THE EXISTING STRUCTURE OF THE SECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

Owing to the numerous problems, stakeholders have expressed agreement to the effect that public education in Ghana, has failed to meet expectations in terms of its coverage, quality, equitableness and economic utility. In view of this the Government commissioned a committee to review the existing education system. The major findings particularly for basic Junior and Senior Secondary education includes

1. The training for students at the Junior Secondary School (JSS) level is inadequate to equip young pupils with the basic reading, writing and numeracy skills required for further studies at the secondary level to international standards.
2. The innovation of a three-year JSS system introduced under the 1987 reforms has failed to equip the youth of that age bracket with directly

employable skills for the job market.

3. The JSS system has failed to strengthen the basic skills of Ghanaian youth in numeracy and literacy (including cyber literacy) needed by the work force of a modernizing economy.
4. Graduates being produced as a result of the 1987 reforms of ages between 12-15 are still a little immature to absorb the skills of craftsmanship and industry.
5. The present system of massive attrition at age 15 tends to pouring hundreds of thousands of unskilled, unemployable and rather young Ghanaians onto the job market. This cannot be afforded by any socially responsible system of governance. Economically, it is a criminal waster of human resources.
6. Available data indicates that the survival rate from JSS grade 1 to JSS grade 3 hovers around 88.2% - 89.5% for boys and 86.8% for girls. This means that one out of every eight pupils who entered through the JSS stage failed to complete it.
7. The transition rate for students that manage to complete JSS to SSS 1 was approximately 40%.
8. Subjects are taught at the Primary and JSS levels were too many and poorly taught owing to shortages of qualified teachers and materials. In effect, pupils of average ability are not able to acquire sufficient foundation in basic literacy, numeracy and social studies to enable the pupils to move either to Senior Secondary School levels of learning or enter into the job market.
9. The system has fallen between the two schools of good intellectual formation on the one hand and practical skills training on the other.
10. Gender equality is a problem across all levels of education. Particularly at the SSS level, only 42.7% of students are female. This level of attrition cannot be afforded by any nation.
11. Technical education in Ghana which is a subsidiary of Secondary has been neglected by places much emphasis on Grammar/General type of education. This has led to gross disparity between State Senior Secondary School (474) as against State Technical (23) and Vocational (29) Institutes.
12. About 60% of the Junior Secondary School leavers that are not able to proceed to Senior Secondary Schools find themselves in the informal sector

(Apprenticeship) which had been neglected to provides further training opportunities to the about 60% school leavers.

13. The Ghana Education Service which has the mandate to implement the Ministry's policies on education and manage the implementation process has not been able to correct these manifest defects, for a decade and a half.

OBJECTIVES OF THE REFORM (WITH PARTICULARY REFERENCE TO SECONDARY EDUCATION)

Following the numerous defect in Ghana's education system, the objective of Government to implement a new education system is to ensure that

1. Education result in the formation of well-balanced individuals with the requisite knowledge, skills, values, aptitudes and attitudes to become functional and productive citizens.
2. Trained students become enterprising, and adaptable to the demands of a world driven by modern science and technology in order to support a nation aspiring to build a knowledge-based economy within the next generation.
3. improve the quality of life of all Ghanaians by empowering people to create the wealth needed for radical socio-economic and political transformation and consequently overcome poverty.
4. Develop Technical, Agricultural, Vocational education, and on structured Apprenticeship training as a viable course area under Senior Secondary education.

STRATEGIES FOR REFORMING SECONDARY EDUCATION

Structure of Basic Education to lay Strong Foundation for Secondary Education

In the light of the fore-going objectives, Government intends to lay a strong foundation for Secondary education. In this regard, High School education shall comprise two distinct sections - Junior High School and Senior High School. The Junior High School is expected to lay emphasis on general, comprehensive education where pupils will be exposed to a wide range of subjects and skills. Thus, Government has introduced

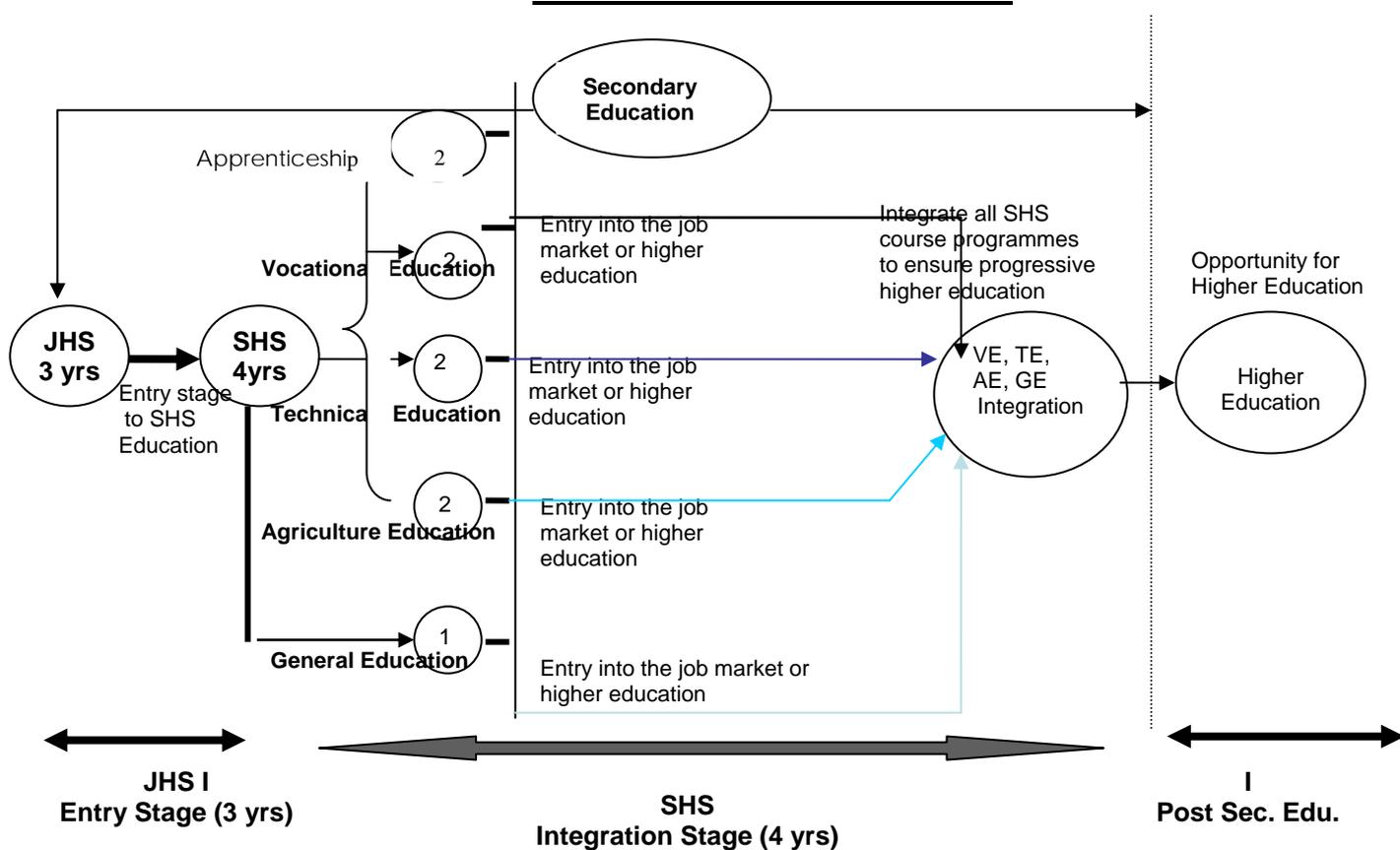
- (i) 2 years of Kindergarten,
- (ii) 6 years of Primary

as reform intervention for the new universal and continuous basic educational programme to address the defects in the education system. The introduction of the 2 years of Kindergarten education is to ensure that pre-school education which plays a crucial role in the formative years of the child, progressively become part of the universal, free and compulsory basic education structure.

STRUCTURE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

The existing Junior and Senior Secondary education which last for three years at each level would be reviewed. The diagramme below depicts the proposed new structure of both Junior and Senior Secondary education under the new reforms.

Figure 1 The Analytical Structure of Secondary Education under the New Education Reform



The above diagram gives a pictorial view of how Government intends to restructure Secondary education. Thus, unlike the JSS which served as a terminal programme for most pupils, the Junior High School would become the entry stage for a comprehensive system of Senior High School training in Vocational, Technical, Agricultural and General education. It is expected that by improving the level of education attained at basic school, the new system will provide the following benefit:

1. increase the demand for basic education and also improve the survival rates in both Primary and Junior High Schools.
2. improve the standards of Junior High education by providing various options to pupils.
3. the rates of transition between Junior High and Senior High will dramatically improve so that eventually the majority of the youth will have had a full course of second cycle education.
4. finally, the wastage of talent through the present attrition which arises from premature selection of career streams before reaching the legally employable age of 15 years would be eliminated.

CONTENT – SUBJECT AREAS / DISCIPLINE

Junior High School Level

Government further intends to review the existing curricula particularly for basic and High School Education. The review would take into considerations subjects that are relevant to development of knowledge and skill capable of meeting both tertiary work and the job market. Thus at the Junior High School level, the proposed subjects of study shall include

1. English Language
2. Mathematics
3. Social Studies
4. Integrated Science
5. Agriculture Science
6. Ghanaian Language
7. TVET (pre-technical vocational
8. ICT and
9. French

Guidance and counselling shall be offered to students at the JHS level to enable students at the JSH choose the right programme to suit their interest and career objective.

Senior High School Level

At the SHS level the proposed core subjects for study shall include

1. English Language
2. Mathematics
3. Integrated Science
4. Social Studies and
5. ICT

in addition to the core subjects at the Senior High School, government has ensured that every students is offered an opportunity that enables him to choose one of the course programmes as shown in figure 1 (Agriculture, Technical, Vocation and General Education).

TEACHER PREPARATION

MANAGEMENT ISSUES

FINANCING ISSUES

8.3 Government also endorses the recommendation of the Review Committee on Kindergarten education among which are that:-

- a) the training of kindergarten teachers should start with the untrained teachers in the system.
- b) teachers should be trained to be able to identify disabilities for early and appropriate intervention. Periodic eye and ear tests should be carried out on pupils.

10.2 Students will be assisted to follow a programme of assessment and guidance/counselling to enable them select courses based on their interests, aptitudes and ability, whether this is in the general, technical, vocational or agricultural streams.

11.6 In sum, Government's position on High School education is that it will comprise two distinct sections - Junior High School and Senior High School. The Junior High School will be of three years' duration and shall lay emphasis on general, comprehensive education where pupils will be exposed to a wide range of subjects and skills. It will be assimilated to the system of Universal Compulsory Basic Education for all, though distinct in quality and methods from primary education, unlike the present JSS system.

11.7 The Senior High School system will be of four years' duration and will offer opportunities for students to receive further pre-tertiary instruction or skills training backed up by formal instruction such as in sandwich courses. The new structure and content of the senior High School instruction should adequately prepare students to pursue University, Polytechnic, Vocational, Teacher Training and other graduate tertiary education at globally competitive standards.

12.0 TECHNICAL, VOCATIONAL AND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

12.1 Government accepts the Review Committee's recommendation that within the second cycle of education, there should be a radically transformed emphasis

on the quality, quantity and financing of Technical, Agricultural and Vocational education to enable it offer a credible alternative to general education (Arts and Science) for the majority of 15 to 19 year olds.

12.2 In pursuit of this, the following will be put in place:

- (i) A National Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training will be established under the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to implement a national post-basic Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system, to guide policymakers, and to sensitise the public on the Government's focus on a new vision for Technical, Agricultural and Vocational education and training.
- (ii) An enhanced financial base and improved physical infrastructure to reflect Government's new vision for TVET in the country.
- (iii) Government will encourage private industry, commerce and services to participate fully in the running of programmes in technical and vocational training at the tertiary level.

13.0 **APPRENTICESHIP/SKILLS TRAINING**

13.1 The large number of the youth who drop out of Primary, and JSS school-line, and are thereafter left to their own devices about their fortunes in the world of work, is a source of worry to government. It reinforces Government's conviction about the urgent need to restructure the current officially disengaged attitude towards their subsequent participation in the world of work generally and their adult/family life. Apprenticeship to acquire proficiency in the numerous areas of skill, industry and craftsmanship is today dominated by the Private Sector. Henceforth, it will become a commitment of the State to partner the private sector in a more systematic way to promote apprenticeship programmes. Government will assume full responsibility for the first year of the apprenticeship programme.

13.2 Government accordingly accepts the recommendations of the Committee and further has decided to:

- constitute a National Apprentice Training Board, among other things, to

oversee and regulate apprentice training and handle issues concerning registration, content, duration and certification;

- formalize community-based apprentice training schemes in all Districts to cater for the youth.
- support institutions such as the Regional Technology Transfer Centres (RTTCs) and Ghana Regional

Appropriate Technology Industrial Service (GRATIS), ICCES, Opportunities Industrialisation Centres (OIC), Youth Leadership Institutes, the Private Sector and other organizations including NGOs to increase capacity and expand their coverage and enrolment of apprentices.

13.3 The financial commitments, which the state makes to second-cycle education in general education, agricultural, vocational and technical institutions should now be matched by commitments to industry-based apprenticeship and training.

14.0 THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

14.1 Government accepts the recommendation that the children's first home language and Ghana's official language, English, should be used as the medium of instruction at the kindergarten and primary level. Government is aware of the importance of children's native language as an effective communication tool for reaching learners at this level. Government is also mindful of the depth of research, which provides a scientific basis for the use of the parental language as a medium of teaching, and of communication generally, in early stages of education, thus the formulation of a policy to that effect.

14.2 The difficulties, however, of implementing that language policy pushed Government to review the modalities of its application. Given the great multiplicity of Ghanaian languages, the most obvious of these difficulties is how to provide for a class of children with diverse home languages as is increasingly the case in both urban and rural school settings.

14.3 Government is very much aware of its responsibility to promote Ghanaian culture, especially through the use of local languages. Hence, every effort would be made to promote the development of teaching and learning materials in Ghanaian languages, together with support for the training of teachers in the use of Ghanaian languages in teaching. Government, therefore, further accepts the recommendation of the Committee that where teachers and learning materials are available and linguistic composition of classes is fairly uniform, the children's first language must be used as the dominant medium of instruction in kindergarten and lower primary school.

14.4 At the same time, it is also well established that an early and routine acquaintance with second, third or even fourth languages confers on children great advantages in their lifelong proficiency in those languages. The facts of geography impose on Ghana a necessity to promote among wide segments of the commercial and financial sector's work forces a proficiency in the French language. Being an English-speaking country is also a source of considerable competitive advantage in international economic and political relations, which Ghana needs to build upon. Therefore, government has in the past encouraged a policy of **early introduction to English and French**, which is intended to maintain in a balanced way with the primary use of mother tongues in kindergarten and primary school and then with increasing intensity in high school.

14.5 It is the decision of Government that apart from assuring primary-tongue proficiency in English by the end of primary school, the study of French to work-a-day standard will also High curriculum should accordingly work up to that policy. This means in particular that all pupils at Junior High level should attain good working and communication proficiency in English. Second cycle institutions should then be able to concentrate on enrichment of communication skills in English rather than spending so much study time in the remedying of basic deficiencies that have been carried over from the primary level.

15.0 **TEACHER EDUCATION**

15.1 Government notes the problems confronting Teacher Education as outlined in the Committee's report particularly the lack of sufficiently trained teachers.

Government is committed to improving teacher education, which is central to the proposed education reforms. In tandem with the reforms outlined above for pre-school, primary and second cycle education, the policy is that by 2015 all levels will be staffed with professionally trained teachers. To this end, the following actions will be taken:-

- (a) A teaching and licensing co-ordinating body, the National Teaching Council, will be established.
- (b) All Teacher Training Colleges will be upgraded into diploma-awarding institutions, which will be affiliated to the education-oriented universities.
- (c) Modular and competency-based training courses and distance education courses will be organized for non-professional teachers to enable them qualify as professional teachers.
- (d) Continuous teacher development will be undertaken to upgrade and update the competences and skills of serving teachers to enable them offer quality teaching and learning in our schools.
- (e) Remedial programmes will be provided for teachers without the minimum requirements to enter teacher-training colleges.
- (f) Special attention will be given to the training of teachers for technical, agricultural, Vocational and special education, and in French.
- (g) Conditions of service will be improved to make the teaching profession attractive and to inspire confidence and efficiency.
- (h) Special training will be given to teachers who opt for Guidance and Counselling programmes
- (i) Incentives will be offered to encourage teachers to transfer from the urban centers to rural areas.

EDUCATION

16.1 Government has decided that, even as executive responsibility for the provision of primary education is transferred to local authorities, physical preparations for the introduction of the new structure and content of primary and Junior High School education should commence as of the academic year 2007-2008 and be completed by the year 2015, with the primary section being completed well ahead of the target date set in United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

16.2 The critical factors in the achievement of this goal will be:

- the training of sufficient numbers of teachers at diploma level in order to be able to deploy professionally qualified level in order to be able to deploy professionally qualified teachers right down to the kindergarten stages.
- The effective decentralization of executive responsibility for the provision and management of primary and second cycle schools to the Districts.
- This decentralization implies a well-planned refocusing of the Ministry and the Ghana Education Service away from the executive management of a country-wide network of schools, their staff, supplies and finances; and now towards the setting and enforcement of educational standards, the development of books and other educational materials, and the promotion of quality teacher training.

18.0 MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF PRE-TERTIARY EDUCATION

18.1 Government affirms the position of the Committee that, good management and administration are critical for effective delivery of teaching and learning. Government accepts that persons appointed to positions of responsibility at all levels should be academically and professionally qualified and should receive training in management and administration. Government, therefore, accepts the recommendation that heads of schools should exercise authority commensurate with their level of responsibility, especially in matters of discipline.

18.2 Government acknowledges the responsibility of District Assemblies to provide infrastructure and equipment for all basic schools. District Education Oversight Committees will be expected to cooperate with District Assemblies to monitor and supervise schools in the District. District Directorates of Education, within the context of decentralization, will become the Education Departments of District Assemblies. Government accepts the recommendation that District Chief Executives, who chair the DEOCs, must ensure that the Committees meet regularly and exercise effective oversight.

19.0 INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION

19.1 Government accepts the recommendation that external inspection of schools should be taken out of the Ghana Education Service and transferred to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. The new Inspectorate of Education will be staffed at very senior levels and will undertake in accordance with its own time table summative evaluation on a periodic basis of all first and second cycle institutions in Ghana. It will report to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to ensure that its recommendations are enforced.

19.2 Under this new arrangement, the Inspectorate will be empowered to set and enforce standards to be observed at the various levels in both public and private educational institutions. However, the routine internal inspection of Schools by directors and supervisors within the Regional and District Directorates of

Education should continue so that standards of performance in teaching and learning are constantly maintained.

24.0 **CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES**

24.1 Government has noted the recommendations of the' Committee with respect to a number of other cross-cutting issues, namely:

- Information and Communication Technology (ICT); ·
- Distance Education;
- Library and Information Services;
- Science and Technology;
- Guidance and Conselling; and
- Private participation in education.

25.0 **ICT: PROJECTING GHANA INTO THE 21st CENTURY**

25.1 Government appreciates the importance which the Committee has attached to ICT, as indicated by the range of issues that have been raised in their recommendations in this area. Government notes these recommendations and has already initiated some action towards the incorporation of ICT in various spheres of government machinery and education.

25.2 It is in this context that the Government of Ghana, with the help of the Government of India, established the Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence in Information Technology (IT) to promote IT education and usage in the country's development effort But the global march of IT is of enormous economic strength. Coming in late as a junior participant with little or no intellectual propriety to bargain with, Ghana risks being swallowed up in huge foreign exchange costs for the acquisition 'of hard and soft ware. IT education must help to avert this.