UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

SCHOOL DROP-OUT: A CASE STUDY OF PUPILS IN BASIC SCHOOLS

IN SONGOR RAMSAR SITE OF DANGME EAST DISTRICT

EMMANUEL HUAGO

2011

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EMMANUEL HUAGO

Dissertation submitted to the Institute of Education of the Faculty of Education,

University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for award of

Master of Education Degree in Educational Management

JANUARY 2011

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

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

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

Name: Emmanuel Huago

Supervisor's Declaration

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

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

Name: Dr. Clement Agezo

ABSTRACT

The study examined school drop-out among pupils at the Basic Education level in Songor Ramsar Site in the Dangme East District of the Greater Accra Region. The schools in this area were found in settlements called Wekumagbe, Akplabanya, Anyamam, Goi, and Lolonya. A survey was carried out using a combination of cluster, purposive, snowball and simple random sampling techniques. A sample of 110 respondents was selected from Akplabanya and Anyamam Basic Schools.

The Study revealed that basic schools in the Songor Ramsar Site faced high rate of school drop-out. The study also revealed that as first step for school drop-out, pupils became truants and eventually drop-out of school. Most pupils dropped out of school to engage in salt mining and fishing mainly due to the inability of parents to provide the basic needs of their children, poor lighting system in the home due to lack of money to buy kerosene and child neglect.

It is recommended among others that parents should provide the basic needs of their wards and monitor their school attendance. The Central Government through the District Assembly and Ministry of Education through her various bodies at the grassroot level like the District Oversight Committee on Education, the School Management Committee and the Parent Teacher Association must play their roles and institute rules and regulations to ensure that parents and guardians fulfil their responsibilities towards their children in school.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Clement Agezo, for his encouragement and useful suggestions. I also thank Mr. Ebenezer Tatchie, a lecturer at the Physics Department of the University of Cape Coast for his brotherly love. I owe a debt of gratitude to Mr Samuel Pythias Atali for typing the dissertation.

DEDICATION

To my nuclear family for their prayers.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The study area is the Dangme East District of the Greater Accra Region located between latitude 5° 45" south and 6° 00" north and longitude 0° 20" west to 0° 35" east (see map). Records available in the Planning and the Statistical Department of the Dangme East District Assembly on Water, Sanitation and Development Plan (2004-2008) p.7 indicated that the Dangme-East within which the study area was located had a total land area of 909 sq km (350 sq miles). The area is drained by the Songor Lagoon. During teaching practice supervision, I observed that school truancy was very high in the school around the Songor Lagoon area, popularly called "Songor Ramsar Site". The schools were found in settlements called Wekumagbe, Akplabanya, Anyamam, Goi and Lolonya. Besides high rate of truancy, there was high rate of school drop-out in the area under study.

Since education is the bedrock of development, I deem it necessary to research into the high rate of absenteeism and high rate of school drop-out. The issue of truancy and school drop-out is a global phenomenon that has attracted the attention of an author like Skinner (1963), and Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1990) to research into.

Biehler and Snowman (1991) described school drop-out as pupils' inability to complete the required course because he has to stop along the way.

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Allision (1964)(as cited in Skinner, 1963) preferred to use the word 'pushout' because the child may not complete school due to external factors like teacher harassing a female student in the school and forcing her to stop schooling along the journey of the required duration of the course. These children become truants before finally dropping out of school. Allision (1964) pointed out that the initial step towards school drop-out is truancy.

Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1990) described truancy as a situation where some pupils cut classes regularly, become rude, exhibit tamper tantrums when corrected and rarely do their academic work. Biehler and Snowman (1991) and Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1990) came out with findings that the younger generation of every given society is the future of that society and society is expected to transmit its values to its young ones. This is the only way that society can be sustained and developed. Formal education through the school system ensures that knowledge and skills are imparted to the pupils who avail themselves for the benefits of these services. The child who occupies the central position of the school system gets the chance of not only developing his cognitive domain but also his psychomotor and affective domains (Sprinthall & Sprinthall, 1990). Some pupils in the school system do not avail themselves to all the opportunities the school offers. Their attendance at school is on-and-off and become truants in the process (Sprinthall & Sprinthall, 1990).

Biehler & Snowman (1991) found out that the curriculum of the school is intended to enrich the totality of the child. At the end of a programme in the basic education, for instance, the child is expected to have acquired some amount of knowledge and skills. Among these are English Language, Mathematics, Integrated Science and Environmental and Social Studies. The

school also takes care of the psychomotor domain of the child. The child is then given the opportunity to use his hands in creating objects as is done in Technical and Vocational Skills. Religious and Moral Education as well as Environmental and Social Studies Education enable the child to develop his affective domain. The child is trained to be a humane person, that is, to love his neighbour and to become a patriotic citizen. The school also provides co-curriculum activities like sports and games. The child gets the opportunity to develop his talents. The cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains are the taxonomies of objectives as described by Biehler & Snowman, (1991).

Ayim-Ampofo (1990) researched into the causes of truancy in Ayikuma and Kpong while Tetteh (1998) researched into causes of dropping out in first cycle schools in the Ningo Traditional Area and found among others that parents, teachers and the community are not playing their roles effectively towards the education of the children. According to Tetteh (1998), the low-achievers are unable to cope with the academic demands of the school. The low achiever is unable to comprehend lessons taught in class and as a result unable to compete with his classmates. This is expressed in both written and oral work where the pupil performs below average and poorly in almost all the school subjects.

Ayim-Ampofo (1990) found out that some pupils become truants as a result of their own character. The deviant character has been developed either at home or at school. These are vices like pilfering, fighting and disrespectfulness. A pupil who is in the habit of stealing pens, money and even books of various kinds from colleagues and the school will be given various names and labeling. Deviant behaviours are met with various sanctions. The pupils with such

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behaviour lose favour with almost everybody in the school. Being unpopular, the pupil reacts to such a situation by dropping out of school.

Negative attitude exhibited by some colleagues in school is a cause of truancy that will eventually result in school drop-out (Tetteh, 1998). Low achievers in class are often jeered at by their colleagues. They are given various names like "dead minds", "laughing jackals", "always bottom", "stinky minds" and mocked at for being last in class. Pupils who fall victim to such an unfortunate situation are shunned by their colleagues. They lose self esteem, become truants and finally drop-out of school.

The age of a pupil in a class, according to Ayim-Ampofo (1990) determines whether the child should remain in school or drop-out. In a typical agricultural community, some parents do not enroll their children in school very early. It happens that some of the pupils who are older than their class are jeered at or shunned by their colleagues. Pupils who fall victim to such negative behaviours from their friends lose their self-esteem and decide to drop out of school.

Some pupils can absorb certain levels of verbal abuse, excessive caning and fetching of sand or water from one location to another as a form of punishment whiles others cannot absorb it. Some parents may withdraw their wards from one school to another because of the harsh punishments meted to their wards (Tetteh, 1998). The attitude of a teacher in a class goes a long way not only to determine a pupil's interest in a particular subject but also in the school as an institution. Certain abusive language on pupils at the least provocation by the teachers results in the child dropping out of school.

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Gilchrist (1989) and Ghunney (1990) outlined one major cause of truancy and school drop-out as the Home Environment. They indicated that poverty, maltreatment of children, lack of appreciation of the value of education and the breakdown of communal responsibility are factors contributing to making the home environment a breeding ground for truancy.

Gilchrist (1989) indicated that parental lapses are the inability of some parents to provide all the school needs of their children. Failure to provide needs like uniforms, stationery and fees may force a pupil into truancy and therefore drop out. A pupil may come to school without eating anything or given money to buy food. When the child is hungry, he cannot concentrate in class and may end up performing poorly. A pupil may be asked to go home because he has not paid his school fees. The continuous absence in the home means that contact hours in class are lost and this negatively affects the pupil's academic performance.

The lack of appreciation of the value of education contributes to truancy and school drop-out. Tetteh (1998) said some parents and guardians decide when their children should go to school and when they should stay at home or even recall them from school to look after their younger siblings to enable parents or guardians to attend to their businesses or other social engagements. Some parents or guardians intentionally ask their wards to drop out of school in order to assist them with their occupation. Failure of the child to comply with the wishes of the parent or guardian results in maltreatment. This maltreatment could be seen in the form of denial of food, physical injuries and detention.

The roles of the community in education in the form of communal ownership and responsibility towards pupils have eroded over the years.

Tetteh (1998) says school children used to be the property of the entire community. As it is in the past, the elderly no longer question pupils why they are not in school when school is in session. The elderly in communities declined this social responsibility for fear of attracting disrespectful behaviour from pupils and incurring the displeasure and wrath of the pupil's parents and guardians.

The school system where pupils have to run shifts is a cause of truancy and drop out of school (Tetteh, 1998). A pupil who wants to be truant can say he is for the afternoon shift when in actual fact he is supposed to be with the morning shift. Tetteh (1998) found out that most shepherd boys dropped out of school because the shift system enabled them to be disinterested in school.

Allision (1964) indicated that pupils who do play truancy and so do not avail themselves fully to the services offered by the school system spend the contact hours lost in school in different activities outside the school. For instance, some engage in fishing, playing, quarreling and fighting at home. In the market, some push truck and sell. Some do roam aimlessly in town. Others hide in town and accompany their colleagues home when school closes while others find themselves in cinema houses. Tetteh (1998) indicated that most truants who are females are drawn into immoral activities. Vices like sexual misconduct end up in teenage pregnancies which make them drop out of school. Male pupils steal and smoke and find themselves in prisons and asylums.

Statement of the Problem

Schools in the Dangme-East District cannot match most districts in terms of academic excellence in Ghana. Poverty and low pace of infrastructural development have attributed to this state of affairs (Amate, 1999). In the case of

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the schools in the Songor Ramsar Site, however, I identified other problems that probably affected education during my interaction with a cross-section of pupils and teachers. I observed that:

   i.   between August and April each year, school attendance tends to decline rapidly as this season coincides with peak salt–mining period in the Songor Lagoon,

   ii.   some pupils who play truancy end up dropping-out of school and

   iii.   there is a significant difference in the number of pupils who drop out of school between Dangme-East District and other Districts in the Greater Accra Region.

With this observation, I decided to investigate the causes of school drop-out among pupils in the Songor Ramsar Site of the Dangme East District.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to:

   i.   examine the role of fishing and salt-mining in pupils' school attendance,

   ii.   identify other reasons apart from fishing and salt-mining that are responsible for truancy and school drop-out in the Songor Ramsar Site.and

   iii.   find out what measures can be adopted to improve upon school attendance in the Songor Ramsar Site.

Research Questions

Based on the problem identified and the purpose of the study, three research questions were formulated to guide the study. These were:

1. What are the reasons for high rate of absenteeism among pupils in the Songor Ramsar Site?

2. What accounts for the high rate of school drop-out among pupils in the Songor Ramsar Site?

3. What measures can be adopted to improve upon school attendance in the Songor Ramsar Site?

Significance of the Study

The findings will encourage the Guidance and Counselling Unit in the schools to strengthen their services especially to some parents on their role in the provision of basic needs to pupils to enable pupils have sound mind to learn and to attend school regularly.

The findings of the research would be used to educate parents, guardians and the general public on the need to retain their children at school. It will also encourage pupils to pay much attention to schooling and for parents to shoulder their responsibilities to their wards in school to encourage them to learn in order to achieve high academic laurels.

Delimitation of the Study

The study is focused on school drop-out. It is also confined to Basic Schools in Songor Ramsar Site of Dangme East District of Greater Accra Region.

Limitations of the Study

One great limitation was that I could only reach 13 drop-outs yet the research problem is on school drop-outs. The inability to reach out for more of the drop-out to give information could affect the internal validity of the research since the research problem was on school drop-out.

The second limitation of the research was the difficulty in compiling the names of the absentees. Most pupils sampled as respondents left the class after compiling the list of absentees. This problem led to unnecessary cancellations of names in the register. This could affect the findings of the study as only few pupils were used.

Another major problem was the inability of drop-outs to give a true picture of what led to their dropping out from school. Some drop-outs found it very difficult to explain at what age they dropped out of school and the reasons why they did so. Some respondents found it difficult to expose their parents as irresponsible and would not even like to talk. Others gave various reasons for their truancy and dropping out of school, which were not relevant. The attitude of respondents not to give accurate and concrete reasons for dropping out of school would make the findings of the study not valid.

Organization of the Rest of the Study

Chapter Two talks about the review of related literature. The chapter deals with what has already been written that relates to the research topic in terms of theories or concepts and empirical evidence. The overall goal of clarifying how the present study intends to address the gap; silence or weaknesses in the existing literature read were also addressed in this chapter.

The three research questions were used as guide to develop the key issues that served as a breakdown of the review of the related literature.

Methodology is presented in Chapter Three. It describes the type of research design used, the population for the study, sample and sampling procedure and the instruments used to collect data. Data collection procedure and data analysis were also part of Chapter Three.

Chapter Four deals with the results and discussion of the study. In this Chapter, data collected were tabulated into frequencies and percentage figures under the three research questions for analysis. A summary is also provided for the chapter.

Chapter Five presents an overview of the research study and methodology. It also provides key findings, conclusions and recommendations for policy and practice as well as suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Nkpa (1977) defined literature review as a systematic study of all existing works that are relevant to the research. It is concerned with locating, reading, evaluating and citing reports of related research. Purposely, it is to succinctly evaluate the state of the objective(s) in the area under investigation. In line with the above notion, this chapter is written by specifying it into nine sections, namely, what education is, the role of education in socio-economic development, educational policies in Ghana, what truancy is, factors responsible for truancy, what school drop-out is, factors that contribute to school drop-out, Socio-economic status of parents, the school related factors, sociogenic factors, effects of school drop-out and ways to curb the rate of school drop-out.

What Education Is

Dewey (2002) defined education as a process of reconstruction of experience, giving it a more socialized value through the medium of increased individual efficiency. This definition focuses on the individual and what he does as being important. Just transmission of culture is not efficient. It places more emphasis on socialized and communal value. Education is defined culturally, economically and politically. Culturally, education is a means of helping people to free them from unscientific thinking. Politically, it is preparing people to participate intelligently in the political progress of adulthood including

decision-making on issues that affect the individual and the community (Dewey, 1985).

Farrant (1985) had a similar perception of education like Dewey (2002). Farrant(1985) states that education is a universal practice engaged in by societies at all stages of development. Education describes the total process of human learning by which knowledge is imparted, faculties trained and skills developed. Schooling is only one form in which education is provided so it will be wrong to equate schooling with the word universal since there are still so many people in the world who have never been to school.

Farrant (1985) identified three range of forms in which education is provided. These are formal, non formal and informal education. These form a continuum, each merging into the next with no clear line of distinction. In the case of formal education, learning is carried out in schools and colleges. What is taught in these institutions is carefully structured by means of syllabuses and time tables and the teaching provided is carefully supervised by an external administrative body. The achievements of those who learn in formal education are often recognized by the award of certificates.

Farrant (1985) described Non-formal education as any organised learning activity outside the structure of the formal education system that is consciously aimed at meeting specific learning needs of particular groups of children, youths or adults in the community. It includes various kinds of educational activity such as agricultural extension, skill training, health and family planning, educational work amongst the youth and women and functional literacy. What is learned is structured, but not obviously as in the

case of formal education and there is more flexibility as to the places and methods of learning.

In the case of informal education, according to Farrant (1985), there was no attempt at structuring it. Much of the learning that goes on is almost unconscious, as with those things the child learns from his family, friends, experience and environment. It is not associated with the award of certificates. Its effects tend to be more permanent because, unlike formal and non-formal education which are confined to learning experiences that are planned in specific context for particular time, informal education pursues its own course at its own pace, by it's own means throughout each person's life .

The teacher uses some techniques and strategies to shape potentials in the learner. Among learning experiences in the classroom, Dale (1975), a curriculum developer puts reading at the top of the triangle that he used to illustrate classroom-teaching activities. The cone of educational experience by Edger Dale helps in the understanding of the meaning of education in several ways. In the cone are the various teaching and learning techniques that teachers use when teaching and the rate of understanding of the techniques as shown in percentage values. The techniques are ranked in values based on the interactions by teacher and pupils as lesson is being taught. At the summit of the techniques is reading. This technique of reading in the class does not involve much activity for the child to manipulate objects with the hands so at the end of the lesson the child remembers only 10% of what is read.

The lecture technique is a process of delivering verbally a body of knowledge according to a pre-planned scheme. It is characterized by a one way communication. The teacher presents ideas or concepts, develops and evaluates

them and summarizes the main points at the end of lesson while learners listen and take down notes. During the course of the lecture, learners' questions arise which are usually intended for mere little explanation of facts and information and not for higher level discussion (Makinde, 1990).

Still pictures, drawing and photos, moving pictures, television, film movies and exhibits of real objects involve various pictures with explanations of the kind of pictures they portray. The learner reads and observes at the same time and these sharpen the mental faculty of the learner. Thus, according to Dale (1975), the learner remembers 30% of what is seen and heard.

A fieldtrip is an organized trip by learners and teachers or facilitators to places of interest outside the classroom such as factories, educational institutions, agriculture projects, museums, lakeside or ports for the purpose of studying and confronting the basic phenomenon and to collect empirical evidence in the field (Dale, 1975).

Role-play is a structured activity which permits learners to take the part of other people in an imaginary or real life situation and to act the part in a realistic manner as possible. Dramatization entails acting a pantomime, that is drama based on the lesson to be taught where pupils use few words for self expression but are full of activity so that gestures and facial expressions replace spoken words, traditional story with sometimes music, dancing and clowning with or without words and the use of improvised items or materials, for example newspaper becomes a sword (Dale, 1975).

Practical activities are learning principles where teachers or facilitators teach learners any lesson that involves many skills. Learners observe what

teacher teaches and performs with whatever material teacher uses in teaching (Duccasse, 1958).

It is an undeniable fact that, once learners hear, see and do whatever teacher teaches, fieldtrip contributes to 50% of the understanding to what pupils are taught in class, demonstration 70% while role play, simulation, dramatization and the practices contribute to 90% of what learners hear, say and do as stated in Edger Dale's cone of educational experience.

As a culture, education is a way of life and how the young is brought up to adulthood. Education starts from the time a child is born and ends at the time he dies. The parents have a part to play in the training of the child to fit very well into any society. This is called an informal education (Dale, 1975).

The Role of Education in Socio-Economic Development

Education serves as a springboard for national development and self-sufficiency. It also promotes cultural awareness among the citizens of a nation (Abosi & Brookman-Amissah, 1992). Lockhead and Vespoor (1991) stated that the future development of education and of the world and the individual nations hinges on the capacity of individuals and countries to acquire, adopt and advance in knowledge. This capacity in turn depends on the extent to which the population has attained literacy and numeracy, communication and problem solving skills.

Education deals with knowledge that is recognizable, worthwhile and capable of achieving a voluntary and committed response from the learner. Education leads to quality of understanding that gives rise to new mental perspective in the learner and encourages the exercise of judgment by the learner and the use of the learner's critical faculties (Farrant, 1985).

Lockhead and Vespoor (1991) described education as society's cultural reproductive system. By education, society reproduces itself, passing on its main characteristic to the next generation. Just as with genetics, however, the process is complicated, being influenced by philosophical, political, economic and social forces acting on the mechanism. The result is that each generation is different from that which springs yet presents a family likeness that in the short term is unmistakable. In this sense, it is education that keeps society alive. The role of education in socio-economic development is perceived at different levels and considered in terms of personal development including intellectual and spiritual growth, vocational preparation in terms of necessary practical skills and character, qualities and social training in which young people are initiated into society at local and national levels. Politicians tend to look for developments that have national significance, religious leaders for moral growth and parents tend to think of the role of education in terms of career prospects (Lockhead & Vespoor, 1991).

Economically, education means preparing people for a more appropriate and informed utilization of capital to attain higher standard of living. Attatsi (2001) observed that it has been on record that the technology and scientific advancement of Japan can be attributed to the attention they paid to education in the past three decades. Attatsi (2001) cited Abosi and Brookman-Amissah (1992) as remarking the history which witnessed the great scientific and technological break-through of Russians landing a space-craft into space. The Americans re-organized their educational systems to place emphasis on physics and mathematics and within a decade, outstripped the Russians by landing the first manned spacecraft on the moon.

In the history of mankind, development has been found to have a strong link with education. A survey conducted in 1969/70 by Agyeman revealed that the higher people go on the education ladder, the more they become nationally conscious, while the degree of their tribalism drops. He also observed that political participation at the national level is higher among students at tertiary level of education than it is at the lower level of education (Agyeman, 1993).

Regarding Human Resource Development, Kwapong (1979) stated that it takes skilled human agents to discover and exploit natural resources, to mobilize capital, to develop technology, to produce goods and carry on trade. These skilled human agents are best obtained through education.

Educational Policies in Ghana

Recognizing that education is the key to economic, political, social, and cultural development of a nation, the issue of school drop-out has become one of the major concerns for Ghana as a nation. Educational policies have been put in place by successive governments in Ghana even before independence to ensure that every child of school-going age does not only go to school but remains in school to develop their potentials to the fullest. One of such policies was the Accelerated Development Plan of 1951. Its main purpose was to provide for rapid expansion of education at all levels with emphasis on primary education. Tuition was free for primary schools. Another major policy was the Education Act of 1961 which established the legal basis for compulsory primary education (Mc-William & Kwamina Poh, 1975).

In 1987, a major educational reform was introduced. Among other purposes, the reform was intended to provide increased access to education by making basic education available to every Ghanaian child (Antwi, 1992). In

1996, the Free, Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) programme which makes schooling from basic class one through Junior Secondary School (J.S.S) free and compulsory for all children by the year 2005. The Education Reforms of 1951, 1961 up to 1990s are the result of setbacks that needed to be corrected. The Dzobo Commission of 1974 suggested the following among others:

i) The need to develop national consciousness and unity

ii) The need to develop the nation's potential and produce both high grade and intermediate manpower.

iii) The need to develop and modernize our culture.

iv) The need for the development of a new Ghanaian, healthy in mind, body and spirit.

v) Cutting down excessive lengths of studies of pre-university Education

vi) Curriculum was old-fashioned and did not cater for the needs of society and needed to be diversified.

Politicians since independence often contend with increasing employment avenues through structural adjustment but fail to acknowledge the mismatch between the kind of labour produced and demanded. For instance, in 1987 – 1988, 14.3% of labour produced comprising the youth with post secondary education or better were unemployed as compared to 5.2% for those with primary school education and 3.4% for those with no education (Republic of Ghana, 2002). This suggests that persons with secondary education or better are more likely to be unemployed than the uneducated. Yet, there is a substantial provision of vocational education for the youths in Ghana from several government and private institutions. If graduates from several

institutions are unable to earn a living, it presents a serious financial and economic loss to individuals and the state. It is also a source of societal frustration with the educational system.

According to the Ghana Statistical Service (1995), in 1991/92, 38% of the youth aged 12-19 years were enrolled in secondary schools. The report also indicated that, about 60% of graduates from the Junior Secondary School enter the Senior Secondary School and about 20% from this level enter tertiary education. The indication is that products from the various secondary schools comprise a major segment of the 19% level of unemployment currently prevailing in the country. The state of Ghana Statistical Service indicated that for every unemployed adult there are at least four unemployed youth, most of whom are drop-outs from the various levels of school education.

Vocational education exists in over 100 Senior Secondary Schools and 20 Vocational Institutions run by the government. In addition, there are about 60 technical and 80 commercial schools which are privately owned by individuals and religious groups. There are ten Polytechnics and six public Universities which produce various categories of students for the labour market. However, most of these people prefer working in the government sector and end up not getting work. This results in high level of unemployment among School leavers (Republic of Ghana, 2002).

From the Ghana Statistical Service (1995), in 1993 there was an excess supply of educated labour over demand of 12%. The report also added that there was a serious gap between the types of education offered and the types demanded by the public sector and private businessmen. According to Agyeman (1993), most African states faced an oversupply of certain types of manpower

while other types such as doctors and engineers are scarce. If the school system is to effectively fulfill its manpower creating function, it needs to reallocate its efforts in manpower training to bring out products that would get employed.

The achievement of this objective needs to be properly planned and directed by informed policies. The National Co-ordinating Committee on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NACTVET) which was established to direct the implementation of policy in vocational education is yet to make an impact. Effort has to be made in promoting informal sector enterprises to make them absorb the excess labour being produced from schools and also to study and determine the nature of skills and training programmes that would best suit the job market so as to direct policy at these (Republic of Ghana, 2002).

What Truancy Is

Sprinthall (1974) described truancy as a situation where some pupils cut classes regularly, become rude, exhibit temper tantrums when corrected and rarely do their academic work. Skinner (1963) explained truancy as type of delinquency or at least a difficulty of adjustment, which is due primarily to what sociologists call cultural conflict. Mensah (1995) stated that truancy and absenteeism have almost the same meaning. He cited the definition in Longman Dictionary Contemporary English (1998) on truancy as the act of purposely staying away from school without permission and absenteeism as regular absence from work or duty without good cause. Mensah (1995) further explained that absenteeism apply generally to "work" whilst truancy apply specifically to 'schooling'.

Formal education through the school system ensures that knowledge and skills are imparted to the pupils who avail themselves for the services rendered by the school to them. The child who occupies the central position of the school system gets the chance of not only developing his cognitive domain but also his psychomotor and affective domains. Some pupils in the school system do not always make themselves available to all the opportunities the school offers. Their attendance to school is on and off. They become truants and may eventually drop-out of school (Skinner, 1963).

Factors Responsible for Truancy

One of the factors responsible for truancy is the home. In his book, parental lapses in child education, Gilchrist (1989) pointed out responsibilities that parents have failed to do which have prevented the child's progress and may lead to truancy and eventually dropping out of school. These are parent's inability to provide all school needs of their children like uniforms, stationery and fees which might force a pupil into truancy. This may be due to poverty.

Maltreatment suffered at the hands of some parents and guardians can force some children into truancy. This takes several forms like denial of food for sometimes of the day, physical injuries like caning, insults and detention of the children (Mensah, 1995). Some parents or guardians do not appreciate the value of education to society. This is particularly true in most fishing and salt mining communities. Amate (1999) noted in his book "The making of Ada" that in the olden days Adas were typical smugglers of goods (merchandise) from neighbouring Togo and Ivory Coast (now Cote D'Ivoire) to the extent that they did not like attending school, especially beyond middle Form Four. That perception, Amate (1999) noted still persist along the Songor Ramsar Site.

Parents and guardian also decide when their wards should go to school and when they should stay at home or even recall them from school to perform other chores such as looking after their younger siblings while parents or guardians attend to their businesses or other social engagements.

Moreso, the elderly in the community no longer question pupils why they are not in school when school is in session for fear of attracting disrespectful behaviour from pupils and incurring the displeasure of the pupils' parents and guardians. In the olden days school pupils used to be the children of an entire community as they were offered advice and encouragement where necessary but in recent times, this practice no longer exists.

The school environment is another factor responsible for truancy among children. Kukubor (1984), in his book "Rigid Formal Education Dulls the Child's Creative Potentials" indicated that the school system itself is a key factor for truancy among pupils. The shift system in schools encourages truancy. A pupil who wants to be truant can easily say he is on the afternoon shift when in actual fact he is supposed to be with the morning shift. Some pupils may decide to go fishing, farming, salt mining or engage in any other business with the hope of going to school in the afternoon but may be late and decide to call off schooling that day. This may become habitual leading to truancy and eventually school drop-out. Shift school is largely due to the Central or Local government's inability to meet the infrastructural and logistical demands of the school.

In administering external discipline, some headteachers and their staff go beyond their limit. This can be manifested in excessive caning and other forms of harsh punishment. Some members of staff use caning as a means of

encouraging pupils to perform very well in school subjects, especially in mathematics. Some headteachers use caning as a means of encouraging pupils to pay school fees. This may lead to truancy. Besides, some teachers are fond of using abusive language on pupils at the least provocation. While some pupils can contain the insults, others cannot absorb a certain level of verbal abuse. The result might be a non-attendance of class during certain days and periods (Ayim-Ampofo, 1990). The curriculum of the school is intended to enrich the totality of the child. Truancy occurs when a pupil is unable to cope with the academic demands of the school. The low achievers in class usually suffer from this problem (Ayim-Ampofo, 1990).

A third factor responsible for truancy among school pupils is peer-pressure. Truancy among pupils occurs owing to the attitude of colleagues on low achievers who mostly are considered to have low intelligence quotient (Farrant, 1980). Low achievers are often jeered at by their colleagues. They are given and called names like 'dead minds' and 'stinky minds'. They are laughed at for being the last or among the last in terms of academic records in class. Since such pupils are 'labelled' and normally attract condemnation from colleagues, few pupils do associate with them. They become shy and do not attend school regularly (Farrant, 1980). Other determining reasons from peers can cause school drop-out. Age of pupil in a class can result in truancy. If a pupil is far older than the rest of his class, he might not have playmates and this may have an adverse affect on the number of times he goes to school (Farrant, 1980).

What School Drop-Out Is

School drop-out is pupils' inability to complete the required course. For instance, a child begins a basic school course but cannot complete the course because he has to stop along the way. Allision (as cited in Skinner, 1963) preferred to use the word push out because a child may not complete school due to external factors like teacher harassing a female student in the school and forcing her to stop schooling along the journey of the required duration of the course. These children become truants before finally dropping out of school. Skinner (1963) pointed out that the initial step towards school drop-out is truancy and it manifests itself in diverse forms.

In spite of the notable efforts by the country to ensure formal education for all children of school-going age, some children still fail to attend school and others drop out of school for various reasons. Reports on Ghana Basic Statistics and Planning Parameters for Junior Secondary School (J.S.S) (1996) in1993/94 indicate that out of 232, 387 pupils, who started both public and private J.S.S 1 in Ghana in 1993, only 197,637 of them, reached JSS 3 in 1996. In other words, 34,750 students dropped out. This represents 15% of the total number of pupils. An investigation of the rate of school drop-out in the first cycle schools in Ningo Traditional area in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana during 1998 academic year showed that out of 1,226 pupils enrolled in 1993/94 academic year 549 had dropped out by 1996. This represented a drop-out rate of 44.81% (Tetteh, 1988).

In the Dangme East District, the statistics in Table 1 indicate that in 1998, out of the total of 713 pupils who dropped out of school, 284 were boys and 429 were girls in the primary school. In the Junior Secondary School 168

boys and 258 girls dropped out of school respectively. In 1999, a total of 275 boys and 407 girls dropped out of school at the primary level bringing to a total of 682 pupils who dropped out of school. A total of 405 J.S.S pupils dropped out of school in 2000.

Table 1: Statistics of Pupils that Dropped Out of School in the Dangme-East District (1998-2000)

Gender	1998		1999		2000	
	Primary	J. S. S.	Primary	J. S. S.	Primary	J. S. S.
Boys	284	168	275	168	247	162
Girls	429	258	407	247	370	243
Total	**713**	**426**	**682**	**415**	**617**	**405**

(GES, Dangme East, 2002)

From the statistics of total pupil drop-out in the district (1998-2000), it is clear that school drop out is a reality. Another distinguished characteristic of drop out phenomena as evidenced from the table is that drop-out is more rampant among females than males. This may not be true in all cases. For instance, during the preliminary investigations in the Songor Ramsar Site, it was found out that more males do drop out than females as evidenced in Tables 2.

Table 2: Cohort Study of Primary 6: Enrolment from P.1-6 of Anyamam Basic School (1999-2004)

Year	Class	Enrolment		
		M	F	Total
1999	Primary 1	46	31	77
2000	Primary 2	43	30	73
2001	Primary 3	39	29	68
2002	Primary 4	35	27	62
2003	Primary 5	30	25	55
2004	Primary 6	29	25	54

From Table 2, 23 pupils made up of 17 males and 6 females had dropped out of school.

Factors that Contribute to School Drop-out

Factors that contribute to school drop-out can be categorized into home related factors, the school related factors and socio-genic factors. Commenting on home-related factors, Gilchrist (1989) pointed out the things that parents have failed to do which have prevented the child's progress and may lead to school drop-out or the school from achieving its goals. These are: 1) Failure to supply basic learning materials such as pen, pencils, exercise books and crayons to the child attending school; 2) Poor child up-keep, that is, dirty and or tattered uniform and appearance; 3) Child going to school on an empty stomach and malnourished; 4) No care for child's progress at home as homework remains undone. Children are left on their own and they spend all time watching television and playing video-games; 5) No visits to school to interact with teachers to find out child's progress and problems; 6) No parent participation in

activities at school such as attending PTA meetings and other voluntary activities; 7) Parents do not practice or support their children in literacy development such as reading and writing materials, 8) There is nothing like parents expression of aspirations and expectations regarding a child's current performance as well as future school or career success; 9) No decision and discussion about school-related issues and activities including parental advice and guidance in academic decision and course placements, 10) Some parents also expect too much in academic performance from their children than they can put up. This is perfectionism, which brings demotivation, 11) Some parents do pamper their children at home to the extent that when they go to school, they are not able to cope with the rigours of school discipline, 12) Parents do not serve as role-models for why school is important and do not share their own experiences that reinforce the value of education; 13) No expression of love and affection to the child; 14) Non-payment of school-fees; and 15) Some parents over-burden their children with household chores so they have no time to do their homework and become so tired and sleepy during lessons.

The effects of the home-related factors on school drop-out are several. These have been summarized by various authors like (Wilson, 1987; Anderson, 1988; Ayim Ampofo, 1999; Epstein, 1989 and Tetteh, 1998) under;
(a) Socio-economic status of parents, (b) Family structure and (c) Educational level of parents.

In Socio-economic status of parents, Wilson (1987) confirmed that there is a correlation between school drop-out and the socio-economic status of parents. Incidences of school drop-outs are high among parents with low socio-economic status (Wilson, 1987). According to Wilson (1987), parents who are

in extreme poverty and live in over-crowded and tension filled environment cannot hire rooms for their children, let alone letting them have access to educational facilities like books, television and blackboards. Such children rarely have their emotional and psychological needs satisfied. They are, therefore, faced with problems including exposure to drugs and inferior education resulting in their dropping out of school.

Anderson (1988) expressed similar view stating that in developing countries children from poor countries do not enroll in school and those who do have a higher incident of drop-outs as compared to children from well-to-do families. This is because poor parents cannot afford their children's education. Rice (1981) observed that in the United States of America, many parents of low socio-economic status produce drop-out children because parents sometimes engage the younger children in doing household chores while older children are expected to go out and look for jobs in order to earn income to supplement that of their parents.

A study by Attatsi (2001), in the Volta Region of Ghana showed that when parents are poor, they cannot give their children pocket money or pay for their schools fees. Out of frustration, such children tend to drop out of school. On few instances, however, children of affluent but ignorant parents also drop out of school because they do not recognize the value of education. The children believe in getting rich fast and drop out from school so as to use part of their parents' wealth to do business.

In respect of family structure, single-parenthood which may result from the death of a spouse, separation, divorce or desertion tend to have adverse effect on children and often results in dropout from school. A study by

Singleman and WojkieWicz (1993) in the United States of America, revealed that children who grew up with single parents were more likely to drop out of school than those who grew up with two parents and those children whose parents divorce have lower educational achievements than those with both parents. This is due to low parental support, supervision and control, as well as low access to economic resources and stress that come with the change from a two-parent family to a single-parent family.

In a similar study conducted in Koforidua by Ayim Ampofo (1990) indicated that 77% of drop-out respondents indicated that they would not have dropped out of school if they were living with both parents. The study revealed that the income of a single parent could not adequately cater for the children's education. Some single-parents even encouraged their children to drop-out and work to contribute to the family income.

Ghunney (1990) found out from his study conducted at Apewosika and Kokuado in Cape Coast in Ghana that children dropped out of school because they were being raised single-handedly by mothers who encouraged them to drop out of school to serve the University of Cape Coast students in their halls of residence so as to generate some income to supplement those of their mothers.

The educational level of parents is a challenge to children who strive to equal or go beyond their parents' academic levels. Parents with low level of education do not offer any challenges to their children. Here, the parents do not have time to check on the child's education so the child goes to play truancy and finally drops out of school (Ghunney, 1990).

During my pre-investigation in the study area, most pupils complained that their parents encouraged them to drop out of school as they (the parents) did because they see no need for education. Other pupils also complained that their parents discouraged them to discontinue schooling after primary six because at that stage pupils can at least do simple calculations as well as read and write.

School Related Factors

Children sometimes get discouraged or demoralized by the attitude of teachers and drop out from school. The way and manner a teacher handles a child can make a difference. Epstein (1989) observed that children drop out of school because they have teachers who care less about pupils. Teachers fail to encourage pupils to do well next time when they perform poorly. They use phrases like 'useless chap', 'good for nothing', and 'big-headed chap'. This often causes the child to drop out from school. Connell, Ashenden, Kessler, Dowsett (1989) cited in Attatsi (2001) noted that where teachers castigate and label pupils who for one reason or another cannot cope with the cognitive demand of schooling, the pupils lose confidence and self-esteem and may quit school.

Tetteh (1998) found out that teaching in the Ningo Traditional area was poor because as much as 54% of the teachers were untrained. Tetteh (1998) concluded that teachers lacked professional competence resulting in poor performance by pupils who get discouraged and drop out of school.

A study conducted in J.S.S in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan area showed that hardworking, humorous and friendly teachers motivated pupils to remain in school while those who cane pupils too much and are unfriendly scare

pupils away from school. Teachers who are fond of exploiting pupils' physical energy often cause them to drop out. In rural farming communities teachers engage pupils on their personal farms during the rainy season instead of teaching them resulting in the pupils dropping out from school (Brookman-Amissah, 1992).

In some community-based schools, the initial cost of infrastructure and the cost of furniture are borne by parents. Parents are made to pay building fees and furniture fees and are sometimes even called upon to offer communal labour in the school. When they feel that too much is being demanded of them, they ask their wards to stop schooling. It is not uncommon to see pupils involved in manual labour so as to generate funds for the maintenance of such schools. When these activities are too much, pupils tend to drop out of school (Skinner, 1963).

In some of the schools in the rural areas, a whole school may have one or two teachers to instruct as many as nine classes. In most cases the pupils are often left idle. They therefore tend to drop out of school because they see no benefit in schooling (Tetteh, 1998).

Eventhough the Free, Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) advocated for schools to be brought to the doorsteps of communities, there exists a lot of communities in the country without schools. In an attempt to attend schools, pupils have to walk long distances. Due to this difficulty, pupils refuse to attend school at the least excuse (Tetteh, 1998).

Sociogenic Factors

Berns (1993) observed that children's attitude towards learning is influenced by the peer group to which they belong. The peer-group can either

help or hinder the school's role. Similarly, Ohlsen (1974) stated that children can be influenced by the peer-group to drop out of school because children can fall prey to a delinquent gang leader who may control and use them. As the peer-group leader drops out of school, members of the gang also drop out in conformity to the leader's advice. Kano (1979) observed that 40% of a study sample was influenced by peer-group to drop out of school to indulge themselves in activities like carrying load at car parks. The students played truancy and eventually dropped out of school. Sometimes, children, through peer influence developed the love for money, and intending to become rich, drop out of school.

It has also been found that teenage pregnancy and childbearing account for a large portion of girls dropping out of upper primary, J.S.S and lower Secondary Schools. These teenage girls are lured by others outside of their age group to emulate adult's sexual behaviour without a full understanding of the consequences to their reproductive health, education and future careers (FAWE and ASS-FEMED, 1995).

Neequaye-Tetteh (1996) observed that early childbearing means less education for many teenagers. He further stated that although there are opportunities for teenage mothers to go back to school, many of them do not. His study in Kumasi indicated that 37% of the pregnant teenagers had dropped out of primary school or had not gone to school at all, while 22% had dropped out of J.S.S or S.S.S because of pregnancy.

The practice of extended family system in Ghanaian society encourages school drop out in the sense that sometimes a relative asks for the help of a school child and cannot be refused because of the relationship. For example, if a

working mother asks for her brother's daughter to come and take care of her baby, her brother may find it difficult to refuse that request even though he might be aware that it would cost his daughter her schooling (Tetteh, 1988).

Effects of School Drop-out

As stated in the Constitution abridged (1992) of Ghana Articles 6 and 8, all children are entitled to equal education irrespective of whether they are boys or girls. Statistics show that in Ghana boys and girls do not have equal educational opportunities as cited in Article 6 and 8 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. Enrolment of girls at any level of our education is very low and that the percentage is reduced as the learners moved up the educational ladder. In the study area, a cohort study of Primary 6; enrolment from Primary 1-6 (Table 3) is a clear example to this statement.

In Article 6 and 8 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, education of the Ghanaian child is a right and not a privilege. Some lapses may cause the child to drop out of school. The effects are several. Streetism in our cities today and a lot of armed robbery and theft cases can be attributed to some extent to school drop-out (Ghana Statistical Service, 1995).

Most school drop-outs lose their self-esteem and feel inferior to their counterparts who have completed their education. Most school drop-outs feel neglected and have no competing spirit and cause harm to themselves. Teenage pregnancy and early marriage especially of girls result in school dropout. Truancy and child delinquency results into school drop out. It leads to drug abuse and drug addiction (Ghunney, 1990). This in turn breeds notoriety and indiscipline among learners in the school. School drop-out affects community growth and results into under-development. Learners cannot come out well-

groomed to help their various societies or communities and therefore, become unproductive to the country as a whole. School drop-outs become a burden on the society because most people eventually grow without learning a skill or trade so unemployment and poverty becomes their lot (Ghunney, 1990).

The nation suffers most when schools are unable to achieve their set goals. Since education is a means through which a nation achieves its progress, the school has a responsibility to help parents collaborate well so that the aims or goals will be achieved. If all the above effects are coming out of parent's non-participants in education, then the school has a battle to fight (Koomson, 1990).

Ways to Curb the Rate of School Drop-out

It has been a vision of government to ensure that all Ghanaians irrespective of their socio-economic status or geographical location have access to quality education. The rural-urban divide is quite real and this undoubtedly underpins the development of government efforts (Koomson, 1990).

Various ways are suggested to check the incidence of school drop out. Some of the suggestions are already implemented and some are in the pipeline to be implemented by the Central Government. Other stakeholders that need to play a key role to curb the rate of school drop-out are the District Assembly, the School Management Committee, Headteachers, Staff, Parents, Guardians and the Community. The central government over the years through the Ministry of Education facilitated all other stakeholders with more support to make education not only beneficial to pupils but the entire society (Koomson, 1990).

A suggestion to check the rate of school drop-out is stated in 'The Teacher', a Newsletter of the Ghana National Association of Teachers, July-

August 2003, (p. 2). As one of the responses to the FCUBE and Education For All (EFA) goals, the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) and the Canadian Teachers Federation (CTF) initiated the GNAT/CTF/SODEP NKABOM project in six deprived basic schools in the Greater Accra Region on a pilot basis in 2002. The project will be replicated in other regions after the pilot phase. The project offers assistance to brilliant but needy children like providing school uniforms, exercise books, motivating teachers and providing teaching learning materials.

Municipal /Metropolitan Assembly

The District Assembly has a great role to play in a bid to curb the rate of school drop-out. Since schools are located within the local government areas, District/Municipal/Metropolitan authorities should give a sense of direction and continuous assistance to their schools. This form of direction and assistance should be channeled through the District Education Oversight Committee. Rules and regulations should be instituted to ensure that parents and guardians fulfill their responsibilities towards their wards and those who will not execute their responsibilities must be brought to justice. A percentage of the District Assembly Common Funds as well as funds solicited from individuals and corporate bodies should be channeled in building infrastructure, provide material support to schools and to cater for needy but brilliant pupils in the schools to curb the rate of truancy and school drop-outs. When infrastructure is expanded in remote areas, teachers will be motivated to these remote schools to teach to improve upon teaching-learning (MOE 2003).

In a series of consultations and workshop, the new articulated policy on basic education has identified four key areas namely, curriculum and learning,

strengthening management to improve efficiency, access and participation, cost and financing with the view to sustainability as bedrock to achieving the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) (MOE 2003). In the plan, education is to be decentralized and the District/Municipal/Metropolitan Assembly is to bear full cost of responsibility. The assembly is to collaborate with all stakeholders of education at the grassroot level to improve standards in education and to motivate pupils to learn to curb truancy and school drop-out.

Role of school heads and staff

Heads must involve teachers and students in the administration of the school by assigning duties to them towards the attainment of the overall objectives of the school with the school having functioning duty-roster for both staff and school prefects. Heads must promote teamwork and form committees on academic work, examination, guidance and counseling, disciplinary, sanitation (health), sports and culture and children taking part in conducting morning assemblies to have chance to develop their leadership qualities and skills of public speaking. There should be established acceptable standard of behaviour for teachers and students. Rules on hygiene and punctuality should be strictly adhered to. Well-defined systems of authority and responsibility which will enforce school rules and regulations must be established (MOE 2003).

There should be cordial interpersonal relationship and effective chain of command within the school and the community. Plan should be drawn for effective time management and used by both teachers and pupils. Class attendance register and staff attendance books must be kept and signed in the presence of the heads. Heads are to ensure that teachers and pupils are engaged in teaching and learning activities by going round the classes to monitor. The

school head must prepare schedule for receiving and vetting lesson notes of teachers instead of just ticking them and collecting samples of pupils' exercise books to establish the quality and quantity of work to determine the output of work of teachers and pupils (MOE 2003).

At Junior Secondary School level, clubs such as debating societies, drama and HIV awareness club should be formed. Quiz and competitions could be encouraged to help students keep themselves abreast with current affairs. Child-Labour which has been the practice in most schools should be a thing of the past. They must also check teachers test specifications as well as their test items to find out if they are up to the standard of the class, or can sample out test scripts of students to examine the quality of performance and accuracy of scoring of the teachers or interview students to find out their learning and social problems which should be tackled. Heads are to ensure that teachers carry out purposeful assessment of students. Continuous assessment must be systematically done and must be devoid of situations where teachers conjure and cook up marks for students' assessment (MOE 2003).

The Whole School Development Process (WSDP)

For these to be operational, the Whole School Development Programme (WSD) concept was initiated in 1998. Whole School Development Programme is a strategy for the implementation of the FCUBE programme in such a way as to achieve the objectives of the programme. In other words the Whole School Development Programme (WSD) is a concerted effort by all stakeholders in Education to bring about qualitative improvement in the development of quality education (MOE 2003).

Certain guiding principles have been recognized as the basis for the WSD Process. These are as follows:

Decentralization of education delivery at the district level, which is part of Government Policy for administration and development. Decentralization in terms of FCUBE implies:

i. Developing district and local capacity to manage the provision of basic education.

ii. Decentralizing resource planning and allocation to reflect district and local needs.

iii. Improving community participation in education delivery.

iv. Integrating the provision of resources with local ownership through a process of establishing local needs, setting priorities, setting targets and providing supports for district and school level development.

v. Improving efficiency in resource and financial management.

vi. Ensuring sustainability of education delivery to bring about quality of teaching and learning outcomes as the ultimate goal of the FCUBE programme.

Finally, WSD as a continuing process of education delivery should be mainstreamed into the work of the Ghana Education Service (MOE 2003).

In mainstreaming Whole School Development Process (WSDP) into the work of the G.E.S., a number of interventions in addressing the challenges facing the efficiency delivery of quality education at the Basic level have been put in place. The interventions are managed by divisions at headquarters of the GES. The mission of the Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) is to develop appropriate curriculum and syllabuses leading to the

production of relevant teaching and learning materials for basic schools. The Inspectorate Division is to serve as a quality control body for teaching and learning. Logistics and supply division is to ensure adequate, timely and efficient supply and distribution of teaching and learning materials and other resources to schools and districts (MOE 2003).

The Manpower Division is to ensure effective and efficient human resource development from the service and in particular, equitable distribution of teachers and other personnel to the districts and school countrywide. Administration and Finance Division is to implement the Public and Financial Management Reform Programme (PUFMARP) and in particular the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), geared towards financial decentralization as means of improving management efficiency (MOE 2003).

The Basic Enunciation Division is to sensitize communities about the importance of access and participation of all children in Education. In this connection there is the need to give emphasis to access and participation of girl child education. This is done by working through District Education Oversight Committees, School Management Committees and Unit Committees to build the capacity of the district for planning for improving access and participation and the delivery of effective education. The structure of District Level supporting the District Directorate of Education is the District Education Planning Team (DEPT). DEPT is made up of stakeholders and opinion leaders in the district (MOE 2003).

Teacher Education Division is to ensure that the demand for competent teachers in the basic schools is met. Apart from initial production of competent teachers by the teacher training colleges, there is continuing development of

serving teachers to improve on their knowledge and skills. These interventions which should promote the desired link between pre-service and in-service programmes for teachers are managed by the Teacher Education Division. It is worth noting that the interventions are coordinated by the Implementation Coordinating Unit headed by a Coordinator. There is also the National Whole School Development Process Coordinator who serves as a member of the coordinating team. In addition, a number of consultants carry out specific assignments to support the Unit which is attached to the Director-General's office (MOE 2003).

To implement the Whole School Development Process at the District level, District Education Offices were expected to respond positively to the interventions outlined. District Directors of Education (DDE) were expected to put in place structures which will take the initiative for implementing district interventions in connections with WSDP. Examples of the structures are District Education Planning Team (DEPT), School Performance Appraisal Meeting (SPAM) at community and school level and District Teacher Support Team (DTST). Moreover, twelve (12) Whole School Development Process Zonal Centres were planned to be located at strategic locations across the country to provide support for the districts in the implementation of the concept –WSDP. It was planned in such a way that the Zonal Centres would be closely associated with training colleges and expertise in the colleges would be tapped in support of the districts. The Zonal centres would be managed by Zonal Coordinators who would be linked up with the National WSDP Co-ordinator at the centre (Republic of Ghana, 2002).

Judging from the fact that the centre stage of WSDP is the classroom-a place where quality teaching provided by competent teachers will result in effective learning, the school is to have competent teachers and resources and the headteachers' capacity to manage the school effectively built up. Whole School Development Process envisaged a new approach to teacher development or continuing in-service training. Under the new system being implemented the professional development of serving teachers competences does not depend on global in-service training programme designed by external bodies since challenges identified from such in-service programmes do not reflect the needs of teachers. Under the WSDP, the teachers themselves are responsible for identifying their problems for solution at the school-based in-service training (INSET). The teacher under the leadership of the headteacher will find solutions to their problems through the use of lead curriculum or instructional leaders at the school level, and through the cluster of school arrangement. Support is provided at the district level by the District Teacher Support Team (DTST). The DTST is made up of headteachers and personnel from the district office. A member who could be selected from a teacher training college and in all members of the team would be ten (10) and led by a District Headteacher Advisor (DHA), who is also a member of the team of ten(10). The responsibility of the DTST is to support the INSET programme in the schools in the District and bring about expansion of WSDP throughout the schools in the District through a phased programme of initial training of headteachers and teachers (Republic of Ghana, 2002).

In conclusion, it looks as if GES has found a way of ensuring that there will be improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. This achievement

would be enhanced by the improvement in management for efficiency within the education sector as a whole and by improvement in access and participation in basic education.

The concerns of WSDP at the school level should include competent teachers, motivated teachers, motivated children, informed and concerned community, effective use of school resources and improved professional leadership of headteachers. At the District level, the WSDP initiative should aim at providing support to develop competent District Education Personnel, informed and concerned district/local community, able and willing to cooperate with District Education personnel for effective delivery of education, effective use of District resources, and improved supervision by District staff (Republic of Ghana, 2002).

As the FCUBE is being implemented under WSDP, barely eight years after its introduction, precisely in 2003, there has been another programme, Education for all (EFA) to beef up the gains of FCUBE (Republic of Ghana, 2002). EFA programme which stems from the international and communities commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (adopted by the United Nations in 1948) that "every child has a right to education" is expected to end in 2015 after it has achieved the following six goals:

Expansion of Early childhood Care and education; Provision of free and compulsory education of good quality; Promotion of acquisition of life-skills by adolescents and youth; Expansion of adult literacy; Elimination of gender disparity and Enhancement of educational quality. EFA demands, basically, affect teacher education programme in order to make education meaningful to its clientele (Republic of Ghana, 2002).

Summary

This chapter is written under nine sub-headings. These are what education is, the role of education in socio economic development, educational policies in Ghana, what truancy is, factors responsible for truancy, what school drop-out is, factors that contribute to school drop-out, school related factors, sociogenetic factors, the effect of school drop-out and ways to curb the rate of school drop-out.

There are three types of education, namely formal, informal and non-formal education. The curriculum of the school or the formal education is intended to enrich the totality of the child. The child is expected to have acquired knowledge (cognitive), skills or the ability to use his hands in creative objects (psychomotor domain) as well as trained to be a humane person, to love his neighbour and to become a human person (affective domain) at the end of school programme (Farrant, 1990).

Some pupils are unable to access all the privileges the school offers because of truancy that may eventually lead to school drop-out. Several factors are responsible for this. These can be due to the pupils themselves, colleagues, and attitude of some teachers, the school system and the home environment. The riverside and the beach become areas of comfort for the truants. Truants stay at home, play, quarrel and fight. Truck pushing, carrying of people's load and selling become the lot of some truants. Some pupils are pulled out of school by their parents or guardians to engage in family economic activities like farming, fishing and shepherding of flock. Some truants are drawn into immoral activities in some pockets of areas like cinemas, ghettos and night clubs. Vices

like smoking, stealing and sexual misconduct become part of their lives when they do not attend school.

School drop out is a drawback to socio-economic development in society. Duncan (1992) indicated that the head of an institution plays a yeoman's role to help parents and other educators understand each other. Campbell (1992) agrees with Duncan by saying that the ultimate responsibility for creating harmony between the school and the home rests with the head of the school.

Education is a right and not a privilege. In view of this, all stakeholders of education, namely, the Central Government, the District Assembly, the School Management Committee (SMC), Heads and staff, parents and guardians and the community must ensure that pupils enjoy the right of education.

Teachers need to encourage their learners to study subjects in the curriculum and help them where they are weak. On irresponsible parents, measures need to be put in place to support needy parents to minimize poverty and to live up to their responsibility. One good way to ease financial burden of education on parents is that chiefs of the various communities need to emulate the examples set by the Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei-Tutu II by establishing education endowments fund in their communities. Besides periodic cash contributions, the communities need to establish fund-generating projects like farms, shea-butter extraction, bee-keeping and basketry depending on the location of the area and the economic activities of the community.

Currently, the District Assemblies have been mandated by the Central Government to set aside funds to help needy but brilliant pupils in the basic schools and beyond. Nurseries, crèches or kindergarten are sited in the

communities where female teachers could conveniently send their babies to avoid going in for girls from the villages as house-helps whose time will be sacrificed for lessons in the school.

Most school drop-outs who are girls are sometimes victims of teenage pregnancy. To curb the surge of teenage pregnancy, schools should intensify sex-education and to organize talks and debates. Culprits of teenage pregnancy must be sanctioned by the law-courts. Certain obnoxious practices that lure girls and boys to drop-out of school are being abolished like the Trokosi and child slavery.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design is a survey. The term survey is frequently used to describe research that involves administering questionnaires and interviews. The purpose of a survey is to use questionnaires and interviews to collect data from a sample that has been selected to represent a population to which the findings of the data analysis can be generalized (Meredith-Do-Gall & Walter, 2003). This emphasis on population generalization is characteristics of quantitative research but not qualitative research. It includes references to publication where appropriate.

In survey research, researchers are enjoined to do a research that entails a review of curriculum, improvement in the living condition of pupil and academic performance. In their contribution to curriculum development, researchers are enjoined to identify problems pertaining to the content of the curriculum, especially their relevance, currency, gender sensitivities, sequencing and suitability to the grade. When teacher researchers study and point these out, the findings tend to serve as inputs for improving on the system (Meredith-Do-Gull & Walter 2003).

Survey research studies deals with both large and small populations by selecting and studying samples chosen from the populations to discover the relative incident, distribution and interrelations of sociological and

psychological variables. Surveys covered by this definition are often called sample surveys, probably because survey research developed as a separate research activity, along with the development and improvement of sampling procedure (Osuala, 2001).

A fairly clear line of demarcation can be drawn between survey studies and historical studies on the basis of time. Surveys are oriented towards the determinations of the status of a given phenomenon rather than towards the acceleration of causative factors. Survey differ from case study in that surveys are generally based on large cross sectional samples while case studies are oriented to the more intensive and longitudinal study of a smaller sample and like experimentation attempt to isolate antecedence or causes of the phenomenon under investigation (Osuala, 2001).

Surveys are particularly versatile and practical, especially for the administrator in that they identify present conditions and point to present needs. Surveys do not make the decisions for the researcher but they can provide him with information on which to base sound decisions (Osuala, 2001).

Problems and issues in the classroom, the school and the community are legend and varied. In the primary and junior secondary schools, the teacher frequently encounter problems of lateness, truancy, absenteeism, failure to do homework and backwardness in reading. The root causes of these common problems must be investigated through a survey research and when results are arrived at, they help to improve on pupils' school attendance and academic achievement (Osuala, 2001).

Survey research is of great value to the researcher in terms of development of a concerned area of life. It is an inquiry conducted into a

particular issue of current concern, usually undertaken by those directly involved with the aim of implementing a change in a pecific situation (Osuala, 2001).

It is a research aimed at solving problems that emerge from a particular situation. As a researcher, survey research will help to understand what actually goes on in the teaching-learning situations and how the home environment affects pupils. Survey research will not only enhance the researcher's professional status but also promote the researcher's personal development and improvement of his practice (Osuala, 2001).

Findings from survey research provide the researcher with the opportunity of acquiring a better understanding of all aspects of his practice, benefit in relation to subject, content, and the curriculum or method appropriate to the level of the pupils in a class. It will help the teacher to better understand how the environment influences the academic attainment of the learner. However, time and financial constraints is a problem of survey research. Most participants or respondents are unwilling to give accurate information on a problem either because of fear or ignorance on the problem or fear of being labeled or fear of victimisation

Population

According to the 2000 Population and Housing Census, Goi had a population of 2,253, Akplabanya 858, Anyamam 2,168, and Lolonya 1,350 (Dangme East District Assembly Planning Unit, 2004). Records available from the school register and from the PTA Record Book indicate that as at September 2004, the population of pupils at the study and was 2,172; that of teachers was

45, the headteachers were 8 as well as their assistants. The population of parents and guardians of pupils in Songor Ramsar Site was 610.

The accessible population is the entire domain of the population I contacted in Akplabanya and Anyamam out of which a sample was drawn to get first hand information for the research problem. The accessible population is both within and beyond the Songor Ramsar Site. It comprises the Headteachers and their Assistants, Teachers, Pupils and the Ada Teacher Training College Mentees as well as the PTA Chairmen, Parents, Assemblymen, Sege Circuit Supervisor, the School Drop-outs and the Personnel from the Human Resource Management Division of the Dangme East District Education Office as indicated in Table 3

Table 3: Accessible population of Respondent

Population	Frequency
Pupils in Primary 3-6 in Akplabanya Basic School	280
Pupils in Primary 3-6 in Anyamam Basic School	292
Pupils in JSS 1-2 in Anyamam Basic School	137
Pupils in JSS 1-2 in Akplabanya Basic School	138
Pupils in JSS 3 in Akplabanya	48
Pupils in JSS 3 in Anyamam	43
Headteachers in Anyamam and Aklabanya Basic Schools	2
Assistant Headteachers in Anyamam and Akplabanya JSS	2
Teachers in Akplabanya Basic School	12
Teachers in Anyamam Basic School	10
School drop-outs	13
Teacher Training College Mentees in Anyamam Basic School	5
Teacher Training College Mentees in Akplabanya Basic School	5
Sege Circuit Supervisor	1
PTA Chairmen (Anyamam and Akplabanya)	2
Assemblymen (Anyamam and Akplabanya)	2
Parents/Guardians of pupils in Anyamam	610
Parents/Guardians of pupils in Akplabanya	606
Personnel from HRMD of Dangme East District Education Office	1
Total	**2209**

Sample and Sampling Procedure

I used purposive and simple random sampling techniques to select respondents from the basic schools; the headteachers and the assistants, the assemblymen, teacher training college mentees and personnel from the Human Resource Management Division of the District Education Office. Purposive sampling technique is a non-probability technique whereby the researcher,

adhering to the objectives of the study, selects respondents without any rigid sampling procedure who can answer his questions (Osuala, 2001). Purposive sampling technique was used to select the two headteachers from Akplabanya and Anyamam Basic Schools as well as their assistants and four classroom teachers who acted as guidance and counseling coordinators in the schools and who showed active interest in pupils' school attendance and behaviour. One PTA chairman, the Sege District Circuit supervisor and a personnel from the Human Resource Management Division of the Dangme East District Education Office were all selected using the purposive sampling technique. The Queenmother of Anyamam and the chief of Akplabanya were selected to represent parents because they are opinion leaders. Evidence from the PTA chairman selected showed that the two queenmothers have active interest in the welfare of both teachers and pupils in the schools. Five Teacher Trainee mentees were selected using the purposive sampling technique. In my pilot study, the selected five Teacher Trainee mentees assisted me in interacting with the queenmothers and chiefs of the town with a cross-section of teachers and pupils on truancy and school drop-out.

The selection of thirteen drop-out from the Basic School was done through snowball sampling technique. According to Osuala (2001), snowball sampling is often used to obtain a sample respondents when there is no adequate list which could be used as a sampling frame. It is a method for obtaining samples of numerically small groups such as members of ethnic minorities, school drop-out and drug addicts. This approach involves contacting a member of the population of interest and asking whether he/she knows anyone else with the required characteristics like a drug addict and a school drop-out. I, upon

inquiry, was able to locate one drop-out and with his help, the remaining twelve drop-outs were reached.

I used the purposive sampling to select the class prefect and the assistant and the simple random sampling to select two other pupils in P3-P6. By definition, simple random sampling takes into account the fact that all the elements or individuals in the population get the chance of selection. The investigator must give numbers to all the elements in the selected area. The basic assumption underlying simple random sampling is that the elements or the individual in the population are judged to be homogeneous. The researcher gives each element a number. Then he determines a sample size, for example in a population of 1000 pupils a sample size of 300 students is an adequate representation. The numbers are put into a container and mixed. An assistant may be blindfolded and asked to pick numbers from the container until the required sample size is reached (Kish, 1967).

In choosing two pupils each from Anyamam and Akplabanya basic schools in P3-P6, I chose a sample size of 15 out of the entire class population range from 72-73. The names of the pupils included in the sample were written on the papers, mixed and put in a container. I then picked the first four pieces of paper from the container to form the respondents in P3-P6 I got 32 respondents from Anyamam and Akplabanya Primary Schools.

In the JSS1-2, I used simple random sampling to choose four respondents in each class and purposive sampling to select class prefects and their assistants. In all, I chose 12 respondents (six from Anyamam and 6 from Akplabanya Junior Schools). I used simple random sampling to select 30 respondents from JSS3 schools in Akplabanya and Anyamam Basic Schools.

In all I selected 110 respondents out of the accessible population of 2209. The selected sample represents only 4.9% of the accessible population. This was so because the researcher wanted to concentrate mostly on only few respondents who will be committed to give out the idea on the research problem. Secondly, only 13 drop-outs were included because they were the pupils that are directly affected in the research to give the reasons behind their drop-out from school. Thirty pupils were included in the sample for respondents in JSS 3 because by the year pupils reach JSS3, they are faced with several challenges that call for school drop-out. Some of their colleagues who drop-out from school may give to their friends in JSS3 the reasons behind their drop-out from school so more of them have been included in the sample.

Research Instruments

Records, interviews and questionnaire were used to collect data. The school register was checked to determine pupils' attendance and enrollment records. I interacted with the headteachers on pupils' absenteeism and drop-out record and observed that some of the pupils had dropped out of school.

The interview is a method of field investigation whereby the researcher meets the respondents and through the interaction the researcher asks specific questions to find answers to the research problem (Kish, 1967). This is used when respondents are willing to talk and have knowledge of the research problem. The researcher structures specific questions. Some questions may also emerge from the field discussions. They are usually unstructured. In the interview between the interviewer and the interviewee (the respondent), the interviewer must speak the language of the people and must be able to communicate with the various people the researcher meets. The interviewer

must be in the position to understand the culture of the local people and the ability to establish a rapport. When the interview is used in a research, it creates a learning environment in which the researcher and the respondents are involved in a purposeful discussion. Questions are asked, feedback is provided and within a relaxed atmosphere, the information is sought and checked. With the interview guide, I was able to interview respondents in order to provide useful and detailed information not included in the questionnaire pertaining to the research problem.

A questionnaire is a formal question framed and written down for the respondents to provide answers to. The questionnaire is often divided into two parts. The first part normally is a classification section. This section requires such details of the respondent as sex, age, marital status and occupation. The second part possesses the questions relating to the subject matter of inquiry. Usually, the answers given in the second part can be analysed according to the information in the first part. The questionnaire can be mailed and non-mailed (Oppenheim, 1966).

There are two basic types of questionnaires, namely pre-coded or closed questionnaire where the investigator sets questions, and, at the same point, provides all the possible answers he expects to obtain from his respondents. In most cases, the respondent is expected to tick the appropriate responses (Oppenheim, 1966).

The Yes or No type questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. Section A is on biographical data of respondents. Section B, C and D reflect the Research Questions one to three and respondents

are to tick the appropriate responses as basis to answer the various Research Questions.

However, the questionnaire alone was not all that adequate for my research because of the low level of illiteracy amongst the respondents. The questionnaire was backed by interview to clarify some key items in the questionnaire for respondents. The questionnaire backed by interview enabled me to reach 110 respondents within a short space of time.

Data Collection Procedure

The first step in data collection was done by me in the classroom. After briefing the sampled 74 pupils about the items in the questionnaire so that they understand exactly what the questions meant in order that they could give the appropriate response, the questionnaires were given out to them. The sampled respondents used approximately 30 minutes in responding to the items in the questionnaire.

I went round to assist the 12 out of the 13 drop-out and two parents to fill questionnaire. Assistance given was in the form of reading out the items in the questionnaire. I also interviewed some of the sampled respondents.

I collected mailed questionnaire sent to the 4 headteachers and their respective 4 assistants, 4 teachers, the Sege circuit supervisor, the Assemblyman, the PTA Chairman of Akplabanya Basic School and personnel from the Human Resource Management Division of District Education Office all included in the sample. Contact numbers of these respondents were collected so that any clarification on some aspects of the questionnaire could be made to such respondents. Questionnaire was collected personally from the 10 Teacher

Trainee Mentees. Only 109 returned questionnaires which represent 99.0%. One drop-out could not be located.

Permission was sought for pupils, teachers and mentees who were sampled for the research when a day and time was agreed upon for the interview. Interview guides were prepared and time allotted for each respondent. Records were taken from each respondent into a special record book. A special date and time was agreed upon with the 13 school drop-outs, the Sege circuit supervision, PTA chairman, the Assemblyman and the personnel from the Human Resource and Management Division of the Dangme East District. I went to their homes and interviewed them with the help of the prepared interview guide. Records were taken in the course of the interview for analysis.

Data Analysis

Analysis, according to Twumasi (1986), is a critical examination of material in order to understand its parts, and its relationship and to discover its trends. It means the separation of the research data into its constituent parts. After the separation, each part must be studied to determine its essential features and their relations need to be studied.

The data from the field were carefully examined by me for consistency of responses. I read through all the data to determine whether the replies were worthwhile, that is, whether all the questions have been properly answered. The next step was tabulation where I summarised quantitative data into statistical table. The quantitative data was based on the responses given by sampled respondents in the questionnaire.

Data analysis plan was tabulating data on various responses of the questionnaire into tallies, then into frequencies by me. Frequencies on the number of respondents that agreed on the various responses in the questionnaire under every research question were converted by me into percentages. Tables were drawn for the various responses from which analysis and conclusions were made.

Records taken from the various respondents sampled for the interview were coded and transcribed. The transcribed interview records were put into patterns for qualitative analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter comprises the results and discussion of the research. There are three research questions that were formulated to help get answers to the research problem under investigation

Research Question 1

What are the reasons for the high rate of truancy among pupils in the Songor Ramsar Site?

Various reasons were given by respondents as responsible for the high rate of truancy among pupils in the Songor Ramsar Site. The reasons, as illustrated in Table 4 are the home environment, the inability of pupils to cope with the academic demands of the school, attitude of some teachers on pupils who performed below average, the nature of the 'shift' system in the school system and negative attitudes exhibited by colleagues on pupils as victims.

Table 4: Reasons for the High Rate of Truancy Among Pupils in the Songor Ramsar Site

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
The home environment (Poverty and lack of appreciation of the values of education by parents/guardians	62	56.9
Pupils' inability to cope with the academic demands of the school.	29	26.6
Teacher's attitude towards pupils in the school	12	11.0
The nature of the shift system in the public schools	4	3.7
Negative attitude exhibited by colleagues on pupils in the school	2	1.8
Total	**109**	**100.0**

As shown in Table 4, 62(56.8%) of the respondents indicated that the home environment constitute a major cause of truancy in the basic schools in the Songor Ramsar Site and poverty and lack of appreciation of the values of education by parents or guardians were the reasons behind the home environment. A truant interviewed stated: "failure of parents to provide basic needs like school uniforms, exercise books, food as well as delay in paying school fees compelled her to play truancy in school". Most pupils interviewed remarked "truancy was high on Tuesdays and Fridays which are Kasseh Market days for them to sell or serve as ' Kaaya-ye' to enable them get some money to use for their basic needs". A parent interviewed remarked "I deliberately recall

or absent my ward from school to look after her younger siblings to enable me (the parent) attend to her business in the nearby Kasseh market".

The home environment as a major cause of truancy was supported by Gilchrist (1989). In his book "Parental lapses in Child Education," Gilchrist (1989) points out what parents have failed to do which have prevented the child's progress in school that leads to truancy and school drop-out. These lapses he summarised as parents inability to provide school uniforms, pens, exercise books, feeding money and lorry fares.

Pupils inability to cope with the academic demands of the school was a cause of truancy as indicated by 29 (26.6%) of respondents. A truant interviewed remarked "some subjects like mathematics and science were not well taught for him to comprehend so he developed hatred for these subjects". A teacher interviewed remarked "continuous poor performance in classroom subjects, especially in mathematics and science discouraged some pupils from continuously attending school". After interviewing a pupil, a training mentee stated "some pupils did avoid some subjects like Science and English because even their presence in class would not enable them to easily comprehend the lesson".

The views expressed by the 29(26.6%) respondents as pupils' inability to cope with the academic demands of the school was supported by Ohlsem (1974) and Tetteh (1998). Ohlsem (1974) pointed out that pupils in the school hail from different parental background and have various degrees of understanding on what was taught in the classroom. When a pupil's intelligent quotient is low, Ohlsem (1998) he cannot easily understand most lessons taught in the classroom and would continuously perform poorly and may be compelled to be

a truant. Tetteh (1998) found out that most shepherd boys in the Ningo Traditional Area of the Accra Plains became truant because of their hatred for mathematics and science which they performed poorly.

Teacher's attitude towards pupils in the school was identified by 12(11.0%) respondents as a cause of truancy in the Songor Ramsar Site of the Dangme East District. A parent remarked when interviewed "verbal abuse on her ward by School Authorities compelled her child to become a truant". A pupil stated: "rampant and excessive canning as a way of inducing in her and some of her colleagues to learn compelled her to be truant".

The nature of the shift system in the public schools was a reason for the high rate of truancy among pupils in the Songor Ramsar Site in the Dangme East District. Four representing 3.6% of respondents attested to this fact when interviewed. The personnel from the Human Resource and Management Division of the Dangme East District stated: "a pupil who wanted to be a truant could easily say that he was on the afternoon shift when in the actual fact he was supposed to be with the morning shift. This reason was given to enable her play truant because he wanted to mine salt in the Songor lagoon in the morning". A pupil interviewed stated: "he did indulge in either pushing track or selling salt on Tuesday in the Kasseh market in the morning for money and when late for the afternoon shift play truant to school".

Negative attitude exhibited by colleagues on pupils in the school was indicated by two respondents representing 1.8% as a cause of truancy in the study area. A J.S.S 2 male pupil and J.S.S 3 female pupil interviewed remarked "colleague friends became truants because of labeling effect, for example naming by colleagues as 'dongo' 'stinky minds' and 'too old' compelled them

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to look as an outcast and very difficult to make friends and found solace in playing truant in the school". It is, therefore, evident that the reasons for the high rate of truancy among pupils in the Songor Ramsar Site of the Dangme East District are the home environment, pupils inability to cope with the academic demands of the school, teacher's attitude towards pupils in the school, the nature of the shift system in the public schools and the negative attitude exhibited by colleagues on pupils in the school.

Research Question 2

What Accounts for the High Rate of School Drop-out Among Pupils in the Songor Ramsar Site?

Findings revealed five main causes of school drop-outs in the Songor Ramsar Site. The causes are peer-group influence, the demands of community from parents or guardians, family structure, the school related factor and the home related factor

Table 5: Causes of School Drop-out in the Basic Schools of the Songor Ramsar Site

Causes of school drop-out	Frequency	Percentage
The Home Related Factors	53	48.6
The School Related Factors	24	22.1
Peer Group Influence	18	16.5
Family Structure (single parenthood)	7	6.4
The Demands of the Community from parents or guardians	7	6.4
Total	**109**	**100.0**

Most respondents, that is 53 representing 48.6% indicated that the home factor namely poverty, and lack of appreciation of the values of education by parents are responsible for school dropout in the Songor Ramsar Site. A school drop-out interviewed stated: "inability of parents or guardians to provide basic needs like pen, pencil, erasers, pocket money, exercise books and school fees compelled her to drop-out of school when she was sent home by the headteacher". Another drop-out interviewed remarked "poverty caused her to drop-out from school. Continuous absenteeism from school enabled him not to catch up with lesson taught and he performed poorly always in exams and drop-out finally from school".

Wilson (1987) expressed similar view when he indicated that there is a correlation between school drop-out and the socio-economic status of parents. To Wilson (1987), parents who are poor cannot hire rooms for their children let alone letting them have access to educational facilities like books, television, school fees and blackboards. Such children rarely have their emotional and psychological needs satisfied. They are, therefore, faced with problems including exposure to drugs resulting in their dropping out of school. A study by Attatsi (2001) in the Volta Region of Ghana showed that when parents are poor, they cannot give their children pocket money nor pay for their school fees. Out of frustration, such children tend to drop out of school.

Teachers' attitude to teaching and towards pupils was responsible for school drop-out as indicated by 24 (22%) of respondents. When interviewed by me, a drop-out stated: "he dropped out of school because some teachers are untrained so they lacked the professional competence in teaching and classroom management". Such teachers the drop out continued, "failed to encourage pupils

to do well next time when they performed poorly". She lamented when I further interviewed her, "an untrained teacher used phrases on her like 'useless chap', 'good for nothing' and 'big headed chap'". "The use of abusive language and too much canning resulted in the non-attendance of school and finally I dropped out of school".

Epstein (1989) indicated in his findings that the attitude of a teacher in a class goes a long way not only to determine a pupil's interest in a particular subject but also the number of times he goes to school. The use of abusive language and too much canning of pupils resulted in non-attendance of class during certain days and periods and finally the pupil drop out of school. Dowsett (cited in Attatsi, 2001) noted that where teachers castigate and label pupils who for one reason or another cannot cope with the cognitive demand of schooling, the pupils lose confidence and self esteem and quit schooling. Tetteh (1998) found out that in the Ningo Traditional Area, some pupils got discouraged and dropped out of school because some of the teachers were untrained and lacked the professional competence in classroom management and this resulted in poor academic performance. These findings were not different from the situation in the Songor Ramsar Site.

Peer group influence was a cause for school drop-out in the Songor Ramsar Site and this was confirmed by 18 (16.5%) of the sampled population. A drop-out confirmed upon interview that she was among a group of pupils who were seen by their classmates as either too old or not brilliant in class and were shunned. She stated further that "the group formed a 'gang' and joined their colleague gangsters and they were influenced to drop out from school. Before

she finally dropped out from school, she played truancy by swimming in the lagoon, fishing and selling in the Kasseh Market".

The views expressed by the 18 (16.5%) respondents was supported by Berns (1993) who observed that pupils' attitude towards learning is influenced by the peer group which they belong and peer-pressure may enable peers to drop out of school. Ohlsen (1974) stated that children can be influenced by the peer group to drop out of school because children can fall prey to a delinquent gang leader who may control and use them. According to Ohlsen (1974), as the peer group leader drops out of school, members of the gang also drop out in conformity to peer advice.

Seven (6.4%) respondents indicated that single parenthood in the family structure was a cause of school dropout in the Songor Ramsar Site. When interviewed, the headteacher at Anyamam Basic School stated that "at a meeting to discuss the alarming rate of school drop-out, parents confirmed single parenthood was due to death of a spouse, separation, divorce or desertion." He further stated: "most pupils were left either in the care of their mother or grandmother as the parent left the Songor Ramsar Site to elsewhere like Cameroon and Cape Coast to engage in fishing". A drop out stated: "in the absence of her father, she dropped out from school because the income of her grandmother could not adequately cater for her education so she was lured by men into teenage pregnancy."

The study by Ghunney (1990) supports the views expressed by the seven (6.4%) respondents. Ghunney (1990) found out from his study conducted at Apewosika and Kokuado in Cape Coast that children dropped out of school because they were being raised single handedly by mothers who encouraged

them to drop out of school to serve the University of Cape Coast students in their halls of residence so as to generate some income to supplement those of their mothers. Another study by Singleman and Wojkiewiez (1993) in the United States of America revealed that children who grew up with one parent mostly because of divorce have lower educational achievement than those with both parents. This is due to low parental support, supervision and control which have caused some to drop out of school.

Seven representing 6.4% of the sampled population indicated that the demands of the community from parents or guardians was a reason for the high rate of school drop-out among pupils in the Songor Ramsar site. A parent interviewed stated: "certain financial administration in the school like engaging pupils in manual labour and parents billed to pay building and furniture fees did encourage school dropout". A drop-out interviewed remarked "he dropped out of school because his parent could not afford to pay building and furniture fees levied on parents or guardians as the reason to enable them generate funds for the maintenance of the school and to buy more furniture to meet the requirements of pupils admitted".

In some community-based schools, the initial cost of infrastructure and the cost of furniture are borne by parents (Allison, as cited in Skinner, 1963). When parents or guardians felt too much was demanded of them, they asked their wards to stop schooling Allison, (as cited in Skinner, 1963) in support of the views expressed by seven (6.4%) indicated that the demands of the community from parents or guardians was a reason for the high rate of school dropout among pupils in the Songhor Ramsar Site.

To conclude, the main causes of school drop-outs in the Songhor Ramsar Site are poverty and lack of appreciation of the values of education as

Home related factors, teachers' attitude to teaching and towards pupils as school related factors, peer group influence, the demands of the community from parents and family structure.

What Measures can be Adopted to Improve Schooling and Reduce School Drop-out Rate among Pupils in the Songor Ramsar Site?

Various measures were suggested by respondents to help curb the rate of truancy and school drop-out among pupils in the Songor Ramsar Site. The measures suggested were that the School Management Committee under the auspices of the Parent Teacher Association should rally parents and guardians to educate them on the importance of education, pupils exhibiting truant behaviour should be identified and given special counseling by the Guidance and Counselling unit to enable them make adjustment to the school situation, the Central Government through the District Assembly and the Ministry of Education, must play a crucial role, there must be a cordial relationship between the staff and pupils in the school and there must be high community responsibility towards education and ownership of institution.

Table 6: Measures that can be Adopted to Improve Schooling and Reduce School Drop-out Rate mong Pupils in the Songor Ramsar Site

Measures to adopt	Frequency	Percentage
The School Management Committee (SMC) under the auspices of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) should rally parents and guardians to educate them on the importance of education	34	31.1
Pupils exhibiting truant behaviour should be identified and given special counseling by the guidance and counseling unit to enable them make adjustment in the school situation	26	23.9
The role of the Central Government through the District Assembly and the Ministry of Education	21	19.3
Cordial relationship between the staff and pupils must be enhanced	16	14.7
Community responsibility towards education and ownership of institutions must be effective	12	11.0
Total	**109**	**100.0**

The School Management Committee (SMC) under the auspices of the Parent Teacher Association should rally parents and guardians to educate parents on the importance of education. This view was expressed by 34 (31.1%) of the respondent as a way of reducing school drop-out. A headteacher stated "based on available record on the PTA, most of the parents of pupils in the school are either illiterates or could not attend school beyond the Middle School Certificate or the Basic School level and could not fully grasp the importance of education.

The headteacher further remarked "a cordial relationship should exist between parents and teachers to the extent that each party can pay visit to each

other to discuss pertinent problems affecting pupils. At public gatherings like Farmer's Days, Festival Days and Founders Days, parents and guardians should be sensitized to focus more resources and attention on child education and old boys who are pursuing higher education at the universities, polytechnics and vocational institutions could be invited to talk to the public and pupils to motivate them to learn hard", the headteacher further stated. Kwarpong (1979) expressed similar views that community responsibility and ownership of institution and its people should be revived. Expenses on other engagements like funerals should be cut down in favour of sponsoring pupils' education.

Some respondents, that is 26 (23.9%) expressed the view that pupils exhibiting truant behaviour should be identified and given special counseling by a well constituted Guidance and Counseling Unit in the schools. The Queenmother remarked "through leadership roles, pupils should be assisted to expose and uproot vices like armed robbery, pick-pocketing, drug abuse, using abusive language and insult and truancy within their ranks. Where pupils' problem was centered on the inability to cope with school work, remedial teaching should be organized for them."

The concern raised in Republic of Ghana (2002) supported the views expressed by the 26 (23.9%) of the respondents. The report suggested that there should be an appropriate guidance and counseling services in schools to cater for truants and deviants and to retain pupils in school especially the girl child in order to reduce the incidence of school drop-out.

Twenty-one (19.3%) of respondents indicated that as a way to curb the rate of truancy and school drop-out among pupils in the Songor Ramsar Site the Central Government through the District Assembly and the Ministry of

Education must play a crucial role. The personnel from the Human Resource Development Division of the Dangme East Education office stated "since the schools in the Songor Ramsar Site are located within Local Government areas, the Dangme East District Assembly through the District Oversight Committee on Education should institute rules and regulation to ensure that parents and guardians fulfil their responsibilities towards their children in school." He further stated: "apart from the contribution from the District Assembly, financial support should be solicited from individuals and corporate bodies to finance education, the building of infrastructure and to help abolish the shift system." These findings were supported by Koomson (1990). Koomson (1990) indicated that stakeholders of education, especially the Central Government through the District Assembly, the school management committee, headteachers, teachers and parents and guardians of a community over the years gave financial support to make education not only beneficial to pupils but also the entire community. The burden on parents and guardians to buy furniture and providing for school building is lessened and the rate of school dropout is minimized (Koomson, 1990).

Cordial relationship between staff and pupils in the school to facilitate sound academic work was a finding from 16 (14.7%) of the respondents. A parent remarked after being interviewed "the staff should not only impart knowledge but should also serve as counsellors to pupils. Individual teachers should disabuse their minds about some pupils' behaviour and play the role of parents surrogate to all pupils" A staff after interviewed stated: "to instill discipline and high academic standards in the school, plan should be drawn for effective time management and use by both teachers and pupils. Class

attendance register and staff attendance books must be kept and signed by teachers in the presence of school heads."

The 2003 – 2005 Annual Education Sector Operational Plan in conformity with the views expressed by 16 (14.7%) respondents suggested that heads of basic schools must promote teamwork and form committees on academic work, examination, guidance and counseling, disciplinary, sanitation (health), sports and culture and children taking part in the conduction of morning assemblies to get the chance to develop their leadership qualities and skills of speaking in public. Besides, the 2003 – 2005 Annual Education Sector Operational Plan suggested that there should be an established accepted standard of behaviour for teachers and pupils in the schools.

Community responsibility towards education and ownership of institutions must be effective was the view expressed by 12 (11.0%) of the respondents. Upon interview, the assemblyman of Anyaman stated: "the elderly should resume their communal spirit and take the responsibility of not only correcting the young when they go wayward but to also inculcate the good values of the community in them. Cherished values like honesty, hardwork and respect would be learnt with education placed on high agenda. This would arouse the interest and relevance of education in pupils and parents and help reduce school drop-out".

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study examined school drop-out among pupils at the Basic Education level in Songor Ramsar Site in the Dangme East District of the Greater Accra Region. Songor Ramsar Site is drained by the Songor Lagoon. Five settlements, namely Wekumagbe, Akplabanya, Anyamam, Goi and Lolonya are located in the songor Ramsar Site. During the teaching practice in October 2004, I observed from the school register and pilot study that school drop-out was a major problem. I formulated three research questions to guide in finding the root causes of the problem and to suggest solutions to the problem.

Various literatures were read to give me an in-depth understanding of what school drop-out is and the factors responsible for school drop-out. From the literature read, it became evident as compared to my pilot study that truancy and school drop-out are interrelated simply because a pupil who normally plays truancy in school ends up dropping out from school. Statistics of pupils that dropped out of school in the Dangme East District in 1998 was 713 for primary and 426 for junior secondary school. 1999 was 682 for primary and 415 for jss and 2000 was 617 for primary and 405 for jss.

The survey research design was used in conducting the study. The term survey is frequently used to describe research that involves administering questionnaires and interviews. The purpose of a survey is to use questionnaires and interviews to collect data from a sample that has been selected to represent

a population to which the finding of the data analysis can be generalized (Meredith D, Gall & Walter, 2003). With the help of statistics available from the Dangme East District Planning Unit, 2004 and the Anyamam and Akplabanya Basic School register, the accessible population comprising pupils from primary 3 – 6 and junior secondary school 1 – 3, headteachers and assistant headteachers of both Primary and Junior High Schools, teachers, school drop-outs, teacher training college mentees, the Sege Circuit Supervisor, the PTA Chairmen, the Assemblymen, parents and guardians and personnel from the Human Resource Management Division was 2,209.

Out of the accessible population of 2209, 110 respondents (4.9%) were chosen for my sample. The justification for using 110 particip Ghana Statistical Service ants as my sample was to enable me have personal interactions apart from the questionnaire administered to the respondents.

I used a combination of purposive and simple random sampling technique to select respondents from the basic schools, the headteachers and their assistants, the Assemblymen, teacher training college mentees and personnel from the Human Resource Management Division of the District Education Office. Purposive sampling technique was used to select two headteachers and their assistants from the basic schools and four classroom teachers, the PTA Chairman, the Sege District Circuit Supervisor, the queenmother and a chief, the class prefects and their assistants. I used simple random sampling technique to select pupils in Primary and JSS 1-3 and snowball sampling technique to select school drop-outs.

The interview and questionnaire were used to collect data from respondents. The yes/no type questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was

divided into four sections. Section A was on biographical data of respondents. Sections B, C and D reflected the research questions one to three and respondents were to tick the appropriate responses as basis to provide answer to the research questions. One of the sampled drop-outs could not be reached. Key findings were provided by the questionnaire whilst detailed explanations to key findings were provided by the interview with the help of interview guides. The interviewers were drawn from the 109 respondents. At least a respondent from each member of the sample were interviewed by me.

Data for all the research questions were carefully analysed. I examined the data from the respondents for consistency of responses. I read through all the data to determine whether all the questions were properly answered. I tabulated the data for each research question into statistical tables and into tallies and frequency tables and converted them into percentage values. Statistical tables were drawn for the various responses from which analysis and conclusion were made. The interview was coded, transcribed and put into pattern for qualitative analysis.

1. School drop-out began when some pupils initially play truant to school. The causes of truancy are poverty and lack of appreciation of the values of education by parents and guardians, pupils' inability to cope with the academic demands of the school, teacher's attitude meted to pupils in the school, the nature of the shift system in the public schools and negative attitude exhibited by colleagues on pupils in the school.

2. The causes for school drop-out include poverty and lack of appreciation of the values of education by parents and guardians teachers attitude to teaching

and towards pupils, peer group influence, single parenthood and the demands of the community from parents or guardians.

Conclusions

The basic schools in the Songor Ramsar Site are faced with high rate of truancy and school drop-out. The findings of the research confirmed the research questions and it is a true reflection of the school drop-out situation in the Songor Ramsar Site. As expressed by respondents, the attitude of some parents and guardians towards schooling is not the best. Most pupils resort to fishing and small scale farming and all can be attributed to poor counseling on schooling. The reasons behind school drop-out is now better understood after the interaction with respondents that helped me to come out with the root causes of school drop-out as indicated in the findings in the Songor Ramsar Site. This crystal clear that school drop-out in the Songor Ramsar Site is a reality which needs great attention by the government and non-governmental organizations.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations may be helpful to pupils, parents and school management if they are implemented:

1. The Central Government through the District Assembly and the Ministry of Education has a crucial role to play to help retain pupils in school. The Dangme East District and the District Assembly through the District Oversight Committee on Education needs to institute rules and regulations to ensure that parents and guardians fulfill their responsibilities towards their children. Laws could be passed that any child of school going age not attending school without any reasonable cause will attract a penalty of either payment of a huge sum of money by the parent or guardian. Fund must also

be established by the District Assembly to support brilliant but needy children in school.

2. The School Management Committee with funding from the District Assembly must rally the elderly in the community to resume the communal spirit to correct the youth when they go wayward and to inculcate in the youth good values like honesty, hardwork and respect. The staff should, be counselled to accept their roles as not only to impart knowledge to pupils but to also serve as counsellors to pupils and to correct them whenever the pupils go wrong. Individual teachers should cool tempers down and play the role of parent surrogate to all pupils. Effective supervision and time management and teaching by the staff must be enforced by the headteachers and their assistance with the help of the Sege Circuit Supervisor. Class attendance register and staff attendance books must be kept and signed in the presence of the school heads and culprits counseled to adhere strictly to it.

3. Members of staff and parents must be counseled to be regular at Parent Teacher Association meetings. Cordial relationship must be established by removing any grievances that any parent may have against a member of staff or grievances against a parent by a member of staff must be looked into and addressed. By so doing, a congenial atmosphere is created so that each party can pay visit to the other to find out how pupils are progressing in their education.

4. At public gatherings like Farmers Day, Festival and Founders Days, organizers of such durbars must be used to educate parents and guardians to focus their attention on child education. The platform should also be used to

talk on the dangers of such vices as armed robbery, pick-pocketing and drug abuse on the individual, the family and society.

Suggestion for Future Research

The issues involved in school drop-out in the Songor Ramsar Site of the Dangme East District demand much more attention. The duration for the problem of this kind is inadequate to cover the full range of issues. This dissertation examined the causes of school drop-out on pupils. It is, therefore, recommended that further research focuses on the implications of school drop-out on pupils, parents, the school and the community. The study covered only pupils in the Songor Ramsar Site in the Sege Circuit of the Dangme East District. A replication of the study in other Circuits in the district is suggested to confirm or disprove the results of the present study. It is also suggested that three or more districts be compared to make the findings more generalizable to the Greater Accra Region as a whole. The method adopted for this study can be used for replication.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RESPONDENTS

A.   BIO DATA

1.   Age of respondent.

5 – 10 yrs

11 – 15yrs

16 – 20yrs

21 – 25yrs

26 – 30yrs

31 – 35yrs

36 – 40yrs

41 – 45yrs

46 – 50yrs

50yrs + (specify)

2.   Sex of respondent   Male   (Please tick which is applicable)

Female

3.   Educational Background of respondent

Non-Formal sector

M. S. L. C. / Basic   Diploma

G. C. E. / SSSC   1st Degree

Cert A 4yr or Post sec   2nd Degree

Section B

Please tick the appropriate response responsible for the high rate of truancy among pupils in the Songor Ramsar Site

	Yes	No
1. Pupils' inability to cope with the academic demands of the school		
2. Negative attitude exhibited by colleagues on pupils in the school		
3. Teachers' attitude towards pupils in the school		
4. The nature of the shift system		
5. The home environment (poverty and lack of appreciation of the values of education by parents/guardians)		

SECTION C

Please tick the appropriate response responsible for the causes of drop out in the basic schools of the Songor Ramsar Site

	Yes	No
1. The Home related factors		
2. The School related factors		
3. Family structures (single parenthood)		
4. Peer group influence		
5. The demand of the community from parents/guardians		

SECTION D

Please tick the appropriate response as a measure that can be adopted to improve schooling and reduce school drop-out among pupils in the Songor Ramsar Site

	Yes	No
1. The Central government through the ministry of education and the District Assembly must play a crucial role		
2. Community responsibility and ownership of institution must be Effective		
3. Cordial relationship between the staff and the pupils		
4. The School Management Committee (SMC) under the auspices of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) should rally parents/ guardians and educate them on the importance of education		
5. Pupils exhibiting truant behaviour should be identified and given special counselling to enable them make adjustments.		

B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PUPILS, TEACHERS AND PARENTS;

1. In your opinion, what do you say about the teaching and learning of

    mathematics, science and English in the school?

    Prompt: Is it good or bad?

    : Why do you say so? Explain

    : Do you like or hate any of the subjects? Explain

2. What were some of the reasons for truancy in your school?

    Prompt: Can the reasons be attributed to the school environment or the

    home environment?

    : If school environment then what are the reasons?

    : If home environment then what are the reasons?

3. Do pupils play truant on market days?

    Prompt: What are the market days?

    : Is it true that truancy is high on market days?

    : Why do you say so? Explain

4. Do pupils mine salt during school days?

    Prompt: Do pupils mine salt in the Songor Lagoon all Day?

    or half a day and later go to school? Explain

C

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RESPONDENTS (PUPILS, TEACHERS, HEADTEACHERS, PARENTS/GUARDIANS, PTA CHAIRMAN AND ASSEMBLYMAN)

1. In your opinion, what do you say school drop-out is?

    Prompt: I s it good or bad?

    : Why do you say so? Explain

2. Is school drop-out rampant in this school?

    Prompt: If so, have you engaged in any conversation with any school drop-out?

    : What reasons did the school drop-out give for dropping out of school?

3. In your opinion, what do you say about teaching and learning in the school?

    Prompt: Are the teachers friendly or abusive?

    : Are their teaching methods good or bad? Explain

4. So what do you think are the reasons for school drop-out?

D

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SAMPLED RESPONDENTS

1. Are you aware that there is a problem of school drop-out in this school?

    Prompt: How do you know? Explain

    : What suggestions do you offer to solve it?

2. Is there a well-constituted guidance and counseling unit in the school?

    Prompt: if yes what have been their activities? Explain

    : Who are those they counsel?

3. Has the Dangme East District Assembly show any keen interest in the school?

    Prompt: What are the areas of great concern?

4. Are you comfortable with the overall school administration?

    Prompt: Is time-management, keeping and signing of school register an effective part in school administration? Why do you say so?

5. Do you have Old Boys and Girls Association in your school?

    Prompt: What have been their contribution towards the development of the school?

    : Do they offer effective guidance and counseling service in the school?

    : Who are the target group?

6. In your opinion what do you think have been done so far by any individual, body or an organization to check on school drop-out in the school?

    Prompt: Are the actions taken yielding the result of pupil retention in school?

E

MAP OF STUDY AREA

A map showing the study area (in arrow)