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# Secondary Education – A 'Tool' for National Development in Ghana. A Critical Appraisal of the Post-Colonial Context

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## Abstract

The paper appraises the role of secondary education as a 'tool' for national development in post-colonial Ghana. In so doing, it analyses the problems of secondary education provision focusing on funding and reform. I have argued that – notwithstanding the World Bank's present support for universal primary education throughout Africa, a project commenced in Ghana as early as 1951, which represents a major shift from the Bank's previous endorsement (1960s) of university education as the panacea to Africa's development challenges – secondary education remains vital to Ghana's development aspirations. As the most accessible form of higher education in Ghana today, increased attention to, and expansion of secondary education has a greater potential than primary education of sustaining literacy levels attained, raising political awareness and thus advancing democracy, as well as supplying sufficient middle-level manpower crucial to national development.

## Résumé

Cet article évalue le rôle de l'éducation secondaire, en tant qu'»outil de développement national dans le Ghana post colonial. Il analyse les problèmes de l'éducation secondaire, en insistant sur son financement et sur sa réforme. J'écris que, malgré le soutien actuel que la Banque Mondiale accorde à l'éducation primaire universelle en Afrique (un projet initié au Ghana dès 1951), qui constitue une rupture majeure par rapport à l'ancien programme de financement de l'éducation universitaire initié par cette même Banque (années 60), considéré comme la panacée aux défis de développement de l'Afrique, l'éducation secondaire demeure vitale à la concrétisation des projets de développement du Ghana. Elle constitue la forme d'éducation supérieure la plus accessible aujourd'hui, au Ghana, et qui bénéficie actuellement d'un regain d'attention et d'une certaine évolution ; elle est plus à même que l'éducation

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primaire, de préserver les taux d'alphabétisation réalisés, de forger une certaine conscience politique, et, ainsi, de faire avancer la démocratie et de fournir une main-d'œuvre de niveau moyen, indispensable au développement national.

## Introduction

Secondary education in post-colonial Ghana, that is, the period since 1951, has been considered a 'tool' for manpower and national development. Yet, research on the history of education in Ghana (Mc William and Kwamena-Poh 1975; Bening 1990; Quist 1990); educational reform and social change (Foster 1965; Ahiable- Addo 1980; Scadding 1990; Antwi 1990) and the church contribution to educational expansion (Bartels 1965; Smith 1966; Odamtten 1978; Quist 1994) has under-recognised the crucial contribution of secondary education to national development. This paper attempts to fill this gap by specifically focusing on, examining, and critically appraising, secondary education's role as a 'tool' for national development in post-colonial Ghana. The paper argues strongly for increased attention to secondary education since it constitutes a vital link between the primary and tertiary levels of education and constitutes a touchstone in any country's efforts at human capacity building with implications for accelerated national development. In view of this, the paper does not cover primary or university education.

Structurally, the paper first provides a profile history of secondary education expansion and proceeds to examine its relation to national development. This serves as a framework for a critical appraisal of the problems of secondary education development in the second part. Here, issues relating to funding and reform are addressed. Third, I analyse the implications of the problems of secondary education for national development, pointing to the challenges for Ghana in her goal of becoming a middle-level income country by 2020.

I contend that despite the World Bank's present support for increased primary education in Africa, a major shift from its previous (1960s) endorsement of higher education as the panacea to Africa's post-colonial development challenges, secondary education remains critical to Ghana's quest to develop at a faster rate. It is the most accessible form of higher education in Ghana today with greater potential than primary education of sustaining higher levels of literacy, increasing political awareness, strengthening democracy and producing a pool of middle-level manpower crucial to national development.

## A brief history of secondary education and national development

In 1876 the first Methodist church secondary school, Mfantsipim (initially, the Wesleyan Mission High School), a boys' institution modelled on English Wesleyan schools, was established at Cape Coast in the Central Region of Ghana. By 1930, the Anglican and Catholic churches, in competition with the Methodists, had respectively founded at Cape Coast Adisadel (1910) and St. Augustine's Colleges (1930). These later two were also boys' institutions. The colonial state under Governor Gordon F. Guggisberg (1919–1927), realising the importance of secondary education, joined the enterprise initially in 1924 and more fully in 1927 by establishing Achimota School (initially Prince of Wales College), its co-educational masterpiece. Achimota was modelled on elite English 'Public' schools, namely, Eton and Winchester that trained the scholar, 'gentlemen', politician, and elite professionals of Britain, among others (Abodeka 1977; Annstrong 1981; Quist 1999a, 1999b). It rather unsuccessfully sought to blend this elite British model with an American one – the Hampton – Tuskegee design – intended solely for the industrial and manual training of liberated African-Americans in post-Civil War United States (Bennan 1971, 1972; Steiner-Khamsi and Quist 2000). Such replication and expected adaptation of metropolitan models (from England and the United States) with their inherent tensions and contradictions had cultural, social and educational implications for Ghana's development as a nation (Steiner-Khamsi and Quist 2000).

The Mfantsipim model, most especially, but also Achimota, provided the prototypes for secondary education influencing other private schools, notably Accra Academy founded in 1937 in Accra (Boahen 1996; Quist 1999), the national capital. All these early schools were founded in southern Ghana, that is, the geographical area extending from the coast of Ghana to the Ashanti Region. This development placed the south almost half-a-century ahead of the north, the latter being the territory stretching from Ashanti to the Upper East and West Regions respectively. Two notable female institutions, namely, Wesley Girls High (1935) and Holy Child Schools (1946) were also sited at Cape Coast. These educationally prestigious Cape Coast schools ( even to date) as well as Achimota, more than any others, have attracted the cream of Ghanaian primary school graduates.

The south of Ghana, thus, took an early lead in the political development of Ghana by producing the first crop of highly educated elite who

were mostly professionals in law, medicine, journalism, teaching but also ardent nationalists contesting colonial rule on a regular basis. Notable among these were two British trained lawyers, John Mensah-Sarbah and Joseph E. Casely-Hayford. The North of Ghana had its first secondary school in 1951.

Throughout the colonial era no quota system was instituted for the benefit of educationally neglected areas such as the North. Gross gender, class, ethnic and regional imbalances prevailed nation-wide with implications for national development. Williams (1964: 299) asserts that data spanning the 1920s and 1930s, that is, the Guggisberg era (1919–1927) confirm that the ratio of girls to boys in government and government-assisted schools was 1:4.8. Specifically, in 1925, it was 1:4; in 1928, 1:3.5 and in the 1930s, 1:3 and in 1891 it was 1:3.9.

Thus, Williams concludes that 'whatever one's interpretation, the hard facts are that the ratio of girls to boys was approximately the same at the end of the Governor's' [meaning Guggisberg] period of office as it was had been thirty years earlier (that is 1891). And this was in spite of Guggisberg's criticism of the entire educational system as one that was inefficient, ineffective and 'rotten' to the core. Instructively, Guggisberg and the colonial state notwithstanding, the pioneering work of the missions (churches) remained unsurpassed. At the end of the colonial period, 1950–51, there were altogether only two government secondary schools with an enrolment of 857, eleven government-assisted (mostly church-established) institutions with a total attendance of 1,919, and 44 non-assisted ones (private) also with an attendance of 3,386 (Foster 1965; Quist 1999b). Achimota, a government school, and the Cape Coast church-initiated institutions that became government-assisted were well established, providing courses that led to the General Certificate of Ordinary and Advanced Levels. In the Nkrumah era (1951–1966) these examinations modelled on the Cambridge School Certificate of England were taken at the end of five years of secondary education and a two-year sixth-form work respectively.

Under the Nkrumah administration, secondary education received particular attention since the government regarded it as the lynchpin for educational progress, manpower development and overall national development. A 'national' secondary schools project was implemented through the Ghana Educational Trust (GET), 1957–1964. The Trust aimed to increase access to secondary education nation-wide, particularly in rural and deprived areas by creating and increasing access and participation. By 1960, GET had established nineteen secondary schools throughout

the country. Table 1 depicts the status of secondary education in Ghana in the critical years of the Nkrumah era when national development received the greatest attention.

**Table 1: Secondary schools in Ghana from 1951–1966: Types, number and enrolment**

| Year | Public (Government& Approved) Schools | | Private Schools | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | Enrolment | No. | Enrolment | No. | Enrolment |
| 1951 | 13 | 2,937 | 49 | 3,964 | 62 | 6,901 |
| 1957 | 38 | 9,860 | 22 | 2,259 | 60 | 12,119 |
| 1960 | 39 | 11,874 | 31 | 4,238 | 70 | 16,112 |
| 1966 | 105 | 42,628 | 45 | 5,940 | 150 | 48,568 |

*Sources*: Ghana, 1960, *Educational Statistics*, 1959, Accra, Ministry of Education, pp. 1–2; Ghana, 1964, 1962 *Statistical Year Book*. Second Issue, Accra, Central Bureau of Statistics, pp 194–165; Ghana, 1969, 1965–66 *Statistical Year Book* Accra, Central Bureau of Statistics, p. 200.

Table 1 features 1951, that is, the start of the post-colonial phase and an era in which Ghana was politically in 'transition to independence'. It also presents data on 1957, the year of Ghana political independence from Britain and 1960, the year Ghana attained republican status under Dr. Krame Nkrumah. The year 1966, when Nkrumah was overthrown in a military coup d'état, is also covered. The Table shows the number, type and enrolment figures for public (government and government-assisted) and private (owned by individuals) secondary schools. It discloses an almost three hundred percent increase in the number of public secondary schools between 1951 and 1957, and between 1957 and 1966. Enrolment rose by approximately 300 percent between 1951 and 1957, and 500 percent between 1957 and 1966. Such increases were, however, not replicated at the private school level where a decline of 200 percent in the total number of schools between 1951 and 1957 can be discerned.

From Table 1, public secondary educational access expanded more rapidly at the expense of the private sector and this was as a result of the Nkrumah administration's policy of using the private sector to augment

the public domain. Such a policy was effected through the 'encouragement' status granted the more promising private secondary schools by virtue of the fact that they were performing well academically. Such status brought these schools more fully into the public domain, making them government-assisted. Twenty-three of these institutions were actually built, managed and controlled by GET by 1961 (Quist 1999b). From September 1959 to September 1962, GET managed no fewer than 34 well-equipped and well-housed secondary schools. By September 1963, it alone had put up forty-six buildings, increasing access and opportunity for many Ghanaians students irrespective of ethnicity, class and gender. This was possible following increased funding from the Ghana Cocoa Marketing Board (now Ghana Cocoa Board) which endowed it with initial seed money of 2.5 million pounds sterling. The Ghana Cocoa Board remains the sole buyer and exporter of all cocoa (the leading export crop and major foreign ex change earner until the 1990s) produced in Ghana.

Under Jerry Rawlings's Provincial National Defence Council (PNDC) government, 1981–1991, a major change in the inherited colonial secondary education structure, most especially, and the content occurred in 1987 with the implementation of the Junior Secondary education reform. This introduced a 3-3 structure, that is, three years of Junior and three years of Senior Secondary education; a structure apparently informed by similar ones (the 3-3 high school system) in the United States, Japan and Nigeria. This structure was a major departure from the British colonial 5-2 model. Importantly, it made three years of secondary education compulsory for all primary school graduates for the first time in Ghana. Two new examinations, namely, the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) taken at the end of three years of Junior Secondary education, and the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE) administered at the end of the Senior Secondary programme were also introduced (Quist 1999b). One significant change was the elimination of the old middle school. The curriculum content of the Junior Secondary schools now included cultural studies, Ghanaian languages, environmental studies, agricultural science and life skills, mostly based on Ghanaian themes. Content, in most subjects at the senior secondary level, was also revised to reflect new standards and expectations.

Despite these, a radical reform of the system was still absent. The Senior Secondary programme essentially retained some of the features of the old system, such as course designations, preparation and management of the examination and certification processes. Further, Senior Secondary schools still remained highly selective, meritocratic and elitist, espe-

cially the Cape Coast schools and Achimota. By 1990, an expanded secondary school system produced 252 Senior and 4,918 Junior Secondary schools nation-wide; the Junior Secondary institutions had a total enrolment of 507,168, while Senior Secondary schools (the old secondary schools) had 169,204 students. By 1993, enrolment at the Junior Secondary level was approximately 80 percent while that at the Senior Secondary level was about 40 percent of secondary school-going students. With the 1987 reforms, only Senior Secondary education remained the prized aspect since it guaranteed access to the universities and other tertiary institutions.

How was secondary education connected to national development? Since colonial times, secondary education was an instrument for the production of middle-level manpower comprising clerical staff, technicians, schoolteachers, facilitators for adult learners, nurses and other paramedical staff, critical to national development.

I define 'National development' as 'the effective harnessing of all potential human (natural) resources of the state through education, training, industry and technology, among others, for accelerated economic growth and socio-political development'. Secondary education was also a 'tool' for cultivating the 'cream' that secured university education and became lawyers, doctors, academicians, engineers, accountants, among others. Yet, internationally, the exact role of education in national development remained difficult to determine. As Debeauvais (1981:67) noted, 'in less than thirty years we have witnessed the birth, the success, and the decline, of the notion that education is one of the chief factors of development'. This notwithstanding, belief in education's contribution to national development remained strong and accounted for the targets set by countries the world over for increased admission to schools, calls by donor institutions such as the World Bank for enlarged access to all types and levels of education, better educational financing, and continuing research that linked education to national development (Easton and Klees 1990).

How far then might it be argued that the post-colonial state's use of secondary education was for 'national development'? To what extent would a contrary argument hold for the colonial state? The post-colonial state, convinced of the importance of education to modernisation and national development, and confronted by the harsh realities of Ghana's peripheral status in a globalising world, resolved to expand higher education beyond the elementary level rapidly. The result was the immediate attention paid secondary (and university) education by the Nkrumah government (1951–1966) and, in recent years, the Rawlings regime (1981–

1991). Its expansion to cater for the universities (three by 1966, and five by 1999 including one university college) – the most critical higher education – was of primary concern. Also crucial was the elimination of regional, gender, class and ethnic inequalities as a me and of promoting national integration (Bray, 1986). This latter, essential to the associated task of nation-building, includes curriculum reform with a stress on a national language, quota/scholarship systems for less privileged areas and massive infrastructural expansion.

Scholarship schemes such as the Cocoa Marketing Board and the Northern Special Scholarships were instituted by the Nkrumah administration to create opportunities for access. These, solely funded by the Cocoa Marketing Board (now Ghana Cocoa Board) and the Ghana Government, have been continuing, aimed at financially handicapped but needy and promising students. The Northern Special Scholarship Scheme has been, singularly, aimed at bridging the alleged fifty years development gap between the south and north of Ghana by supporting the deprived and under-served Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions. The Junior and Senior Secondary programme pursued by the Rawlings regime (1981–1991) has also been instrumental in carrying further the goals of national development though its benefits will only become evident by the year 2020.

For the colonial state (1874–1950), however, it has been argued that the main purpose of education with its stress on the colonial education policy, 'education for adaptation', was neither to train a bourgeoisie in the likeness of the metropolitan country (Britain), nor train scientists and technicians capable of developing technology, but rather to produce individuals alienated by the very content of what they had been taught (Amin 1975: 51). The colonial state's only secondary school, Achimota, patterned on English 'Public' schools, doubtless contributed to the progress (development) of the colony by producing excellent graduates, future leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah and Jerry Rawlings, scholars and researchers in agriculture for the benefit of Ghana and Africa. Certainly, this was development-oriented even though Kwame Nkrumah (1970:36–37) was to note later on that Achimota's '... curriculum, discipline and sports were as close imitations as possible of those operating in English Public Schools. The object was to train up a western oriented political elite committed to the attitudes and ideologies of capitalism and bourgeois society' . Strikingly, 'development' as a concept with economic and social implications only assumed international currency after the Second World War (Esteva 1992). Achimota's isolated setting also negated its initial mission of de-

veloping a rural-community flavour. The school's atmosphere fostered elitism, intellectual and academic pursuits as the English 'Public' Schools did (Armstrong 1981 ). Its doors were never really opened to the masses nor was it able to effectively champion the colonial state's education policy of 'education for adaptation' (Lewis 1954; Scanlon 1964).

Indeed, 'education for adaptation', which advocated the 'adaptation of education in Africa to the aptitudes, mentalities, occupations and environment' and which was championed by the colonial state as a development policy was considered as dependency rather than development-oriented (Kay and Nystrom 1971:252; Bude 1983; Barrington, 1983:65). It was intended to promote the underdevelopment of Ghana and British Tropical Africa. Berman (1971:145) observed that 'the successful implementation of the Phelps-Stokes Commission's concept of "education for adaptation", of which Achimota was the exemplar in Ghana would have radically altered the course of modern African history, and not in Africa's favour. It would have placed the African countries several centuries behind the advanced countries and would also have deepened the stereotype generally accepted in the West about Africa even today'. What remains controversial in academic and scholarly circles is whether the colonial state apparatus really aimed to promote development. Secondary education, although seen as a medium for restricted middle level manpower development by this state, was not favourably regarded since it had the potential of producing politically conscious and educated persons capable of stirring national unrest.

## Problems of secondary education development

Morsy (1987:4) has argued that for developing countries 'secondary education has not been adapted to deal with the present crisis (of national development in a rapidly globalising world) as well as the exponential growth of science and technology'. I would argue here that this has largely been so in Ghana for two main reasons. First, there is the issue of inadequate funding despite the popularity and consensus among all interest groups, namely, the state, educated elite and the churches, about the significance of secondary education to national development (and nation-building), and this was notwithstanding the fact that it received consistent funding since colonial times (Quist 1999a, 1999b ). Second, are questions and problems surrounding reform with particular emphasis on the curriculum.

First, let us examine the question of funding. Insufficient and disproportionate funding for secondary education has been a problem. In the

colonial era, and right into the early post-colonial phase, that is, 1957–58, funding was biased in favour of Achimota Secondary School. Achimota alone was allocated the following from government recurrent expenditure for education between 1957 and 1960: in 1957–1958 she received £G 107,320 from the total of £G 618,289; 1958–1959 she was given £G 96,600 out of £G 657,900 while the rest of the government secondary schools in the country received £G 34,300; and in 1959–1960 Achimota had funds amounting to £G 101,280 out of a grand total of £G 727,640 compared with the £G 38,360 for other government-assisted institutions (Quist 1990:196). The church-established schools such as Mfantsipim School, Adisadel and St. Augustine's Colleges, and several others, depended on government grants-in-aid of which Achimota was still the measuring rod. Such lop-sided funding adversely affected the nation-wide expansion of secondary education. Strikingly, the colonial state throughout its seventy-six years (1874–1950) of effective colonial rule only established one secondary institution.

The question might further be posed: what then was the financial status of secondary education as a whole vis-à-vis other sectors of the national economy throughout the post-colonial era? Despite Quist's (1999a, 1999b) assertion that secondary education in Ghana received consistent and sustained funding, at times more than other critical sectors of the national economy such as health, agriculture, and fuel and power since colonial times, secondary education nevertheless competed with these very sectors, as well as with primary and university education for limited government funds. Consequently, funds for secondary education never amounted to half the total national budget for development projects. In this instance, it was (and has been) secondary technical education, critical as well for advanced technological education that ultimately suffered.

What are the pointers? Here, it would be useful to compare government expenditure from 1958–65 (the Nkrumah era) with that for 1985-90 (the Rawlings period). These two eras constitute the watershed in secondary education development in Ghana. In Table 2 which covers 1958-65, the total education expenditure of £G66,003.0 in 1965 constituted 65 percent of the entire social services budget for the whole country. In this same year secondary education alone was allocated £G 7,902. 9, that is, 12 percent of the education vote, while primary education received a higher amount of £G 23,921.5, equivalent to 36 percent. In comparison, the colleges and universities were also allocated £G 28,261.8, that is, 43 percent. Clearly, secondary education received the least funding among the key aspects in the education sector. Education as a whole, however,

received more funds than health in 1965. From the Table, the overall total for the Defence sector alone between 1958 and 1965 was higher than that for secondary education, which received £G 756.1. The Defence sector was allocated 3,495.5, four times more than what was given to secondary education. In 1960–61 secondary education received £G 4,995.1, whilst the Defence sector was allotted £G9,972.2, almost twice. In 1965 secondary education was allocated £G7,902.9 whereas the Defence sector received £G25,384.5, about three-and-a-half times that of secondary education.

**Table 2: Revenue and expenditure of central government on Education: Combined consolidated and development funds, 1958–1965, compared with selected sectors (in £G, percentages in parenthesis)**

| Sector | 1958–59 | 1960–61 | 1962–63 | 1965 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Administration | 1,244.5(13) | 778.40(05) | 998.3(04) | 3,280.6(05) |
| Primary | 3,031.6(31) | 4,534.9(30) | 8,709.5(38) | 23,921.5(30) |
| Secondary | 756.1(7.8) | 4,534.9(33) | 1,919.6(08) | 7,902.9(12) |
| Colleges & Universities | 3,858.2(40) | 3,245.4(22) | 8,251.1(36) | 28,261.8(43) |
| Teacher training | 93,4(01) | 543.1(22) | 616.9(03) | 1,393.0(02) |
| Other | 165.9(02) | 253.3(02) | 1,924.5(08) | 160.9(02) |
| Total | 9,682.1 | 14,973.3 | 22,865.2 | 66,003.0 |
| Overall Total for social services | 19,895.5(49) | 27,730.8(54) | 40,171.7(57) | 101,358.0(65) |
| Defence | 3,495.5 | 9,972.2 | 11,076.9 | 25,384.5 |
| Health Total | 3,835.5 | 5,987.5 | 9,583.2 | 19,660.0 |

Source: Ghana (1964) 1962 *Statistical Year Book* Second Issue (Accra, Central Bureau of Statistics), p. 148; Ghana (1967) 1964 *Statistical Year Book*, Fourth Issue (Accra, Central Bureau of Statistics). Table 153, P. 163; Ghana (1973), *Statistical Year Book* 1969–1970. Seventh Issue (Accra, Central Bureau of Statistics), pp. 144–145.

*Percentages derived by author were rounded off to the nearest whole figure.

Clearly, the Nkrumah government emphasised education more than all other social services including health. As shown, however, secondary education did not attract more funds between 1958 and 1965 than Defence,

**Table 3: Total government development expenditure on community and social services (1985–1990), compared with other sectors (amount in million Cedis and percentage distribution in brackets)**

| Sector | 1985 | 1986 | 1987 | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Education | 402.1(32.1) | 657,7(31.9) | 1,686.0(38.5) | 2,358.8(27.2) | 3,149.9(27.6) | 6,696.3(33.4) |
| Health | 233.4(18.7) | 447.0(217) | 2,153.3(49.2) | 2,119.6(24.5) | 3,566.6(31.3) | 5,121.6(255) |
| Social security & welfare | 27.7(2.2) | 25.9(0.0) | 109.0(2.5) | - | 125.7(1.1) | 347.8(1.7) |
| Housing & community services | 419.6(33.5) | 748.4(36.3) | 428.2(9.8) | 3,931.7(45.4) | 3,995.8(35.0) | 5,090.7(25.4) |
| Recreational, cultural & religious services | 168.5(13.5) | 182.2(8.9) | - | 248.2(4.9) | 563.7(4.9) | 2,818.1(14.0) |
| Total (1) | 1,251.3(100) | 2,061.8(100) | 4,376.5(100) | 8,658.3(100) | 11,400.8(100) | 20,074,5(100) |
| Total as % of total recurrent & development expenditure | 6.9 | 7.1 | 9.5 | 12.9 | 12.5 | 16.4 |
| Defence | 322.2 | 809.8 | - | 141.5 | 527.9 | 671.5 |
| Road & waterways | 2,174.8 | 2,052.7 | 6,869.1 | 9,943.1 | 12,214.5 | 12,290.2 |

*Sources*: Ghana (1990;1994) *Quarterly Digest of Statistics*, VII an XII, 4 and 1. pp. 42 and 54 * Percentages Compiled by Author

or the colleges and universities as a whole nor than primary education, except in 1960–61. Within the secondary sector itself, the Nkrumah government's expenditure levelled gradually for all institutions by 1960, but favoured Ghana National College at Cape Coast more than any other institution in the country; a situation reminiscent of Achimota. Ghana National College was the first of the 'national' secondary schools to be established by Kwame Nkrumah in 1948.

It was later taken over and managed by GET. Table 2 shows that in some years, however, secondary education had more than other levels of education. For instance, in 1960–1961 it received £G 4,995.1, that is, 33 percent of the budget while primary education was allocated £G 4,534.9, that is, 30 percent. Yet, there prevailed an uneven distribution of government recurrent expenditure at the secondary level between 1957 and 1960. Achimota's example as already noted provides ample illustration.

Under Jerry Rawlings (1981–1991) secondary education financing was linked to an economic recovery and structuraladjustment programme. The Ghanaian economy by 1983 was at its lowest ebb following consistent failures in domestic policy implementation and management, political instability arising from frequent military coups between 1966 and 1981, and the droughts of 1982–1983. Anyemedu (1993:13) observed that:

> Real GDP stagnated and per capita incomes declined at the average annual rate of about 3 per cent. Inflation averaged over 50 percent and reached triple digits in some years. By 1981, cocoa's output was less than at independence in 1957 and only 45 per cent of the 1965 peak. The other major export commodities – gold, diamonds, and timber – had all suffered significant reductions [while] agricultural stagnated throughout the 1970s [despite] population growth at an annual rate of about 2.5 percent.

This situation affected secondary education standards, infrastructure, equipment and personnel. The effects were debilitating, especially in view of the fact that cocoa was 'the goose that laid the golden egg' for Ghana's economy and financed secondary education development.

Such economic decline explained the implementation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank advocated Economic Recovery (ERP) and Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) that spanned two phases, that is, 1983–1986 representing the stabilising phase and 1987–1989 constituting the structural adjustment and development phase. These aimed, among others, to arrest and reverse a decade of precipitous decline in production, particularly in agriculture, including cocoa, rehabilitate national infrastructure, sustain economic growth at between 5 and 5.5 percent a year over the medium-term, raise public

investment from about 10 percent of national income to 25 percent by the end of the decade, improve the management of resources in the public sector and effectively mobilise the resources to improve the overall well-being of Ghana (Anyemedu 1993: 19–20).

The government received substantial funding from international donor agencies. By September 1987, it had acquired a total of$34.5 million from the World Bank, Overseas Development Agency (ODA), The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Fund, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Norwegian Government (Sefa Dei 1993: 53) to initiate the first phase of pre-university education reform. This involved the introduction of a three-year Junior Secondary School (JSS) programme to replace the four-year middle school system. The government also removed subsidies. In the Programme of Actions to mitigate the Social Costs of Adjustment (1987), it was observed that 'secondary school students have already been hit by the removal of Government feeding and boarding subsidies and the charging of economical fees for the use of textbooks' (Ghana 1987: 37; Quist 1999b:437).

The immediate impact of the structural adjustment and economic recovery programme was felt in the Ghana Education Service, the implementing organ of the Ministry of Education which provided (and still does) teachers for Junior Secondary Schools. It exposed almost 18,000 ghost workers in both the Civil and Ghana Education Services on the government payroll. This led to the introduction of national service for all sixth formers preparing to enter the universities (this programme has now been abandoned) in order to save the Junior Secondary programme. To make up for the removal of subsidy, intensive rehabilitation and repair of many secondary schools that had deteriorated infrastructurally were undertaken. Here, the day secondary institutions attracted the most attention. In 1987, allocations of 8.75 million cedis per day school and 3.5 million cedis per boarding school were made. In all a total of US$ 600,000 was set aside from IDA-EDSAC (International Development Agency-Education and Structural Adjustment Component) sources to start the Junior Secondary programme whilst a further US$ 5 .6 million was being sought.

These foreign loans, however, only increased Ghana's debt problem. Orivel and Sergent (1988) have rightly noted that foreign aid - expected to constitute a panacea for the ailing educational problems - only exacerbated the situation mainly because most donor agencies seek to promote particular interests which in some cases are at odds with what the country actually wants. By 1982, Ghana's long-term disbursed and outstanding

debt was US$ 1.1 billion. IMF debt totalled US$ 21.4 million in 1982 and short-term debt was US$ 195.0 million. By 1987, long-term debt outstanding and disbursed was US$ 2.2 billion; IMF debit amounted to US$ 778 million, and short-term debt was US$ 108 million. These debts placed major constraints on resource provision for the sustenance of the secondary education reform. By receiving all these loans and aids Ghana lost complete control over her own economy (Orivel and Sergent, 1988: 459-469; Bray, 1984:129–136), with significant consequences for secondary education reform and national development.

This raises questions about the purposes and usefulness of foreign aid to national development. The question might be posed whether the country had an alternative. Obviously, the options and alternatives were few or non-existent considering the extent to which the national economy of Ghana had been run down since 1961/2 and the difficulty of raising loans and funds domestically to salvage the situation. Indeed, without the foreign loans, it is doubtful if the New Education Reforms of 1987 could have been undertaken. By 1987, the opportunities for the government to raise funds domestically were virtually non-existent. The country had economic and financial problems revolving around low savings, low capital formation, and increased international debt. Under these circumstances, foreign aid definitely was useful particularly for a developing country such as Ghana where capital formation and capacity building through education remains crucial to accelerated growth and development.

How then did secondary education fare financially vis-à-vis other sectors of the economy in the Rawlings era? Table 3, which covers 1985-1990, provides clear pointers. The Table shows that education as a whole competed actively with health, housing and community services for increased government funds. In 1985, education received 32.1 percent of total development budget, while housing and community services had 33.5 percent of total government allocation for social services, including education. The Table further reveals that in 1986 housing and community services had a budget that surpassed education by 4.4 percent. In 1987 and 1989 education took second position to health receiving 10 and 3.7 percent respectively. As total percentage of gross recurrent and development expenditure, the entire vote for community and social services development of which educational projects were a part between 1985 and 1990 was minuscule. In 1985, it amounted to 6.9 percent; 7.1 percent in 1986; 9.5 percent in 1987; reaching 16.4 percent in 1990. Obviously, the bulk allocation made to community and social services went into recur-

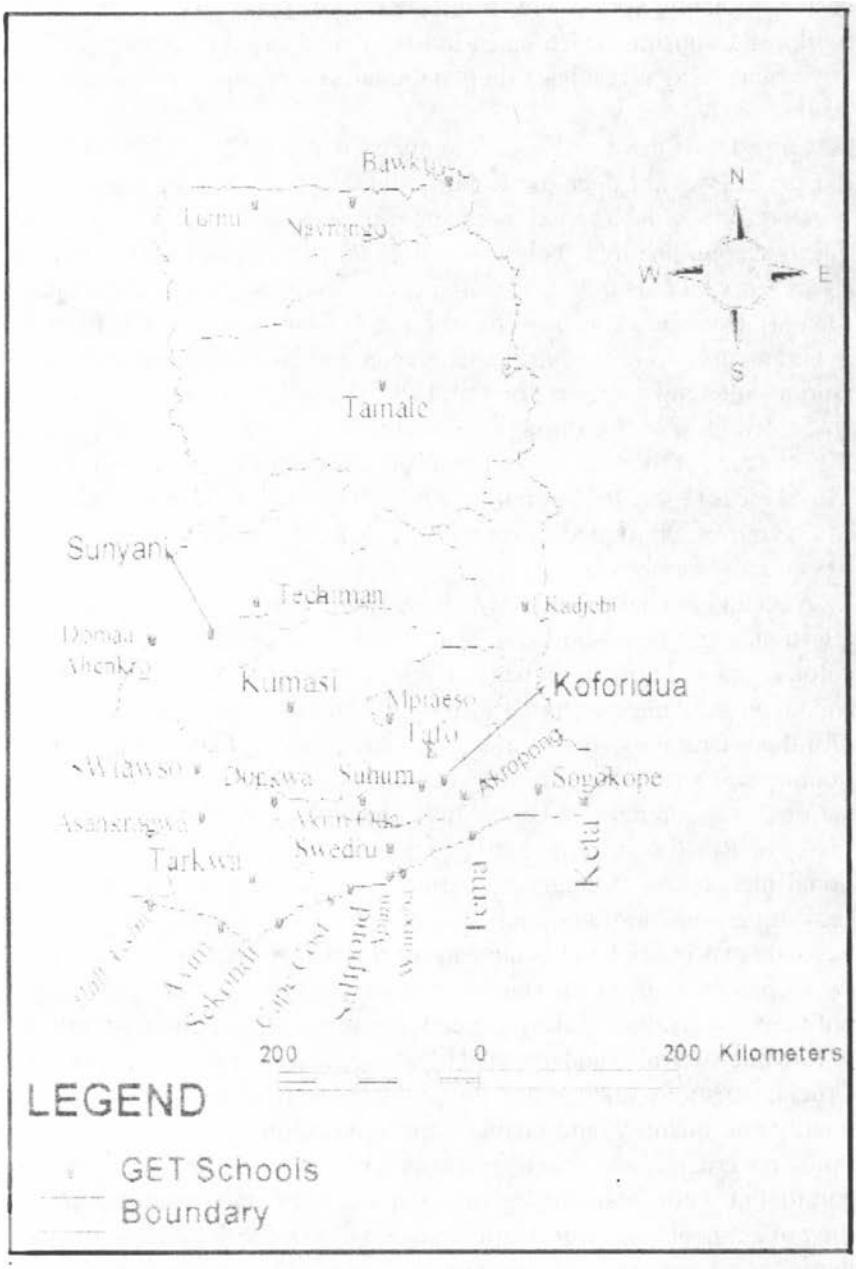
rent expenditure, namely, wages, salaries and overhead administrative costs.

Greater constraint, however, arose from challenges posed by other sectors, notably, agriculture, health, transport and communication and works and housing which since independence had drawn support from governments as a result of their national development plans and programmes.

Considering the inability of the country with a GNP of $390 million in the 1980s (World Education Report, 1993) to support secondary educational reform, Ghana relied more and more on international donor funding to accomplish this. This was unlike the 1950s and 1960s when the country drew on its own substantial cocoa reserves. Financial assistance for the New Education Reforms of 1987, for instance, came from the governments of Germany, France, Japan and Norway most especially. Donor financial support for the 1987 secondary education reforms amounted to $231.7 million. The World Bank's share represented about 79.5 percent of the total investment for the education sector. Yet, Orivel and Sergent (1988:462) point out that, Ghana, together with other African countries, continued to receive the smallest amounts of foreign aid (less than $1 per head).

A second crucial problem worth analysing here is that of reform. The question might be posed: what has 'reform' comprised during the post-colonial era and how has it been effected? What have been the trade-offs and ideological underpinnings? Here, 'reform' must be looked at in terms of infrastructural expansion aimed at increased enrolment, and also curriculum and structural reform and models that best serve the interest of national development. Whereas the objective under Nkrumah (1951–1966) or Rawlings (1981–1991) remained one of dealing with educational inequalities through infrastructural expansion and increased access in participation, attention was also focused on promoting literacy beyond the primary level as a means of fostering manpower and national development. It is worth stating that such use of secondary education politicised it. But secondary education reform whether under Nkrumah or Rawlings was also underpinned by ideological and resource constraints. Crucial questions surrounding curricular relevance, equality and equity, quality and quantity, and changes and innovation in structures, institutions, governance and management processes (Spaulding 1988:5) were paramount while political legitimation was a predominant concern for the government in power. But the state was not the only interest group that kept a keen eye on secondary education. The educated elite, most

**Figure 1: Distribution of Ghana Educational Trust (GET) schools**



especially, perceived it as a viable vehicle for accelerated social, economic, political and occupational mobility. As a result these groups continued to monitor reform with the aim of ensuring that it did not introduce changes significantly different from the quality and standard of education they had enjoyed.

Quite instructively, state initiated secondary education reform since colonial times did not always imply 'change' over a period of time; 'change' that was structural, content related, infrastructural or organisational and that was consistently pursued. This was amply so in the Nkrumah era where such reform meant massive expansion of the hitherto limited access and increased enrolment. It did not really translate into a radical organisational nor even structural form. Thus, Foster and Clignet (1964) and Quist (1999) affirm that by the end of the Nkrumah era, secondary educational expansion had been mostly quantitative rather than qualitative. The Ghana Educational Trust (1967–1964) that aimed at the massive expansion of hitherto limited access to secondary education was meant as an innovation. It introduced a new kind of secondary school - 'the national school'. Yet, the spread of such schools raises the question as to the distribution of national infrastructure and the initial mandate of building secondary schools in rural and neglected areas. Figure 1 shows that most GET schools were centered in southern Ghana, and this was in spite of the fact that this region, especially the cities of Accra and Cape Coast, already paraded the most prestigious secondary institutions and altogether accounted for the bulk of such institutions by 1966 (Quist 1999). More instructively, the demand for secondary education in the north of Ghana was not intense by the end of the Nkrumah era in 1966.

In some cases especially with the curriculum, 'reform' implying 'change' or 'innovation' was attempted, but this was not comprehensively pursued and in some cases was a mixed bag. Here, subject content that was Ghanaian and African was introduced into the humanities, notably, History, Geography and Religion. But to an extent the teaching syllabus, notably in History, still featured western European themes. Reform with respect to the sciences was a mixed success. In general curricular reform saddled between utilitarian-technical versus pure academic-'grammar' - secondary education. This was further complicated by the persisting contest among the churches, educated elite and the state for control of secondary education content and direction. Such a contest informed the difficulties of Africanisation (indigenisation) of the curriculum.

Doubtlessly, it was the ambivalence and contradictions of the Africanisation project that was also evident by 1966, only to be repli-

cated in 1991 (Kwamens and Benavot 1991; Bishop 1990). Whilst espousing Africanisation of the school curriculum, there was a strong reluctance and apparent difficulty in Africanising the mathematics and the physical sciences or accepting one of the numerous languages as a national language to compete with English. Certainly, the complete Africanisation of the mathematics and physical sciences was a challenging task, considering the fact that most of the theories and theorems could not necessarily be replaced. Efforts could, nevertheless, still have been made to introduce topics/themes that had relevance for the African environment and the development of Ghanaian indigenous science and technology. With regard to language, it is obvious that the multiplicity of languages in most African countries, including Ghana, has always remained a major obstacle to the selection of one language as the national language. Indeed, it is largely in view of this that English has proven more acceptable, and particularly because it is also an international and commercial language. The cultural implications of this difficulty have been adequately addressed by many postcolonial scholars (Whitehead1995; Gosh 1993; Thiong'o 1986). Significantly, the Africanisation policy also attracted distrust from the educated elites who were suspicious of its supposed intentions. More significant in contemporary times are the influences of globalisation and modernisation (taken to mean westernisation). These remain potent obstacles to the reshaping of educational thought and practice in Ghana and Africa as a whole.

Excepting the 1987 reforms when major structural changes were really undertaken bringing into being three years each of Junior and Senior secondary education, previous efforts at reform only replicated the colonial model or readjusted it in diverse ways. The 1987 structural reforms, however, allowed for only one track and pattern nation-wide and remain significant for challenging the colonial model and the prevailing conception of secondary education. The reform also created psychological difficulties for Junior Secondary school students. These students were still considered by many as middle (elementary) school students when in fact they had become secondary school students with the introduction of the new reforms. Worst of all, they were still attired like elementary school students. Also, they continued to occupy the same compound/ school environment with the primary school pupils, and thus, were not readily distinguishable from them, except for the sizes, height and age. Under the circumstances it was difficult for the junior secondary school students to perceive themselves as secondary school students who were expected to display a certain level of maturity clearly distinct from that of the primary

school pupil. Thus, even though most of them wanted to be regarded as secondary school students, parents, education officials and their own teachers still regarded them as children being in a similar position as former Middle School students. New examinations, namely, the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) and the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE) were instituted to replace the old General Certificate of Education Ordinary and Advanced Levels. However, at the Senior Secondary level the reforms did not eliminate the competitive and highly selective examination process typical of the old system.

At the end of 1991, just as in 1966, and notwithstanding reform that was basically quantitative and infrastructural, many regional, class and gender imbalances regarding secondary education remained. Reference bas already has been made to the distribution of GET schools in the Nkrumah era. These were heavily concentrated in the south even though the Trust aimed to expand secondary education nation-wide and remove gender and regional imbalances. Parliamentarians of the era were embittered by what seemed to have been a discriminatory policy favouring powerful ministers and their political constituencies (*Ghana: Parliamentary Debates* 1964:72–98).

Scadding (1989) also points to the difficulties associated with the implementation of the Junior Secondary programme by the Rawlings regime. She cites inadequate classrooms, leaking roofs and insufficient learning and instructional resources as some of the major reform problems; difficulties and challenges that are not peculiar to Ghana.

## Implications for national development

Doubtless, secondary education as provided in Ghana remains crucial to the country's economic growth and national development, sustained literacy as well as the cultivation of a sense of national unity. It is not just a means to economic development, measured by discount rates, rates-of-retum analysis and so on; it has also a broader socio-cultural dimension that needs to be taken into account when measuring its role in national development (Habte and Heyneman 1983:471). Considering that 'it is now widely accepted that education contributes to national and economic development', a basic question arises as to the type(s) and model(s) of secondary education that Ghana should implement and that can best address her twenty-first century national development problems. How should the secondary education curriculum, most especially, be reconfigured to sustain the charge of national development? Countries the world over have implemented models relevant to their national development needs.

This is especially so of such advanced countries as the United States, Great Britain, Japan or Germany. In Africa, models have varied between Francophone (for example Senegal) and Anglophone (such as Ghana) countries, but drawing substantially on metropolitan examples, particularly those of France, Britain and the United States. I am persuaded that as a foreign model transferred to Ghana (and Africa), the secondary educational system/model(s) will continue to be substantially informed by international examples, especially those in the West even as Ghana (and other African countries) attempts to adapt its pattern(s) to the Ghanaian environment. Here, there are bound to be cultural implications associated with such transferred models, and these are worthy of note, and of critical appraisal by the state with the intent of upholding only that which will contribute positively to Ghana's development.

Whereas universal primary education remains crucial to national development, a project started since 1951 in Ghana, I am convinced that as Ghana marches into the twenty-first century there is the equal need for increased attention to secondary education particularly since it is the most accessible form of higher education. Also, there is the need for accelerated secondary education expansion that produces an 80–85 percent enrolment nation-wide, paralleling the present approximately 85 percent primary school enrolment (1993 UNESCO estimations). Indeed, the consensus among all interests groups, namely, the state, churches and education about the benefits of secondary education (Quist 1999a, 1999b), coupled with Ghana's major challenge of becoming a middle income country by 2020 requires that this level of education be given increased attention. Accelerated national development and economic growth, the sustenance of democracy, among others, are inextricably intertwined with higher levels of literacy. I would still contend that secondary education has greater potential of achieving and sustaining these aims. The long-term benefits are doubtlessly tremendous and beyond dispute, especially in the wake of the Jomtien Plan of Action (Thiam 1990) which calls for the involvement of the developing world in the struggle against illiteracy and underdevelopment.

Here, worthwhile curriculum reforms remain decisive. For the sake of scientific and technological development, I would argue for a rethinking of secondary technical education that is responsive to the technological development of Ghana (Heyneman 1987:64). The rapid development of Ghana, and Africa, in the twenty-first century would depend more on an increasing provision and support of secondary technical education of a higher quality that is technological-oriented, world-informed and dynamic.

Here, government needs to court the support of the business community. An immediate step in the direction should be the conversion of all post-primary technical institutions (financially, outdated institutions) into modern secondary technical schools (and then all tertiary polytechnics into polytechnic universities). This should provide all the ten regions of present day Ghana with a least one major secondary technical school that both the state and private business can consistently and persistently support. Funds to these institutions should be aimed solely at resource and equipment acquisition and improvement.

Also critical are concerns relating to gender disparities. Higher education for girls impacts positively on fertility , population growth rate, and the health of children. Women in sub-Saharan Africa, in exercising their responsibility for the upbringing of their children, are key actors in the process of human development (Browne and Barret 1991:275). Education and scholarship schemes aimed at girls deserve increased attention as part of national development. The Girl-Child Unit of the Ghana Education Service obviously needs to intensify its education regarding the benefits of educating the girl-child, at least up to the secondary level.

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