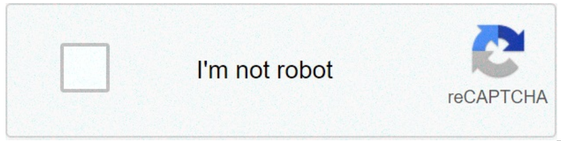


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# Education system in ghana pdf

Ghana Table of Contents The country's education system at the beginning of the 1993-94 academic year comprised primary schools, junior secondary schools, senior secondary schools, polytechnic (technical and vocational) institutions, teacher training colleges, and university-level institutions. In 1990-91, the latest year for which preliminary government statistics were available, 1.8 million pupils were attending more than 9,300 primary schools; 609,000 students were enrolled in about 5,200 junior secondary schools; and 200,000 students were enrolled in some 250 senior secondary schools. In the mid-1980s, teachers on each of these levels numbered approximately 51,000, 25,000, and 8,800, respectively. In addition, 1989-90 enrollment in Ghana's approximately twenty-six polytechnic schools totalled almost 11,500 students; the teacher corps for these schools numbered 422. Education is free, although students have recently begun to pay textbook fees. The Education Act of 1960 foresaw universal education, but the constraints of economic underdevelopment meant that by the early 1990s this goal had not been realized. On the primary level, instruction is conducted in the local vernacular, although English is taught as a second language. Beyond primary school, however, English is the medium of instruction in an education system that owes much to British models. Before the introduction of reforms in the mid-1980s, students at what was then the middle-school level took either the Middle School Leaving Certificate Examination and terminated their studies, or, at any time from seventh to tenth grade, the Common Entrance Examination, which admitted them to secondary or technical study. With the traditional six years of primary education, four years of middle schooling, and a seven-year secondary education (five years of preparation toward the Ordinary Level Certificate and two years of Advanced Level training) before entering degreegranting institutions, the average age of the first-year university student in Ghana was often about twenty-five. Most students, however, did not continue formal instruction after the first ten years of education. Of the 145,400 students completing middle school in 1960, for example, only 14,000 sought secondary education. In 1970 only 9,300 of the more than 424,500 leaving middle school were admitted into secondary schools. Ministry of Education data for the 1984-85 academic year showed that of the 1.8 million students completing ten years of primary and middle schooling, only 125,600 continued into secondary schools, while fewer than 20,000 entered vocational and technical institutions. That same year, approximately 7,900 students were enrolled in the universities. Although the government provides free tuition to all children of school age, and notwithstanding the fact that schools can be found all across the country, 1989-90 government statistics showed that more males continued to be enrolled in schools than females. In the first six grades of the educational system, only 45 percent of the students enrolled were female. The percentage of females in the school system decreased to 33 percent at the secondary school level, to 27 percent in polytechnical institutions, and to as low as 19 percent within the universities. Disparities in the malefemale ratios found in the schools had not improved significantly by 1990-91. The emphasis on male education doubtless reflects traditional social values, which view the reproductive abilities of women as their primary role in life, while men are valued as breadwinners and, therefore, in need of education to compete in the contemporary economy. Despite a number of committee reports and proposals for educational reform, until mid-1980 the education system continued to place emphasis on traditional academic studies. Proponents of reform argued that the country's development needs required an education system that, beginning at the middle-school level, placed equal emphasis on training students in vocational and technical skills. It was further suggested that reforms could contribute to reducing the number of students who dropped out of school for lack of interest in traditional academic studies. Partly as a result of earlier proposals for reform and partly in keeping with the government's economic reform program, fundamental change in the educational structure of the country was undertaken in the mid-1980s. The overall goals were to make curricula at all levels more relevant to the economic needs of the country, to reduce the length of pre-university instruction, and to improve the quality of teacher preparation. Increased enrollment in primary schools and a reduction in the rate of illiteracy were also to be pursued. The reforms were to be implemented in two phases: those for primary and middle schools were to be introduced in 1987- 89, and those for secondary schools and the universities, in 1990- 93. The much-discussed changes in education became a reality in 1987 when all seventh-level students, who otherwise would have entered the traditional first year of middle school, were instead admitted into new junior secondary schools (JSS) to begin a threeyear combined training program in vocational, technical, and academic studies. The JSS system was a radical change in the structure of education in the country. It replaced the four-year middle school and the first three years of the traditional fiveyear secondary school system. After three years at the JSS, three years further training would be available in senior secondary schools (SSS), after which students could enter polytechnic institutions or the universities. Pioneers in the JSS system sat for the first Basic Certificate of Education Examination in 1990. In this same year, seniors of the old middle-school system took the last Middle School Leaving Certificate Examination. Supporters of the JSS argued that the system would attract more students into technical, vocational, business, and agricultural institutions. It was also suggested that those students who did not gain admission into the SSS would be better equipped to enter the job market. Results of the first SSS certificate examination, announced in May 1994, however, showed that only 3.9 percent of students received passing marks. This poor showing was attributed to lack of textbooks, equipment, and trained teachers, and to inadequate time to prepare for the examination. Despite loud protests from students and parents, reform of the education system remained on course. In addition to revamping middle-school education, changes were also introduced on all other educational levels. Fees for textbooks and supplies were instituted, primary curricula were revised, and food and housing subsidies were reduced or eliminated in secondary schools and the universities. In the early 1990s, however, the government appeared to be moving slowly in implementing further proposed reforms, such as new curricula in secondary schools and restructuring of the universities. In the early 1990s, higher education was available at three institutions--the University of Ghana (located principally at Legon outside Accra), founded in 1948 as the University College of the Gold Coast; the University of Science and Technology at Kumasi, opened officially in 1952 as the Kumasi College of Technology; and the University of Cape Coast at Cape Coast, founded in 1961. In 1989-90 enrollment at all three institutions totalled 9,251, of whom 19 percent were female. In addition, large numbers of Ghanaians went abroad for university education, as they had in the past. In anticipation that the new JSS and SSS structures would increase the number of students seeking advanced technical training, two more universities were proposed. The specialist institutions or colleges at Winneba, which offered post-secondary teacher training in such subjects as art, music, and physical education, were to be upgraded into an independent university college or were to be given associate relations with the University of Cape Coast. In September 1993, the University of Development Studies at Tamale opened. Designed initially to train agricultural specialists, it will eventually also offer degrees in health and development studies. Source: U.S. Library of Congress Formal education in Ghana preceded colonization. The first schools were established by European merchants and missionaries. During the colonial period, a formal state education structure was modelled on the British system. This structure has been through a series of reforms since Ghana gained its independence in 1957. In the 1980s, further reforms have brought the structure of the education system closer to an American model. Ghana's educational System is highly centralized. The Ministry of Education and its agencies are responsible for the entire educational system in the country. Entrance to universities is by examination following completion of senior secondary school. Ghana has over 15,000 primary schools, 7,000 junior secondary schools, 700 senior secondary schools, 25 training colleges, 30 technical institutions and over 10 public and private universities. PRIMARY AND JUNIOR SECONDARY  Though Public schools are suppose to be better than private because they receive funding from the state and therefore, have more equipment and supplies. Private schools which depend on tuition and receive no government aid are performing well than their public counterparts. Primary and junior secondary education is tuition-free and mandatory in the public schools. However, there is no way to enforce attendance since; there are not enough teachers and facilities available to accommodate all the students. Students begin their 6-year primary education at age six. Under educational reforms implemented in 1987, the students, after primary school, pass into a new junior secondary school system for 3 years of academic training combined with technical and vocational training.  The TIG factor on the Education System A major negative factor on the quality of teaching in Ghana is the reliance on 24,000 untrained teachers in rural and underserved areas. Thirty seven percent of Ghana’s primary school level teachers do not meet national minimum standards for teaching. Only 52 percent of children reach the sixth grade; of those only 23 percent become proficient in English, Ghana’s official language and the main language of instruction. Ghanaian government has often been criticised for providing insufficient resources to basic education, resulting in low primary enrolment rates, untrained personnel, teacher absenteeism and high school fees. In addition, poor remunerations which are feature of most developing countries have worsened teacher shortages. Rural and underserved communities do not have the qualified teachers and community support to have a quality education. Moreover, the limited education available to girls has exacerbated the HIV/AIDS pandemic and negatively impacts the likelihood of families to encourage schooling for primary school aged children. The structure of basic education inherited from the missionaries and the British colonial administration is comprised of six years of primary school and four years of middle school. The official age at which pupils begin schooling is six. Until the introduction of educational reforms in 1987, the 10 years of elementary schooling constituted the first circle of education. All students completing the tenth grade wrote the Middle School Leaving Certificate Examination conducted by the West African Examination Council (WAEC). Established by a 1951 Ordinance, the Examination Council conducts all public examinations for the former British West African countries and Liberia. The reforms of 1987 reduced the first circle of education to nine years, with the seventh through ninth grades designated as Junior Secondary School (JSS). Successful candidates are admitted to a four-year Senior Secondary School (SSS) system. The rational for reform was originally stated in the Dzobo Committee Report of the mid-1970s, which called for a new type of education that was consistent with national development. Similar to the observations of the Phelps-Stokes Report of 1923, the Dzobo Committee argued for the introduction of more vocational, science, and agricultural courses at the JSS level. Thus, while a general education was provided during the first six years of primary education, it was argued that students attending the JSS should be given the chance to test a variety of practical courses. Those who showed propensity for practical education were to be encouraged to enter vocational and technical institutions, while the others continued with the curriculum associated with the traditional secondary school system. The four-year SSS curriculum is tested in the standardized Senior Secondary School Examination, also conducted by the WAEC. Successful candidates are considered for admission to tertiary institutions for further education in specialized fields. While some have praised the government's courage to implement reform policies, the new system has also been criticized. The main problem was that the national government called on local governments to provide for the workshop and labs anticipated for the JSS system. Critics feared the increased financial burden on the communities, and it was argued that children in well-to-do communities would fare better than those in the least endowed areas. The reality of the past 10 years, however, has been that many well-to-do parents have sent their wards to the private JSS institutions that opened in the wealthy communities. The rational was that the betterendowed private schools would better prepare children to gain admission to the prestigious secondary schools now designated as part of the new SSS system. On the one hand, it has been observed that the increased establishment of the private JSS was consistent with the privatization of the national economy that characterized the 1980s. On the other hand, critics see the trend in education as favoring the wealthy and widening the gap between haves and the have-nots, since in the end, better preparatory secondary education makes it easier to gain admission into the nation's universities. Ironically, it has also been argued in some quarters that those with influence have coveted the few government scholarships that are to go only to the very bright students. There continue to be opportunities, however, for education expansion in Ghana. Advanced vocational and technical education is available through various polytechnic institutes. Nursing and teacher training are now offered exclusively to postsecondary candidates. Professional training in accounting and management courses can also be obtained outside the universities. In fact, the compression of the second circle of education resulting from the reforms has tremendously swollen the university application pool. In the past decade, it was typical for SSS graduates to wait for two years before gaining admission to university programs. The universities responded to the severe bottleneck by admitting more students than they normally would. With limited space available in the old facilities, larger classes and overcrowding in student residence halls occurred, thus creating tension between students, university administrators, and the government. The Ghana University Teachers' Association has also complained about salaries and work conditions. Given the gravity of the problems, it is not surprising that periodic disruptions in the academic year occurred as a result of strikes. These concerns, notwithstanding, Ghana has made great progress in the provision of schools in the past half century. This reality is reflected in the significant reduction in the national adult illiteracy rate—it was 75 percent in 1960, approximately 60 percent in 1970, nearly 57 percent in 1980, about 43 percent in 1990, and almost 30 percent in 2000.