

## Community Resources in Social Studies Education: The Case of Tamale College of Education, Northern Region of Ghana.

### Abstract

The study sought the level of use of community resources in Senior High School (SHS) within Tamale Metropolis of the Northern Region of Ghana. The explanatory survey research method was adopted to assess the phenomenon of community resource use during Social Studies lessons from the perspectives of SHS Social Studies teachers within the metropolis. The study adopted quantitative methodology in which a sample of 40 Social Studies teachers was selected for the study using purposive sampling technique. Community Resource Use (CRU) questionnaires comprising closed-ended items, were used in generating data from the respondents. The quantitative data obtained were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. Findings of the study showed that even though SHS Social Studies teachers within the Tamale Metropolis perceive the importance of community resources for effective teaching of the subject, the usage of the resources was relatively low. Hence the study recommended that effort should be made by all the stakeholders especially Ghana Education Service (GES) and teachers involved in the Social Studies curriculum implementation to promote the regular use of community resources for effective teaching and learning of Social Studies in SHS within the Metropolis.

**Keywords:** Community Resources, Views, Social Studies, Educational curriculum, Teaching, Learning.

### Introduction

“Community resources are persons, places and institutions which desirably enrich teaching and learning of relevant subjects” (Mezieobi *et al.* (2015). “They are mostly found within the community, district/metropolis, region or country where the school is located and can be exploited to promote the understanding of concepts of the subjects being studied. They include educational, social, cultural, economic, religious, historical and administrative resources such as universities, rivers, railways, markets, airports, banks, police stations, parliaments, industries, arts and museum galleries, banking institutions, traditional institutions and so forth” (Atubi, 2019). Among the subjects that are taught in schools, Social Studies is one subject whose aim is to inculcate good citizenship skills into the youth. It involves the inculcation of positive attitudes, values and skills that will enable them to become good citizens. Generally, because of the abstract nature of topics that are taught in Social Studies, students find it difficult to understand this subject (Atubi&Ogheneakoke, 2020; Obro, 2021). “The use of interactive learning methods and community resources has the potential to sustain the interest of students for effective teaching and learning of the subject. The use of community resources facilitates effective teaching of Social Studies (Parua, 2018) as these resources could be likened to laboratories or workshops where Social Studies teachers and students can gain firsthand knowledge and experience about the environment, government, institutions, industries and professions”. More importantly, in teaching cultural and environmentally based subjects like

Social Studies, the use of these resources has become imperative since schools and their communities are integrated (Ikwumelu, 2019). For example, resource persons/professionals can be engaged during Social Studies lessons to present professional information on the topic under discussion.

The use of community resources does not only facilitate understanding of the subject but also motivates learning leading to positive learning outcomes (Atubi, 2019). In the opinion of Tuba (2013), “learning outside the classroom can help students to interpret and understand society better, thereby concretizing learning”. Edinyang and Effiom (2017) examined “the use of teaching resources and identified community resources as key in facilitating effective learning of the subject”. Furthermore, Social Science Space (2017) asserted that “an extensive form of education introduced to the child through the medium of community resources can help to manipulate the educational atmosphere for favourable learning experience”. Unfortunately, Social Studies teachers in Ghana continually use traditional methods in teaching Social Studies which essentially involves the use of resources such as textbook, chalkboard etc. This approach has the negative implication of reducing the interest of students in learning the subject (Ekpenyong, Edem & Martins, 2015) leading to poor understanding of the subject.

In a related study by Segkulu et al. (2022) “on Social Studies tutors’ use of teaching and learning materials (TLMs), it was discovered that student-teachers were not adequately prepared for the use of TLMs to teach Social Studies. Even though the teacher training Colleges of Education (CoEs) had quite a number of TLMs that could be adequately used, most of these TLMs were not readily accessible for use”. The study therefore recommended further research to assess the use of community resources for effective teaching and learning process. The current study is therefore a follow-up effort to establish Social Studies teachers’ take on the use of community resources in the implementation of Social Studies within the Tamale metropolis of Northern Ghana. As the facilitator, the role of the teacher is crucial in the use of community resources for implementing the Social Studies curriculum in the SHS. Hence, this study sought the level of use of community resources from the perspective of the SHS Social Studies teachers within the Tamale Metropolis of the Northern Region of Ghana. The purpose of the study was to examine the use of community resources by SHS Social Studies teachers within the Metropolis. Specifically, the objectives were to:

1. Ascertain the usefulness of community resources from the perspectives of SHS Social Studies teachers.
2. Find out the extent of utilization of the community resources in teaching social studies
3. Suggest intervention measures for the optimum use of the community resources for effective teaching of social studies.

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How useful are community resources in the implementation of the social studies curriculum as perceived by SHS Social Studies teachers?

2.To what extent do SHS Social Studies teachers utilize community resources in teaching social studies?

3. What intervention measures are required for optimum use of the community resources in teaching social studies in SHS?

### **Methodology**

The study adopted the explanatory survey research method since the study sought to explain the phenomenon of community resource use during Social Studies lessons from the perspectives of Social Studies teachers within the Tamale metropolis. This design was considered appropriate since the study involved collecting data to answer questions about the views of SHS Social Studies teachers on the use of community resources in teaching Social Studies subject. The study was limited to Social Studies teachers in SHS in the Tamale Metropolis since they are charged with the responsibility of implementing the Social Studies Curriculum in the schools within the metropolis. The population for the study involved all SHS social studies teachers of the 2022 academic year within the Metropolis. In all, there were 45 SHS social studies teachers in the Metropolis within the period under investigation. Out of this number, 40 Social Studies teachers were selected for the study. This selection was in line with the guideline provided by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) which suggests that a minimum sample size of 40 should be selected for a population of 45. All the 10 SHSs were similar in teachers' characteristics and population because they were all controlled by the Ministry of Education. Purposive sampling was used to select the sample of teachers for the study since they could provide key information relevant to this study. In purposive sampling the sample is selected on the basis of the researcher's knowledge of the elements of the population (Babbie, 1990). Teachers from private schools were exempted from the study because they hardly stay long in their teaching jobs due to poor remuneration.

The researcher, together with four research assistants, visited the selected SHSs (within four weeks, that is from 1<sup>st</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023) where they briefly introduced themselves as well as the purpose of their research to the school authorities. Having received permission to undertake the research, they met with the study participants who were also briefed on the mission of their visit. The research team then explained the purpose of the research to the respondents who granted approval for the administration of the questionnaires. Community Resource Use (CRU) questionnaires were used for the study. The CRU questionnaires comprised of closed-ended items and were divided into three parts namely A, B and C. Part A solicited data on the usefulness of community resources for effective teaching and learning of social studies. Part B solicited data on the extent of use of community resources by social studies teachers while part C solicited data on intervention measures required for the optimum use of community resources in social studies lessons.

Research questions 1 was addressed using a five-point likert scale where strongly agree (SA) = 5, agree (A) = 4, not sure (NS) =3 disagree (D) = 2 and strongly disagree (SD) =1. Research question 2 was addressed using a three-point likert scale (Always, Occasionally and

Never) to measure the frequency of use of community resources. For Research question 3, study participants were made to indicate their approval (Yes) or disapproval (No) of some proposed intervention measures required for optimum use of community resources in Social Studies lessons.

Participants were first invited and briefed on the purpose of the study and made aware that they were free to withhold any information or discontinue their participation in the study at any time. During the administration of the questionnaire, the research team encouraged the participants to complete and return the questionnaires on the same day in all the schools that were visited. With the maximum cooperation received from the participants, the return rate of the questionnaires was 100%. The quantitative data obtained was analyzed using frequencies and percentages.

## Results and Discussion

### *Research Question 1: How useful are community resources in the implementation of the social studies curriculum?*

The study sought from the participants the usefulness of community resources for effective teaching and learning of Social Studies topics. Their responses are as shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** Social Studies teachers' views on the usefulness of community resources (CRs) for teaching Social Studies

Statement	SA F(%)	A F(%)	NS F(%)	D F(%)	SD F(%)	Mean
CRs facilitate the teaching of Social Studies	34 (85.0)	4 (10.0)	0(0.00)	2 (5.0)	0 (0)	4.8
CRs make the teaching of Social Studies effective	30 (75.0)	8 (15.0)	0(0.00)	1 (2.50)	1 (2.50)	4.7
The use of CRs promote cultural, environmental and national concepts in Social Studies	24 (60.0)	14 (35.0)	0(0.00)	2 (5.0)	0 (0)	4.5
CRs provide an extensive form of education	33 (83.0)	5 (13.0)	0(0.00)	1 (2.50)	1 (2.50)	4.7
The use of CRs consumes time and resources	3 (7.50)	5 (13.0)	2(5.00)	15 (38.0)	15 (38.0)	2.2
Use of CRs helps students understand their community better	34 (85.0)	4 (10.0)	0(0.00)	2 (5.0)	0 (0)	4.8
CRs promote students-centered learning	32 (80.0)	6 (15.0)	0(0.00)	1 (2.50)	1 (2.50)	4.7
CRs promotes hands-on experience among learners	32 (80.0)	6 (15.0)	0(0.00)	1 (2.50)	1 (2.50)	4.7
The use of CRs sustains learners' interest during lessons	37 (93.0)	1 (2.50)	0(0.00)	1 (2.50)	1 (2.50)	4.8
<b>Grand Mean</b>						4.4

Source: Fieldwork (2023). (N=40)

Out of the 40 (100%) teachers surveyed, a vast majority of them (38 representing 95%) with a calculated mean score of 4.8 felt that community resources facilitate the teaching of Social Studies, with only a few (2 representing 5%) feeling otherwise. Also, as many as 38 (90%) respondents, with a calculated mean score of 4.7, were of the view that community resources

make the teaching and learning of Social Studies effective. Another 38 (90%) with a calculated mean score of 4.5 felt that the use of community resources promotes cultural, environmental and national concepts in Social Studies. On whether community resources provide an extensive form of education, 33 (83%) of the respondents with a calculated mean score of 4.7 strongly agreed, and 5 (13%) agreed that community resources provide an extensive form of education. Out of the remaining two teachers, one of them was not sure while the other one disagreed that community resources provide an extensive form of education.

As many as 30 (76%) of the respondents with a calculated mean score of 2.2 did not agree with the fact that the use of CRs consumes time and resources. Only 3 (7.50%) strongly agreed and 5 (13%) agreed with this viewpoint. Majority of the respondents (34 representing 85%) with a calculated mean score of 4.8 strongly agreed while 4 (10%) agreed that the use of community resources helps students understand their community better. The remaining 2(5%) felt otherwise. As many as 32 (80%) with a calculated mean score of 4.7 strongly agreed, and 6 (15%) agreed that community resources promote student-centered learning. The remaining 2 (5%) felt otherwise. On the issue of promoting hands-on experience among learners, 38 (95%) respondents, with a calculated mean score of 4.7, supported this viewpoint while the remaining 2 (5%) had contrary a view. Another 38 (95%) of the respondents with a calculated mean score of 4.8 also felt that community resources sustain learners’ interest during lessons while the remaining 2 (5%) felt otherwise.

These findings are consistent with those of Social Science Space (2017), Tuba (2013), Ajala and Ojo (2018) and Atubi (2019) which reports that community resources are important in promoting effective teaching and learning of Social Studies. Mezieobi *et al.* (2015) posit that “community resources enhance social studies teaching and learning, deepen the social studies content and widen the horizon of the social studies students. This is because community resources serve as laboratories for learning in the school by simply making room for learners to associate areas of their subject to what is being practiced in the community. This further helps learners identify and appreciate the interrelatedness found in their school subject and what is obtained from the community”. “In buttressing the importance of community resources to the school and vice versa, Johnson (2015) stressed that it is impossible to consider the value of community resources to the school without taking into account the value of school activities to the community”.

**Research Question 2: To what extent do you utilize community resources in teaching social studies?**

The research question two sought to find out from the study participants the extent (frequency) of use of community resources during their social studies lesson delivery. Their responses are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Social Studies teachers’ extent of use of community resources (CRs) for teaching Social Studies

Statement	Always (%)	Occasionally (%)	Never (%)	Total (%)
I visit the Centre for National	2(5.00)	4 (10.0)	34 (85.0)	40 (100)

<b>Culture with my students</b>				
I visit the arts/museum with my students	2(5.00)	8 (15.0)	30 (75.0)	40 (100)
I visit a government institution with my students	2(5.00)	14 (35.0)	24 (60.0)	40 (100)
I visit the palace of a traditional ruler with my students	2(5.00)	5 (12.50)	33 (82.50)	40 (100)
I visit a bank or industry with my student	3(7.50)	5 (12.50)	32(80.00)	40 (100)
I visit the Regional House of Chiefs with my students	3(7.50)	4 (10.00)	33 (82.50)	40 (100)
I visit the District Assembly with my students	0(0.00)	6 (15.0)	34 (85.00)	40 (100)
<b>Grand Mean</b>				

Source: Fieldwork (2023). (N=40)

From the table, an overwhelming majority (34 representing 85%) of the respondents indicated that they never visit the Centre for National Culture with their students. Out of the remaining 6 respondents, 4 (10%) indicated that they occasionally embark on such a visit while only 2 (5%) indicated that they always embark on the visit. As many as 30 (75%) of them indicated that they never visit the arts/museum with their students. Only 2 (5%) of them indicated that they always embark on such a visit while the remaining 8 (15%) indicated that they occasionally embark on such a visit. A good number of the respondents (24 representing 60%) indicated that they never visit a government institution with their students. Out of the remaining respondents, 14 (35%) indicated that they occasionally visit a government institution with their students while only 2 (5%) of them indicated that they always embark on such a visit.

A vast majority (33 representing 82%) indicated that they never visit the palace of a traditional ruler with their students. Only 2 (5%) of them indicated that they always embark on such a visit while the remaining 5 indicated that they occasionally embark on such a visit. On whether they visit a banking institution or any industry with their students, 32 (80%) of the respondents indicated that they never embark on such a visit. Out of the remaining 8 respondents, 5 (12.50%) of them indicated that they occasionally make such visits while only 3 (7.50%) of them indicated that they make such a visit. As many as 33 (82.5%) of the respondents indicated that they never visit the Regional House of Chiefs with their students. Out of the remaining 7 respondents, 4 (10.0%) stated that they occasionally embark on such a visit while only 3(7.5%) indicated that they always embark on such a visit. Among all the respondents surveyed, none of them indicated that they visit the District Assembly with students always. From the table, only 6 (15%) of them indicated that they occasionally embark on such a visit while an overwhelming majority 34 (85%) indicated that they never embark on such a visit.

Findings of the study demonstrated that even though SHS Social Studies teachers within the Tamale Metropolis perceive the importance of community resources for effective teaching of the subject, the usage of the resources was relatively low. These findings are in agreement with Amuzu (2018) and Usulor (2014) who lamented the low of community resources by Social

Studies teachers in Ebonyi State in Nigeria and West Mamprusi District of Northern Region of Ghana.

“Low usage of community resources has the negative implications of hindering effective teaching and learning of the subject because community resources provide concrete data on cultural, industrial, political and geographical facts and relationship (Kochhar, 2006) and the experiences learners gather from these community resources afford them unique experiences in their real-life situations”. “Social problems become concrete as we investigate them in our own communities. Thus, the resources found within the communities can appeal to learners’ senses of seeing, hearing and feeling (Mezieobi *et al.*, 2015) as they come in tangible forms and help make learning more realistic and fulfilling”. According to Akinfe and Fashiko in Umar (2016), “short trips to community resources on a regular basis can become an integral part of learning that fosters students’ understanding of the natural world and increases their sophistication in observing and interpreting their surroundings. Social Studies Education is an area that undertakes the study of man and his environment therefore its learning process must embrace a judicious contact with the content of the physical environment (outside the classroom). Making field trip a regular exercise must be encouraged to enhance students understanding of their physical environment”.

**Research Question 3: What measures are required for optimum use of the community resources in teaching social studies in SHS?**

From the study participants, five measures were examined as proposed intervention measures required for optimum use of the community resources in teaching social studies. They are: Provision of adequate security during visit of community resources; readily available means of transport; remuneration for embarking on visit; cooperation of staff of Community Resources Centre; and cooperation of school authorities for such a visit. The views of the respondents were sought on the above proposed measures. Their responses are presented in Table 3

Table 3: Views of respondents on intervention measures required for optimum use of the community resources in teaching social studies

No.	Intervention	Response	Number of Respondents	
			Frequenc y (N=40)	Percentage (%)
1	Is provision of adequate security required?	Yes	35	88
		No	5	12
2	Is readily available means of transport necessary for optimum use of CRs?	Yes	32	80
		No	8	20
3	Will teacher remuneration promote the use of CRs?	Yes	35	88
		No	5	12
4	Is cooperation of staff of CRs Centre necessary?	Yes	37	93
		No	3	7
5	What about cooperation by school	Yes	36	90

authorities?	No	4	10
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Source: Fieldwork (2023). (N=40)

Among the 40 respondents, as many as 35 (88%) respondents agreed that provision of adequate security is an intervention required to promote the use of community resources in teaching social studies. Only 5 (12%) disagreed. Also, 32 (80%) felt that readily available means of transport will encourage the use of community resources in teaching social studies while only 8 (20%) felt otherwise. On the use of remuneration, as many as 35 (88%) respondents agreed that it is an intervention required to promote the use of community resources in teaching social studies. Only 5 (12%) disagreed on this intervention. Almost all (37 representing 93%) the respondents felt that cooperation of staff of CRs Centres is required to encourage the use of community resources in teaching social studies. Only 3(7%) disagreed. An overwhelming majority (36 representing 90%) of the respondents agreed that co-operation of school authorities is an intervention required to promote the use of community resources in teaching social studies. Only 4 (10%) disagreed on this issue.

The findings on the intervention measures implies that if community resources could be made use of by Social Studies teachers, then school authorities within the metropolis must ensure adequate security, readily available means of transport, remuneration for embarking on visit. They must also ensure co-operation of staff of CRs Centre as well as cooperation of school authorities for such a visit. This is necessary to offer the child the opportunity to observe and participate in the basic human activities that characterize living in a social group. According to Kochhar (2006), a variety of community experiences offers the child the laboratory in which he may experiment with life in the community and begin to find his place in it. Efforts must therefore be put in place the above intervention measures for effective implementation of social studies curriculum. This is because in curriculum implementation, the learner should be regarded as an essential stakeholder whose access to these community resources promotes subject-matter mastery.

### **Conclusion**

Findings of the study demonstrated that even though SHS Social Studies teachers within the Tamale Metropolis perceive the importance of community resources for effective teaching and learning of the subject, the usage of community resources was relatively low. The intervention measures required to promote community resources include adequate security, readily available means of transport, remuneration for embarking on visit, cooperation of staff of Community Resources Centre as well as cooperation of school authorities for such a visit.

### **Recommendation**

Efforts should be made by all the stakeholders especially Ghana Education Service (GES) and teachers involved in the Social Studies curriculum implementation to promote the regular use of community resources for effective teaching and learning of Social Studies in SHS within the Metropolis. Additionally, school authorities within the metropolis must ensure adequate security, readily available means of transport, remuneration for embarking on visit to a

community resource centre. They must also ensure cooperation of staff of Community Resources Centre as well as cooperation of school authorities for such a visit.

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