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CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND ENROLLMENT: A CASE STUDY OF SOME SELECTED SCHOOLS IN THE ATWIMA NWABIAGYA DISTRICT.

BY

GABRIEL BOAMAH KUSI

2019

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Dissertation submitted to the [Department of Planning and Social Development] of the [Faculty of Humanities/ Christian Service University College], University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Science degree in [Monitoring and Evaluation]

November, 2019

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is totally an original study that I conducted with regard to MSc. degree in Monitoring and Evaluation. Apart from important literatures which have been accordingly referenced, the work contains no material which has been published or accepted anywhere for any award of a degree.

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ABSTRACT

In the pursuit to tackle social disparities in Ghana's education delivery in order to attain her Education for All (EFA) agenda, some pro-poor programs have been initiated. Among these is the Ghana School Feeding Program (GSFP) that targets among others, at providing safety nets for the poor, enhancing school enrolment in addition to making better domestic food production. While this program has been implemented since 2005, there is inadequate information on the experiences of beneficiaries. The question then is, to what extent have this investment been effective in reducing poor enrollment and absenteeism in poor households in the Ghanaian rural areas? This research examines how GSFP has affected school enrollment and attendance in Atwima Nwabiagya district in Ghana. The study sought to explore the experiences of beneficiaries of the program within the Atwima Nwabiagya district in Ghana, using interviews and observations. Combining literature with benefit incidence analysis, the results indicate that basic schooling in Atwima Nwabiagya district is generally progressive with an evident rise in enrollment and attendance numbers in pupils' participation in education as compared to periods prior implementation of GSFP. Challenges of program delivery documented included extended time spent on serving, eating and cleaning up, counter effective teaching and learning, pose a threat to education quality. There are disputes concerning funding, policy conflicts and issues about targeting and sustainability of the program.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family for their massive support and prayers.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Basic education is an essential investment for human and economic development of a country (Neamtu, 2015). The level of development of a country is usually informed by the United Nation's Human Development Index (HDI), which focuses on economic, social, and demographic development. The components of the index are made up of the literacy rates and education for social factors, and life expectancy for demographics (UNDP, 2017). Education is truly one of the most powerful instruments for reducing poverty and inequality and it sets the foundation for sustained economic growth (Fosu, 2016). As a source of very powerful human capital, investment in education results in better job and better income returns which impacts on a nation's level of development.

In an advance technological changing world, it is important to educate a child in order to contribute to the human resource of a country. Providing the requisite skills and knowledge is instrumental to meeting the vast changing needs of this world. As such it is necessary for education centers and institutions to provide the best form of conducive environment to facilitate teaching and learning.

International efforts to ensure education is evident in goal 4 (Quality Education) of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The United Nation's (UN) agenda 2030 which covers a broad range of social and economic development issues and aim at transforming the world, identifies quality education as a goal which all countries should seek to achieve (UN, 2017). Pertaining to the Universal Goal 4: Quality Education, the Government of Ghana has made substantial progress towards widening access to primary education over the last

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decade predominantly in the rural areas where participation in education is low. However, research by Takyi et al 2019 showed some level of differences with the current system of Ghana's education, citing disparities in gender, geographical location and income level resulting from uneven distribution of income and resources in some part of the country. The analytical report on access to basic education in Ghana in 2007 highlighted some barriers to access of basic education in the rural communities, which accounted for their low participation in education. (Acheampong, 2007). Pronounced barriers that affect enrollment levels is attributed to economic constraints, traditional beliefs, poor infrastructure and unfavorable school environment (Bardley, 2000).

Over the years, the Ghanaian government has developed several reforms in an effort to improve the educational system which includes the introduction of Free compulsory universal basic education (FCUBE). The FCUBE initially focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning, the effective management of the education sector and access to and participation in basic education. According to Abotsi (2013), educational policies aimed at achieving a universal primary education include; Education Strategy Plan (ESP) for 2005-2013, the Growth Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) or free-compulsory FCUBE and the Ghana School Feeding Program (GSFP).

The School Feeding Program (SFP) is one of the social interventions instituted by the government of Ghana to provide food for free to pupils during school hours. According to the Ministry of Education (2005), the program is intended to decrease the net cost of schooling and thereby alleviate demand on parental financial support for children's educational participation. This incentive would thus lead to improvements in pupils'

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enrolment and attendance, especially the wards of the financially handicapped parents. Moreover, pupils' concentration and cognitive functioning would be enhanced resulting in better learning and higher achievement in school.

Ghana is the first of ten countries in the Sub - Saharan Africa to implement a school feeding program modelled to the guidelines of the New Economics Partnership on African Development (NEPAD) as described in the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program. The implementation of the GSFP across the country began in 2004 and is still on-going (NEPAD, 2005). The Program is supervised by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural development and is expected to serve all pupils in all schools across the districts of Ghana.

Most of the pupil enrolled in schools in non – urban part in Ghana with ages between 7 and 12 are unable to read basic paragraphs and do simple subtraction which has contributed the learning deficit among many primary schools in the country. (Wei et al., 2012) Furthermore, many rural community folks find it very difficult to provide 3-square meal for their children (Smits, Leatherman & Berwick, 2002) resulting in high levels of undernutrition and malnourishment. Undernourishment during childhood has been well-documented to have damaging results not only on children's education but general health. The Ghana School feeding programs have a potentially vital role to play in combating undernutrition in this context.

In order to identify the causal effect of this program, it is essential regular examination and exploitation of its implementation is conducted.

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1.2 Problem Statement and Justification

For sustainable economic growth and development, education is essential as it increases a nations' productivity and competitiveness. Oftentimes, the cost of sending a child to school goes beyond tuition and comprises other costs (books and stationary, feeding, transport, etc.). Child labor and other forms of child exploitation account for the opportunity cost of children's schooling, especially those from poorer households in the rural areas. For this reason, unless these costs are lowered, the poor's sharing in the free education system will be very much inadequate.

The government of Ghana through the Ministry of Education in its quest to increase free compulsory universal basic education for all, places more emphasis on districts with relatively lower wealth level, focusing on providing pupils in public basic schools with free nutritious meals daily at school. This is to help contribute to offsetting the opportunity cost of children's schooling as well as provide better cognition and reduced truancy levels.

Although many advocates claim that free school feeding programs have an encouraging influence on learning through inspiring school partaking and improving children's health and nutritional status, these positive effects are however not self-evident. Thus the need to evaluate the performance and impact of the program by assessing relevant indicators. It is crucial to the design and operation of School feeding and similar future projects. This will assist policy makers in the education and related sectors to choose and apply the optimum techniques to enhance the programs sustainability. Additionally, the likelihood of miscalculated project revenues, leading to under- or over scaled facilities shall be reduced. Correspondingly, reliable data concerning the performance and sustainability of the Ghana School feeding program especially in the rural sects such as the Atwima Nwabiagya district,

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not only informs decision making processes, it is also critical for evaluating the outcome of changes in policy measures and general conditions such as demography and economic system.

School feeding program although is a sizable investment the Ghana government has committed to, is rational with its high tendency to abate hunger and improve health and nutrition of Ghanaian pupils. Furthermore, the program has a propensity to improve schooling outcomes. Yendaw & Dayour (2015) mentions that the introduction of the Feeding in basic School has helped to increase the intake of pupils in the Rural Districts of Ghana. According to Chakraborty & Jayaraman (2019), free school feeding programs have a positive impact on learning through two main avenues. First, they boost school involvement in the form of school enrollment and attendance. Next, they enhance pupils' nutritional intake; alleviation of short-term hunger facilitates concentration, and improved health and nutritional status which leads to better understanding and lower absenteeism due to illnesses. In order to contribute effectively to the sustainability of this substantial yet crucial investment in the Ghanaian educational system, it is imperative the implementation and performance of the policy is regularly assessed and examined. This would inform effective and efficient decisions to be made by the local and national authorities to enhance the sustainability of the ubiquitous program as it affords children the opportunity to learn in the first place. This is particular in the non-urban parts of the country which has over the years been known for poor-enrollment and attendance in formal educational facilities.

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1.3 Research Questions

The study seeks to address the following research questions;

1. Has Pupils' enrollment in the selected schools increased with the introduction of SFP?
2. How has the attendance of pupils in the selected schools increased with the introduction of SFP?
3. How has the SFP improved the quality of education provided in Basic Schools in the district?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

General Objective:

The general objective of the study is to determine the mid-term impact of the school feeding program on school enrolment and attendance ratios and to monitor the implementation and performance of the program in Atwima Nwabiagya District.

Specific Objectives:

This study seeks to achieve the following specific objectives;

1. To determine the extent to which feeding students via the GSFP has impacted basic school enrolment in the Atwima Nwabiagya District.
2. To assess the extent to which feeding students via the GSFP has influenced basic school attendance in the Atwima Nwabiagya District.
3. To identify and examine the challenges facing the GSFP in the selected schools in the Atwima Nwabiagya district.

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1.5 Project Scope

1.5.1 Geographical Scope

The study is being conducted in the Atwima Nwabiagya district in the Ashanti Region of Ghana with basic schools selected from some of the communities within the district who are both beneficiaries and non – beneficiaries of the Ghana School Feeding Program.

1.5.2 Contextual Scope

The study covers the performance appraisal of the Ghana School Feeding Program on pupils' attendance to school and how the program has been able to influence basic education in their respective communities of operation as against non – beneficiary schools in the same communities and beyond.

1.6 Organization of the Study

The study is divided into five distinct chapters. Chapter one contains the introduction, that is the background to the study, the statement of the research problem, objectives and justification of the study. Chapter two presents definition of other concept and terminologies related to the study, outcome of review of related articles and documents and a well – structured conceptual framework. Chapter three comprises the materials and methods of the study, consisting of the procedures that were used for the collection of the data as well as how the data was interpreted and analyzed. Chapter four focuses on presentation and interpretations of results and findings of the study. The final Chapter five took into account the Conclusion and recommendations of the study.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This sections defines the terms and variables, explain and explore other existing materials and literatures from other researchers and scholars that are related to the current study towards realizing its aims and objectives as far as the operations and performances of the Ghana School Feeding program in the Atwima Nwabiagya District is concern. The sections also provide a well-designed conceptual framework that outlines the various activities and outcomes that leads to measuring the performance of the Ghana School Feeding program.

2.1.1 Definition Terms and Variables

2.2 School Enrollment and Attendance

School enrolment is the total number of students properly registered and/or attending classes at a school (UNICEF, 2001). However, enrolment can further be measured as Gross Enrolment or Net Enrolment depending on the need and targets of the school. According to UNESCO (2009), Gross Enrolment refers to total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age. This is used to show the general level of participation in a given level of education and indicate the capacity of the education system to enroll students of a particular age group. On other hand, UNESCO (2015) defined Net Enrolment as the number of children of official school age who are enrolled school. The purpose is to measure the education coverage in a specific level of a country's education system. Based on these, the special study shall adopt these definitions in its analysis and discussions.

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2.3 School Performance

The research would adopt Ward et al. (1996) definition of School Performance. This is due to the fact that the definition takes into account the context of learning. Ward et al. (1996) viewed School Performance as the extent to which a pupil, teacher or institution has attained their short or long-term educational targets. They further illustrated that, School Performance is commonly assessed through examinations or continuous assessments.

2.4 Quality of Education

Quality of education focused on learning which strengthens the capacities of children to act progressively independently in the attainment of essential knowledge, useful skills and appropriate attitudes; required of children, and helps them create for themselves and others, places of safety, security and healthy interaction (Bernard, 1999 cited by UNICEF, 2000). Therefore, this special study considers Quality Education as one that provides all learners with capabilities they require to become economically productive, develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies and enhance individual well-being**.**

2.5 Basic Education

2.5.1 Definition of Basic Education

Basic Education as defined by the Washington State Legislature is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders, without distinction or preference on account of race, colour, caste or sex. It is further meant

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to capture the knowledge and skills needed to participate in the economy and in our democracy. (Article IX, Section I of the Washington State Constitution).

UNESCO defines basic education as the first nine years (progressively extending to 12 years) of formal education, of which the first five or six are often identified as primary and the rest lower secondary. It also includes basic education for youth and adults who did not have the opportunity or possibility to receive and complete basic education at the appropriate age.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in defining basic education includes early childhood education, primary education and, formal and non-formal education for basic life skills for young people and adults (adult education); literacy and numeracy training.

The World Declaration on Education for All which states: "The main delivery system for the basic education of children outside the family is primary schooling. Primary education must be universal, ensure that the basic learning needs of all children are satisfied, and take into account the culture, needs and opportunities of the community". Primary education is the most important component of basic education. Basic education is broader than simply primary education, which was used by the donor community in the formulation of the second MDG goal and the EFA goal of universal primary education (UPE).

In Latin America and the Caribbean, many countries have six to eight years of compulsory education with approximately five to 15 percent of the students repeating one or more years. In parts of Africa, where life is disturbed by drought or war, the average attendance in public education is measured in months, not years. Unfortunately, the lowest quality of education is

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often found in the poorest regions or communities. The impact of little and/or poor-quality education severely limits the options available to a nation for developing it's short- and long-term sustainability plans.

2.5.2 Relevance of Basic Education

Basic education prepares the population for further education, for an active life and citizenship (Steer & Wathne, 2009). It meets elementary learning needs including learning to learn, the acquisition of numeracy, literacy and scientific and technological knowledge as applied to daily life. This is fundamental for the intellectual growth of every human being. Not only does basic education develop a person's intellectual abilities but also helps develop values like respect for manual labour, sense of co-operation, feeling of being mutually helpful through manual work, development of friendship feeling, economic self-reliance, team spirit and sincerity, (UNESCO, 2009). This level of education also increases the probability of employment in a changing economy. In many developing countries, basic education focuses on reading, writing, and ciphering. Pupils learn to read the newspaper, write letters, figure accounts, and develop skills necessary to fulfil their expected roles in their households and community.

Basic education provides the essential building blocks to continue to higher levels of education. It provides the foundation upon which work-related skills are developed. Generally, research shows that basic education is key to a nation's ability to develop and achieve sustainability targets. According to Oduro (2000), the quality of a country's stock of human capital influences the extent to which knowledge and technology can be utilized and created to enhance productivity and increase the well-being of citizens. Providing basic

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education is a step toward ensuring that citizens are provided with the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills that begins the process of enriching their capacity, increasing productivity as well as their welfare. Ultimately, an educated citizenry is necessary to carry out informed and sustainable development. As such, some attempts have been made by the Ghanaian government to improve the education sector and in the country.

2.6 Educational Reforms in Ghana on Basic Education

Education is widely regarded as the route to economic prosperity, the key to scientific and technological advancement, the means to combat unemployment, the foundation of social equity, and the spread of political socialization and cultural vitality (Chimombo, 2005).All these conditions necessary for the development of a nation. This has informed the conception of various educational reforms in the country. The education system of Ghana has experienced a number of reforms after independence in 1957. The history of education in Ghana can be grouped into the mercantile era, colonial era, post-independence era and the current education system. Different instruments have been used during each of these eras.

During the mercantile era, education in Ghana was a means to help spread the evangelism mission of the missionaries. This is evident in setting up of schools in the forts to train half cast children. The missionaries realized that effective evangelism could only take place when the local people who assisted in the process were educated. This further leads to the establishment of formal schools in Ghana. In the year 1874, Ghana had finally become the colony of Britain. During this period there were 139 schools in Ghana. The British government established the first educational policy in 1882. The plan had four main targets

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including; primary education for every African boy and girl, a training college for teachers in every province, better salaries for teachers and a royal college. Post-Independence Era.

Since Ghana's independence, successive governments have demonstrated the recognition of the importance of education to the nation's development by pursuing policies on education that aim at making it accessible to all and relevant to the social, industrial and technological development of the country. Dr Nkrumah instituted the Education Act of 1961, Act 87 which aimed at achieving free universal primary education (Oduro, 2000). The Act endorsed the two-tier system of education as instituted by the British in colonial times, namely primary-middle and secondary school education. The 1961 Act made education compulsory. Section 21 states that "every child who has attained the school going age as determined by the Minister shall attend a course of instruction as laid down by the Minister." the Act made education to be free (primary education). Section 20 (2) stipulated that "no fee other than the payment of money for stationary or exercise books or materials required by pupils for use in practical work, shall be charged in respect of tuition at a public primary, middle or special school." The structure of the educational system at the time was made up of a six-year Basic Primary Course followed by a four-year Middle School Course.

In the early 1970s, the National Redemption Council (NRC) government of Colonel Ignatius Kutu Acheampong established an Educational Review Committee to recommend reforms in the educational system of the country. One reason for the reform was that basic education needed to focus on how Ghanaians can deal with the problems of the environment, disease, deforestation and low agricultural productivity. It was therefore argued that the prevailing educational system did not address the socio-economic development needs of Ghana. The

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main features of the 1974 Reforms which were to take effect from September 1975 included a Two-Year Kindergarten Education for children between the ages of four (4) and six (6) years which will be followed by a Nine-Year Basic First Cycle Education: six (6) years Primary for children between the ages of six (6) and twelve (12); and three (3) years Junior Secondary School (JSS) for children between twelve (12) and fifteen (15) years, two (2) years Senior Secondary (Lower) and two (2) years Senior Secondary (Upper). The content of the reforms at the primary school included Ghanaian Languages, English, Mathematics, Social Studies, Elementary Science, Cultural Studies, Physical Education and Youth Programs.

In 1987, the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) government of Flt Lt Jerry John Rawlings implemented new educational reforms. This was to address the concerns and criticisms about the educational system, almost the same concerns and criticisms that necessitated the 1974 reforms. It changed the structure of the educational system to six (6) years Primary, three (3) years Junior Secondary and three (3) years Senior Secondary education. The Common Entrance Examination (CEE) used for selection into Secondary Schools was replaced by the Basic Education Certificate Education (BECE).

On January 17, 2002, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) government of John Agyekum Kufuor inaugurated a Presidential Committee on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana. Kindergarten was not an integral part of Basic Education and the reform incorporated it to prepare children between the ages of four (4) and six (6) years before they enter primary school. The committee maintained the three (3) years Senior Secondary School but the government decided to increase it to four (4) years and rename the educational system

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Junior High School and Senior High School to replace the existing Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools.

Currently, Ghana operates an educational structure consisting of the following: Eight (8) years primary education made up of 2 years of kindergarten, 3 years lower and 3 years upper primary;3 years' junior secondary education which is both terminal and continuing and 3 years' senior secondary education. The 8 years primary and 3 years junior high constitute basic education, which is free and compulsory.

2.7 Basic Educational Policies in Ghana

Ghana has undergone significant and ambitious educational reforms in her post-colonial period. Towards the tail end of the colonial era, the demand for education became more pressing and the government in 1945 proposed a 10-year plan for further expansion of educational provision. In this plan, universal primary education was targeted to be achieved within 25 years (i.e. by 1970). The next wave of the expansion plan was the 1951 Accelerated Development Plan (ADP) for Education, which also aimed to achieve universal primary education (UPE) for all. The main ADP strategy to improve access to basic education was to abolish tuition fees.

Ghana as a republic in 1960, still considered it a priority to make basic education free and introduced the 1961 Education Act to support this vision. These policies helped expand access to elementary education very rapidly. This review of the educational system is quoted extensively from two documents (Akyeampong et al., 2007; Ampiah et al, 2005) on education in Ghana.

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By 1970 Ghana had one of the most highly developed education systems in Africa (World Bank, 2004). Gross enrolment ratios increased dramatically, 60% of teachers in primary schools were trained, and the Ministry of Education (MOE) projected that all untrained teachers would be eliminated from the education system by 1975. The late 1970s and early 1980s, however, saw a sharp economic decline and the real value of government financing for education fell sharply from 6.4% of GDP in 1976 to 1.4% in 1983 and resulted in a near collapse of the education system (Oduro, 2000).

The Education Reform Program (ERP) was introduced in 1987by the Government of Ghana in partnership with the World Bank and other international agencies to reverse the decline in the education system. The major goals of the ERP were to expand 'access to basic education, to improve the quality of basic education, to make education more relevant to Ghana's socioeconomic needs', and to ensure sustainability of the reform program after the economic adjustment period. To date, the 1987 reforms have benefited the most in terms of investment to improve the access to and quality of basic education. Although this huge financial investment into the Ghanaian educational system has made an impact on educational performance in Ghana today, many educational indicators suggest that growth has not been sustained (Chimombo, 2005)

An Education Reform Review Committee (ERRC) was set up in 1994 to review the achievements of the 1987 ERP. Following this review, in accordance with the World Bank and other international donors, in 1996, the 'free compulsory universal basic education' (FCUBE) reforms were introduced to address the weaknesses in the 1987 reforms. The FCUBE aimed to achieve UPE by 2005. UPE could, however, not be achieved in 2005.

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Additionally, FCUBE sought to improve girls' enrolment and has generally succeeded in achieving this target (MoESS, 2006). Implementation of the FCUBE was supported by the World Bank Primary School Development Project (PSDP).

According to the World Bank (2004) report, two main areas of activity of the PSDP were identified:

- Policy and management changes: (i) increasing instructional time, (ii) reducing student fees and levies, (iii) improving the skills and motivation of head teachers, (iv) community involvement in the selection of head teachers, (v) providing orientation for district officials and community leaders, (vi) supporting to school supervision, and (vii) conducting school mapping
- Investment in physical infrastructure: (i) construction of classrooms, (ii) construction of head teachers' housing, (iii) provision of roofing sheets. Communities were to be responsible for building the external walls ("cladding") for pavilions constructed by the project (World Bank, 2004, p.26)

By 2003, over US$ 500 million of donor funding had been injected into Ghana's education sector. Funding from the World Bank, the principal donor from 1986 to 1994was used for school infrastructure development and rehabilitation, instructional materials for training pre-service teachers including the production of teaching materials and textbooks in primary and JSS. Other support from the World Bank went into head teachers' housing (World Bank, 2004).

The FCUBE program met with several problems and constraints. Management weaknesses have undermined its impact which included poor supervision both at system and school levels (Akyeampong, 2009)According to the FCUBE 1999 implementation report, one of

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the important lessons learnt in the implementation of the FCUBE program is that 'continuing to expand access to basic education and increasing physical inputs into the system are not effective unless the quality of activities at the school level improves significantly'.

However, the World Bank's assessment of its role in improving educational access and quality through its support to both the 1987 and 2007 reforms is generally positive. It concludes from analysis of its contributions to the reforms that this had led to reversing the deterioration of the educational system, as the number of schools increased from 12,997 in 1980 to 18,374 in 2000, and that the basic school enrolment rate increased since the beginning of the reforms by over 10 percentage points between 1988 and 2001 (World Bank, 2004).

Despite these appreciable gains reported by the World Bank, analysis of access indicators shows that there continue to be difficulties in reaching a significant proportion of children who do not enrol at all. In particular, gains made in enrolment have been difficult to sustain throughout the 9-year basic education cycle. The World Bank admits that improving the quality and quantity of education infrastructure (i.e. classrooms) is an important strategy but is not by itself adequate. More needs to be done to ensure equitable access to quality basic education.

In 2003, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) issued an Education Strategic Plan (ESP) for the period 2003-2015. The new ESP focused on the achievement of Universal Basic Completion, whose aim was for all enrolled students to complete 6 years of Primary and 3 years of Junior Secondary education. This is a more ambitious goal than mere

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Universal 'Primary' Completion (UPC). Accordingly, the government's goals have been revised to 100% completion for primary education to be achieved in 2012 so that UBC would be attained by 2015 (MoES, 2006). Gender Parity was scheduled to be achieved by the end of 2005. This target could however not be achieved.

A major achievement in the Ghanaian education system is that 18 months after the inception of the ESP, good progress had been made in terms of access across many areas of the sector. In particular, enrolment rates have risen in primary, JSS and post basic sub-sectors (Ministry of Education Science and Sports, [MoESS], 2004). These have, in general, led to improved Gender Parity Indicators (GPI), Gross Enrolment Rates (GER), and survival and completion rates at the national level. Primary school enrolment growth was sustained at 3.5% in 2003-04, with an overall growth of 8.6% between 2001-02 and 2003-04. This resulted in a significant increase in students enrolled from 2.72 million to 2.96 million over the period from 2001-2004.

Primary enrolment growth for girl students was particularly positive with increases of 3.2% in 2003-04 and 9.3% over the period 2001-02 to 2003-04. The significant increases in enrolment outstripped the projected population growth, estimated at 2.7% per year, and as a result, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) increased from 84% to 86% (female increase from 80% to 83%, male increase from 87% to 90%) over the two-year period.

Overall, a significant increase in enrolment at the basic level was achieved partly due to the introduction of Capitation grants. However, there appeared a large demand for education infrastructure, classrooms, textbooks and trained teachers which had to be met before the quality of education could be achieved. From 2005, the Participatory Learning Action (PLA) programmed has provided schools with the assistance to identify their needs in the delivery

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of the educational services, such as upgrading and examination of school performance. So far, the program has been implemented in 16 districts. Communities are encouraged to draw School Performance Improvement Plans (SPIP) to be able to manage their school effectiveness. To improve the quality of instruction, teacher training, especially at the JSS (junior secondary schools) level, was held with special science tutors dispatched to Colleges of Education (COE).

According to the Government of Ghana (Rolleston, 2011), one of the main reasons that children in Ghana do not attend school is that their parents simply cannot afford to pay the levies charged by the schools. Despite the policy of fee-free tuition in basic schools, many districts charge levies as a means of raising funds, for example, for school repairs, and cultural and sporting activities. This has the effect of deterring many families, particularly the poorest from sending their children to school. The Ministry of Education has therefore set up a Capitation Grant Scheme through DFID funding for all public schools, which commenced in the 2005/2006 academic year, whereby every Basic School receives an amount of GHS3.00 per pupil enrolled which has now been increased to GHS4.50. It is the belief of the Government of Ghana (GoG) that this would serve to remove the financial barrier created by these levies, and more than compensate the schools for any loss of revenue they face as a result.

The utilization of the Capitation Grant has been designed to empower the schools to effectively use financial resources to plan and carry out school quality improvement activities under the "School Performance Improvement Plan" (SPIP). It is the expectation of the GoG that the process of planning activities would be participatory (involving head teachers, teachers and PTAs) and transparent. The grant is therefore expected to serve as an

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opportunity to help build school-level capacity to effectively implement fiscal decentralization - which is a long-term goal of the Government of Ghana -as well as help implement the SPIP to improve the quality of education in schools. The SPIP was therefore introduced as a condition for the allocation and utilization of money to the schools.

2.8 Current Educational Policy in Ghana

The current education strategic plan is the fifth educational policy produced in Ghana. The Policy covers a 10-year period starting from 2010 to 2020. The policy replaced the Education Strategic Plan (2003 to 2015). The policy was drawn taken into considerations the events within the six-year period of implementing the previous strategic plan.

2.8.1 The mission statement of the educational policy

To provide relevant education with an emphasis on science, information, communication and technology to equip individuals for self-actualization, peaceful coexistence as well as skills for the workplace for national development

2.8.2 Relevance of the Policy

The Policy is relevant to the educational sector due to the following reasons;

- To put into effect, the key provisions of the 2008 Education Act that relate to access, decentralization, inclusion, quality, and system monitoring,
- To implement the STME, ICT, TVET, SpED, Tertiary Education, Teacher Education policies as they relate to an enrichment of education provision, improvement in quality, and personal and national development

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- Following enactment of the appropriate laws and measures, to implement the Government commitment to fee abolition and other poverty alleviation measures, and the provision of teaching incentives, and increased study opportunities at secondary and tertiary levels,
- To continue to subscribe and commit to the principles that relate to Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals

2.8.3 Policy Objectives

There are 8 policy objectives for the educational policy which is grouped into three thematic areas.

- Improve equitable access to and participate in quality education at the basic education level (90% NER in KGs by 2020, 120% GER in primary schools by 2020, 110% GER in JHS by 2020, Gender parity in BE)
- Mainstream issues of population, family life, gender, health, HIV/AIDS/STI, conflicts, fire and road safety, civic responsibility, human rights and the environment in the curricula at the basic education level. (HIV&AIDS programs operational in all schools/institutions, all new teachers trained in STD/ HIV&AIDS basic counselling, prevention, care and support)
- Bridge gender gap in access to education (GEU BE Work Program in place and implemented at all levels – central, regional and district)
- Improve quality in teaching and learning (Primary textbook ratio of 1:1 for core subjects by 2012, JHS textbook ratio of 1:1 for core subjects by 2012, 1 computer teaching lab per JHS (10% of schools by 2015, 25% by 2020)

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- Promote science and technical education at the Basic Education level (Appropriate ICT and skills development (SD) curriculum within the BE system by 2012 and reviewed periodically in 2020)
- Improve management of education service delivery (Reduce the percentage of untrained teachers from 21.2% at the primary level and 12.8% at JSS to not more than 5% by 2020.

2.9 A brief account of the Ghana School Feeding Program

The Ghana School Feeding Program (GSFP) commenced in 2005 with the intermediate objective of reducing hunger and malnutrition; increasing school enrollment, retention and attendance and to boost local food production. The GSFP is an initiative under the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Pillar 3 seeks to enhance food security and reduce hunger in line with the UN-Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Ghana is the first of 10 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa implementing an SFP modelled to the guidelines of the NEPAD as described in the CAADP. The formulation of the Ghana SFP started in the year 2004 and the program ran from January 2006 and was preceded by a pilot program, which was carried out from September to December 2005 (Yusuf et al, 2012). In the year 2010, the program intends to serve about 1.04 million children in all 138districts of Ghana. (Ghana 2006a; Ghana 2005; Ghana 2006c)

The long-term objective of the Ghana SFP is to contribute to poverty reduction and food security and to increase school enrolment, attendance and retention. The SFP is based on locally grown food products, which should promote domestic food production and improve

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market access for resource-poor farmers. The government wants to achieve this objective through an increase in employment and income level of farmers at community and national level. In addition, greater availability, access and utilization of food crops and products at the community level are assumed to enhance food security. By the end of the program, it is expected that there will be: a real increase of 8% in income at national and community levels, an 8% increased employment at the community level and a greater availability, access, utilization and stability of food crops at the community level. This strategy complements the development strategies of the government of Ghana (Ghana 2006a). The immediate objectives as formulated in the Annual Operating Plan (AOP) to reach these goals are:

1. To reduce hunger and malnutrition
2. To increase school enrolment, attendance and retention
3. To boost domestic food production

The corresponding outputs and indicators of achievement formulated in the AOP of the Ghana SFP for the years 2007 to 2010.

2.9.1 Concept of quality education

Education systems set objectives and those objectives are then operationalized in the curriculum and teachers' guides. The mastery of the curriculum is measured by national examinations. Hence the best indicator of high-quality education is a high score on the national examinations. When students perform well on national examinations, then it is reasonable to conclude that they have had a high-quality education (Samoff, 2007). However, examination should not always be the focus of assessing pupils' performance as

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stated in the research by (O'Sullivan, 2006). He believes that focusing on examination results could affect the quality of teaching and learning as some of the teachers especially in the developing countries may tend to rely on note teaching and learning as a means to prepare children for the taking examination.

(Adams and Standfort, 1992) shared different idea with quality of education. They believed that quality of education should take into account the level of competence to ensure that the expected objectives in certain curricular are well established and achieved.

A notable Minister of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation in Namibia is quoted to have aptly described that the notion of "quality and standards should be measured in relation to the context and environment in which education is located" (O'Sullivan, 2006). The literature on the definition of education quality is quite massive and holds different and contradictory positions. The notion of quality is therefore relative. It changes over time and differs geographically due to variations of aims, functions and the means to realize them. In this regard, the quality of education is linked to people and how they perceive education (Rissom, 1992).

Most definitions highlight the different elements of the basic input-process-output model that commonly underpins education research and policy analysis (UNESCO, 2002). In this regard, a more efficient system obtains more output for a given set of resource inputs or achieves comparable levels of output for fewer inputs, other things being equal. The output of education refers to that portion of student growth or development that can be reasonably attributed to specific educational experiences (Lockheed and Hanushek, 1988; Stephens, 1997).

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It is generally perceived that school improvement focused on input and process quality measures, especially on the learning end which is likely in principle to have the effect of improving output quality of student achievement since students are able to better master the curricular content that is mandated for each grade (N'tchougan-Sonou, 2001).

In the process factors, the emphasis is placed upon the experience and the complex processes that interact in the daily delivery of education. The extent to which inputs can improve quality is directly related to the extent to which teachers effectively use them to improve the teaching and learning process. The process quality is, therefore, the quality of the teacher-pupil interaction in the teaching-learning process. It means the use of teaching approaches suited to the given situation such that pupils' opportunities to learn are optimized. The quality of the teaching and learning process depends on the quality of the curriculum, of its contents, methods and manner of implementation. The quality of curriculum implementation depends in turn on the teaching and learning materials, the working conditions, and the pedagogical skills of the teachers, the total instructional time, and on the importance assigned to quality by the key stakeholders. These factors depend, to a large extent on the control exercised by the school and the parents themselves (Bergmann, 1996). Managing the quality of classroom interaction is seen as the single most important factor in improving the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in contexts where learning resources and teacher training are limited (Anderson, 2002 O'Sullivan, 2004).

A minimum level of quality is a fully functional literacy and a good mastery of basic mathematical operations including the capacity to apply them to simple everyday problems (Bergmann, 1996).

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2.10 Conceptual Framework

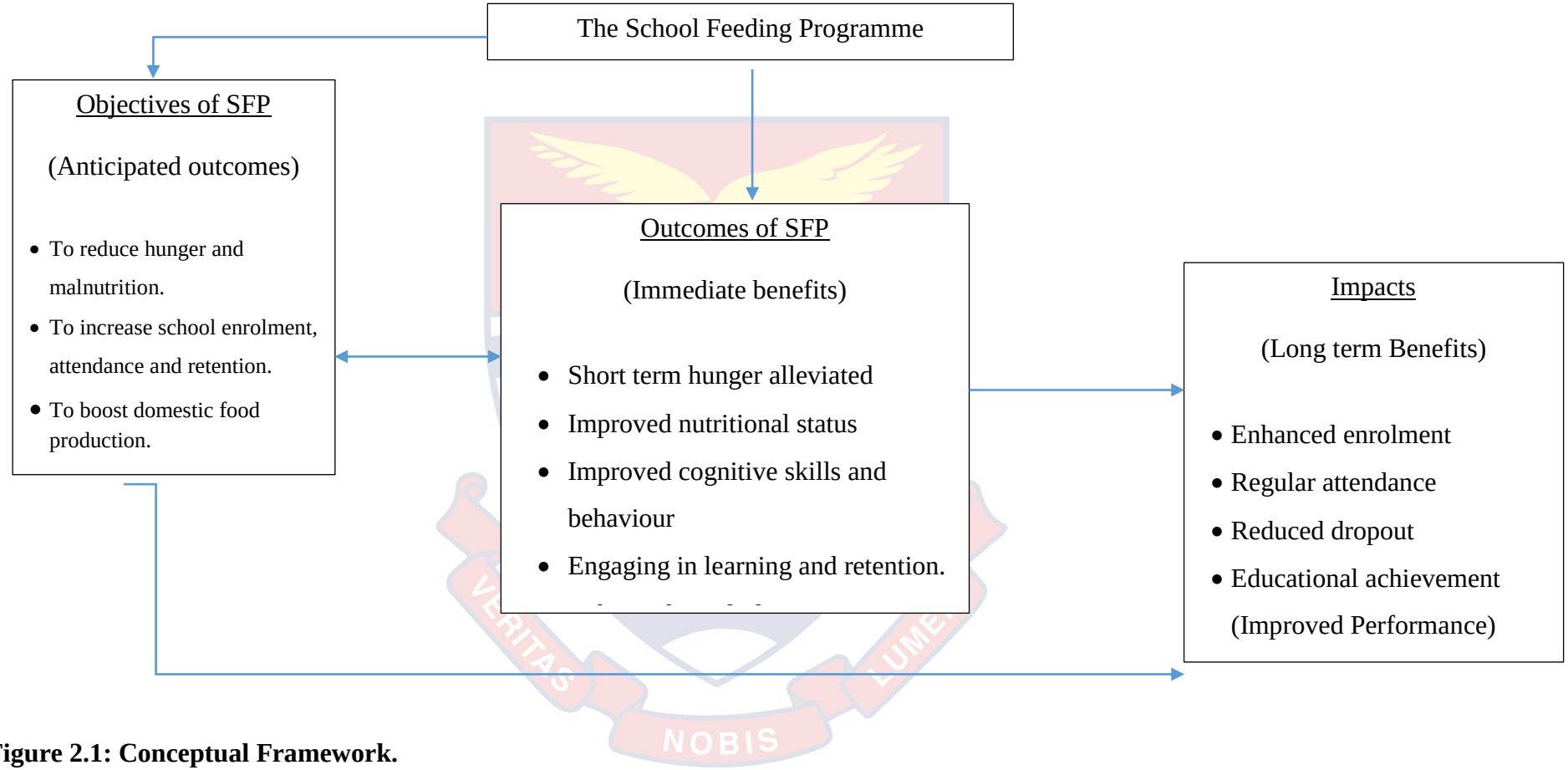

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework.

Source: Author's Construct, 2018.

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The concept of the school feeding program focuses on three different categories. The health of student, Schooling and local food production is the main focus of the program. The main objectives of the program are: to reduce hunger and malnutrition, to increase school enrolment, attendance and retention, to boost domestic food production. These inform the purpose of the program and serve as a base for measuring the Impact of the program, hence the relationship between *Objectives* and the *Impacts* of the program. The outcomes encompass the immediate benefit of the school feeding program to beneficiaries: pupils in school through increased enrolment, attending school regularly, participating in class and hence lowering the dropout rate. The enhancement of pupils' participation in class is influenced by the school feeding Program as it improves cognitive skills, behavior and concentration levels in class. With concentration levels spiked, the GSFP facilitates smooth learning and memory retention of pupils.

The provision of a hot balanced meal a day motivates pupils to attend school on a regular base as well as participate effectively in class. This serves as a motivating factor to children who do not have access to good nutritious food to attend school regularly. The provision of nutritious food provides pupils with the adequate nutritious need and prevents malnutrition. Therefore, the incentive of GSFP on education will lead to increased pupil enrolment, regular attendance, active participation in the classroom. This framework illustrates that participation of pupils in school results from the motivating factor (GSFP) and the pupils' interest and expectation of acquiring reward (good meal and education to be successful in future).

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The research methodologies that were used to collect and analyze the data in this study have been presented in this section. This chapter gives a brief description of the study area as well as the sample size and sampling procedures of the research. It is organized under the following: study area, research design, study population, sampling size determination, sampling and sampling procedures, data collection techniques and instruments and data analysis and presentation.

3.2 Study Area

The study area is Atwima Mponua District. The district is located in the western part and forms one of 27 districts in the Ashanti Region. The District shares boundaries with four (4) districts, principally in the South with the Amansie West District, Ahafo Ano South to the north, Atwima Nwabiagya in the East and Bibiani – Anwhiaso – Bekwai District of the Western Region. The study area is shown in the regional contexts in Figures 3.1.

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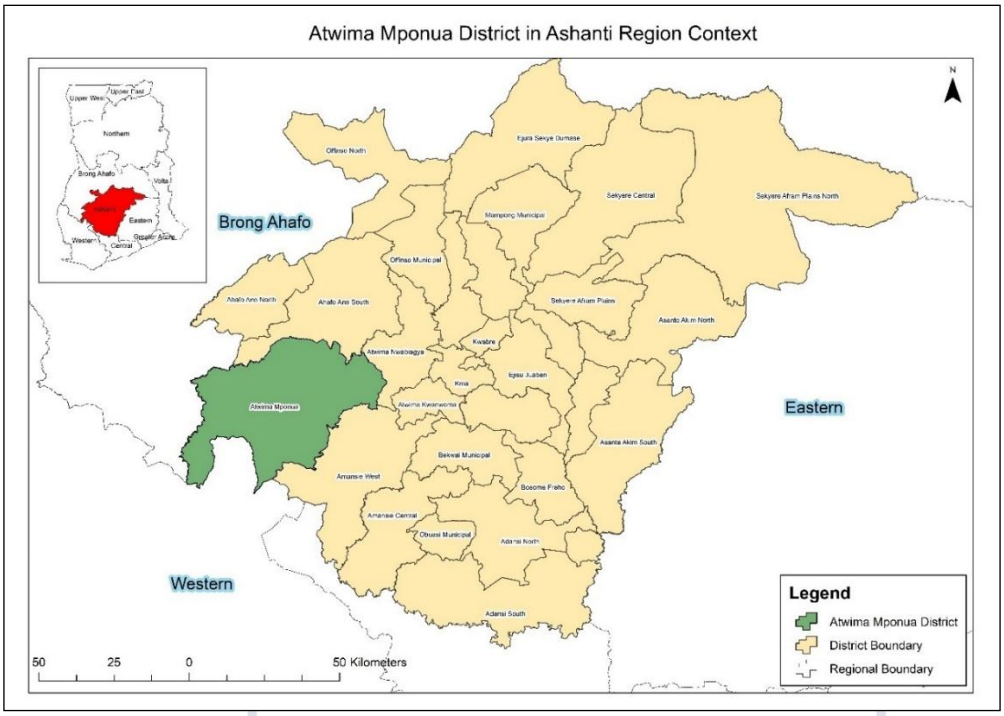

Figure 2.2 . Map showing Atwima Mponua in Regional Context. Source: GIS Instructor, 2018

According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census population of Atwima Mponua District, the population stands at 119,180 with Males constituting 51.3 percent and Females 48.7 percent respectively. The population of Atwima Mponua District according to the 2010 Population and Housing Census is 119,180 representing 2.5 percent of the region's total population. About 88 percent (87.6) of the population reside in rural localities.

There are 359 basic schools (141–pre-schools, 141–primary schools and 77–Junior High Schools (JHS)) in the District made up of 308 public and 49 private in the 2009/2010 academic year. There are only two public Senior High Schools (SHS) and one private Vocational/Technical School in the District (Atwima Mponua District Assembly, 2013).

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3.3 Research Design

The study relies on both quantitative and qualitative approach, the use of survey and observation for data collection. The use of both observation and survey helped the researcher to obtained the necessary data used to assess the teaching and learning environment in which the program was implemented

3.4 Study Population

A population is a complete set of individuals (subject), object or an event having common observable characteristics in which the researcher is interested (Systems, 2013)The population of this study includes basic schools in Atwima Mponua District in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The district has a total of 359 basic schools (141–pre-schools, 141–primary schools and 77–Junior High Schools (JHS). The program was first piloted in the District at the Adupri D/A Basic School in June 2005 with a total of 139 pupil. Currently, the District has forty-one (41) schools on the program with 13,765 pupils at the end of 2016 (AMDA, 2017). The target population were head teachers and teachers of the beneficiary schools. The Municipal coordinator of the program was also interviewed.

3.5 Sampling and Sampling Procedures

The sample of a population is the representation of the entire population concerned. For this research, the target is basic schools in the Atwima Mponua District. Meadows (2003, p398-400) and Borland (2003, p8) advocates that quantitative descriptive research results are drawn from a sample and generalized to the population of interest. This is done to save time and reduce costs and the labour involved in collecting data. The population for this study

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were all beneficiary basic schools in the district. The basic school defined in the literature was pre-school, primary school and junior high school (JHS). However, the GSFP provides meals for KG and Primary pupils, as such the study focused on these categories of students.

3.6 Sample Size Determination

The GSFP is implemented in 41 basic schools of the Atwima Mponua District. The 41 schools enrolled in the GSFP in the district were the units of observation. A sample was derived from the population of 41 beneficiary schools of the feeding programme. In collecting data on the Schools, simple random sampling was used to select three classes whose enrolment and attendance levels were assessed. The teachers selected using convenience sampling based on their qualification and availability.

In determining the sample size of beneficial schools, Stovin's formula was adopted. That is

$$n = \frac{N}{(1 + Ne^2\ )}$$

Where:

n is the sample size

N is the sampling frame

e is the sampling error (10 percent).

Using a confidence level of 90%, the sample size was 29. Therefore, 29 basic schools were interview for the case study.

Data on attendance and enrolment were obtained from teachers of the selected classes.

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3.7 Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

3.7.1. Source of Data

This aspect of the research methodology addresses data collection instruments, methods, and procedures. It provides exhaustive explanations to each of the methods used in addressing the aim, objectives, and research questions. Data gathering is crucial in research, as the data contributes to a better understanding of a theoretical background (Kothari, Kumar, & Uusitalo, 2014). The study focused on assessing the impact of the school feeding program on school enrolments and attendance in the Atwima Mponua District. As such, primary data was collected on enrollment and attendance over the last 5 years, from June 2012 to June 2017.

Data collection was done through both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was gathered from the responses given by the teachers and headteachers from questionnaires administered and interviews conducted. For secondary data, a sampling of the school registers and reports of the Ghana School Feeding Programs in the district and written work done by other researchers were accessed.

3.7.2 Quantitative data

This appropriate design for this phase of the study was thus the descriptive survey, which allowed for the collection of quantifiable data from a sample. It is used to quantify the problem by way of generating numerical data that can be transformed into usable statistics. It results from a larger sample population. Quantitative Research uses measurable data to formulate facts and uncover patterns in research.

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3.7.3 Qualitative Data

This form of data collection is used to solicit the views of the District Educational Directorate and the school heads as well as teachers on the quality of basic education in the district. According to Meadows (2003, p 398), qualitative research helps to understand the social phenomenon in a natural setting laying emphasis on views and experiences of participants. The selection of the school heads is from the selected schools.

3.7.4 Data collection instruments

As far as data collection tools were concerned, in the conduct of the research, the study employed the use of semi-structured interview guides, questionnaires and observation techniques were used. Questions were prepared by the researcher to guide the interview towards the attainment of the research objectives. This gathered primary data on the views of teachers concerning the impact of the SFP in their schools and the challenges faced by the program. The questionnaire had open and close-ended questions and will be administered to the headmasters and teachers of the selected schools. On the open-ended questionnaires, the respondents were allowed to formulate their own answers based on their diverse views they had and also to explore a range of possible themes arising from an issue. On the closed-ended questionnaires, the respondents selected from the range of possible alternative answers provided and this helps to make it easy to code, record, and analyze results quantitatively and easy to report results.

Overall, the research was conducted at 2 levels: the school and the district. At the school level, data were collected on the basic school enrollment and attendance. At district level

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data collection focused on the impact of the GSFP in the district. This was done through an interview with the district coordinator of the School Feeding Program in the district.

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CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results and findings of the study using tables, charts and descriptive for quantitative and contents for the qualitative. SPSS was the software used in processing the data collected from the field towards obtaining the desired results of the study. The result details differences in the enrolment level of pupil from the selected schools before and after the implementation of the Ghana School Feeding Program, the challenges faced by these schools and the prospects of improving the quality of the Ghanaian School Feeding Program in the district. Data was gathered at two levels: the district level where the District Educational Directorate was interviewed; and school level where the respondents were primarily head teachers and pupils. In all, data from 10 out of the 29 sampled schools were successfully retrieved. (See Table 4.1). Due to the changes of district which affected the rearrangement and reorganization of some of the schools in their respective districts which affected the delivery of some key information to the study, data could not be obtained from the remaining 19 schools were affected. From the ten schools visited, 60% (6 school heads) provided a detail response. Out of the target of 5 teachers per school, 80% (40) of the teachers responded to the 50 questionnaires administered. For the pupils, 100% gave their responses out of the proposed number to be interviewed. Data gathered covered issues on the influence of SFP on attendance, emerging challenges facing the SFP and suggested interventions.

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Table 4.1 : List of sampled schools and their location.

School	Location
1. Ntwiagyeikrom primary	Ntwiagyeikrom
2. Pasoro D/A primary	Pasoro
3. Bredi Methodist Basic School	Bredi
4. Mantukwa Methodist Basic School	Mantukwa
5. Bayerebon number 5 D/A primary	Bayerebon number 5
6. Tawiakrom D/A primary	Tawiakrom
7. Debra camp Seikrom D/A primary	Debra camp Seikrom
8. Tanodumasi D/A primary	Tanodumasi
9. Abofirem D/A primary	Abofirem
10. Ahyiresu D/A primary	Ahyiresu

Source: Field Survey, 2018

4.2 Background Information of the Schools

4.2.1 Level of Education of respondents

Findings from the study revealed that about 74% of the head teachers had first degree in basic education (BED), whiles 16% had a Diploma in Basic Education (DEB). It was further revealed that only 7% acquired Certificate 'A' and 3% had HND. The data revealed that 85% of the male head teachers had the BED. This is evident to the fact that majority (65%) of the males are heads of schools since they pursued higher level of education. Hence, are capable and qualify to speak to issues emanating from the study.

On the other hand, 36% of the pupils were in the lower primary which ranges from primary 1 to 3. The remaining 64% were in upper primary (primary 4-6). Majority of the students interviewed were at the upper primary level since they could give an appreciable account of their encounter with the SFP. In instances where pupils had to provide responses to some

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concepts, pupils in the upper primary had a better understanding when compared to the lower primary. An example is the concepts that hinged on the nutritional needs of pupils being met by the SFP. Moreover, the study revealed that there was is a direct relation in the quality of food and the level of education. Pupils in the lower primary were given smaller rations compared to those at the upper primary since cognitive demanding task increases with each class and require regular supply of energy. To facilitate concentration during class lessons, the kind of foods served each day varied in some schools. About 6 out of 10 (representing 60%) of the schools provided their pupils with at least two different meals while 40% of the remaining schools were on a mono- dish menu. This restricted the variety of meals students could enjoy to just 5 meals a week.

4.3 The Gross Effect of GSFP on School Enrolment, Attendance and Retention in the Selected Schools

The study discovered GSFP had largely affected school enrolment, attendance and retention among children who fall within the school-going age brackets in all 10 schools. According to the GSFP Coordinator at the district level, "the school feeding program on school enrolment has been phenomenal. The enrolment levels have been rising at an increasing rate particularly in communities where there are more basic schools but only one or two of those schools are beneficiaries of the GSFP".

At the district and school levels, the study showed that some parents or guardians changed their wards from the non-GSFP beneficiary schools and enrolled them in GSFP beneficiary schools. Author's Field Source (2018)

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Discussions with school authorities further revealed that parents/guardians occasionally went to the schools to enroll their wards in such schools. According to the teachers, some parents indicated that the meals provided at lunch as part of the feeding activities influenced their action towards enrolling their wards in GSFP beneficiary schools. This has therefore immensely reduced the number of children who stay out of school.

For the study to better appreciate and assess the effectiveness or otherwise of the implementation of the GSFP in terms of school enrolment, attendance and retention, data on both the pre-GSFP and post-GSFP enrolment figures from the, District Education Directorate and school authorities were obtained. This sought to provide a better understanding of the levels of enrolment in the various schools. Enrolment figures of three academic years prior to the commencement of the GSFP were provided by the heads of the school.

Figure 4. shows the total number of basic school enrolled three years before the introduction of the SFP in the district. Data collected are for the 2002/2003, 2003/2004, and 2004/2005 academic years for the 10 sampled schools. Data obtained from the directorate which covered enrollment figures for 3 academic years prior to the introduction of the GSFP and the past 3 academic years after the introduction of the program. These figures (enrolment before GSFP and figures after GSFP) were summed up for each school in order to have a better understanding and comparison among each school. Enrolment figures thus constitute the total number of pupils from Class One (1) to Class Six (6) – which constitutes the primary school population in Ghana for each school was obtained.

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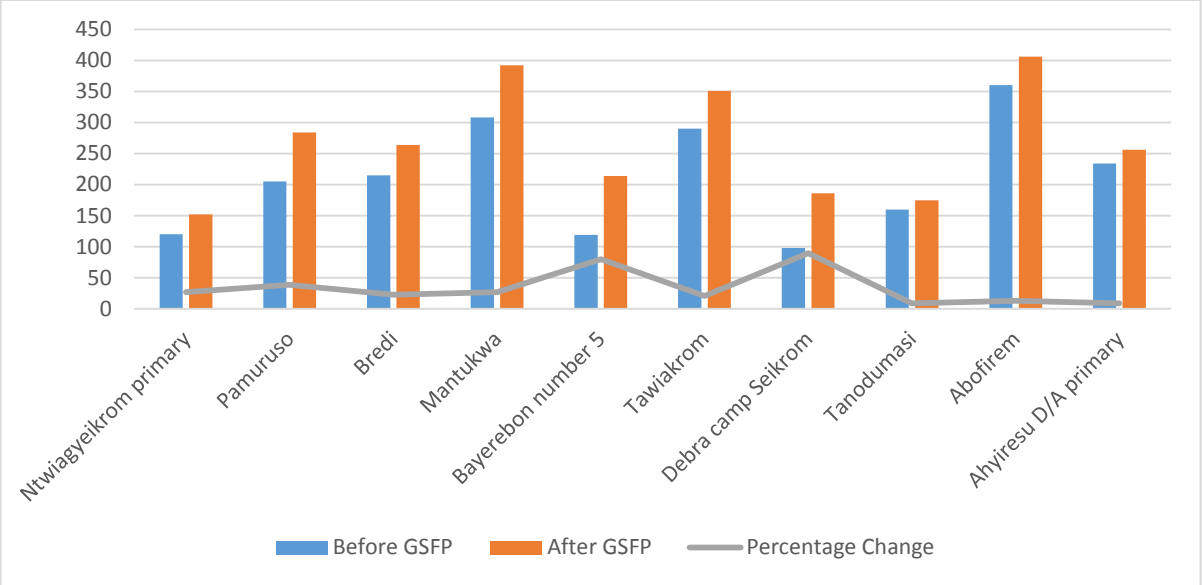

Figure 4.1: Enrolment Levels Prior to GSFP implementation in 10 selected schools in Atwima Nwabiagya District

Figure 4.1. Shows that y Abofriem D/A primary has the highest population of 406 students enrolled as compared to the others. Mantukwa D/A primary was the second highest school with 392 pupils enrolled making a difference of 14 pupils between the 1st highest school.

The line graph clearly shows the pattern or trajectory of school enrolment among the selected schools in the district. Debra camp Seikrom and Bayerebon No. 5 Basic Primary Schools have seen an improvement in their pupil retention level and for the first 3 academic years after the running of the feeding program in the schools. The line trend depicts an initial rise in school enrolment and then it slumped in the Pre-GSFP academic year (2002/2003 - 2004/2005). Enrolment rose with the introduction of the GSFP in 2006 and began to show a stable pattern for the immediate years after the GSFP implementation. Interestingly, in the periods where there was a rise in enrolment, the (percentage) increase was very marginal.

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The implementation of the program has been in existence for over a decade the District. For this reason, assessing the implementation of the feeding program and its effect on school enrolment and attendance was guided by enrolment figures of three academic years in the post-GSFP era from 2005/2006 to 2015/2016 academic years. To assess the implementation of the feeding program and its effect on school enrolment and attendance, three academic years with an interval of 5 years were selected and considered for analysis.

Overall, the Atwima Nwabiagya District during the post-GSFP implementation period, witnessed an increase in school enrolment and attendance. On the contrary, school retention rate per the data based on the accounts of the school authorities was initially low but had seen an improvement over the year. Discussions with the headmistress of Tawiakrom D/A primary revealed that during the initial implementation of the feeding program, school retention among her pupils was less than salutary. However, the school retention rate has tremendously improved over the years. Table 4.2 shows the data on school retention.

Table 4.2: School Retention

Schools	Before GSPF	During GSFP	Percentage change
1. Ntwiagyeikrom primary	10	12	20%
2. Pasoro D/A primary	12	4	-67%
3. Bredi	9	2	-78%
4. Mantukwa	21	9	-57%
5. Bayerebon number 5	8	3	-63%
6. Tawiakrom	15	7	-53%
7. Debra camp Seikrom	10	2	-80%
8. Tanodumasi	6	1	-83%
9. : Abofirem	18	10	-44%
10. Ahyiresu D/A primary	11	4	-64%

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

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The general overview of accounts for heads of school indicate that enrolment, attendance and retention had increased upon the implementation of the GSFP. Approximately 90% of head teachers acknowledged that the GSFP has succeeded in encouraging children in their respective communities to actively participate in school sessions. However, pupils occasionally did not attend classes but were around for meals and afterwards went back home. This was had adverse impact on official attendance records because such absentees are not recorded in respective class registers as having been in school although they come in to take part in the lunch break. Such practice has however been minimized as now daily attendance records to feed the pupils have been institutionalized. This has boosted the general school attendance.

For school retention, it was revealed that seldom do schools witness pupils who have reported to school and leaving without the authorities' prior approval either before or after feeding them. The community's cooperation with school authorities was also noted to be massive. The relationship between communities and schools was revealed to be strong and mutually beneficial.

The implementation of the GSFP in the district in terms of school enrolment, attendance and retention based on gathered data has generally been effective. These findings on the increase in school enrolment in both schools and districts corroborate with similar research outcomes by Lynch (2013) and Drake *et al* (2016) who also found that by virtue of the GSFP roll out, enrolment and attendance figures have significantly shot up in the beneficiary schools.

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4.4 Challenges Facing the GSFP in the Selected Districts/Schools

The implementation of any public policy within human settings is bound to encounter one form of challenge or the other (Creswell, 2013; Buabeng, 2015). It is the acknowledgement of the existence of some problems or challenges associated with the implementation of the GSFP at the local level that this study aimed at highlighting those and suggest remedial measures to improve upon the effectiveness of the GSFP. From the interviews and focus group discussions, a number of issues confronting the implementation of the feeding program were brought to light. These are presented in the subsequent sections.

4.4.1 Non-Purchase of Foodstuffs Produced from the Local Economy

One major challenges with the implementation of the GSFP in the Atwima Nwabiagya District was the non-purchase of local farmers' food produce by the implementing agencies. This challenge was attributed to the adoption of the caterers' model of procurement where the caterer is at liberty to purchase food items from sources other than the farmers in the local area. This deprives these expectant farmers of some income that would have helped improved the local economy and create wealth in the process.

4.4.2 Dearth of Basic Infrastructural Development

Another challenge was the inadequate basic infrastructure required for the smooth running of the feeding program at some Basic Schools, School heads and some parents complained about deficits in terms of infrastructure such as a properly-built and enclosed kitchen. In the case of Tanodumasi DA primary school, it was observed that some of the kitchen

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spaces/facilities were not well furnished. For example, they did not have doors and was not protective enough for the cooks who spend time cooking there. Interaction with the cooks also emphasized similar views about having a real block-built kitchen instead of the weak wooden kitchen facilities.

Access to potable water for cooking was further revealed to be a major challenge. As such, they relied on the near-by stream to prepare food. The situation is serious since cooks employ the services of the school children to fetch water from the stream for cooking. – This was revealed by the schools' coordinator of the GSFP. According to the head teacher of one of the basic schools, "this issue oftentimes disrupts teaching and learning activities and therefore retard the teaching and learning progress". Suggestions to address this challenge were to reach out to the appropriate authorities to provide cisterns for water storage and construct a kitchen for the school.

Another major challenge about the implementation and effectiveness of the GSFP was the lack of dining hall facilities for the children to eat their lunch. Through direct observation, pupils were loitering around the schools' compounds with their food in their hands. Others were also seen taking their meals in their classrooms. This fundamentally does not augur well for the health of the pupils in terms of both environmental and personal hygiene.

4.4.3 The Nature of the Food Served

Another challenge about implementation of the GSFP in both districts and schools is the quality and quantity of food served to the pupils at lunch. Although all the school children interviewed expressed their profound happiness about the feeding program, majority of them however wished the quantity and quality of the food they are served should be

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increased. Almost all the pupils pointed to, for example, the quantity of rice that is served them. They pleaded that instead of the one and half ($1^1/2$) scoops of rice that is currently given to them, two (2) scoops of rice will be better and make them full and happier. In pointing to the quality, the pupils' collective expectation was that 'eggs or chicken and sometimes fish should be added to their meals to make the meals nutritious, rich and balanced. These they concluded if done, ''will not only make them healthy but boost their academic performance in school''. The head teachers in these schools admitted that the quality of the food in particular needed improvement but added that it all depended on the government's commitment to raise the daily feeding rate (amount) per child – a position which the caterers in an interview fully endorsed.

4.4.4 Political Interference (Partisan Influence)

In the Atwima Nwabiagya District, one of the major challenges raised during the focus group discussion was local politics that has characterized the operations of the feeding program at the Basic Schools. The discussants revealed that political inference by the political heads in the district and local area affects the smooth running of the feeding program. Immediately after elections, whenever there was a change of government, the caterer was abruptly dismissed. This was done despite the caterer's competence who worked and cooked well for the school. Parents were concerned because the 'political turf war was adversely affecting their wards; the future leaders of this country and particularly distracting them of their studies and attendance to school.

The narration above confirms the concise response from the District GSFP coordinator when asked whether politics play any role in the selection of caterers. Clearly, politics has had an

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adverse effect on the implementation of the feeding program in the Atwima Nwabiagya District. As evidenced by the above responses of the group discussions, to the extent that their meals were not cooked and served to pupils as a result of political inference in the wake of the dismissal of the caterer on purely political grounds. This makes local political dynamics an adverse influential factor on the program's implementation.

4.4.5 Delays in Release of Feeding Funds

Funding is a critical resource to the success of a project (Ram et al, 2013). Approximately 80 percent of caterers assigned to the various schools cited the issue of excessive delays in the release of feeding grants and their service payments. As part of the program, caterers were expected to pre-finance the cost of providing food but delays in payment by the government hampers the continuous provision of food. A caterer stated that:

"*Delays in refund can go far back as three different cutback of money government owes me. This creates a financial burden for caters who go in for bank loans to cover feeding cost. Prompt disbursement of funds will go a long way to lessen the unbearable financial pressure on them" Caterer, name of school, date?*.

4.4.6 Low Community Participation

Community participation in the operations of the feeding program in the Atwima Nwabiagya District was revealed to be extremely minimal. The assemblyman for the areas where the schools were sited said they were not consulted in the implementation and day-to-day affairs of the school feeding program. However, the entire program was in the hands of the District Chief Executive (DCE), the District GSFP coordinator, the caterer and the

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headmistress. Despite being a member of the School Implementation Committee (SIC), the assembly man was not included in implementing phase of the program. Neither was he informed of the current state of the program; hence could not be accountable to his community.

A key thematic pillar for the effective implementation of the GSFP as contained in the 2011 GSFP Operating Manual is community ownership of the feeding program at the grassroots. It is important for the community and its people to actively participate in the local affairs of the GSFP because community participation or involvement promotes local ownership of the feeding program (GoG, 2011; Lynch, 2013).

The above challenges that have been identified in this study are largely symptomatic of the many implementation problems associated with the GSFP elsewhere in Ghana and these findings confirm other empirical findings by World Food Program (2007); De Carvalho (2011); Lynch (2013); Mohammed & Sakara (2014); Atta & Manu (2015); and SNV (2016). For example, Lynch (2013) found a deplorable state of infrastructures in Ntranoa Basic Primary School in the Central region of Ghana while SNV (2016) also established a neglect or lack of inclusion of local farmers in the GSFP supply chain at the decentralized levels.

Inputs from those at the local level and top rank of society regarding the challenges of the program are important and this finding draws from the theoretical perspectives of both Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) and Winter (1990). Specifically, the interests of the implementing actors have been factored as evidenced by this finding relative to how the policy challenges may impact on the output of the implemented GSFP.

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4.5 Summary of Chapter

Findings from the study indicate that across both districts and all schools covered, enrolments have risen as a result of the running of the feeding program. However, school retention at 4 schools (Tanodumasi, Bredi, Bayerebon number 5, and Debra camp Seikrom) were low at the initial stages of the implementation of the GSFP. It was also noticed that pupils attended school with the main motive of being fed. After lunch had been served, some pupils left school before the closing time. To curtail this attitude, school authorities instituted some measures leading to an improvement in pupils' retention at school. The situation, per the findings, was quite different at the remaining 6 Basic Schools as there was no reports of such school retention problems. On the reverse, official attendance among some of the pupils was fluctuating as some only showed up during lunch times and after getting served or fed, went back home – a practice that has since been minimized by the school authorities.

Challenges identified with the implementation of the GSFP varied with each school but was peculiar across the district. The Atwima Nwabiagya District faced challenges ranging from lack of basic infrastructure to inadequate or no demand for the produce of local farmers by the caterers among others. In the Atwima Nwabiagya District, local politics was found to be a challenge as it influences the selection and dismissal of contracted caterers. Additionally, there is zero or very minimal community involvement in the operations of the GSFP within the district. Government's delay on release of feeding funds and payments of caterers was found to be a common challenge across the district.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter, presents the summary, conclusion, theoretical relevance and policy recommendations to address challenges faced by the GSFP identified in the study. The chapter includes summary of the findings in relation to the objectives of the study and the way forward. Recommendations were made based on key findings and challenges faced at various levels by stakeholders.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The study identified that no empirical investigation had been conducted into the operations and implementation of the feeding program at the local level in the Atwima Nwabiagya District.

The study broadly assessed the implementation of the GSFP in the Atwima Nwabiagya District. Overall, the sampled schools in the Atwima Nwabiagya District during the post-GSFP implementation period, recorded a tremendous increase in school enrolment and attendance. The initial stages of the GSFP indicated gradual increase in enrollment figures from the inception in the 2005/2006 academic year.

On the other hand, school retention rate as indicated by the school authorities was initially low (percentage) but had seen an improvement (percentage) over the years. The general impression about the developments in the respective schools are relative to the data (enrolment and attendance figures) for each school.

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The study investigated the issue of retaining the pupils throughout school sessions, the Heads of the Schools indicated that at the initial implementation of the feeding program, school retention among pupils was low. Majority of the students did not attend school during the teaching hours but managed to surface during the feeding period. With the appropriate measures adopted by Basic Schools, the retention rate has tremendously improved over the years.

In overall, the study's assessment of the implementation of the GSFP in the district, in spite of some identified challenges and observed socio-economic difference highlighted above, points to a largely successful and effective implementation of the GSFP at the local level.

Challenges identified with the implementation of the GSFP varied with each school but was peculiar across the district. Basic schools in the District faced challenges ranging from lack of basic infrastructure to inadequate or no demand for the produce of local farmers by the caterers among others. In the Atwima Nwabiagya District, local politics was found to be a challenge as it influences the selection and dismissal of contracted caterers. Additionally, there is minimal community involvement in the operations of the GSFP within the district. Interestingly, government's delay on release of feeding funds and payments of caterers' services was found to be a common challenge or problem across the district.

In the Atwima Nwabiagya District, the main challenge identified was in regards to local politics that has characterized the operations of the feeding program at the Basic Primary Schools.

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5.3 Recommendations

First, there should be a periodic performance appraisal of caterers in all the beneficiary districts especially Atwima Nwabiagya District and schools to be carried out by competent professionals in order to avoid arbitrary and politically-motivated dismissal of caterers.

Secondly, the Atwima Nwabiagya District assembly should use part its internally generated funds (IGFs) or solicit corporate sponsorships in putting up basic infrastructures such as Kitchen at ABPS.

Thirdly, Atwima Nwabiagya District assembly should embark on community sensitization about the GSFP to whip up the various communities' interest and ownership of the local feeding program.

In order to solve the issue of personal hygiene and providing a conducive environment for taking meals, dining halls or sitting areas are to be provided to facilitate the appropriate serving of meals.

The state of school kitchens in a deplorable state should be refurbished, this provide kitchen staff the appropriate working environment to carry on with their duties freely. Schools without kitchens should be provided with appropriate building structures to house the kitchen staff during cooking activities. A proper kitchen will reduce the risk of contaminating meals during preparation.

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