

# THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

## Basic Education in Ghana: History, Management and Challenges

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### **Abstract:**

*Universal access to quality basic education is a key global developmental issue. This is confirmed by interventions like Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's). However, despite the efforts being made by government of Ghana and stakeholders in education to promote basic education, it remains an elusive goal. This paper focuses on basic education in Ghana, which was introduced by European merchants and sustained by European missionaries, colonial and post-colonial governments, but continues to face challenges under the current Ghanaian educational system. A qualitative research paradigm was adopted, using the historical research design. Data were collected using interviews and content analysis of educational policy documents. The study revealed that basic education in Ghana continues to enjoy the support of government and other non-governmental agencies. As a result, the sector has achieved a lot of success by giving children increased access to basic education and retaining them in school, due to various policy interventions provided by government and non-governmental agencies. However, in spite of the achievements, there are a number of challenges facing basic education in Ghana, which are institutional, cultural and social in nature. The study commends the private sector participation in education in Ghana and recommends that NGO's, civil society groups, philanthropic organizations and individuals continue to complement government efforts towards the delivery of basic education. This will help the nation to work towards the achievement of Millennium Development Goals 1, 2 and 3, which seek to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; and promote gender equality and women's empowerment respectively.*

**Keywords:** basic education, primary education, education in Ghana

### **1. Introduction**

Education is a key to national development. Regrettably, a number of children, especially in sub-Saharan Africa do not have access to formal education. According to UNESCO (2017), there are 43 million children in sub-Saharan Africa who are not going to school. As a result, UNESCO has taken certain steps to promote quality education in sub-Saharan Africa by introducing the Education for All (EFA) programme. This programme seeks to provide quality basic education for everyone, including children, youth and adults. Since the launching of the U.N. Millennium Development Goals (MDG) (UN, 2000), many African countries have committed themselves to working towards the achieving universal primary education (Akkari, 2005). In the Sub-Sahara Africa, a number of studies have been conducted to deal with efforts being made by countries to promote basic education (Ogawa, & Nishimura, 2015). Some of these studies have been conducted in Kenya (Sifuna & Sawamura, 2015; Lloyd, Mensch, & Clark, 2000); Uganda (Yamugisha & Nishimura, 2015); Malawi (Himombo, Kunje & Ogawa, 2015); Nigeria (Olaniyan & Obadara, 2008). According to the State of Education in Africa Report (2015), to ensure the achievement of the universal primary education, a number of policy initiatives have been introduced to increase children's access to basic education and also ensure their retention. The report further indicated that in sub-Saharan Africa, 15 countries have abolished school fees since 2000, enabling more children to attend primary school. The report further indicated that between 1990 and 2012, the number of children enrolled in primary schools in Africa more than doubled, from 62 million to 149 million children. Similarly, in Ghana, a number of studies have also been conducted on basic education (Akyeampong, Djangmah, Oduro, Seibu & Hunt (2007); Ampiah, Mankoe & Beecham (2005); Fobih, Akyeampong & Koomson (1999); World Bank, 2004). Regrettably, in spite of the efforts that countries are making, no African country has achieved universal primary education (UNESCO, 2017; Kagia, 2005). This has come about as a result of the numerous challenges facing basic education in Sub-Sahara Africa. A study conducted by Ampiah and Yamada (2015) identified administrative and financial challenges facing basic schools within the Cape Coast and Mfantseman districts in the Central Region of Ghana. This study will deal with institutional, cultural and social challenges facing basic education in Ghana. It will also focus on the history and management of basic education in Ghana. The University of Cape Coast basic schools have been used as a case study. The basic schools comprise kindergarten, primary and junior high school. The study is organized along three research questions as follows: (i) What is the historical development of basic education in Ghana? (ii) How are basic schools managed in Ghana? and (iii) What are the challenges facing basic education in Ghana?

### 1.1. Historical Development of Basic Education in Ghana

Since the era of pre-colonial regime through the colonial period up to the present post-colonial era, basic education in Ghana has been guided by educational policies. Basic education started in Ghana (then Gold Coast) through the pioneering efforts of European merchants (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1978; Graham, 1976; Kwamena-Poh, 2011). These merchants established “the Castle Schools” to educate their mulatto children which they had with the native African women. The mulattoes were to be used as interpreters. In Ghana, Castle Schools were established at Christiansborg, Osu in Accra by the Danish, at Elmina by the Portuguese; and at Cape Coast by the Dutch (Antwi, 1992; Graham, 1976).

After the Castle Schools, the Basel Evangelical Mission Society was the first mission society to contribute to basic education. The mission established a Boys’ School at Akropong-Akuapem in 1843 and a Girls’ School was later established at Akropong-Akuapem in 1847. In 1848, the Basel Mission took over the school at the Osu Castle (Kwamena-Poh, 2011). The Girls’ School was later transferred to Aburi in 1854. Between 1853 and 1956, separate Primary Boarding Schools for boys and girls were opened at different locations in the country (Asare-Danso, 2012).

The first education reforms in Ghana were initiated by Rev. Johann Gottlieb Auer, the first Inspector of the Basel Mission Schools. It thus became the Auer Reforms. The highlights of the reforms included the use of syllabus and textbooks in the schools; missionaries were not to use schoolboys and girls to do household chores; manual work became part of the syllabus and school farms were established for pupils to do practical agriculture; refresher courses and conferences were organized for teachers; entry requirements of the seminary was raised, leading to the introduction of an intermediate school which was referred to as “middle school” (Kwamena-Poh, 2011). Even though Rev. J. G. Auer proposed this noble idea in 1863, Rev. J. A. Mader who became the successor to Rev. Auer, as an Inspector of Basel Mission Schools, implemented the reforms in 1867.

The Basel Mission had the primary aim of using their schools to win converts and to train African catechists and semi-skilled workers. As a result, primary education (which was referred to as junior school) was provided by the Basel Mission up to Standard Three (Primary Six) at the initial stages of its educational development in the Gold Coast. It was against this background that even though Ramseyer established the first Primary School at Abetifi in 1876, this type of educational structure remained for forty-four (44) years until 1920 when the first Senior School (Middle School) was established at Abetifi (Akuamoah, 2007). Similarly, in an interview, it was revealed that a Junior School was established at Abokobi in the year 1858 but it took eighty-seven (87) years before a Middle School was established at Abokobi in 1945.

This situation was not different from others who provided mission education in other parts of Colonial Africa. For example, as late as 1960, the Catholic patriarch of Lisbon said in his Christmas message to Portuguese Africa that:

- We need schools in Africa, but schools in which we show the native the way to the dignity of man and the glory of the nation (Portugal) which protects him. We want to teach the natives to write, to read, and to count, but not to make them learned men (Simpson, 2001).

This was the kind of educational philosophy that the European Missionaries had, and the Basel Mission was no exception.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, basic education came into the hands of the British colonial administrators and it was managed under the Ordinances (1852, 1882 and 1887 Ordinances). Later, another education reforms was introduced under the governorship of Sir Gordon Guggisberg. Highlights of the Guggisberg’s Reforms included giving equal opportunities for boys and girls in basic education; provision of co-educational institutions; staff training and development; training of school inspectors; abolition of free and compulsory education; and the promotion of technical and vocational education, among others (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1978).

In 1951 when Dr. Kwame Nkrumah became the Leader of Government Business, he introduced the Accelerated Development Plan policy which brought a rapid increase in enrollment in primary schools. Basic education underwent a rapid and steady growth and the number of primary schools rose from 1,081 in 1951 to 3,372 in 1952. School enrolment doubled in a period of five years and Ghana was acclaimed as having the most developed education system in Africa (Foster, 1965; UNDP, 1998; Scadding, 1989). Emergency teacher training was introduced, and a large number of pupil teachers were appointed. Facilities for middle, secondary and technical schools were greatly increased. Parents were asked to buy only textbooks and stop paying school fees. Such educational provisions continued until Ghana achieved political independence in 1957. This means that prior to the attainment of Ghana’s political independence, a strong foundation had been laid for basic education.

Another educational policy that was introduced during the Nkrumah regime was the Education Act of 1961. This Act made primary and middle schools free and compulsory for all children. During the time of President Nkrumah, the government decided to pay teachers and asked the local authorities to provide school buildings. In line with this educational policy, the Minister of Education stated that any parent who failed to send his/her child to school would be fined. This new directive meant that all children of school-going age should be enrolled in school. In 1963, the government paid more attention to the provision of educational infrastructure as well as teaching and learning materials like textbooks and stationery. As a result the government began to supply free textbooks not only to primary and middle schools, but also to all assisted secondary schools. This free textbook supply continued until 1966 when the government invited parents to make some contribution to the cost of textbooks and stationery.

From the late 1970s, however, the quality of basic education which had been high in the previous years, began to deteriorate as a result of poor national economy, which led to thousands of Ghanaian teachers leaving for Nigeria (Nti, 1999). Consequently, the government put into operation the first major post-Independence reform in pre-university education in 1974. This reform is generally referred to as ‘The New Structure and Content of Education’ (NSCE). The reform reduced the length of pre-tertiary education from 17 years to 12 years. Basic Education had a six-year structure. The thrust of the content of the reform programme was to vocationalise pre-university education in Ghana and to make it more functional and oriented towards contextual demands and challenges. It endorsed the introduction of pre-technical and pre-vocational subjects in both primary and junior secondary curricula.

The New Educational Reform Programme (NERP) was introduced in 1987 with a focus on the total restructuring of the entire pretertiary education system and on improving access through the provision of infrastructure whilst making the curriculum more relevant to social and economic needs. In 1998, following the reforms, Mr. K. B. Asante, then Minister for Education, in his address on the state of education in the country at the time, stated that the economic decline of the 1970's, coupled with the mass exodus of qualified teachers to other neighbouring countries in the 1980's, has called for the need to replace more than 50 percent of primary and middle school teachers with untrained teachers (Asante, 1988). He pointed out that the majority of students had neither textbooks nor exercise books. Buildings and furniture were in a state of disrepair, and enrolment levels had declined to the extent that many of those who went to school did not complete their studies, thus leading to two-thirds of the adult population being illiterate. With low motivation and morale, ineffective supervision became the norm.

In 1994, seven years after the inception of the New Education Reform Programme in 1987, the results of poor performance of school pupils at age 12 led to the setting up of yet another Education Review Committee to review the education system. At this time, only 6% of the pupils at grade six in public schools tested nation-wide, achieved a criterion score of 60% and above in English. Even worse less than 3% achieved a criterion score of 55% and above in Mathematics (MOE, 1997). The Education Review Committee decided to develop and introduce new curricula for primary schools since it was argued that a large proportion of the subject matter in the curriculum was not relevant to the pupils' immediate environment. In addition, it was criticized as being overloaded in content and too rigid and compartmentalized, thus reducing the effectiveness of the teaching and learning tasks. As a result of the 1994 review, another major reform, the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Programme (FCUBE) was initiated with the backing of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana (MOE, 1996).

The FCUBE initiative was the Ministry of Education's response to a constitutionally mandated charge arising from Article 38 (2) of the 1992 Constitution of the Fourth Republic of Ghana:

- 'The Government shall, within two years after parliament first meets after coming into force of this Constitution, draw up a programme for implementation within the following ten years, for the provision of free, compulsory and universal basic education (Government of Ghana, 1992).

In line with the policy document, the Basic Education curriculum was designed to achieve literacy, numeracy and to impart appropriate knowledge of culture and practical skills. In addition, exposure to, and hands-on experience in, technical and vocational skills were promoted. At the beginning, the curriculum comprised as many as nine subjects. The Education Reform Review Committee later reduced this to five and six subjects in Lower and Upper Primary respectively. This was to allow more time for the development of writing, reading and numeracy skills after the Ministry of Education conceded that subject overload was a factor contributing to the abysmal performance of pupils' learning outcomes.

Under the 2007 Education Reform, the two years of Kindergarten education was formally added to Ghana's educational structure. The Reform led to the promulgation of the Education Act 2008 (Act 778), which provided that there should be inclusive education, in order to give equal access to all persons, including the physically challenged. The Act also provided free and compulsory education for all children at the basic level of education.

## 2. How Basic Schools Are Managed in Ghana

Currently, basic education in Ghana has a three-tier structure with eleven years duration, comprising:

- 2 years of Kindergarten,
- 6 years of Primary, and
- 3 years of Junior High School.

The two-year Kindergarten education in Ghana admits pupils aged 4 to 6 years. The Primary School consists of Lower Primary (Basic 1 to 3) and Upper Primary (Basic 4 to 6). The two levels are different in terms of age, teaching methods, medium of instruction, medium of writing, nature of books used by pupils and classification. Lower Primary pupils are younger (below 10 years) than Upper Primary pupils who are above 8 years but below 13 years. Activity methods, the use of real objects and visual aids are used in teaching Lower Primary pupils. Flash cards are used to introduce them to reading; counters are used to teach them addition, subtraction, multiplication and division in mathematics.

When pupils get to the Upper Primary level, less activity is used to teach them. Local language is used as a medium of instruction in the Lower Primary while English Language is used as a medium of instruction in the Upper Primary. Pupils use pencil to write in the Primary School while those in the Upper Primary use pen to write. Lower Primary pupils use exercise books that have wider spaces between the ruled lines. Normally, trained and experienced female teachers with attributes of affection, sympathy, tolerance and time for children are assigned to Lower Primary classes, particularly Primary 1 (or Basic 1). In the Upper Primary, the pupils are older so any trained teacher can handle them (Sekyere, 2010). The Junior High School admits pupils who fall within the age ranges of 12 and 15 years. Now, let us examine how the curriculum, human resource and instructional time are managed in basic schools in Ghana.

### 2.1. Curriculum Management

#### 2.1.1. Kindergarten Curriculum

The Kindergarten curriculum was developed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MoESS) in collaboration with UNICEF in 2006. The general aims of the curriculum for Kindergarten Education in Ghana are to help learners to:

- i. develop communication skills that enable children to express their emotions, thoughts and actions in various ways such as listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- ii. familiarize themselves with the environment and its living and non-living components.
- iii. learn to live a healthy life.
- iv. develop their psychosocial competencies such as assertiveness, self-confidence and relate positively with others.
- v. awaken and develop their potential creative abilities.
- vi. respond emotionally and intellectually to the world around them, through music and dance.
- vii. appreciate and find pleasure in their own creations and those of others. (Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, 2006, pp. i-ii)

The curriculum for Kindergarten Education in Ghana is divided into six (6) core areas as follows:

<b>Kindergarten Subjects</b>	
1	Language and Literacy (Language Development)
2	Creative Activities (Drawing and Writing)
3	Mathematics (Number Work)
4	Environmental Studies
5	Movement, Drama (Music and Dance)
6	Physical Development (Physical Education)

*Table 1: Kindergarten Curriculum  
Source: Ministry of Education, 2013*

Every Kindergarten class in Ghana is supposed to have a Class Teacher and a Class Attendant.

### 2.1.2. Primary School Curriculum

Primary Education in Ghana has the following objectives:

- 1 To develop skills in Numeracy and Literacy, i.e. ability to count, use numbers, read, write and communicate effectively;
- 2 To lay the foundation for inquiry and creativity;
- 3 To develop sound moral attitudes and healthy appreciation of our cultural heritage and identity;
- 4 To develop the ability to preserve and adapt constructively to a changing environment;
- 5 To lay the foundation for the development of manipulative and life skills that will prepare the individual pupil to function effectively to his or her own advantage, as well as that of his or her environment; and
- 6 To inculcate good citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in national development (MOE, 2013).

At the primary School level, there are nine (9) subjects that are currently being taught at the Lower Primary level, while ten (10) subjects are taught at the Upper Primary level. These subjects are presented in the table below:

<b>Lower Primary Subjects</b>		<b>Upper Primary Subjects</b>	
1	Natural Science	1	Integrated Science
2	English Language	2	English Language
3	French	3	French
4	Ghanaian Language	4	Ghanaian Language
5	Mathematics	5	Mathematics
6	Creative Arts	6	Creative Arts
7	Religious and Moral Education	7	Religious and Moral Education
8	Physical Education	8	Physical Education
9	Information and Communications Technology	9	Information and Communications Technology
		10	Citizenship Education

*Table 2: Primary School Curriculum  
Source: Ministry of Education, 2013*

At the Primary School level, "Class Teachers" are made to handle the classes. What this means is that, in principle, every teacher is made to teach all the nine or ten subjects in his or her class. However, in practice, this has become difficult to implement, as some of the teachers may have weaknesses in certain subject areas.

### 2.1.3. Junior High School Curriculum

At the Junior High School level, the curriculum was designed to provide opportunities for pupils to acquire basic pre-technical, pre-vocational and scientific knowledge and skills that will enable them to:

- 1 discover their aptitudes and potentialities and induce in them the desire for self-improvement;
- 2 appreciate the use of the hand as well as the mind and make them creative and productive oriented;
- 3 appreciate the value of hard work; and

4 understand their environment and make them eager to contribute towards its survival and development (MOE, 2013). At the Junior High School level, ten (10) subjects are taken by pupils. The subjects are categorized into core and elective as follows:

Core Subjects	Elective Subjects
1. English Language and Literature	1. Basic Design and Technology (BDT)
2. Mathematics	2. Religious and Moral Education (RME)
3. Integrated Science and Agriculture	3. Ghanaian Language and Culture
4. Social Studies	4. French
5. Information and Communication Technology	5. Physical Education

Table 3: Junior High School Curriculum

Source: Ministry of Education, 2013

At the Junior High School level, unlike the Primary School where “Class Teachers” are made to handle all subjects, there are “Subject Teachers” who handle the individual subjects, according to their areas of specialization. For example, the French Teacher teaches French at all levels (i.e. JHS 1, 2 & 3) in all classes (e.g. 1A, 1B, 1C, 2A, 2B, 2C, etc.).

## 2.2. Human Resource Management

At the Kindergarten level, teachers are trained by the 38 public Colleges of Education and other private Colleges of education, leading to the award of a Diploma in Early Childhood Education by the University of Cape Coast, the affiliate institution. The University of Cape Coast and the University of Education, Winneba also train teachers for the award of Degree in Early Childhood Education. Besides, some private Universities train teachers with specialization in Early Childhood Education, and they are awarded Degrees in Early Childhood Education.

Similarly, at the Primary and Junior High School levels, teachers are trained by the 38 public Colleges of Education and other private Colleges of Education, leading to the award of a Diploma in Basic Education by the University of Cape Coast, the affiliate institution. The University of Cape Coast and the University of Education, Winneba train teachers for the award of Degree in Basic Education. In addition, some private Universities also train teachers with specialization in Basic Education, and they are awarded Degree in Basic Education.

The Education Act 2008 (Act 778) provides that District Assemblies appoint District Education Oversight Committees to manage the basic schools. The composition of the committee is provided as follows:

- i. The District Chief Executive (Chairman)
- ii. The District Director of Education (Secretary)
- iii. The Chairman of the Sub-Committee responsible for education.
- iv. One representative of the Schools Management Committee
- v. One representative of the Private Schools
- vi. The District Director of Health Services
- vii. The District Social Welfare Officer
- viii. One representative of the Association of Teachers on a rotational basis
- ix. One representative of the Parent/Teacher Association (PTA)
- x. One representative of the traditional rulers in the District
- xi. One representative each of the religious bodies
- xii. One woman identified generally with social development in the District
- xiii. One member (woman) from the District Assemblies

District Education Oversight Committees have been provided to oversee the following as part of their functions:

- i. Conditions of school buildings and other infrastructure;
- ii. The sponsorship of teacher trainees in the Colleges of Education;
- iii. The proper performance of duties by staff;
- iv. The moral behaviour of the staff and pupils and matters relating to general discipline;
- v. Complaints relating to, or from teachers, non-teaching staff and pupils;
- vi. The supply of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials;
- vii. The environmental cleanliness of schools and facilities in them.

Whereas the secondary schools are managed by **Boards of Governors**, the basic schools in Ghana are managed by **School Management Committees (SMC)**. Members of the SMC are as follows:

- i. The Headteacher of the school;
- ii. One member appointed by the District Assembly
- iii. One representative of the School’s Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
- iv. One representative of the Old Pupils’ Association
- v. One member appointed by the town/village
- vi. One elder appointed by the chief of the town/village
- vii. Two members appointed by the teaching staff, one from Primary and one from the Junior High School
- viii. One member appointed by the Education Unit (if it is a school with religious affiliation).

A member holds office for not more than three calendar years.

The SMC perform the following functions:

- i. To ensure that the premises of the school is kept in a sanitary and structurally safe condition, and to bring to the notice of appropriate authorities the state of the premises of the school;
- ii. To submit to the Director-General of Ghana Education Service through the District Director any information, returns and accounts on the school on demand;
- iii. To assist in ensuring discipline among the teachers and pupils, particularly in checking absenteeism and lateness to school;
- iv. To participate in school durbars where matters affecting the school are discussed, e.g. school performance appraisal meetings (SPAM);
- v. To ensure the retention of teachers in the rural schools by assisting them to get some basic needs such as accommodation and food.

The SMC is not expected to interfere with the daily administration of the basic schools. The Headteachers perform administrative duties, while the SMC helps to formulate policies for implementation in the schools by the Headteachers.

### 2.3. Instructional Time Management

#### 2.3.1. School Calendar

Basic Education in Ghana is run in three (3) terms. The Ghana Education Service provides a unified school calendar for all basic schools in the country. For the 2016/2017 Academic Year, the school calendar, which has been provided for all category of basic schools, comprising Kindergarten, Primary and Junior High School, is presented as follows:

TERM	DATE	DURATION
1 <sup>ST</sup> TERM	13 <sup>th</sup> September, 2016 – 15 <sup>th</sup> December, 2016	14 Weeks
HOLIDAYS	16 <sup>th</sup> December – 9 <sup>th</sup> January	25 Days
2 <sup>ND</sup> TERM	10 <sup>th</sup> January, 2017 – 13 <sup>th</sup> April, 2017	14 Weeks
HOLIDAYS	14 <sup>th</sup> April, 2017 – 8 <sup>th</sup> May, 2017	25 Days
3 <sup>RD</sup> TERM	9 <sup>th</sup> May, 2017 – 27 <sup>th</sup> July, 2017	12 Weeks
HOLIDAYS	28 <sup>th</sup> July, 2017 – 11 <sup>th</sup> September, 2017	46 Days

Table 4: School Calendar (or Terms) and Holidays  
Source: Ministry of Education, 2016

The total number of weeks to be spent in the school by pupils is 40 weeks. On the calendar, a date has also been fixed for the conduct of the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), which is externally examined by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC), an external examination body. The dates for the writing of the BECE were from 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2017.

#### 2.3.2. School Time Table for Kindergarten

At the Kindergarten level, school activities start at 7.30 a.m. and ends at 1.50 p.m. The Time Table is provided in Table 5 as below:

TIME	PROGRAMME
7.30 a.m. – 8.00 a.m.	Arrival
8.00 a.m. – 8.15 a.m.	Assembly
8.20 a.m. – 8.30 a.m.	Registration
8.35 a.m. – 9.05 a.m.	1 <sup>st</sup> Lesson period
9.10 a.m. – 9.40 a.m.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lesson period
9.45 a.m. – 10.15 a.m.	3 <sup>rd</sup> Lesson period
10.15 a.m. – 10.30 a.m.	BREAK (Snack Break)
10.35 a.m. – 11.05 a.m.	4 <sup>th</sup> Lesson period
11.10 a.m. – 11.40 a.m.	5 <sup>th</sup> Lesson period
11.40 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.	BREAK (Lunch)
12.35 p.m. – 1.05 p.m.	6 <sup>th</sup> Lesson period
1.10 p.m. – 1.40 p.m.	7 <sup>th</sup> Lesson period
1.50 p.m.	CLOSING

Table 5: School Time Table for Kindergarten  
Source: University of Cape Coast Kindergarten, 2016

### 2.3.3. School Time Table for Primary

At the Primary level, school activities start at 7.45 a.m. and ends at 1.45 p.m. The Time Table is provided as in Table 6 below.

TIME	PROGRAMME
7.45 a.m. – 8.05 a.m.	School Assembly
8.05 a.m. – 8.10 a.m.	Registration
8.15 a.m. – 8.45 a.m.	1 <sup>st</sup> Lesson period
8.45 a.m. – 9.15 a.m.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lesson period
9.15 a.m. – 9.45 a.m.	3 <sup>rd</sup> Lesson period
9.45 a.m. – 10.15 a.m.	4 <sup>th</sup> Lesson period
10.15 a.m. – 10.40 a.m.	BREAK
10.45 a.m. – 11.15 a.m.	5 <sup>th</sup> Lesson period
11.15 a.m. – 11.45 a.m.	6 <sup>th</sup> Lesson period
11.45 a.m. – 12.15 p.m.	7 <sup>th</sup> Lesson period
12.15 p.m. – 12.40 p.m.	BREAK
12.45 p.m. – 1.15 p.m.	8 <sup>th</sup> Lesson period
1.15 p.m.- 1.45 p.m.	9 <sup>th</sup> Lesson period
1.45 p.m.	CLOSING

Table 6: School Time Table for Primary

Source: University of Cape Coast Primary School, 2016

### 2.3.4. School Time Table for Junior High School

At the Junior High School level, school activities start at 7.15 a.m. and ends at 2.00 p.m. The Time Table is provided in Table 7 as follows:

TIME	PROGRAMME
7.15 a.m. – 7.25 a.m.	Quiet Time
7.25 a.m. – 7.50 a.m.	School Assembly
7.55 a.m. – 8.00 a.m.	Registration
8.00 a.m. – 8.35 a.m.	1 <sup>st</sup> Lesson period
8.35 a.m. – 9.10 a.m.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lesson period
9.15 a.m. – 9.50 a.m.	3 <sup>rd</sup> Lesson period
9.50 a.m. – 10.25 a.m.	4 <sup>th</sup> Lesson period
10.25 a.m. – 10.55 a.m.	BREAK
11.00 a.m. – 11.35 a.m.	5 <sup>th</sup> Lesson period
11.15 a.m. – 12.10 p.m.	6 <sup>th</sup> Lesson period
12.15 p.m. – 12.50 p.m.	7 <sup>th</sup> Lesson period
12.50 p.m. – 1.25 p.m.	8 <sup>th</sup> Lesson period
1.25 p.m. – 2.00 p.m.	9 <sup>th</sup> Lesson period
2.00 p.m.	CLOSING

Table 7: School Time Table for Junior High School

Source: University of Cape Coast Junior High School, 2016

## 2.4. Educational Policy Interventions

A number of innovative policies interventions and programmes have been introduced to promote basic education in Ghana. This has led to increase in access to basic education and the promotion of quality education. It has also led to the retention and completion of pupil's education in basic schools. My interview with the Head teachers revealed that donor agencies have contributed towards the success story of basic education in Ghana through the introduction of innovative programmes and educational projects. Among these donor agencies were the United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank, the Canadian International Development Association (CIDA), Danish International Development (DANIDA), Department for International Development (DFID), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the European Union (EU), among others.

Among the innovative programmes were: (i) The Whole School Development (WSD) Programme, which was initiated in 1988 with the support of DFID to support to head teachers and teachers in basic schools in terms of resources and logistics for effective management of the instructional programme. (ii) The Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) was initiated in 2005 to achieve the United Nations Millennium development Goals on hunger, poverty and increasing school enrolment, attendance and retention, in order to promote basic education. (iii) Girl-child Education has been promoted in Ghana in fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 3, which seeks to promote gender equality and women empowerment. For the realization of this dream, Girls Education Unit (GEU) was created under the Ministry of Education in 1997 to give girls access to education. Currently, a minister of state has been appointed to deal with gender and issues affecting female education in Ghana. (iv) The School Health

Education Programme (SHEP) was established in 1992 to provide health education to schools. (v) The Primary Education Programme (PEP) was introduced in Ghana in 1990 to provide input and logistics like textbooks, in-service training for basic school teachers to help them upgrade their knowledge and skills in teaching. (vi) The EPF Educational Empowerment Initiative was a US-based NGO which went into partnership with P & G Company to supply Always Sanitary Pads to girls and also provide toilet facilities for girls in selected schools. The girls were also to be taught how to use the pads and dispose of them properly (Donkor, 2016). (vii) The Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) was introduced in Ghana in 2005 as an initiative of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) The programme was meant to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals on hunger, poverty and primary education. It is an initiative of the Comprehensive African Its main objectives were: To reduce short-term hunger; increase school enrolment, attendance and retention; and to boost domestic production. The GSFP started in September 2005 with 1,984 pupils in 10 pilot schools – one in each of the ten regions of Ghana. The programme has been a success and as a result, it has been extended to cover about 5,285 public basic schools in 216 districts in Ghana, with enrolment of over 1,728,681 pupils. (viii) The Capitation Grant Scheme is a fixed amount of money that the Ministry of Education pays for every pupil in basic schools every year. Initially, the fixed amount was GHC 3.00 per pupil per year but this has been reviewed to GHC 4.50. This amount is supposed to be used by the school managers or heads to cover expenses relating to minor repairs, sanitation and stationery, provision of teaching and learning materials, and transport and travel (T&T) allowances, among others. As a result of these interventions, access to basic education in Ghana has been increased tremendously, thus leading to increased number of schools, as Tables 8, 9 and 10 indicate.

Kindergarten	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016
Public	13,263	13,505	13,305	13,492	13,828	14,145
Private	5,538	5,410	5,972	6,608	7,132	7,907
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,801</b>	<b>18,915</b>	<b>19,277</b>	<b>20,100</b>	<b>20,960</b>	<b>22,052</b>

Table 8: Number of Kindergarten Schools in Ghana from 2010/2011 to 2015/2016 Academic Year

Source: Ghana's Education Sector Performance Report, 2016

Primary	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016
Public	14,431	14,360	14,112	14,142	14,405	14,664
Private	5,292	5,473	5,742	6,360	6,904	7,625
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,723</b>	<b>19,833</b>	<b>19,854</b>	<b>20,502</b>	<b>21,309</b>	<b>22,289</b>

Table 9: Number of Primary Schools in Ghana from 2010/2011 to 2015/2016 Academic Year

Source: Ghana's Education Sector Performance Report, 2016

JHS	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016
Public	8,462	8,336	8,818	9,076	9,445	9,905
Private	3,247	3,231	3,618	4,006	4,395	4,862
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,709</b>	<b>11,567</b>	<b>12,436</b>	<b>13,082</b>	<b>13,840</b>	<b>14,767</b>

Table 10: Number of Senior High Schools in Ghana from 2010/2011 to 2015/2016 Academic Year

Source: Ghana's Education Sector Performance Report, 2016

### 3. Challenges Facing Basic Education in Ghana

In an interview with the heads of basic schools, it was revealed that in spite of the gains that basic education has made in Ghana, it is faced with a number of challenges. These have been grouped as institutional, cultural and social challenges.

The Institutional challenges, which Ampiah & Yamada (2015) perceived to be administrative and financial in nature include Over-enrolment in the urban areas, thus creating large class sizes; Under-enrolment in some rural areas; Inadequate infrastructure like classrooms; Inadequate supply of educational materials by the Ghana Education Service; Delays in payment of salaries of newly-recruited teachers by government; Absenteeism among teachers and pupils; Sexual harassment by some teachers; and Lack of means of transport for educative and administrative purposes.

The Cultural challenges include Drunkenness on the part of some teachers; Invasion of school premises by drug addicts; Interference with school administration by parents; Encroachment of school lands by local chiefs and community members; and Assault on teachers by parents for enforcing discipline among pupils.

The Social challenges include Parents' inability to provide the educational needs of children, e.g. school uniforms; Parents' inability to pay the fees of their children or wards; Lack of accommodation in the communities for newly posted teachers; and Drug and substance abuse by pupils.

### 4. Conclusions

The following conclusions have been made from the study:

1. The study has revealed that from the historical point of view, the Government of Ghana continues to support basic education, which was initiated by European merchants and sustained by the European missionaries.

2. Secondly, my overall assessment of basic education delivery in Ghana indicates that the sector has been well managed to achieve greater success in terms of increasing children's access to basic education. This was made possible due to the various policy interventions made by government and non-governmental organizations or agencies.
3. Thirdly, the study has revealed that in Ghana, private sector participation in education is highly encouraged, as Tables 8, 9 and 10 indicated. This is a very noble idea which must be sustained by the Government of Ghana, and to be emulated by all African governments.
4. Finally, the study has revealed that in spite of its success story in education delivery, there are a number of challenges facing basic education in Ghana. These challenges are institutional, cultural and social in nature, and they need to be given the necessary attention by all stakeholders in education.

## 5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made for policy and practice:

1. Sub-Sahara Africa governments must support operators of private schools to deliver quality services to their nations, since their services complement the efforts of government.
2. Private sector participation in education should be encouraged not only at basic education, but also at all levels of education, and this must be encouraged, especially in African countries.
3. The private sector should continue to see its relationship with government as partners in development, so that they can complement government efforts towards the provision of basic education, and other social services to their nations.
4. With the collective efforts of all stakeholders in education like NGO's, civil society groups, philanthropic organizations and individuals, Ghana and other African nations can work towards the realization of fulfilling Millennium Development Goals 1, 2 and 3, which seek to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; and promote gender equality and women's empowerment respectively.

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