

Problems in the Operations of the School Feeding Programme in Ghana

ABSTRACT

The study focused on whether there is any involvement and the need for the Ghana Education Service (GES) in the operations of the school feeding programme in Ghana. The Ghana Education Service has supervised similar programmes as the main agency in charge to improve efficiency in delivery. The purpose and intent of the Ghana education service will better be served if they are in control of the school feeding programme. The study sampled 350 teachers as the target group and other stakeholders which included directors of education, school feeding programme, parents and students. With a mixed method and the use of questionnaire and interviews, the study analyzed responses based on percentages and themes respectively.

The study concluded that the Ghana education service (GES) is not involve in the operations of the school feeding programme. They are stated as partners in its operations but are not consulted in the recruiting of schools and caterers as part of the programme operations. But they do have the competence to run the school feeding programme effectively and efficiently and will reduce political influence when the programme is under the Ghana education service as a public institution.

Keywords: School feeding, Education service, Programme operation

1. INTRODUCTION

Educational policies are at best social interventions policies implemented by states for the wellbeing of its citizens. It is in the same vein that basic education policies are targeted policies intended for a particular group of people. They are deliberately enacted to solve social problems [1]. The author in his work in Tanzania identified how the basic education policy didn't perform well and also failed to solve the problem for which it was enacted. The author in his studies made specific reference to the Tanzanian Development Vision 2025. On the other hand, [2] in his studies have it that these failed policies were as a result of use of non-experienced or politically inclined implementing agencies to help achieve the intended policy. The author has it that there is a disjuncture between policy intentions in theory and the outcomes of

implementation practice. In this study, the author used the Ghana Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy as an exemplar to explore the apparent disjuncture.

The Ghana Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy intended to increase enrolment and attendance at the primary level. The policy of getting every child to school has received greater recommendation throughout the developing world especially Ghana [3]. Several policies from free education to universal basic education have been implemented in many developing countries including Ghana. To help achieve the objective of these policies, appropriate public awareness programmes are equally needed [4].

In a study of the school feeding programme in Ghana by [5] in a critical appraisal of his work stated that the assumptions under which the Ghana school feeding programme was established or formulated are unachievable. They went further to state that those assumptions were both theoretical, faced operational challenges and doubtful in terms of sustainability. It is clear in its operations that the major problem is the use of inexperienced institutions like the school feeding secretariate and the district assemblies. Further argument was made that the design structure of the Ghana school feeding programme was not flexible to allow for the operations of the programme to cope with emergencies. Therefore, the main beneficiaries who are basic schools' children get little benefit from the programme. In looking at the current state of the Ghana school feeding programme, one will also admit that there is no room for emergency when caterers failed to cook due to lack of funds. The study therefore will look at the current operations of the Ghana school feeding programme and the need for the involvement of Ghana education service in its operations.

2. GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE INVOLVEMENT

The development of education in Ghana was mainly informal before the coming of the Europeans. After Ghana gained independence on the 6th March, 1957 achieving universal basic education became a political slogan or objective. Due to the political and economic difficulties of the time attempts at educational reforms were slowed down. The efforts of government to continue with the fight for educational reforms gave birth to the Ghana Education Service in 1974. In view of its importance to the fight for educational freedom and inclusiveness many acts of parliament have been enacted to give meaning to the operations of the Ghana Education Service. Among them include the Education Act of 1987, 1995 (Act 50) and 2008 (Act 778). The

Ghana Education Service (GES) in its mandate is governed by a fifteen-member council. They oversee the management of the service. With these constitutional backings, the Ghana education service is well positioned to handle educational programmes to achieve a universal primary education for all. The Ghana education service therefore is in a proper position to handle the activities of the school feeding programme then the district assembly and the school feeding secretariat in its current operational structure.

In the work of Addy, [6] the service is managed with a vision to create an enabling environment in all basic schools in Ghana that will sustain effective learning and promote management efficiency. It has a well design implementation structure from the national to the school level. The system has been designed giving advantage to the service in the implementation of educational programmes. With the experience of the service in the implementation of social programmes in education do collaborate with local and international organizations to operate school feeding programmes [7]. It is also charged with the responsibility of implementing pre-tertiary education policies of government which is the core responsibility of the service. They have handled such responsibilities successfully and are still doing same and therefore have the solution to the problems of the school feeding programme [8]. To ensure that all Ghanaian children of school going age who are the major beneficiaries are provided with quality formal education and training, there is the need for the Ghana education service to take control of all educational programmes. This is due to the mandate of the Ghana Education Service (GES) as indicated in the work of [6]. It is to super see the implementation of educational programmes envisaged in Act 778 of 2008. It is also in its mandate to ensure effective operations of basic educational programmes. The challenge or difficulty is why the GES is not the agency in charge of the school feeding programme given its constitutional mandate to do so. Giving the lead role to manage the school feeding programme, basic school children who are the beneficiaries will get the best of service and will be motivated to enroll and attend school as they have done in the management of the capitation grant [9] Click or tap here to enter text..

Rolleston, [10] maintains that the quest to reduce poverty alongside increasing enrolment and attendance in basic schools in Ghana can only be achieved if the Ghana Education Service is given its place in the implementation of its constitutional mandated role to manage the school feeding programme. Given the educational gap between the southern sector and the northern sector of the country in Ghana, it drives public action against illiteracy and inequality in access to basic education [11]. The move to eliminate illiteracy in the Ghanaian society is the objective

of successive governments. But there exist difficulties in ensuring equitable distribution of educational resources like the school feeding programme [12]. This is acknowledged in the United Nations global monitoring report 2017 and supported by the social justice theory. The report states that only twenty-one percent (21%) of poor people in Ghana benefit from the school feeding programme. In the view of the authors, it is due to the widespread political interference without adherence to operational manual [13]. This is due to the non-involvement of the Ghana education service (GES) in the performance of their constitutional duty of managing the school feeding programme. The non-involvement of GES has also led to the current problems that the programme is going through due to the involvement of the district assembly and the school feeding secretariats which are political affiliated.

Rolleston, [10] again maintains that the Ghana education service is very important to the success of educational programmes in Ghana and must be involved when it comes to the operations of the school feeding programme. The establishment of parallel institutions with little or no experience in implementing educational programmes is a challenge to the success of the programme. It is confirmed in the report of a policy brief [14] that accountability can only be achieved in educational programmes when parallel institutions are eliminated. It is when the rightful and experienced institutions are given the mandate to handle such programmes that transparency and effectiveness can be achieved. Achieving accountability in the operations of the school feeding programme can be enhanced when the Ghana education service is given the full mandate to operate the programme. Basic school children will benefit more and be motivated to attend school when the Ghana education service whom the children have a common goal in the pursuit of education is involved [13].

Dunne and Ananga, , states that the Ghana education service (GES) serves many purposes in the field of education. They are in charge of establishing primary schools and as well identifying the needs of primary education. They are in the position to identify school dropouts in Ghana depending on the geographical situations. The singular honor of identification of the causes of school dropout of the primary child puts them in a better position to operate the school feeding programme. Operating the school feeding programme by the Ghana education service will enhance the benefits of the poor child. Alhassan and Sulemana, [16] in support of this assertion added that the role of the Ghana education service in assessing the process of dropout in primary schools can help use the school feeding programme to target the most vulnerable. In their work identified the girl child as the most vulnerable due to their social status and therefore need the

school food to motivate parents allow them enroll and attend school. The involvement of the Ghana education service in the operations will help get the school feeding programme to the extreme poor and vulnerable in Ghana. Their institutional availability and human resource capacity throughout Ghana is an asset to help the poor child enroll and attend school.

Little, [17] affirms that the non-political posture of the Ghana education service is an added advantage to the running of the school feeding programme. The politicization of the programme is a major challenge to its operations there by limiting its benefits to the school child [11]. Non-politicization therefore is the only objective to get donors trust back in the operations of the programme. Amutabi, [18] in his work on political interference in education in Kenya laments on the effect of political decisions in the operations of education programmes. He recounts a number of policy decisions which were politically motivated but had little benefit or progress in the educational sector of the country. He again argued that the marginalization of educational institutions and professionals as the case of Ghana education service in the operations of the school feeding programme impacts negatively on the school child and as well on policy formulation. In addition to this, Akaguri, [4] in his study recount the cost of feeding which takes the bulk of the cost of education there by been a disadvantage to the poor child and his parents. It is also identified as a cause of school dropout among poor communities. The effective operations of the school feeding programme by the Ghana education service can be an incentive for the enrolment and attendance of the poor child at the basic level. The replacement of the district assembly and the school feeding secretariat with the Ghana education service is therefore necessary if only the objective of the programme is to be achieved.

3. METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this research, the main primary source of information was from questionnaire, interview guide and observation. The questionnaire was administered on three hundred and fifty (350) teachers who are the target population. Seven (7) each from fifty (50) basic feeding schools. These schools were purposefully sampled based on the operation of school feeding in their schools. Interview guide was used for the sample considered as the key informants of the study. These categories included the 16 District Directors of Education, hundred (100) parents and 17 directors of the school feeding programme. Observation on the other hand was used to study the relationships that existed before and after the research in the various schools under

study between teachers, students and the caterers. It was also used to study the behavior of respondents during the interview sessions. This was in relation to questions pertaining to the procedure for school selection and caterer selection. These questions were sensitive and as well political in nature. Many had reservations in answering questions related to how and why in the procedure of selection.

3.1 Data Analyzes

The study used mixed methods in the analysis. Quantitative data from the questionnaire was analyzed with the help of descriptive statistical analyzes on various responses from respondents. Conclusions drawn were put in to percentages. All questions were on a five-point linkage scale. To put the qualitative data findings in a proper perspective, the study made use of the inductive process of analysis in order to establish the research themes. There was the transcription of interviews and observation. Notes from the field were analyzed with the help of an open coding system. Systematic steps were established in the coding of the data. Memos were written to track the process of data collection and analysis. There was labeling and naming of concepts after several rounds of going through transcribed data which led to the development of the research themes. This was in consistence with the research questions. It again was followed by initial codes developed across participants which included Ghana education service non-involvement; non-involvement in school and caterer recruitment and non-use of Ghana education service existing structures from the national to the school level. The views expressed by stakeholders coupled with beneficiary concerns were compared with other perceptions with relevance on the issue under study.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Control of the Programme

During the period of the research, the author observed a number of activities but could not confirm whether the beneficiary institution which is the Ghana education service (GES) was in total control of the school feeding programme. One significant observation was that GES had no officer or desk in charge of the school feeding operations in all the districts visited for the study.

To confirm this observation, respondents indicated their views on whether the GES was in control of the programme or not.

The responses of the various respondents showed a strong disagreement that the Ghana education service (GES) was not in charge of the operations of the school feeding programme. This was represented with a total of N=350, 93.4% of respondents in disagreement. This was clear as it was observed in all the district offices of the Ghana education service visited for this research. Many other officers including circuit supervisors who were contacted for this research had little knowledge on their role in the operations of the school feeding programme. During the interview sessions with district directors of the Ghana education service to confirm why their officers knew little about the school feeding programme operations, many revealed that their office had no role to play. It was added that the Ghana education service is only a service partner but not an active institution in the operations of the programme. A district director had this to say;

'We are described as partners in the school feeding programme but in reality, we are not. How can you describe a beneficiary of a programme a partner who knows nothing about the programme even in my own backyard? What kind of a programme is operating in schools I am the district education director but I have no knowledge on how the programme operates.'

A clear indication that the operations of the school feeding programme was out of their control. The Ghana education service was being mentioned as a partner only on paper but not in reality. Another district education director had this to say;

'The description given to us as partners might have a different meaning from what we thought it is. Because they the district assembly/school feeding secretariat don't consult us on anything concerning the programme operations. We sometimes visit our schools only to find children being fed by a caterer.'

These revelations were a clear indication that the Ghana education service was not in charge of the operations of the school feeding programme. They were also found not to be consulted in its implementation and operations at the district level. The school feeding secretariat and the district assemblies were found to be in charge of the operations without the involvement of the Ghana Education Service (GES).

4.2 Recruitment of Schools

The Ghana education service per the constitution of Ghana is responsible for the management and operations of all basic schools in the country. It is responsible for the recruitment of teachers and establishment of basic schools. The recognition of a school to fully operate must be endorsed by the Ghana education service with establishment identification (ID). This oversight responsibility of the Ghana education service is recognized in the passing of the Ghana Education Act 778 of 2008. It is therefore legally binding in all their operations with respect to basic schools. The Ghana education service therefore knows well the vulnerability status of all their schools when it comes to their needs. To confirm how that is translated in the selection of basic schools in to the school feeding programme, the author asked whether the Ghana education service was in charge of the recruitment of schools in to the programme.

The responses from the various respondents showed a varied view on the issue of school and caterer recruitment. A total of N=350, 66.3% held the view that the Ghana education service is not in charge of the recruitment of schools and caterers. They see no indication of the Ghana education service in control of the operations of the school feeding programme. The views of respondents become valuable because respondents were also recruited by the Ghana education service. They are also managers of the basic schools in which the school feeding operates. These schools cannot be recruited in to the school feeding programme by the Ghana education service without the consent of these managers. A total of N=350, 28.0% also held the view that they knew nothing about the recruitment of their schools and the caterers. This view is attributed to the ambiguous nature in the operations of the school feeding programme. The categories of respondents within the 28.0% are the undecided group. Due to the structure of operations of the school feeding programme, it is obvious not to be sure how these schools/caterers are recruited. An appointment of a caterer made by the district assembly which is under the Local Government Ministry to provide food to a basic school under the Ghana education service which is under the Ministry of Education and to be supervised by the school feeding secretariat which is under the Ministry of Gender and Social Protection.

It is in no doubt key stakeholders within the school feeding programme are confused and cannot tell who is in charge of the recruitment of schools. District directors of education who are also supposed to know or be part of the selection of the schools under their control do not also have

the information on how these schools are selected. A district director told the author in an interview that;

'It is not in our office that recruitments of schools and caterers are made. Our office is copied after these recruitments are done. Most of the time we do not receive our copy only to find out a school is operating the programme without out notice. This could be same to the teachers at the various schools not having the information on how their schools are selected in to the programme.'

Again, this assertion was confirmed when all efforts to get a copy of the appointment or recruitment letters of schools failed. This was because all the schools visited had no official document to show their selection by an institution in to the school feeding programme. Others said they got to know their schools were recruited the day the caterer brought her appointment letter to the head teacher. Something which got the teachers still wondering the criteria used for their recruitment.

4.2.1 Competence

The capability, competence and experience of the Ghana education service in managing programmes like the school feeding programme was put to question. The purpose of this question was to confirm whether the Ghana education service lack the expertise in the management of the school feeding programme which led to the establishment of the school feeding secretariat or just an establishment of a political wing to honor political loyalists. In answering this question, a district education director had this to say;

'The Ghana education service already has more experience in similar programmes which it managed successfully. It was part of the initial school feeding programmes led by the World Food Programme (WFP). With the support of teachers and the Ghana Education Service, the WFP was a success.'

The Ghana education service already has the needed human resource to manage the programme. They already have offices in all the districts of the country and as well have circuit supervisors monitoring all the public basic schools in their circuits. Why the parallel establishment of the school feeding secretariat and the inclusion of the district assemblies to oversee the operations of the programme with Ghana education service already in existence.

The view of respondents on the capability of the Ghana education service to manage the school feeding programme is not in question. To support the competence of the Ghana education service, out of N=350, 87.4% agreed that they do have the competence to operate the school feeding programme. Out of N=350, 65.1% strongly supported the Ghana education service without reservation. This indicates a strong conviction of the capability of the Ghana education service. It was also found out that the Ghana education service do have enough structures in all levels of the implementation process from the national to the school level. It was revealed that the school feeding programme faces its numerous operational challenges due to the non-involvement of the Ghana education service. The school feeding secretariat lacks the capacity as compared to the Ghana education service which is the beneficiary institution. To support the claim that the Ghana education service have the capacity more than the school feeding secretariat, the district director of the school feeding secretariat had this to say;

'Why won't they have the capacity more than we do? They have more personnel and a well-organized system in place. They are the beneficiary institution of the programme which makes them well suited for the programme. The involvement of Ghana education service in to the operations of the programme will reduce the operational challenges at the national, regional, district and school level.'

It again goes to confirm that the Ghana education service is capable of running the school feeding programme. It is more equipped with the necessary structures and the tools to operate the school feeding programme successfully.

4.3 Political Influence

The questions still un-answered which demanded further probe was why the Ghana education service isn't the main institution responsible for the operation of the school feeding programme. To further give meaning to why the Ghana education service was left out of the implementation process, the author posed the question whether the inclusion of Ghana education service as the main institution in the implementation of the school feeding programme could eliminate political influence in the operations of the programme. To answer this question in an interview with a district education director of education, he had this to say;

'When we take charge of the operations of the school feeding programme politics will definitely die off. We are not politicians and we don't operate with politicians. We are technocrats who work based on our expertise and not by directions from politicians.'

A confident response on how Ghana education service works without political influence. This alone could not satisfy the author as an answer to the effectiveness of the Ghana education service in reducing politics from the operations of the school feeding programme. The question was further investigated by the use of the questionnaire to seek the views of respondents in the various schools under study. From the responses, out of N=350, 85.4% agreed with the assertion. The tendency to reduce the influence of politics in the operations of the school feeding programme could be reduced when the Ghana education service takes charge of its operations. The support of respondents in the capability of the Ghana education service in reducing the influence of politics also supports the idea of GES effectively recruiting appropriate schools. It is their responsibility to oversee the effective and efficient performance of all basic schools. In their mandate, they are supposed to make appropriate recruitment in line with the vulnerability status of all schools. This will allow those who deserve to benefit from the programme have access to the school food. In an interview with a district coordinator of the school feeding programme, he had this to say;

'The handling of the operations of the school feeding programme by the Ghana Education Service (GES) will definitely reduce politics because their staffs are not appointed by politicians. They can therefore stand their grounds to do the right thing when it comes to school and caterer recruitment. We staff of the school feeding secretariat are answerable to the politician so therefore we cannot do the opposite of what the politician wants us to do.'

It was revealed in the interview that appointments of district school feeding coordinators are highly influenced by politics. A district coordinator can only get his appointment when his political party is in power. For this reason, the regional school feeding coordinator was in his position based on the fact that his political party was in power. He again indicated that since the inception of the school feeding programme, there have been five regional coordinators before his appointment. If that is the case, how can they as staff of the school feeding secretariat disobey the instructions of the politician who did appoint them? This again explains why the operational structure of the school feeding programme involves active political figures with the appointing authority of schools and caterers under the district assembly with supervision of the local Government Ministry.

4.4 School Recruitment on Children

The purpose and intent of the school feeding programme in Ghana is meant to eliminate poverty and as well increase enrolment and attendance. To achieve the objective of the programme is to enhance its accessibility to potential beneficiaries. Enhancing accessibility means recruiting the right schools where there are poor children who need the programme. It was evident in many of the interviews and questionnaire data that there is hindrance in accessing the benefits of the programme by these poor children. Due to the non-involvement of the Ghana Education Service (GES) in the recruitment of schools, potential beneficiaries do not get the actual benefits from the programme.

It was not new to the study when respondents concluded that children were the most affected when it comes to the selection of beneficiary schools. Out of N=350, 94.6% agreed that the nature of school selection affects the potential to benefit by children. The current recruitment process is done without due process. Due to the absence of the Ghana education service in the recruitment process, many parents had this to say;

'Because the Ghana education service is not involved in the recruitment process there are a number of challenges. This is due to the lack of monitoring on the part of Ghana education service and proper selection of poor schools.'

The view is an emphasis on the theme of the work which highlights on the child or the basic school student. It was observed that the only institution that can better implement and monitor the school feeding programme in order to benefit the school child is the Ghana education service. Due to lack of monitoring children do not get the best from the programme. Schools which deserve to be on the programme are left out due to political interference in the selection process. In one of the trips, many students could be seen going home in search for food during break time or rest within lessons. Some of these children interviewed had this to say;

'We are going home to eat because we didn't eat before coming to school this morning. Other schools they provide them food but our school they don't give us food.'

These children are the reason for the school feeding programme and for no reason many of them don't have access to it. This was attributed to the nature of school recruitment and as well the manner of operations and implementation of the programme. It was revealed that schools which

were under the programme also suffered from the lapses in the recruitment process. Beneficiary schools had peculiar problem with caterer recruitment.

4.5 Caterer Recruitment on Children

In view of the neglect of the Ghana education service (GES) in the activities of the school feeding children benefit less from the programme. Children priority is not met in the provision of the food. Caterers do not meet the basic requirement in securing the job or the provision of the food. This results in frequent absenteeism of caterers at schools and sometimes inadequate food for children. This was also attributed to the nature of their recruitment without the involvement of the Ghana education service. The responsibility to recruit the caterer is in the hands of the district assembly. This makes it difficult for better accessibility of children to the caterer. Children can only complain to their teacher on the activities of the caterer. Teachers on the other hand are also responsible to the Ghana education service who is not involved in their recruitment. They therefore are not responsible to Ghana education service and the teacher. To confirm the effect of current procedure of caterer recruitment, the question was put to respondents. The situation under which caterers are recruited by the district assembly without GES consultation is to the disadvantage of the school child. Ghana education service holds the trust of the people in the delivery of better service in education. It is for this reason that all educational activities at the basic level are done in consultation with the GES. Examples include the capitation grant and the provision of the free school uniform.

It is in no doubt that out of N=350, 93.71% of respondents agreed that the current procedure of caterer recruitment is not in the interest and to the benefit of the school child. The study reveals that caterers do not cater for the interest of the children leading to many still going home for food and others ending up in their family farms. Due to the lack of monitoring on the part of the Ghana education service and teachers, caterers have their way of doing business at the expense of the poor student. Some school children had this to share with the researcher in the process of the research;

'We don't get enough food to eat and we can't go back home during break time because of the small food they give us. Some children don't come to school because the food is too small. When we told our teacher, he said they cannot help because even their boss (GES) cannot do anything about it.'

This revelation from the side of school children is a manifestation of how the programme does not benefit them. The study can confirm that there is a procedural error in caterer recruitment. The recruitment of caterers should rather be under the Ghana education service like the case of matrons in the boarding senior high schools. It is a typical example which could be used to improve on the possible benefits of the basic school child. The Chinese case of Deng Fei school meal system is a perfect example to improve the operations for better benefit to the school child. Lessons could be learnt from its successful operations.

5. CONCLUSION

The Ghana Education Service (GES) is the constitutional mandated body responsible for the management of all public basic schools in the country. It is the duty of GES to oversee the effective and efficient administration of all programmes at the basic school level which will encourage children to enroll and attend school. In the case of the school feeding programme the study found out that the GES was not in control of its operations in all the public basic schools in the country. This was made evident in the responses of district directors of education. These directors made it known that the school feeding programme in its policy document only listed the GES as a service partner. As a service partner they should be consulted in decision making concerning the programme. This was because they have the data on the need base or poverty status of all public basic schools. It was found to be surprising why nothing is done to engage their service. This was not surprising to the author in view of the many interactions with different actors within the school feeding programme.

It was also made evident in the findings that the GES is not in charge of recruiting schools and caterers in to the school feeding programme. The recruitment of schools and caterers was done by the district assembly in order to serve the interest of government. The absence of the GES makes it difficult for efficient and effective operations considering the current implementation structure of the programme. It also makes it difficult to implement the principles of good governance in its operations due to lack of transparency and accountability on the part of the district assembly and the school feeding secretariat. It is again difficult to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in the programme when there is no transparency and accountability in the operations of the programme. The GES in the research was adjudged to have had the needed competence and the necessary structures in all the districts to handle the school feeding

programme. Looking back on its role in the implementation of the World Food Programme (WFP), the GES therefore have the necessary human resource. Out of N=350, 87.4% of respondents confirmed that the GES is the appropriate agency to better operate the programme due to its experience. It is also evident that the involvement of the Ghana education service will also reduce political interference in the recruitment of schools and caterers (N=350, 85.4%). Involving the Ghana education service and giving them the authority to recruit schools and caterers will definitely reduce political influence. Responses from respondents confirmed that the GES has done better in other programmes like the capitation grant. The GES is in charge of monies under the capitation grant for all public basic schools. They have disbursed and monitored with the teacher at the school level the effective and efficient utilization of monies, why can't they do same for the school feeding programme.

The involvement of the Ghana education service in the operations of the school feeding programme is necessary and advocated in some of the interviews of parents. Many came to the conclusion that the Ghana education service is not involve in the programme due to the presence of the district assembly. The district assembly represents the political interest in the operations of the programme in order to reward political loyalist. Replacing the district assembly with the Ghana education service will not be in the interest of the politician. The Ghana education service as a constitutional mandated body in charge of basic education in Ghana therefore needs to be given the authority to operate the school feeding programme. The GES as an institution have a laid down structure from the national, regional, district to the school level. The already existing mechanism of operations of the Ghana education service is already an added advantage to enhance delivery of the school feeding programme and as well increase enrolment and attendance in beneficiary schools.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

In many of the stakeholder meetings and sensitization, concerns on how the programme is losing its focus of being a social protection programme to satisfy an education policy is becoming a political tool. But the question that still remains and yet to be answered is whether these politicians can be left out of the way in the implementation and operations of the school feeding programme to allow for the maximum coverage of the poor and the socially excluded.

To minimize political involvement in the programme implementation and operations and to serve potential beneficiaries or poor children fairly as postulated by social justice in education theory, the study came out with the following suggestions to better operate the programme efficiently and effectively.

- The Ghana Education Service should be involved in view of its predictive capacity to increase enrolment and attendance. They are capable of operating the programme at the national to the district level and as well capable of coordinating activities with programme partners to ensure confidence in donors. The national school feeding secretariat and the national steering committee should be abolished. These are duplication of roles without cognizance to key institutions capable of operation the programme.
- The Ghana Education Service should take control as an agency under the ministry of education at the regional level instead of the regional coordinating council and the school feeding secretariat. This will eliminate parallel institutions and cost of operating the programme. The Ghana education service already has a better structure in place and has implemented similar programmes in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Catholic Relief Service (CRS).
- The district education office should take control of the implementation and operations at the district level. They have the requisite skills, personnel and also absolute control of various schools in each district to better determine who is most qualified to benefit. They also have the necessary personnel to monitor the programme without additional labour and cost. Teachers from the experience of this research found that they are comfortable working with the Ghana education service than the district assembly and the school feeding secretariat.
- District Assemblies should not have an active role in the selection of beneficiary school and caterers. They should be made to only be a service partner to the education directorate at the district level due to their political stands. Transferring the right to recruit schools and caterers to the Ghana education service will ensure transparency and as well enhance regular supply of food to poor children.
- The study recommends that caterers at various schools should be made permanent and canteens should be provided to promote hygienic food to children. Making caterers permanent will enhance confidence in students of regular provision of food in every school day. It will also enhance proper planning in to the future operations of the caterer

in respect to food purchases.

- The authority to recruit schools and caterers handed to the Ghana education service with the support of the statistical service of Ghana who does periodic surveys on poverty situations in the country. This will promote fair and distribution of national resources as stipulated in theory of social justice and participatory epistemology in the recruitment process. Caterers should be recruited based on their qualification, experience, health status, and competence from the various training institutions of food management or economics.
- **Consent**
As per international standard or university standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

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