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COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT: UNDERSTANDING PARTICIPATION IN BASIC SCHOOLS PERFORMANCE IN THE NANUMBA DISTRICT OF GHANA

BY

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DEDICATION

To my Loving and Caring wife:

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[1] Nanumba language spoken in Northern Region of Ghana.

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Acronyms

BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examinations
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CPC	Community Participation Coordinator
CSA	Community School Alliance
CRDD	Curriculum and Research Development Division
DEOC	District Education Oversight Committee
ERNWACA	Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GES	Ghana Education Service
GNAT	Ghana National Association of Teachers
GOG	Government of Ghana
HCPS	High Community Participation School
HND	Higher National Diploma
IDA	International Development Association
JSS	Junior Secondary School
KVIP	Kumasi Ventilated and Improved Pit
LCPS	Low Community Participation School
MOE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PTA	Parents Teachers Association

SDR	Special Drawings Rights
SMC	School Management Committee
TLM	Teaching and Learning Materials
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAEC	West African Examinations Council

ABSTRACT

This study has been an attempt to look at the impact of community participation on the performance of basic schools in Ghana, specifically the Nanumba District of the Northern Region. As a government policy under the decentralisation concept and the FCUBE, communities are required to take part in the development of schools their children attend.

The study examined the forms and level of participation in two basic schools in the district and its influence on the performance of the schools. It is, therefore, a comparative study. This aimed at ensuring our understanding of local participation in government policies. Qualitative data were employed in the study. The study also adopted the Case study Strategy of doing social research. General theories of participation especially as it relates to local or grassroots were used to explain the phenomenon. However, the study has been largely guided by the Communitarian model of participation as well as the articles by Patrick Watt, Bray, Uemura and others.

The main conclusion reached in the study is that school performance or development cannot be explained by community participation alone as other variables come into play in explaining performance. This is because it is difficult to disentangle participation from community profile which to a large extent determines participation; the study found. However, where participation is active, performance would be better. Also, the study found that participation and the forms it takes depend on a number of factors; and that performance and participation are like a double-edged saw. They cut on both sides. That is they influence each other and depend on each other.

The study also reached the conclusion that in assigning education provision and delivery roles to communities, the issue of equity risks be taken into account. For rich, well resourced and willing communities have the potential of ensuring effective performance of schools. This can result in disparity in the rate of development of schools.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0. Introduction

"Community participation is a very good idea. In the past communities thought schools were for the government and teachers. With the launch of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) and the government's call for participation, the idea has dawned on communities that the school is for the community and hence they must take part in the management and administration of the school. This has led to the formation of Parent-Teacher Associations and School Management Committees. The voice of the community is incorporated into the decisions and running of the schools and this has generated trust between the community and us. This in a way has led to the improvement of schools in various ways even though the level of participation is not as high as expected. More awareness creation is necessary to get the community or parents to fully participate in school development[2]"

Community participation in managing social services is a new orthodoxy among governments and International Organizations. The case with school development is not very different. In Ghana, until the mid 1990s, community participation in school development especially in the Northern Region was inactive. The northern region since Ghana's independence in 1957 had enjoyed a policy of fee-free education. School development was, therefore, the responsibility of the central government.

However, "during the late1970s and early 1980s, Ghanaian education fell into crisis due to poor management and general macroeconomic turmoil. By 1985, the education budget had fallen to one-third its 1976 level. Nearly half of the country's primary and middle school teachers were untrained. Teaching and learning supplies had dwindled. The majority of primary school graduates lacked literacy skills, and the primary school attrition rate stood at sixty percent"(CSA: 1994-2003:1).

It was in the light of this that the government of Ghana embarked on two major educational reforms. The first was in 1987 and the second in 1996. The 1987 reforms were to ensure that Ghana would be in a position to increase access to basic education,

[2] Interview with a teacher at Jilo Junior secondary school in July 2004.

improve the quality of education, make it relevant to socio-economic conditions, and sustain the reform programme on national resources. This was to be achieved through an effective mobilization of all stakeholders in education, including the local communities of the schools, for a collective participation in basic education. The 1987 reforms were also aimed at reducing the years spent in schooling from 6-4-5-2 to a formula of 6-3-3-4[3] .

The country now has 6 years of primary school education, 3 years of junior secondary-school education, and 3 years of senior secondary school education and a minimum of 4 years of tertiary education. The six years of primary school and three years of junior secondary school education constitute the basic education, which is supposed to be compulsory and free for every Ghanaian child of school-going age. The latter whose policy document forms the basis of this study is referred to as the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education ***(FCUBE).*** This Programme was launched in October 1996 in response to the weaknesses in the implementation of the earlier reforms and other concerns about educational quality. The FCUBE Programme has three major components namely:

a) improving the quality of teaching and learning;
b) improving efficiency in management and;
c) improving access and **participation** in basic education.

According to the policy document, the involvement of all stakeholders in education is required to achieve the above objectives of the reforms. The policy document has, therefore, made it mandatory for communities to participate in the education their children receive since communities can no longer be neglected as partners in development of education. The World Bank (2001:1) has noted "that unless communities are placed at the centre of educational change in Africa, the critical challenges of poverty reduction and educational development is unlikely to happen especially in the rural areas". To ensure community involvement in education, Parent-Teacher Associations and

[3] Before the reforms, primary education was made up of six years, 4 years middle school, five years secondary education and 2 year Advanced level education (sixth form). The reforms changed it to 6 years primary education, 3 years junior secondary education, 3 years senior secondary and 4 years tertiary or University education.

School Management Committees have been instituted in all schools. This is to ensure that the inputs of the general public and for that matter communities are made in the management of schools.

In the Nanumba District of the Northern Region, which is the focus of this study, the people have become more proactive in educational development through parental involvement in the management of schools. Community involvement in schooling with the aim to improving the teaching and learning environment has become more crucial now than ever. Perceptions of inadequacies in the supervision of schools, both by district level officers and headteachers, and the limitations of disciplinary processes are said to be undermining effective teaching. Communities, therefore, are required to be involved to assist the district level officers and headteachers.

It has been argued, "Community involvement in the life of the school could have a dramatic impact on education access, retention, and quality. Bringing the school and community closer together can generate a sense of local ownership and enhance accountability. Teachers and other sector professionals are more likely to do their jobs well when communities take an active interest in what is happening in the classroom. (ibid). In the process, community participation in education can play a central role in efforts to raise participation rates and improve school retention and learning outcomes.

1.1. Statement of Problem

Since independence in 1957, Ghana's educational system has been financed and managed mainly by the state. Due to the heavy dependence on state financing, "the macroeconomic turmoil of the 1970s and early 1980s plunged the country's education system into severe decline. Expenditures on education by the Government fell from 6.4 percent of GDP to 1.4 percent between 1976 and 1983," (World Bank: 1996:2). Besides, a shortage of foreign exchange deprived schools of textbooks and other essential instructional materials.

A mass exodus of trained and qualified teachers who were unsatisfied with conditions of service left nearly half of the primary school teachers untrained. School buildings, furniture, and equipment deteriorated. It was in the light of this that in 1987, the Government initiated an overall education sector reform as an integral part of its national plan for economic recovery. This process restructured the school system; revised the curricula for primary, junior secondary school (JSS) and senior secondary school (SSS) levels. New teaching and learning materials were developed; in-service teacher training provided; teacher qualification requirements raised; and steadily replaced unqualified teachers. The government also introduced several cost-saving/sharing policies; and began the process of administrative decentralization. The administrative decentralization was aimed at developing internal capacity at the local level that would ensure that "managers, supervisors and head teachers are effective in carrying out their new responsibilities in a decentralized system, and to enable communities to participate in the management of schools" (World Bank: 1996:19).

It was, however, not until the first batch of the senior secondary school students graduated in 1993 that the weaknesses in the implementation of the reform came to the fore. The reforms have failed to achieve quality targets and exposed the education sector to public criticism.

In response to these and other concerns about educational quality, the government launched, in 1996, the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education programme. It was launched both as a constitutional requirement and a package of reforms designed specifically to focus on basic education access and quality in the country.

In order to help finance the reforms, the Government of Ghana requested International Development Association (IDA) assistance of Special Drawing Rights (SDR) $34.7 million to help finance the first phase of a basic education sector improvement programme. This was to be implemented over the ten-year period from 1996-2005. It aimed at improving: teaching and learning outcomes; access to primary and junior secondary education; efficiency in resource management; and financial sustainability.

Despite substantial real increases over the years, which have made teachers salaries relatively higher than those for civil servants of comparable rank, remuneration is still regarded inadequate by teachers and other stakeholders. This contributes to alienation and the inclination to pursue other income-generating activities. All these tend to affect the development of schools in Ghana.

It is worth mentioning here that since independence on 6th march, 1957, the first government of Ghana adopted a policy of fee-free education towards the north. Communities in the North considered the government as the provider and manager of education. This prevailing notion deprived the northern communities of any meaningful role they could play in educational development. The policy was adopted as a way of bridging the gap between the north and the south due to the late development of education in the north coupled with its pervasive poverty and illiteracy. In an article entitled "***Eliminating Poverty in Northern Ghana***" Caesar Abagali notes "the first secondary school in the north was established in 1951 when others in the south were already 100 years old. The government of the First Republic attempted to integrate the North by the policy of free education and citing there of some industries. These policies were abandoned by subsequent governments, and now school fees keep many children out of school, adding to the lopsided development"[4]

With the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education, however, communities can no longer be neglected as partners in development of education. The World Bank has noted "that unless communities are placed at the centre of educational change in Africa, the critical challenges of poverty reduction and educational development is unlikely to happen especially in the rural areas[5]."

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[4] "Eliminating Poverty in Northern Ghana"(2002-12-03) by Caesar Abigail. www.ghanaweb.com

[5] Quoted from a World Bank report on "community support for Basic Education in Sub-Saharan Africa" by Patrick Watt. Www.worldbank.org/afr/hd/wps/Communityfinal.pdf
>

Therefore, community involvement in schooling in improving the teaching and learning environment has become more crucial now than ever. In a World Bank Document titled ***"Staff Appraisal Report, Republic of Ghana Basic Education Sector Improvement Program"*** the Ministry of Education stresses the importance of community involvement in education development in the following words: "Communities have an important role to play in enforcing standards, developing and maintaining school property, and providing support and encouragement to headteachers, teachers and students." (World Bank: 1996:23).

With the requirement of community involvement in the management of schools, the important question that arises is how can the Northern communities become more involved in the management of schools through the new School Management Committees (SMCs) and District Education Oversight Committees (DEOCs) recently legislated in the Ghana Education Service (GES) Act of 1995; and how does that affect the performance of schools? "Although parents are officially expected to play a more active role in school management, many continue to see their role as providing supplementary financial support only. This is partly due to some confusion between the roles of the Parents-Teacher Associations and the School Management Committees and partly because teachers do not always welcome parental "intrusion." (World Bank: 1996:8).

At present, "local communities have a limited role in the running of schools: extra curricular activities organized by Parent Teacher Associations are the most usual form of involvement. For this reason, communities feel little ownership of the schools their children attend; and frequently are mistrustful of attempts by the authorities to solicit community involvement lest it could be an excuse for extracting additional financial contributions". (World Bank: 1996:9) The key to successful community participation, however, as noted in the World Bank Report (May, 1996) is "to ensure that, having regard to distinct features, local people have a real influence over decisions which affect the quality of education their children receive". This has, therefore, called for more collaboration than ever and fresh approaches to the challenges of education especially in

the north. In the light of this it is considered necessary to establish the extent to which community participation, as conceived by government policy, is being achieved and how far the envisaged impact of community participation on quality of education is being realised.

It is against this background that this study is being conducted to ascertain the extent to which the level and forms of community participation in schools in Ghana has affected the performance of schools at the basic level. Besides, the study is also focused on challenges or barriers to community participation.

This is particularly necessary in the northern region of Ghana where illiteracy rate is highest and poverty rife and pervasive so as to establish the extent to which communities are engaged in the activities of schools. Besides, it is of importance to ascertain how such participation has contributed to the performance of schools.

However, the present study unlike previous studies (Fundi: 2002; Anokye: 2004.) in the field focuses more attention on community participation on schools located in the same community. This aims at establishing whether variations in participation emanates from geographical locations of communities or from other factors.

1.2. Objectives or Purpose of the Study

Participation in school development is so crucial now than ever. The increasing number of schools following the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) Programme has made it almost impossible for government to solely bear the responsibility of financing and managing education. Communities are, therefore, required to be involved if the present levels of quality are to be improved.

The basic objective or purpose of the study, therefore, is to explore the effects of community participation on school performance. In this regard, the study will focus on the following:

- The effects of community participation on schools performance;
- The forms of community participation in school performance;

- Factors that promote or hinder the full participation of communities in basic education development; and
- Effects of different forms of participation.

1.3. Significance of the Study.

Participation has the potential of generating community ownership of schools, democracy in school governance, and accountability of teachers, trust and overall performance of schools in various ways especially where the level of participation is high.

Thus the study would help highlight the current relationships that exist between schools and communities in the area.

Also, it would provide useful insights into the roles of communities and the challenges faced by communities in educational development in Ghana.

Furthermore, the study would serve as basis for intervention programmes to policy makers and stakeholders in education.

Finally, conclusions and findings from the study will serve as a useful base for further research in the area and also add to existing literature in the area.

1.4. Unit of Analysis.

The study is based on two junior secondary schools, high community participation and low community participation schools in the Bimbilla community of the Nanumba district. The schools are the Jilo Junior secondary and the English Arabic/Islamic Junior secondary respectively. Both schools are public or state-managed operating under the same district education office. In Ghana, all state-managed schools are in principle community-based schools. The choice of the two schools has been influenced by their respective level of performance in terms of infrastructure, enrolment, availability of teaching and learning materials, academic and other extra-curricular performance.

The two schools possess very interesting features worth studying. They are located in the same community with the same or similar structures, run on the same curricular; have the

same procedure for recruiting teachers and students and being funded by the government of Ghana but with different levels of performance. Could the differences in the level of performance find meaning in their cultural backgrounds as Jilo J.S.S is Secular in origin whiles Islamic J.S.S is Religious in origin. The aim, therefore, is to find out the extent to which community participation influences these differences in the level of performance. Other factors would also be considered but community participation is given priority in the analysis. Particular reference is made to the views of parents, teachers and educational administrators. The perceptions of parents and teachers are especially indispensable in the study as a result of "a relative lack of research on participation described from parents and teachers perspectives in the developing countries" (Suzuki: 2000:2).

My choice of the two schools was also appropriate given the limited time and resources available during the data collection phase of the study. Indeed, this enabled me to gather the necessary information within the given time frame as the two schools are located in the same community. My familiarity of the area helped in making data collection manageable within the limited time period.

1.5. Area of the Study

Nanumba district is chosen as a setting for the study. Nanumba district is one of the administrative sub-units in the Northern Region of Ghana. The choice of the Nanumba district is purposive. Until the late 1990s, following the end of an inter-ethnic conflict in the area and the launch of the FCUBE in 1996, which made community participation in the management of schools mandatory, the Nanumba community had always perceived school development as the responsibility of the government.

1.6. Research Questions.

The central question this study seeks to answer is "how does community participation affect schools development in Ghana?"

Specifically, the study aims at finding answers to the following strategic questions:

- What are the forms of community participation in school performance in Ghana?
- How does community participation impact on school performance?
- What conditions promote or hinder the participation of communities in school performance?

1.7. Study Assumptions

The study is guided by the following assumptions:

- Socio-economic, cultural and other factors determine community's participation in education development.
- Where the level of participation is high, the better would be the performance.
- Varying forms of participation produce different degrees of impact on school performance.

1.8. Methodology

The study employed qualitative research methodology for gathering relevant data. Creswell (2003:18) describes "a qualitative approach as one in which the inquirer often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives (i.e., the multiple meanings of individual experiences, meanings socially and historically constructed, with an intent of developing a theory or pattern) or advocacy/participatory perspectives (i.e., political, issue-oriented, collaborative, or change oriented) or both. It also uses strategies of enquiry such as narratives, phenomenologies, ethnographies, grounded theory studies, or case studies. The researcher collects open-ended, emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data." In the study, case study was employed in order to study the level of participation in each of the two cases and how this has affected the development of each case. Also the individual experiences of the two schools in terms of participation were explored in an attempt to understand the phenomenon in its natural setting. Open-ended data were collected from which the researcher analysed the impact of community participation in the development of the two schools.

Creswell points out that the qualitative researcher views social phenomena holistically. In this regard, each case was viewed as wholes as the practical experience of each case with regards to community participation was studied in its natural setting.

The qualitative paradigm of social research was adopted in the study because of its flexible ways of data collection, subsequent analysis, and interpretation of collected information. This flexibility afforded me the opportunity to capture important details that were not covered in the interview questions. That is I was able to probe further for more information emanating from the main interview questions relevant to my topic.

In addition, the qualitative methodology was preferred in the study in order to obtain a more realistic feeling of the world that cannot be experienced in the numerical data and statistical analysis used in the quantitative research. This is because "qualitative research takes place in the natural setting."(Creswell 2003:181). Thus, the researcher had the opportunity to go to the site of the participants to conduct the research. This enabled me to develop a level of detail about the participants and the place as I was highly involved in the actual experiences of the participants, interacted with them face to face in their chosen language and on their own terms.

Another important reason for adopting the qualitative method in the study is due to the unique nature of the subject under investigation. Research in community participation on schools development in the Nanumba district of the Northern Region of Ghana is relatively lacking. Qualitative methodology is thus necessary in view of the exploratory nature of the subject. For qualitative methodology allows issues to be explored in greater depths than quantitative methods. "One of the chief reasons for conducting a qualitative study is that the study is exploratory. This means that not much has been written about the topic or population being studied, and the researcher seeks to listen to participants and build an understanding based on their ideas". (Creswell 2003:30). Research on community participation has focused on the region as a whole. The adoption of the qualitative paradigm of social research, therefore, afforded me the opportunity to build an

in-depth understanding of participants` ideas in relation to community participation in the area.

The main qualitative data-gathering tool used in the primary data collection phase of the study is interviews. According to Catherine Marshall and Gretchen B.Rossman (1999:108), an interview is a useful way to get large amount of data quickly. In that it allows the researcher to understand the meanings that people hold for their everyday activities. The face-to-face interview ensured that more information was received per respondent. However, some quantitative tools such as tables have also been made use of to some extent.

1.8.0. Research Design

Research Strategy

To achieve the objective of the study, a Case Study approach was adopted. “A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”. (Yin, 1994: 13)

Every method of social research has its weaknesses and limitations. To opt, therefore, for a case study approach is not intended to deny the value of other ways of collecting evidence. Other research strategies may be as, or more appropriate in given situations.

Nevertheless, the case study approach is probably the most appropriate strategy to uncover the impact and the factors affecting the participation of communities in school performance in Ghana.

Case study is the preferred strategy when a contemporary phenomenon is being investigated. Community participation in school development in Ghana and for that matter the Northern Region is a contemporary phenomenon as it has become more important now than ever following the launch of the FCUBE programme in 1996.The

study is, therefore, about investigating a contemporary phenomenon in a real life context. The extent of community influence on school performance is explored in the study.

Besides, case study is the appropriate strategy when a researcher is dealing with events over which he has no control. (Yin: 1994). The choice of the case-oriented strategy is thus related to the nature of the phenomenon under study. Community participation is an event over which the researcher has no control. In this case the relevant behaviours cannot be manipulated. Participation in education development has been studied in its natural setting.

Another reason for choosing the case study strategy is its ability to cope "with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis"(Yin 1994:14).The researcher's focus is on community participation and its influence on school performance but other variables of interest have been considered in the study. School's performance cannot be measured based on community participation alone and so other variables have been considered as a way of triangulating the data, thereby dealing with the problem of validity and reliability. The approach, therefore, has several advantages over other methods like phenomenologies, focus group discussions and ethnography which are also methods of qualitative research.

Its ability to study social reality in its natural context implies that the case study approach allows little manipulation of participants thereby ensuring that data and research findings are more authentic and reliable.

Any strategies to achieve a high degree of community participation require careful examination of communities because each community is unique, and complicated in its nature. In this regard, the case study strategy is the preferred approach to study the Bimbilla community in its entirety and how it relates to the performance of schools in terms of

infrastructure, availability of teaching and learning materials, enrolment and retention, resources, motivation etc by looking at the issue in its natural setting.

Perhaps its central virtue and one of the major reasons for opting for this strategy is that a relatively small number of carefully selected respondents (33) can provide relatively accurate and representative information about a very large population.

As an approach to social science research, case-oriented approach works well when the number of cases is relatively small. Two schools, Jilo Junior secondary and Islamic Junior secondary, both in the Bimbilla community of the Nanumba District of the Northern Region have been selected for this study. The aim is to study a small number of cases with the intention of exploring in detail what pertains in each individual case so as to explain the impact of community participation in the variations in the performance of the two schools.

The availability of multiple sources of information in case study method is another important strength, which the other methods lack. According to Yin, “the case study’s unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence—documents, artefacts, interviews, and observations.”(2003:8). The use of the multiple sources of evidence helps in dealing with the problems of validity and reliability of data as data is triangulated. In addition to the field data, therefore, the researcher made use of reports, schools records, documents from the district Education office, works by other researchers, the internet etc.

1.8.1. Comparative Method

The study is based on a comparative approach. According to Ragin (1987:1) virtually all empirical social research involves some comparison of some sort. Comparison provides a basis for making statements about empirical regularities and for evaluating and interpreting cases relative to substantive and theoretical criteria. In this regard, the cases being compared are the English Arabic (Islamic) junior secondary and the Jilo Junior secondary schools. Both schools are government funded and managed. They are, therefore, public schools and in principle community-based schools. They are located in the same community with the same or similar structures, run on the same curricular but with variations in performance. The choice of the two schools found expression in their individual levels of performance.

A comparative study of the two schools would help to uncover the extent to which the level of involvement of the community has resulted in the variation in performance since they are both in the same community and have almost the same structures in terms of organization. The study would also help to explain whether different levels of community involvement have to do with the differences in performance.

The comparative approach is also adopted in line with the qualitative nature of the study. In the words of Ragin (1987:3), qualitative researchers tend to look at cases as wholes, and they compare whole cases with each other. Typically such works seek to make sense out of different cases by piercing evidence in a manner sensitive to chronology and by offering limited historical generalisations that are both objectively possible and cognizant of enabling conditions and limiting means---of context. The aim of the study, therefore, is to understand the extent of community influence in schools performance based on the level of involvement in the life of each school. Thus the two schools are seen as different cases.

1.8.2. Data Collection Instruments

Primary and secondary data have been used as sources of information in this study.

Primary Data:

The primary data for this study was obtained through formal and informal structured interview schedules conducted by the researcher over a two month period—June to August. The Bimbilla community of the Nanumba district was selected as the setting for data collection as the two schools are located in this community.

Selection of Participants and Sample Size

The total number of participants in the interview schedule was thirty-three. Respondents included three officers from the District Education office, sixteen parents; twelve teachers, and two headmasters/headmistresses.

Participants were selected through purposive or systematic and random sampling techniques.

Purposive sampling technique was used to select the Educational Administrators. They were the community participation coordinator (CPC), the field officer for community participation and the circuit supervisor for the Bimbilla circuit.

With regards to the parents, random sampling was used with the assistance of the teachers. A list of parents or guardians with children in the two basic schools was complied. However, a conscious effort was made to include some members of the PTAs and SMCs.

The twelve teachers, six representing each of the two schools were also selected through random sampling.

The formal interviews were conducted in the schools. Each school was visited a number of times after having sought appointment from the head to interview the headmaster and or headmistress and their staff. Notes were taken at each interview session and later placed under major sub-headings.

At the district Education office, the same formal interview schedule was used to interview the three important officers. The Assistant District Director of Education

referred me to the three scheduled officers who gave me appointment to meet them individually at their homes due to tight schedules. Notes were also taken at the interview sessions.

The parents were informally interviewed at their homes as I did not seek appointment with them before hand.

The table below is an illustration of the total number of interviewees.

Table 1: Categories of Respondents.

Bimbilla community	**No. Of respondents**	**Schools**	
		Jilo J.S.S	**Islamic J.S.S**
District Education Officers	3		
Headmasters/Headmistresses	2	1	1
Teachers	12	6	6
Parents/Guardians	16	8	8
Total	33	15	15

Educational administrators formed one category of the participants in the interview schedule. Three officials from the District Education office of the Nanumba district were interviewed. The district community participation coordinator, the field officer for community participation in schools activities and the Circuit supervisor for the Bimbilla circuit. They were interviewed concerning their roles in the development of basic education in the district, their perception of community participation in the development of education, the conditions that enhance community participation in school development as well as the challenges of community participation in school development in the study area and for that matter Ghana. Their views were sought because they formed one of the key stakeholders in education in Ghana. Besides, they implement government policy on education at the local level.

Headmasters and or headmistresses of the two schools also formed another important category of participants in the interview schedule. Their opinions concerning community participation in terms of performance of their respective schools formed the core of the interviews.

The extent to which the community is involved in the running and management of the schools; and whether they were satisfied with the level of performance of the schools were also explored. The situation of physical infrastructure as well as the relationship between the teachers and the community was also explored since this also determines the extent of development. The challenges they face in the attempt to get the community involved in the development of the schools also featured prominently in the interviews. They formed part of the interview because as managers of the schools they coordinate with the community for support.

The views of teachers were also considered very important source of primary data in the study. As a result, twelve teachers were interviewed. Six from Islamic J.S.S and six from Jilo J.S.S. Questions centred on the idea of community participation, school-community collaboration, factors that affect community participation as well as factors that affect the learning behaviour of pupils either positively or negatively. The influence of community involvement in school development and as to whether they were content with the level of academic performance and development of their schools did not lose out in the interviews.

Parents/guardians formed the last category of participants in the interview schedule. Sixteen parents, eight each representing the two schools was interviewed. Basically, the questions centred on the level of satisfaction of the schools their children attend, the extent of involvement in school affairs, relationships with school authorities and teachers, contributions as parents towards the development of the school, and suggestions to improve school-community collaboration. Focus was also on roles of P.T.As and SMCs in the development of schools and factors that motivate them to get more involved in school affairs. Challenges they face in their attempt to participate in school development

also formed a core part of the questions. Their views were necessary as they represent the community in this study.

It is worth noting that consideration was given to gender in the data collection so as to ensure that views of the community reflected that of both sexes. In was in this direction that it came to light that participation of women members of the community was very low as meetings of schools and other activities are seen to be the responsibility of their male counterparts.

Secondary Data:

The primary data have been supplemented with secondary data in the study. Records of schools such as National Examination Results, minutes of general and executive PTA meetings, books on educational development as well as articles or research papers in the area of community participation both published and unpublished. Works by other researchers and the Internet formed another source of secondary data in the study. Other documents from the District Education office like trends of participation in the two schools in terms of financial contributions and in-kind contribution have also been used in the study.

1.9. Challenges and Limitations of the Study

Just as every social research entails challenges and limitations; this study is no exception. Thus, the following are some of the major challenges and limitation encountered by the researcher in the study.

The first was time. The data collection was carried out over a two-month period, June to august. This was too short a time. This did not allow me to make certain observations. Besides, I had to meet the Educational administrators at their homes due to their tight schedules as a result of pressure of time.

Another limitation or challenge was translating exactly into the local language of the Nanumba, the interview questions to members of the community (parents). Most of the parents could neither read nor write and so this in a way affected their understanding of

the questions posed to them. I managed to translate and explain as much as possible to the best of their understanding being a Nanumba myself.

Initial reluctance to release school's academic records by one of the Heads of the schools is yet a challenge worth mentioning. However, this was released after an extensive explanation from me that it was only for academic purposes.

An interesting experience was, however, the desire and readiness of respondents to answer the interview questions. There was enthusiasm by all participants at the interview sessions.

Other major limitations of the study include the following.
The scope of the study is restricted to only public Junior Secondary schools in the study area. Private basic schools have not been included in the study as the study was limited to two schools in the area.

In spite of this, however, the reliability and validity of the study have not been affected as much effort has been made to triangulate the data by corroborating the primary source with the secondary sources.

1.10. Organization of the Study

The research report presented in this study is divided into six chapters.
Chapter one covers an introduction to the issue of community participation, statement of the research problem which borders on how to get communities more involved in schools affairs, objectives of the study, significance of the study, unit of analysis, research questions, study assumptions, methodology, limitations of the study and organization of the study.
In chapter two, there is a theoretical discussion of participation in broader terms with a view to reconstructing participation in education. A review of relevant literature is done. The *communitarian Model of Participation* by Parry et al (1992) and literatures by Watt, Bray, Uemura and others are employed to establish a framework for analysis.

The third chapter mirrors on the trends of community participation in education in Ghana. The various modes of participation in the Ghanaian context as identified in the literature are presented to establish the context for the study.

Chapters four and five focus on the presentation and analysis of findings based on the views of respondents. Basic background information on the two cases is also presented in these two chapters.

The penultimate chapter of the study takes a look at the two cases in the study. A comparative analysis of the two schools in terms of regularities and differences especially with regards to their respective developments is espoused. The performance of the two schools in the area of infrastructure and other amenities, availability and adequacy of teaching and learning materials, enrolment and retention, motivation, resources and the reasons for the variations in performance constitute the focus of the chapter.

Finally, chapter seven deals with summary and conclusions by linking up theories with findings.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

2.0. Introduction

Creswell (2003:131) notes that theories "provide a lens to guide the researchers as to what issues are important to examine and the people that need to be studied." The role of theory in any research study, therefore, is to help understand the research problem and for its analysis. In this regard in qualitative research, "inquirers employ theory as a broad explanation" (ibid: p.140)

The fundamental aim of this chapter, therefore, is to provide a theoretical discussion of the concepts and ideas that would inform a subsequent analysis of findings in the study. These theoretical concepts throw more light on the importance, effects, challenges, levels and forms of community participation in school performance and the relationship between community participation and school performance.

In this study, my task is to investigate community participation in relation to school performance. Does participation by the community have any impact on school performance? Is it important for communities to participate at all? What are the forms of participation available to communities; what conditions or factors promote or hinder participation?

For the purpose of the study, therefore, and for finding answers to the above questions, a review of literature in the area of theories and dynamics of participation, its effects, importance, forms and challenges as it relates to education has been undertaken. This was necessary in order that the theories would focus on those areas that can help us understand and analyse the nature of community participation in school performance with particular reference to the Bimbilla community of the Nanumba District of Ghana.

The chapter is laid out in four sections. Section one is an introduction. In section two, definitions of key concepts in the study as they relate to community participation in education are examined. Section three is a presentation of a discussion of theoretical concepts that would later inform subsequent analyses of findings. Section four is an explanation of the independent and dependent variables and how they relate.

2.1. Definition of Concepts

(i) The Concept of Community

The term “Community” has been used in different ways over time. It has been contested, fought over, and appropriated for different uses and interests to justify different politics, policies and practices.

In his in classic paper (1955:113 cited in Bray 2000:5), Hillery noted ninety-four alternative definitions of community and observed that the list was still not exhaustive. What is certain is that communities can be defined by characteristics that the members share, such as culture, language, tradition, law, geography, class, and race.

Bray’s conception of community is applied. Bray (1996a) identifies three different types of communities, which are particularly prominent in the field of education. These are:

1. *Geographic community:* This is defined according to the members` place of residence. That is individuals living in relatively small areas such as villages, districts or suburbs;
2. *Ethnic, linguistic, racial and religious communities:* Here membership is based on ethnic, racial, linguistic or religious identification and usually cuts across membership based on geographic location. Mostly, these are minorities and have self-help support structures.
3. *Communities based on shared family or educational concerns:* These include parents Associations and related bodies based on adults shared concerns for the welfare of their children.

The Bimbilla community, which is the setting of the study, exhibits features of these three distinct communities identified by Bray. In Ghana and for that matter the Bimbilla community; members first and foremost consider themselves to belong to village communities where they were born or where their family originates. This has important implications for community support for education since such geographic communities are more socially cohesive and therefore better placed to use participatory approaches to development (Watt, 2001:10).

The second type of community tends to exercise a powerful hold over their members, since most people inherit these identities from their parents, and share them with their immediate and extended families. Religious groups are a particularly important source for education in most African countries. Christian communities have been actively visible and active in education since the late nineteenth century, and support schools across the spectrum of cost and quality. (ibid, p.11) Both Christian and Muslim communities are actively involved in education provision and management in the Bimbilla community.
The last category of community identified by Bray is more flexible and adhoc. This type of community can expand and contract according to need, and more explicitly based on self-interest than the communities that people are born into. For example, a parents school association is based on a shared interest in their children's education-once children leave school, parental interest in the school association diminishes-but members are typically drawn from identifiable geographic community (ibid, p.11)

The concept of community becomes the school community when applied to education. It is an entity holding basic education infrastructures in common and is composed of the traditional or political leadership of the area, the PTA, SMCs, the various religious bodies and the residents. Within an administrative boundary, the community served by a school often does not coincide with community boundaries. This situation is most common at the secondary level, where communities are less likely to identify with the interests of schools serving a wide catchment area. This is the situation in Central Ghana, where it is common practice for households to send some of their children to live with extended family members in urban areas, in part to take advantage of better education provision

(Condy 1998 cited in Watt, 2001). In this situation, household may be reluctant to support their village school.

(ii) The Notion of Participation

Participation like the concept of "community" is subject to various interpretations, connotations and meanings depending on the context. Shaeffer (1994) in Uemura (1999:2) clarifies different degrees of participation, and provides seven possible definitions of the term, including:

- *involvement* through the mere use of a service (such as enrolling children in a school or using a primary health care facility);
- *involvement* through the contribution (or extraction) of money, materials, and labor;
- *involvement* through "attendance" (e.g. at parents meeting at school) implying passive acceptance of decisions made by others;
- *involvement* through consultation on a particular issue;
- *Participation* in the delivery of a particular service, often as a partner with other actors;
- *Participation* as implementers of delegated powers; and
- *Participation* in "real decision making at every stage," including identification of problems, the study of feasibility, planning, implementation, and evaluation.

According to Shaeffer, the last three implies a more active role.

Shaeffer (1994) in Uemura (1999:2) further provides specific activities that involve a high degree of participation in a wider development context, which can also be applied in the education sector, these include:

- *collecting and analyzing information;*
- *defining priorities and setting goals;*
- *assessing available resources;*
- *deciding on and planning resources;*
- *designing strategies to implement these programs and dividing responsibilities among participants;*

- *managing programs; monitoring progress of the programs;*
- *and evaluating results and impacts.*

An analysis of the general conception of participation is necessary in order to understand the implication in a specific context so as to reconstruct the notion of participation in education in a broader conceptual framework.

(iii). Community Participation

Within the larger context of participation is the notion of community participation. Many definitions of community participation draw on the United Nations Resolutions, which were adopted in the early 1970s.One of such definitions view community participation as: "the creation of opportunities to enable all members of a community and the larger society to actively contribute to and influence the development process and to share equitably in the fruits of development" (United Nations, 1981, p.5) cited in Midgley, 1986, p.24.

For the development of education, communities and society must support parents and families in the upbringing, socializing, and educating of children. Parents and families cannot be the only group of people for children's education as long as they interact and learn from the world outside their families. Education takes place not only in schools but also within families, communities, and society.

Anokye (2004:17) views community participation as all forms of involvement and support that parents, the collective body of parents and teachers, local leadership and residents in a school neighbourhood offer to the enhancement of learning and teaching in a school.

Community participation in education in this study is defined to mean the level or extent of community involvement in the decision-making process, management, activities; or running of schools. That is the level to which parents and other identifiable community groups contribute towards creating an environment conducive for efficient and effective

teaching and learning. In other words, it refers to the involvement by the community in education programmes within the framework of the national development programme.

(iv). Basic Education

Manzoor (1983) in Baku (1997:129) defined basic education as a set of learning experiences which helps an individual to function in his/her social and physical environment, stressing that ideally these early experiences should also lay the foundation for continuing life-long learning. He identified three elements constituting basic education: (i) a systematic and collectively organized early childhood care and education program designed to promote normal physical, psychological, and intellectual growth of school-age children; (ii) primary-level education intended to be accessible to all children for a duration and in a form contingent on resources and level of educational development of a country; and (iii) literacy and non-formal education programs for youth and adults including post-primary non-formal education.

Watt (2001.10) carried the idea of basic education further by stating, “basic education refers primarily but not only to formal primary education. In some countries, basic education also covers the lower secondary cycle, while in other cases it refers to non-formal, as well as formal approaches”

In Ghana, the first two definitions apply to what constitute basic education. Until the 1987 educational reforms, basic education in Ghana covered the first six years of primary education and four years of middle school education. This jointly constituted elementary school at the time. This was meant to make the individual function in his/ her physical and social environment. With the implementation of the Education Reform, basic education in the formal sector now covers the primary and junior secondary school levels. This constitutes nine years of compulsory formal education: six years of primary and three years of junior secondary school.

2.2. Theoretical Discussions.

2.2.0. Community participation in Education

To speak of community participation in education is nothing new and extraordinary. Communities in Africa have traditionally made significant contribution to basic education; and continue to make significant contributions. In Africa, communities are central to the joint endeavour of education development and education development cannot take place unless communities are at the centre of education change- as educators and sources of knowledge, and as partners of governments, civil society organizations, and donors (Watt, 2001:3). In Ghana, communities have traditionally participated in the provision of basic education but their participation used to be limited to the provision of school infrastructure (Baku & Agyman, 1994).

2.3. **Analytical Framework**

2.3.0. **Introduction**

Following the above discussions, an attempt is made to establish a framework in this section for studying and understanding participation in school performance. School performance is here defined in relation to improvements in enrolment rates, availability of teaching and learning materials, decline in drop out, existence of basic facilities, infrastructure and amenities that enhance smooth teaching and learning, motivation of teachers and pupils, resources, academic and other extra-curricular performance etc. The variables analysed here, it is argued within the framework, depend very much on the forms and level of community participation. In other words, community participation is a key factor in explaining the extent to which these variables of school performance prevail in a particular school.

The analytic framework has three aspects: community profile (or individual attributes and resources of communities), participation (or the level of involvement), and school performance. That is how community profile and participation affect school performance.

In trying to explain participation and how it impacts on school performance, this study draws on many strands in the literature as well as models of participation, while maintaining coherence in the analysis; through the use of the model of communitarian participation. The option for the communitarian model of participation is not intended to predispose towards particular conclusions, but rather to help identify why people participate in community actions. Other theoretical discussions by Watt, Bray and others also form part of the discussions.

2.7.1. Arguments for community involvement.

Within the literature, various models have been developed to explain participation. These include *Instrumental Participation* which assumes that participation is intended to promote or defend the goals of the participants with the minimum of costs and the maximum of effect. *Educative Theories,* which is another model of participation in the literature sees participation as an educative experience. Taking part in the processes of public decision-making is said to be an education which would develop the citizen's sense of competence and responsibility. Then is *Expressive Participation,* where people may act in order to express their feelings or display their stance about a matter. At its broadest, this may be a form of symbolic participation. (Parry el at 1992)

As stated earlier, the study employs the *communitarian* model of participation. The adoption of the model is underscored by the weaknesses the researcher identified in the other models. The *instrumental model* explains participation in strictly economic terms where actions by individuals are assumed to be based on calculation of benefit or utility maximization. There are instances where people get involved for symbolic reasons as in the case of *Expressive Participation.* The other models have their shortcomings as well but time and space would not permit the researcher to look at them in the study.

According to Parry et al (1992), the *communitarian* theory of participation suggests that one motive, or justification, for taking part or participating is a concern for the community of which a person is a part. In the view of this theory, at the core of democratic theory is the view that where people are highly integrated into the local

community, and where they identify strongly with it, participation would be greater. This is because under such circumstances, people have a more detailed understanding of local needs and problems and recognise that these needs are often shared with their neighbours. When people perceive their interdependence with others, they will seek to act to sustain their communal relationship. Schools depend on communities for legitimacy as they adapt to their environments while communities need schools for knowledge and skills acquisition.

Parry et al (ibid), noted further in their study that in spite of the long history of this theory, there have been few attempts to establish whether there is in fact, any such relationship between community and participation. This is because of the difficulty associated with what constitutes a "community" as noted earlier in the multiplicity of definitions of the term. All the same, in their view, wider participation may, perhaps, be stimulated where people think of themselves as equals and where they believe their neighbours are mutually supportive. For this reason, it becomes important not only to establish whether people living in a particular area regard it as a community, but whether they share a belief in what makes for a community. From this line of argument, culture becomes very important in analysing the level of community participation and the forms it takes.

Further more, Plant (1978) cited in Parry et al. (1992) observes that nowadays people are as likely to feel a sense of communal identity with those who share their interests and life-style than with people who are simply their neighbours. Communities identify with schools their children attend and come together to help address the needs of such schools.

It would, therefore, be a mistake to dismiss the possible effect of local communities in participation. It remains the case that most people's lives are conducted within the confines of the local community in which they reside. They send their children to local school, shop locally, attend their local church, and of course, come together to solve their local problems as a group or as individuals.

The proponents of the *communitarian* model of participation, however, admit that this sense of community identity is greater in smaller, more tightly-knit societies. Further, they submit that it is, therefore, likely that some appreciation of local issues and problems will shape the patterns of participation. In this light, it is important to consider to what degree participation is driven by interests common to groups and classes across the nation or is moved by specifically local considerations-whether or not these are in turn inspired by an ideal of community which for some is merely a tempting myth in the modern world or, even worse, a rationalisation of what are in reality, sectional local interest (ibid: 14)

The rational theorists have also advanced arguments as to why people take action as individuals or groups.

According to the rational theory, participation is regarded as a direct, rational, calculated response to a given situation. It stresses the context in which people act, the issues which confront them, the interests which are at stake and the opportunities available for involvement. This approach suggests that certain people develop “civic” attitudes which predispose them to participate. Their upbringing and personal environment encourage the development of skills and resources which are conducive to involvement. Civic attitudes include an interest in, and knowledge of issues, a sense of effectiveness and also a feeling that there is an obligation to participate. Such civic attitudes are, it is generally alleged, more likely to emerge amongst “upper-status” individuals. These individuals are better-educated. (Parry et al, 1992). Thus, they have financial security which permits them to invest time, energy, money and other resources into participation.

Eriksen, (1992) on the issue of communicative rationality notes that people coordinate actions communicating through significant symbols and mutually respecting validity claims. By this, participants are able to reach an agreement and a base for judging what reasonable choices are. In this way, goals may be achieved in a legitimate way. From this perspective, schools are institutions that need legitimacy from the environment in which they are situated. The decision by communities to participate, thus, gives legitimacy to schools by making them accountable to the communities.

Following from this approach, the starting point for understanding participation is with issues and with the needs and interests of the individuals and groups which they affect. They may be shaped by people's economic position, their education, their accommodation, their leisure pursuits or their religion. (Parry et al: 1992).

In the field of education a central premise for community involvement especially in the developing World is that those closest to the school, e.g., community members, have a better understanding of local conditions and are in the best position to make decisions about educational processes that best serve the local needs. (Chapman et al, 2002).

Watt on his part has identified five key rationales for community participation in education:

(i) Limits of State Effectiveness

Education is a multifaceted and complex process, and the scale and reach of education systems place practical limits on what a centralised state system can achieve. Public authorities or states cannot supply every human, financial and organisational requirement, and where education decision–making is excessively concentrated, inefficiencies and distortions enter the system. Besides, where the state attempts to do everything, the diverse conditions and needs of communities are neglected. Life of the school must, however, reflect the life of the community in which it is located.

The inability of governments in Africa to ensure a minimum standard of education provision- and their failure to make the necessary fiscal and administrative adjustments- has placed limits on state effectiveness. Decentralised approaches to education financing and delivery that limit the role of the state and expand the role of communities in education partnerships are often promoted as a solution (Crook 1997) cited in Watt, 2001. Community partnerships are therefore seen as a panacea to ensuring access, equity and quality in education.

(ii) Ownership and Demand

Traditionally in Africa, governments have funded the construction and operation of schools, and enforce attendance. The limits of this approach have become apparent, where efforts at education development have been thwarted by inefficiency and chronic resource constraints and in some cases by weak private demand for schooling. In many communities in Africa, sending children to school involves considerable direct and indirect costs, which many poor people cannot meet.

Enhancing the community's ownership of the school, therefore, is vital to raising demand for education. Requiring communities to contribute to the cost of education, and involving them in school management, can give communities a direct stake in the success of the school, and generate a commitment to education improvement (Patrinos and Ariasingam1997 cited in Watt, 2001:15).

(iii) Democratization and Accountability

Community participation in education is often considered an important building block in the democratization of societies, since it encourages people to hold government accountable for meeting its core responsibilities, provides forums where weak as well as strong voices can be heard, and legitimizes collective decision-making processes. In education, where the scope for exercising the option of exit is often limited, the ability of communities to hold teachers, government and other stakeholders accountable can be a crucial element in school improvement efforts. Some proponents of community support for education argue that where communities are required to contribute directly or indirectly towards the cost of education, they are likely to demand a greater say in the form and content of education, and ensure that they are delivered efficiently. Effective participation at the local level can have an important demonstration effect, and can be a vital element in efforts to consolidate the development of democratic institutions especially in Africa, where national democratic institutions are usually recently formed and are fragile.

(iv) Efficiency

Community participation in education can help ensure that education needs are accurately identified, that accountability structures are enhanced, that teachers attend school on time and teach the curriculum, that school participation rates increase, and that pupil achievement improves. Bringing service providers physically and functionally closer to service users by actively involving communities is a common response to the problem of centralised and rigidly hierarchical systems that often produce poor outcomes at high unit costs. Involving communities ensure that maximum efficiency is achieved at minimum cost.

(v) Choice and Competition

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Right states that: “parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children”. While in theory the state can provide for educational choice within the public system, in practice governments have a weak track record in responding to parental and community demand. Educational choice especially in Africa has usually depended on private providers being legally allowed to operate and response to demand. In most cases, educational choices require an expanded role of communities, who have become major providers in recent years, as African governments have loosened restrictions on private schools. The need for widening the alternatives in education provision, thus, calls for more community collaboration and involvement. The other argument is that subjecting education providers to market discipline by forcing them to compete for service users raises standards and improves efficiency.

Baku (1994:134) has also argued that community or parent-teacher co-operation in educational provision contributes to improvement in the enrolment and retention of pupils, maintenance of school facilities, learning environment, and overall quality and long-term impact of education.

2.3.2. Forms of Community Participation.

Various forms of community participation in education have been identified by many researchers in their studies. Community support for education takes a large number of monetary and non-monetary forms. Monetary support includes fees, levies, and fundraising activities. These can be intended to meet a shortfall in recurrent public financing, for example, by purchasing textbooks or supplementing teachers` salaries or it can be used for classroom construction. Non-monetary support covers a wide range of activities, from attending school committee and parent association meetings, to providing labour for school construction and maintenance. Non-monetary support is an especially important component of community-based education in rural Africa, where the cash economy is typically small, income irregular and unpredictable, and the isolation of communities means that many management decisions must be taken at the school level. Watt (2001) notes further "community participation in school management in Africa has taken many forms. At its most limited, it involves an advisory or consultative role on the school committee."

Williams (1997 in Watt, 2001:27) broadly grouped community support for education into three principal areas of activity. These are:

- support for the instructional program
- school management
- contributions to school resources.

i) Support for the instructional program

This is often overlooked as a form of community participation in education, but it can be crucial to improving participation and learning outcomes where communities are able to provide formal support by volunteering as teachers`assistants or after- school tutors. Support for the instructional program can be formally mobilized through school committees and parents associations, which organize extracurricular activities, provide links between schooling and work, assist teachers –for example to prepare teaching aids- and encourage parents to help children with home work.

It must be pointed out that the capacity of communities to provide this sort of support varies widely. One major challenge is that poor communities with low levels of education attainment often lack the time, confidence, and skills to provide formal support to the instructional program. Also efforts to involve communities in the learning process will depend on the cooperation of the school staff, which may not be forthcoming if teachers feel their professional status may be threatened or regard community involvement as an "intrusion." Teachers must, therefore be assured that community involvement is designed to assist and complement rather than substitute for the teacher.

Where the capacity of the community to participate in the instructional program is limited, it can still play a crucial role in improving learning outcomes through more informal channels. Perhaps the single most important contribution communities can make to improve school effectiveness is providing and creating a home and community environment conducive enough to reinforce the work of the school. Practically, parents can ensure that their children attend school regularly, arrive at school on time, eat in the morning before lessons begin, and provide time and space for children to study in the home. Communities can also help to ensure that teachers attend school every day on time, teach when they are at school, and inform the school community of planned absences. Taken together, these relatively simple forms of community participation can have a critical bearing on learning outcomes, by increasing the amount of time children spend being taught, by improving their mental alertness, and by making children and teachers feel that what happens in the school is valued and actively followed by the community. (Lockheed &Verspoor, 1991, Watt, 2001)

ii) School Management

Williams 1997 and cited in Watt (2001) also identified school management as a form of community participation in education. Until recently most African countries reserved education management responsibilities for the government. Community management can be an important building block in creating a sense of ownership of schools, and has practical benefits for poor communities, who may be unable to make additional financial contributions to education, but who are often enthusiastic about being given greater

decision making power over the school. In Africa, this has taken a number of forms. At its most limited, community participation in school management involves an advisory or consultative role on the school committee.

Community participation in school management has become necessary because of lack of government administrative and managerial capacity. Community-based school management is often less skill intensive and more cost-effective than existing centralised approaches.

The effort to improve teacher accountability to the communities they serve has resulted in some countries given communities direct control over the recruitment of teachers; while in other countries this remained the responsibility of local or central government as is the case in Ghana, but the community is given an enlarged oversight role.

Another management role that communities can perform is the development of school improvement plans. These are designed to give communities greater freedom to identify their own needs and priorities. These are often decisions best taken at the community level, where needs can be identified more accurately. In some countries, communities have also participated in school management by providing expertise in areas such as account keeping and learning evaluations.

Like support for the instructional program, the ability of communities to participate in school management varies widely. Many poor rural communities lack the management and administrative skills required for their contributions to be effective; some communities –usually in the urban areas-are highly educated and have the time and skills to make a major contribution to management requirements. In situations where communities lack the capacity or skill to effectively participate in school management, additional assistance in the form of workshops are organized to effectively equip communities so as to help them define their responsibilities towards the school.
In Ghana, a clear example is the organization of workshops by the Ghana Education Service and other NGOs like the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), United States Agency

for International Development (USAID) for communities on school management. Topics like composition of the School Management Committees (SMCs) and PTAs; roles of the PTAs and SMCs; mobilising community resources for school development; taking good care of school property etc(*field data*) are usually discussed. Other ways of assisting include training in basic accounting and administrative skills and regular site visits by local education officers to respond to community concerns and provide practical support.

iii) Contributions to school resources

Contributing to school resources has been identified as the most common form of community participation in education. The principal rationale for community contribution towards the cost of schooling is financially underscored by the fact that government is unable to single-handedly fund education. A further rationale for community contribution to school resources is that it promotes accountability and increases community legitimacy to exercise control over their own school. Additional financing of education are typically contributed only by households with children enrolled in school coming in the form of user fees or charges. Community financing is an alternative to user fees, and draws on the support of the wider community, not just the parents who have a direct stake in the school. It also implies more active support than user fees and tends to involve contributions of time and effort in addition to money (Cornia, Jolly, and Stewart 1987 cited in Watt, 2001)

Community financing of education takes two main forms: (a) financial contributions in the form of official and unofficial fees and levies decided by the government, community leaders, and teachers, and usually directed to meeting the same needs as income from user fees; and (b) money raised from fundraising activities. Community financing is a preferred option in the rural areas, where communities are more cohesive and identifiable, and easier to mobilize. In contrast, user fees may be more appropriate in urban communities, where the opportunity costs of in-kind contributions are higher, support from the wider community is more difficult to mobilize, and incomes are larger and more predictable.

Bray (1999b) cited in Watt (2001) notes that contributions to school resources can take two main forms: in-kind as well as financial support. In-kind supports includes labour for activities such as school construction and work by students on the school plot, and can cover contributions of goods, such as building materials for school construction, or food. For example, in Madagascar schools have attempted to broaden access by accepting in-kind payments of rice, while in Botswana cattle have been contributed in some cases In-kind contributions have clear advantages for cash-poor communities, as well as capturing resources that would not otherwise be used to meet educational goals.

Ota (1986) and cited in Baku & Agyman (1994:133) identified three main forms of community financing of education found even in poor settings: (i) parental contributions in various forms such as school fees and PTA levies; (ii) contributions by the whole community, most commonly in the form of labour toward construction work in the school; and (iii) contributions by voluntary organizations including religious bodies. The study notes further that other innovative approaches increasing community participation (UNESCO, 1991) include orientation ceremonies, family visits, hobby courses for parents, pupils performance pamphlets, parents meetings, and classes.

2.3.3. Factors that promote or hinder Community Participation

The factors that promote effective participation in education have not been lost out in the literature. Watt (2001), notes that demand is a necessary condition for successful community participation in education. Unless communities have a clear desire for change and strong incentives to support the school, the response to community-based education programs will likely be weak. Communities support education in order to achieve an objective that would not be met without their involvement. This posits once again a rational perspective to participation. People coordinate actions to reach an agreement and a base for judging what reasonable choices are. The biggest incentives for communities is the promise of a better education, which at the local level usually means an accessible and affordable school, staffed by competent, motivated teachers, teaching in safe classrooms equipped with adequate materials, leading to the acquisition of valued knowledge skills. What makes an *effective school (emphasis mine)* in the perception of

parents, thus constitute a major barrier to participation. In poor and rural communities where the average education level is low, and where the teaching process in the classroom is often invisible and little understood, and community members rely on the teachers to inform them of many of the problems facing the school, this can greatly affect participation. Communities may be able to provide additional support to the local school but be unwilling to do so, typically because the costs of support outweigh the benefits. This may be because the community views education as inappropriate for some, if not all children. What makes an effective school as well as willingness on the part of communities therefore, constitute yet another important challenge to participation.

Another condition or factor that enhances community participation in education is that communities must be able to identify common interests and needs, accept and enforce basic rules governing their support for the school, and have a minimum level of skill, knowledge, and leadership to follow through on its commitment. Where communities cannot identify common interests or needs; or where there is distrust about the leadership, support might not be forthcoming. For example, in Ghana, although parents are expected to play more active role in school management under the School Management Committees and the Parents-Teachers Associations, many continue to see their role as providing supplementary financial support only. This is partly due to some confusion between the roles of the PTAs and the SMCs and partly because teachers do not always welcome parental “intrusion” (World Bank; 1996:8).

Again Watt (2001) observes that efforts such as concerted capacity building; support of other education stakeholders, especially teachers and government; timely and free flows of information are needed before communities can play a more active educational role.

Building capacity for community support to education is often best achieved by actively initiating change, and establishing a process of “learning by doing”. This is done by beginning a process of bringing the community together and encouraging discussion about educational needs and priorities, perceptions about the role of education in the community and the responsibilities of different stakeholders, and options for improving

the school. Some well-resourced, highly motivated and cohesive communities are capable of single-handedly financing and managing education on an ongoing basis. At the other end are communities that may lack the resources to make anything more than a minor contribution to the costs of education, or be unable or unwilling to work together. In certain instances, financial constraints thus constitute a hindrance to effective participation. On this Shaeffer, (1994) observes that poor communities cannot bear the added expenses of participatory processes-especially in the form of financial resources and of the time and energy required of communities and individuals.

Besides, in order for community participation to be effective, communities must be able to collaborate with other education stakeholders based on negotiated roles and responsibilities. This is to ensure a balanced of decision-making power among the various stakeholders and also provide for the recognition of the role and value of expertise, and the practical limits of participatory principles by communities.

Information flow between schools and the communities is equally an important factor to successful community participation. The extent to which school authorities make available to communities the problems and needs of the school, underpins the form and level of support the community can offer. In this regard, leadership plays a very important role in communicating the problems of the school to the community.

This is buttressed further in a document by Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa .The document notes that "in Ghana, the factors that have a positive influence on community participation include: (i) communities`perception of the usefulness of their participation; (ii) the existence of organized groups in the community and the quality of their leadership; (iii) the quality of communication between the ministry of education and the communities, and between members of the teaching staff and members of the community; (iv) the degree to which members of the community are made aware of their educational responsibilities; and (v) the degree of encouragement and support given to school-related community initiatives.(ERNWACA,2002:4-5)

2.3.4. Effects of community participation

As regards why communities or parents participate in education, in the considered opinion of Bray (2000:17), parents are a good place to begin the process of community

building, because they may be assumed to have a natural interest in the education of their children.

Baku (1994:134) has also provided explanation on why communities or parents participate in education. Community or parent-teacher cooperation in educational provision contributes to improvement in the enrolment and retention of pupils, maintenance of school facilities, learning environment, and overall quality and long- term impact of education.

Furthermore, Bray, Watt and other researchers have generated empirical evidence from their studies to throw more light on the effects of community participation in education. As a matter of fact, participation builds ownership and a better understanding of the true nature of the educational problems facing the country (Bray, 2001:13).

Watt (2001) on his part has also noted that community-based approaches to educational development have the potential to enhance ownership, accountability, and efficiency. Enhancing the community's sense of ownership of a school makes it more likely that parents will support the aims of the school, and ensures that their children attend regularly and learn. Greater ownership can also build consensus for change, and increase accountability: teachers and other sector professionals are more likely to do their jobs well when communities take an active interest in what is happening in the classroom. This would in turn bring about improvement in educational access and quality.

Uemura (1999) also submits that community participation in education ensures maximisation of limited resources; developing relevant curriculum and learning materials; identifying and addressing problems that hinder the development of education; realising democracy; increasing accountability.

Thus, the situation in Ghana in terms of community participation in education development might not be very different from the observations made by the various writers and scholars mentioned above. However, in the various submissions indicated, they have generally dealt more on specific countries and subjects relating to community

participation in education in broader terms without any particular mention or reference to the study community or area.

A review of the available literature reveals that nothing specific about the phenomenon under investigation has been carried out in the Nanumba district or they are rather sketchy.

It is in the light of this that this present study is undertaken to offer a pioneering role to explore the impact of community participation on school performance, which would serve as foundation for further research in the area.

2.4. Brief Overview of Variables

From the above theoretical discussions, the variables to be considered are examined below.

2.4.1. Dependent Variable(s)

The only dependent variable of the study is school performance. School performance is measured by its output relative to inputs provided by stakeholders in education. These include indicators such as enrolment, retention and drop out, infrastructure, availability of teaching and learning materials, motivation of teachers and pupils, financial resources, supervision, and academic and other extra-curricular performance or cognitive skills of pupils. School performance in this regard is measured by school level and household-level variables such as number of teachers, their qualification, schools` physical facilities and instructional materials, parent's education and income. The available literature has documented a positive correlation between community participation and school performance.

Different studies on community participation have posited that where the community takes part in various forms and in high levels, school enrolments, retention, resources, infrastructure and amenities, teaching and learning materials, motivation of both teachers and pupils, improvement in school supervision, and enrolment of girls are likely to improve.

As indicated earlier, Baku (1994:134) has noted that community or parent-teacher cooperation in educational provision contributes to improvement in the enrolment and retention of pupils, maintenance of school facilities, learning environment, and overall quality and long-term impact of education.

In the considered opinion of Uemura (1999), community participation in education ensures maximisation of limited resources; developing relevant curriculum and learning materials; identifying and addressing problems that hinder the development of education; realising democracy; increasing accountability.

Bray (2000) on the issue of the relationship between community participation and school performance observes that clear evidence exists in many contexts that show that the involvement of communities in the operation of schools can help in the recruitment, retention and attendance of pupils. This is because community members have deeper understanding of the circumstances of particular families, of relationships between individuals, and of micro-politics. Community members on school committees may provide an important element of continuity.

Watt (2001) has also observed that community involvement in the life of the school could have a dramatic impact on education access, retention, and quality. Teachers and other sector professionals are more likely to do their jobs well when communities take an active interest in what is happening in the classroom. That is where there is encouragement, cooperation and motivation from the community; this would impact on the output of teachers, pupils and other professionals in the education sector. In the process, community participation in education can play a central role in efforts to raise participation rates and improve school retention and learning outcomes.

On the issue of supervision, Watt notes further that community and parental involvement in schooling with the aim to improving the teaching and learning environment has become more crucial now than ever. Perceptions of inadequacies in the supervision of

schools, both by district level officers and head teachers, and the limitations of disciplinary processes are said to be undermining effective teaching. Communities, therefore, are required to be involved to assist the district level officers and head teachers.

The issue of academic performance as an aspect of school performance has also received critical attention from researchers. Bray (2000) is of the view that it is difficult to prove empirically the impact of community participation in schools academic achievement since many other factors affect achievement, and evaluations cannot easily isolate the specific effects of community participation. However, "when other factors are equal it seems very likely that community inputs to schools will promote learning outcomes. Community participation cannot by itself work miracles; but it is certainly important". Bray, (2001:28).

Besides Bray, in the literature, two competing schools have emerged advancing explanations for school effectiveness or academic performance. (Fuller and Clarke,1994:120). These are the "Policy Mechanics" and the "Classroom Culturalists". The Policy Mechanics attempt to identify particular school inputs, including discrete teaching practices that raise student achievement. In other words, this intellectual camp explains higher academic achievement in relation to the same instructional materials and pedagogical practices that hold constant meaning in the eyes of teachers and children across diverse cultural settings.

On the other hand, the "Classroom Culturalists" focus on the implicitly modelled norms exercised in the classroom and how children are socialised to accept particular rules of participation and authority, linguistic norms, orientations toward achievement, and conceptions of merit and status.

Thus from the view points of these two intellectual camps, school effectiveness or performance cannot be explained mainly from the perspective of community participation. School inputs such as Leadership, culture, organisation of classroom tasks and homework policies, child characteristics, qualification of teachers, distance from schools to where pupils live, availability of textbooks and other educational materials, etc

are equally important variables. These factors are what some researchers would describe as the schools “Black Box”. These are contextual or school-related variables.

The importance of community participation in the performance of schools is summed up by the MOE in a World Bank (1996:23) document in the following words: Communities have an important role to play in enforcing standards, developing and maintaining school property, and providing support and encouragement to headteachers, teachers and students.

2.4.2. Independent Variables

The independent variables in the study are divided into three categories: community profile, participation and Contextual or school related factors. These are labelled as Independent variables I and II and III respectively.

Independent Variable I: Community profile embraces the socio-economic status of communities, cultural backgrounds of communities, resources, and other contextual or organisational factors.

Socio-Economic factors:

These are explained to mean the social and economic backgrounds of parents. That is the educational status, social class, gender, personal values, and employment. These are factors that underpin the capability and ability of communities to get involved in schools affairs.

Cultural Background of communities:

Culture has been defined by Hosftede (2003) as mental programming of the mind. That is the way of thinking, feeling and acting that has been established within an individual’s mind set up. In this regard, the collective values of the school community in terms of education. Individuals are products of their own environment and for that matter their mental orientation coupled with that of the group would determine the form and level of participation or group action.

Resources:

In this study resources are categorised into two: individual (wealth and education) and organisational (ties to groups). This is closely allied to socio-economic status of communities. The educational background and wealth of individuals coupled with organisational factors such as leadership of the organisation, culture of the organisation also determine the extent to which individuals or communities can act.

Contextual Factors:

As indicated already, this has to do with the leadership and culture of schools and how much the community is allowed to take part in the affairs of the school.

According to Parry et al (1992:20), Resources, coupled with advantageous social background, place some people in a better position to take up action. In addition to resources and background there must also be some circumstance which triggers involvement.

Independent Variable II

Forms and Levels of participation:

This relates to the various ways in which communities take part in school activities. Participation in education could take both monetary and non-monetary forms. Baku & Agyman (1994) have noted that the involvement of the community in the development activities of the school could take the following forms: (i) providing land, money materials, communal labour, and free accommodation for teachers; (ii) building school facilities; (iii) acting as resource persons teaching traditional and cultural practices; and (iv) organizing forums to discuss the problems of the schools.

In Ghana the literature review identified four modes of participation. These include: (i) participation in the decision-making process, through School Management Committees (SMCs) and PTAs; (ii) participation in the school endowment where the community limits its role to donating educational infrastructures and leaves their use to the discretion of school authorities; (iii) participation in the teaching and learning process where community members act as resource persons to assist in those areas where the staff alone cannot cope; and (iv) participation focused on access to education where chiefs and development committees undertake to promote access through registration of births,

determination of the school-age population, use of moral persuasion, or compulsion to get children enrolled and imposing fines on defaulters.

Level of participation:

Community participation is based on the reasoning that the provision of basic education should be a joint venture between the government and the community. Communities are characterized by three levels of participation as seen below:

- High Level: (i) community is ever ready and anxious to get to know the needs and problems of the school; (ii) devotes a lot of its communal development efforts to school needs; (iii) constantly levies its members to raise funds to address school needs; (iv) has an effective leadership that champions the cause of the school; and (v) parents patronize PTA meetings well.
- Average level: (i) community tries sometimes to address the needs and problems of the school; (ii) could have done better if there were good leadership; (iii) participates because it seems to have no choice; (iv)some parents participate effectively but most are unconcerned; and (v) parents patronize PTA meetings only during their free or non-farming season times.
- Low Level: (i) community hardly knows whether the school has any needs or problems; (ii) believes that the government has the sole responsibility for the school; (iii) is poor and does not believe in its capacity to do anything for the

School; (iv) has a very lukewarm attitude towards the school; and (v) most parents cannot sacrifice even one day in months to attend PTA meetings.(Baku et al,1994)

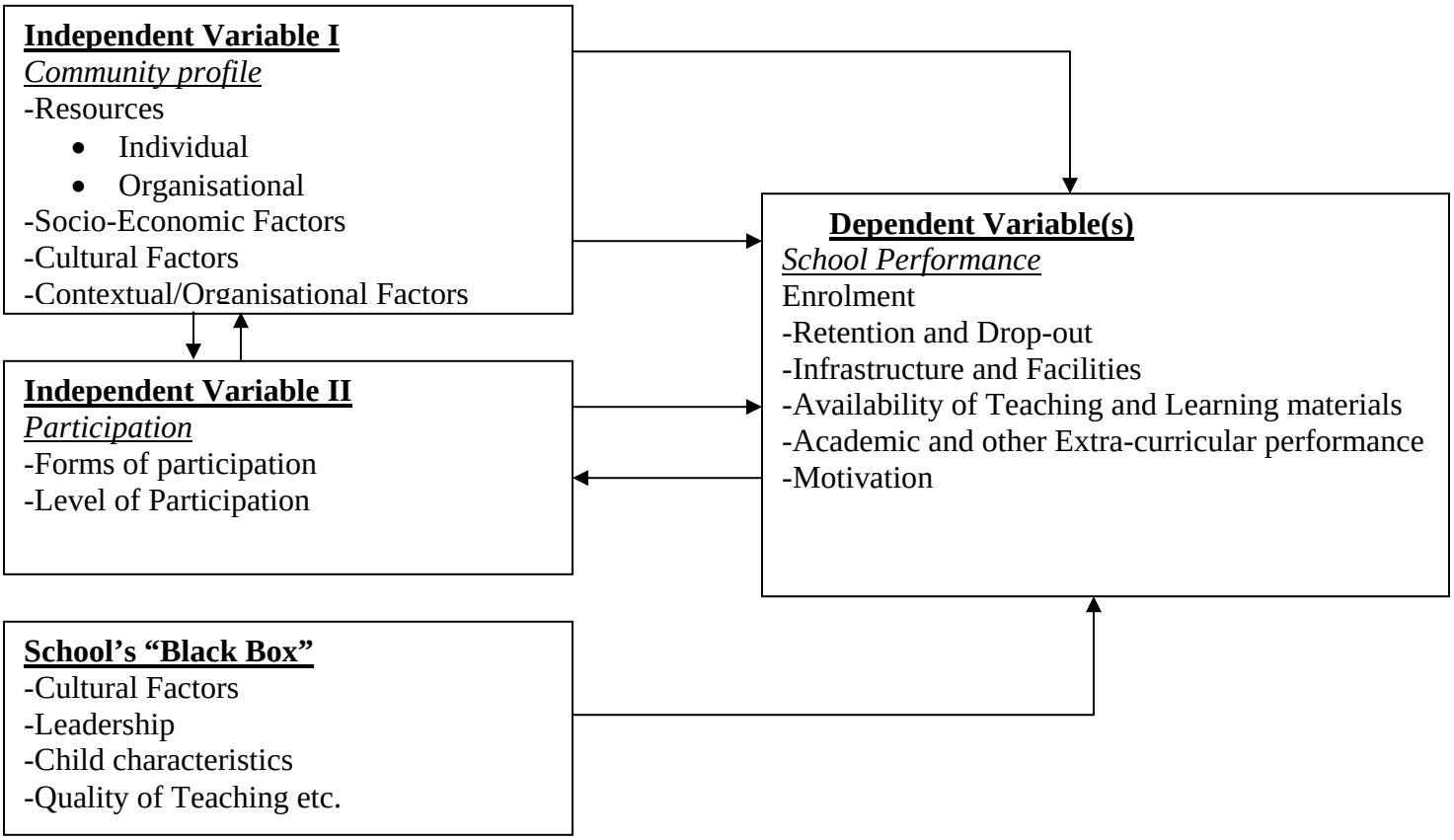
Independent Variable III

“Back Box” of Schools:

These are individual school factors that may also explain the performance of a particular school. Fuller and Clarke (1994) identified these to include variables such as qualification of teachers and quality of teaching, classroom tasks and home work policies, culture of schools, school location to where pupils live, leadership of schools, pupils characteristics or cognitive development etc.

The study adopted the assessment of the level of participation of the communities made by the heads of the two basic schools, their teaching staff as well as parents. The figure below is the inter-connection between and or among the variables.

Figure 1: Model of Community Participation



Source: *Researcher's own design*

From the figure above, it can be explained that the extent to which an individual participates depends on whether he or she possesses the resources to act. These resources are individual (wealth and education) and organisational (ties to group). Lying behind

these resources are certain other economic, social, cultural and other contextual factors which partly enhance or diminish the chances to obtain resources and partly shapes one readiness to employ them for participation. These factors include social class, gender, personal and collective values, educational background, employment status and the environment. Resources, coupled with advantageous social background, place some people in a better position to take up action. (Parry et al 1992:20). The same is true of communities. From the diagram, it can also be argued that the extent of school performance largely depends on the profile of the community since the profile determines the level and forms in which the community gets involved in the affairs of the school.

The other category of independent variable is participation. As seen from the preceding explanation, the form and level of participation is determined by various factors. Like the first category of independent variable, it is seen from the figure that participation influences school performance. Even though it is argued within the framework that participation influences performance, on the other hand, it could also be argued based on the framework that school performance also determines participation. (See chapter four on the factors that promote participation).

Then is the issue of what has been referred to the “Black Box” of schools. These are other institutional variables not related to participation or community profile that have been identified in the literature as explaining school effectiveness or performance.

The final element in the model is constituted by performance. In this regard, among other things, by participation, school communities hope to improve upon enrolments and retention, ensure adequate teaching and learning materials are available to enhance learning, increase financial resources of schools, motivate teachers and pupils to carry out their duties, ensuring better academic and other extra-curricular performance so as to bring about overall school performance in these areas.

2.5. Summary

This chapter mirrors on the concepts and theoretical discussions of community participation as it relates to education. Basic concepts have been explained and the forms, rationales, effects, and the relationship between community participation and school performance discussed in a broader conceptual framework that would inform subsequent analysis.

A brief overview of the variables in the study has also been espoused in the chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

TRENDS OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN GHANA

3.0. Introduction.

The aim of this chapter is to set the context of the study. The chapter thus mirrors on the trends of community participation in education in Ghana. The various strategies or institutions put in place to involve communities in the provision and delivery of education also form part of the section.

3.1. Trends of Community Participation in Education

Communities in Africa have traditionally made significant contribution to basic education; and continue to make significant contributions, as communities can no longer be neglected as partners in development. In Africa, communities are central to the joint endeavour of education development and education development cannot take place unless communities are at the centre of education change- as educators and sources of knowledge, and as partners of governments, civil society organizations, and donors (Watt, 2001:3). In Ghana, communities have traditionally participated in the provision of basic education but their participation used to be limited to the provision of school infrastructure (Baku & Agyman, 1994).

This traditional posture of community involvement in Ghana has changed following the 1987 reform. Communities are expected to be proactive in the development of schools. This is reinforced by the Local Government Act of 1988, which promoted local participation in decisions affecting communities through the establishment of decentralized departments. Communities have since 1988 been involved and are expected to perceive development in terms of growth and improvement in the quality of life.

In the context of the educational reform, basic education is community-based. This policy grants ownership of basic schools to communities in which the schools are located. It recognises that the provision of basic education is a joint venture between government and the communities, and encourages communities to participate in school management. The roles of the two partners were defined in official policy documents as follows:

(i) Government provides curriculum materials, equipment, teachers, supervision and management; and (ii)Community participates in school management, provides infrastructures, ensures pupils presence in school and patronage of PTA meetings, and supports a book supply scheme by paying a nominal fee.

Through this policy, the government anticipated that the communities would construct their own school buildings to provide for the opening of JSS so that pupils would not have to travel beyond a distance of three kilometres between home and school. Where school buildings already exist, communities would build workshops for the various practical-oriented subjects. It was also anticipated that the involvement of community opinion leaders in the affairs of the school would increase access to education for school-age children, and that community members would constitute a rich reservoir of supplementary education information needed for a holistic education.

Baku and Agyman (2002:135) noted that four main steps have been taken by the MOE to promote the policy of effective community participation in school development. These include: (i) promulgation of PNDC Law 207 creating 22 decentralized departments, including education; (ii) workshops/seminars organized to conscientise district chief executives, community/opinion leaders and PTA executives; (iii) identification of community strategies and structures within the community that could facilitate/promote participation; and (iv) adequate media publicity of communities achievements to encourage other communities.

On the trends of participation, Baku and Agyman (2002:135), have identified four modes of community participation in Ghana. These are:

- participation in the decision-making process, through School Management Committees (SMC) and PTAs;
- participation in the school endowment where community limits its role to donating educational infrastructure and leaves their use to the discretion of school authorities;

- participation in the teaching and learning process where community members act as resource persons to assist in those areas where the staff alone cannot cope; and
- Participation focused on access to education where chiefs and development committees undertake to promote access through registration of births, determination of the school-age population, use of moral persuasion, or compulsion to get children enrolled and imposing fines on defaulters.

3.2. Forms and Nature of community Participation in Ghana.

According to Baku and Agyman (1994: 154), manifestation of community participation in Ghanaian Schools can be categorised into traditional and new or shifting forms of participation.

Traditional Forms: These are the forms of participation that most communities know and have practised for years. In many communities, the whole idea and vision of participation is limited to these traditional forms. Here community participation is essentially concerned with the provision of infrastructure for the school. Thus traditional participation includes: (i) engaging in communal labour to provide infrastructure for the school; (ii) making monetary contributions to finance school projects; (iii) providing residential accommodation for teachers; (iv) providing rooms in personal houses to be used to store school property; (v) providing land for gardening, farming, etc.; (vi)churches allowing their chapels to be used for classes; (vii) parents attending PTA meetings; (viii) attending school functions such as “open days;” and (ix) supplying the needs of their wards.

Shifting Forms of Participation: These are participatory activities that are relatively new in Ghana. They are an integral part of the educational reform programme launched in 1987. Under these forms of participation, communities have a right to participate in activities and decisions affecting the curriculum and management of the schools. Here, community participation takes the form of: (i) managing of schools through representations on the SMCs; (ii) designing curriculum; (iii) serving as resource persons to teach about some culture-oriented themes; (iv) protecting and maintaining school property; (v) supervising and monitoring pupils`attendance at school; (vi) increasing

pupils`access to basic education through enrolment drives; (vii) motivating teachers to improve their effectiveness; and (viii) supervising pupils` studies at home.

While many communities have been living up to expectation with regard to the traditional forms of participation, the shifting forms of participation seems relatively new in the Ghanaian context and not as common as the other form. However, in most schools, these new forms of involvement have become very effective.

3.3. Strategies of Participation

As noted earlier, four main steps have been taken by the Ministry of Education (MOE) to promote the policy of community-based schools. (See trends of participation for details). The various strategies for participation under the government policy of free and compulsory universal basic education are examined below.

3.3.0. Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

The PTA is a joint body of parents and teachers of a school. In terms of composition, it is made of between six to nine executive members who are selected at a general PTA meeting of a school involving all parents or guardians who have their children in the school. The PTA is not much of a national requirement. It is basically an automatic association of teachers and parents or guardians of a particular school who seek to advance the welfare and development of the school. The membership increases or decreases depending on the enrolment at a particular time. However, it needs to be mentioned that some school do not have PTAs. This is due to the fact that it is not much of a compulsion unlike the SMC.

In practical terms, the PTA is the organ of the community that is always most current with the needs and problems of the school. It is a forum where teachers and parents meet as partners to educate the children with the sole aim of bringing their minds together to solve thorny problems that inhibit smooth teaching and learning in the school. Among all the stakeholders in education, apart from the learners themselves, parents are the most

concerned and anxious group. Thus on several occasions and in numerous instances, parents have initiated the execution of projects in their respective schools.

The main aims and objectives of the PTA include:

- to bring parents and school authorities together to work jointly for the development of the school;
- to forge strong links between the home, the school and the community; and
- to assist in raising funds to address some of the basic needs of the school such as providing furniture, classroom blocks, sports equipment, lighting system and other amenities; and

With regards to the functions, the PTA assists in the maintenance and repair of school infrastructure. Also the PTA sometimes assists in solving some problems such as disciplinary issues where parent(s) of a misbehaving pupil may be invited to help address the issue.

3.3.1. School Management Committee (SMC)

School Management Committee is one of the various interventions introduced to promote effective community participation and involvement in the education delivery system.

The SMC is one of the School-Community based institutions designated under the Ghana Education Service Act of 1995. The establishment of SMC is a national requirement in all public basic schools and have been instituted in all basic school since 1995. This committee unlike the PTA is composed of the immediate stakeholders of the school in the community. It aims at fostering effective community participation and mobilisation for efficient education provision and delivery. Thus, it is regarded as the Basic education counterpart of Board of Governors in second cycle schools. This joint body represents the entire school community of a particular school.

Addae-Boahene and Akorful (1999:9) have outlined the composition of the SMC as follows:

(i) the District Director of Education or his/her representative;

(ii) the Head teacher or headmistress of the school;

(iii) district Assembly Representative (usually Assembly person of the school area);

(iv) representative appointed by an educational Unit if the school is affiliated to a religious body;

(v) representative appointed by the chief of the town/village;

(vi) two members appointed by the teaching staff; one from the primary and one from the JSS;

(vii) a representative of the Old Students Association;

(viii) a representative of the PTA, and

(ix) any co-opted members to perform special functions (optional).

3.3.2. Powers and Functions of the SMC

The main function of the SMC is to control the general policy of the school and to ensure effective management by the headteacher.

Specifically, however, the SMC has responsibility for four main areas of the school: school policy, school development, school administration and school finance. Addae-Boahene and Akorful (1999:14)

----*School Policy*: In terms of school policy, it is the responsibility of the SMC to decide on hours spent at school, religious policy, dress code, students` code of conduct, and school goals. In practice, however, policy regarding public basic schools is determined by the Ghana Education Service. Educational decentralisation in Ghana is more of deconcentration than devolution. Policies emanate from the headquarters of GES and only implemented at the local level through GES district offices.

----*School development*: They also look into development issues such as development plans and relationships with the community and other schools. This is an area in which the SMC has some leeway. Development issues are usually determined by the committee and presented to the PTA in an attempt to raise some funds.

----*School finance:* The committee again has the responsibility of overseeing the finances of the school, raising funds and opening a bank account where necessary.

----*School administration*: Here the committee is expected to work hand-in-hand with the headteacher of the school. In order not to get in conflict with and show respect for the authority of the head in professional matters, the SMC in reality plays a very minimal role in administration. The organisation of teaching and learning as well as running the school is in the hands of the head.

3.3.3. **District Education Oversight Committees (DEOCs)**

Besides the PTAs and SMCs, communities also participate in schools affairs through the DEOCs. This is a body made up of a cross-section of stakeholders in education at the District level.

The DEOC is made up of the following stakeholders in the district:

1. The District Chief Executive-Chairman
2. The District Director of Education
3. The District Director of Health
4. The District Inspector of Schools
5. The District Social Welfare Officer
6. Two representatives of the District Assembly nominated by the Assembly of whom one shall be a woman
7. One representative of traditional rulers in the District
8. One representative each of the Christian and Muslim groups
9. One representative of the Ghana national Association of Teachers (GNAT) in the District
10. One representative of the District PTA and
11. One woman identified generally with social development in the District.

The DEOCs have been established at the district level and are to be concerned with, and oversee:

- Conditions of school buildings and other infrastructural requirements of schools
- the provision of teachers and the regular and punctual attendance of teachers and pupils at the schools
- The proper performance of duties by staff at the school

- The moral behaviour of staff and pupils and matters relating to general discipline
- Complaints to or from teachers, non-teaching staff and pupils
- Environmental cleanliness of schools and facilities therein
- The supply of textbooks and other teaching materials; and
- District Assemblies` Common Fund-allocation to education.

3.4. Summary.

In this chapter, the setting of the study is laid out. The contextual background of the trends of community participation in Ghana is necessary to put the study in perspective. An attempt is made to cover as much of the various areas as possible in the area of community involvement in education the country. The strategies for participation are also examined.

CHAPTER FOUR

PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

The High Community Participation School (HCPS)

4.0. Introduction.

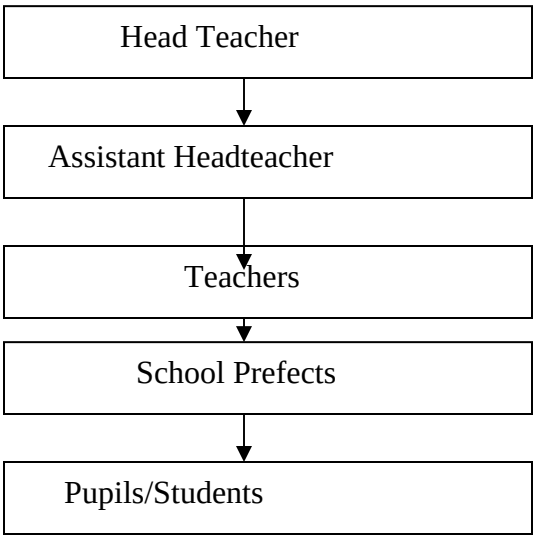
This chapter analyses the effects of community participation on school performance in Ghana based on the views of parents, teachers and educational administrators gathered in the study area between June and August 2004. Official documents like school records, documents from the district education office, minutes of meetings obtained during the field research have also been used. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part deals with organizational structure of Basic Education in Ghana. The grading system at the Basic level is also presented. The second part examines the practical experience of community participation in the High Community Participation School (HCPS) while the third part looks at the impact of high participation on the performance of the school.

4.1. Levels and Administrative Structure of Basic Education.

Basic education in Ghana is made up of two levels. These are the primary and the junior secondary schools levels. The primary level consists of six years of primary education while three years of junior secondary schooling makes up the other part.

With regards to the administrative structure of basic education in Ghana, it is organised in line with the rules and regulations of the Ghana Education Service Act of 1995. At the apex is the headmaster or headmistress. Under the head of the school is the Assistant headmaster or headmistress. The teachers who are given responsibilities as form masters come next. The pupils are supposed to report problems of the class to the school administration through the form master. The school prefects come next in the organisational hierarchy. Finally are the entire student body at the bottom of the administrative ladder. The figure below is a hierarchical illustration of the chain of authority in a typical junior secondary school (Basic Education) set up.

Figure 2: School Administration



Source: *Documents from the District Education Office*

4.2. An Overview of the Grading System at the BECE.

In accordance with the new educational policy in Ghana, pupils in Basic School 7-9 (i.e. the junior secondary school) study nine or ten subjects if French (an optional subject is studied in a particular school. These subjects are examinable both internally and externally. Besides, Life Skills, Physical Education, Music and Dance are taught and are internally examinable.

At the end of the mandatory 9-year basic school course is the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). Students are externally examined in 9 core subjects by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC). These subjects are shown in the table below

Table 2: Externally and Internally examinable subjects

Core Subjects (Externally Examinable)	Optional External Exams	Other (Internally Examinable)
1. English Language 2. Mathematics 3. Ghanaian Language/ Culture 4. Science 5. Social Studies 6. Agricultural Science 7. Pre-Vocational Skills 8. Pre-Technical Skills 9. Religious/Moral Education	1. French	1. Life Skills 2. Music and Dance 3. Physical Education

The grading scale at the BECE is based on grade 1-9 in each subject taken. Where 1 is the best grade and 9 the worst. The best six subjects for each student are usually aggregated. Student's aggregates, thus range from 6-54, where six is interpreted to mean a student scores grade 1 in all six subjects and aggregate 54 means a student obtains grade 9 in all six subjects taken. Aggregates 6-12 are considered as distinction or outstanding. According to the selection criteria of the Ghana Education Service, for a student to gain admission to a senior secondary school, the student from the basic level needs to score between aggregates 6-30 in their best six subjects. In reality, meanwhile, students with better aggregates always stand better chances of gaining admissions and especially into "better schools".

4.3. The Local Environment or the Community

The school is located in the Bimbilla community of the Nanumba district. The district is a heterogeneous one in terms of ethnicity. The area is made up of the (i) Nanumba; (ii) Dagomba ;(ii) Nawuri; (iv) Konkomba; (v) Zambarima; (vi) Chakosi; (vii) Ewe;

(viii) Asante[6]; and many other minority ethnic communities. In effect the school is situated in a multicultural community.

Specifically, however, the school is located in a predominantly Nanumba spoken community. Bimbilla is the district capital where government departments and other agencies are found. Majority of the residents mostly government workers are, therefore, elites while a greater proportion of the population has also received basic education. Literacy rates in the rural areas are quite low. The community also houses a Senior Secondary School and a Teacher Training College.

The school community covers a wide catchment area and so the school serves not only the Bimbilla community but also surrounding communities within the Nanumba district

4.4. Case One

4.4.1The High Community Participation School (HCPS)

Jilo Junior secondary is one of four basic schools located in the Bimbilla Community of the Nanumba District. The Primary Unit of this basic school was founded in 1962 while the present junior secondary came into being by 1968, then called the Jilo Middle School. This served as a continuation for pupils from the primary school. Both the primary and JSS are located on the same grounds but with different headmasters and teachers.

With the 1987 educational reforms, Jilo Middle school was converted into the present Jilo JSS.

The school has an enrolment figure of 554 for the 2003-2004 academic years. The female population is 165 girls. The school has a staff capacity of 19 teachers.The 19 teachers were made up of 14 Certificate "A" or professionally trained teachers; 1 Higher National Diploma (HND) holder; 1 service personnel, 1 doing attachment in the school, an Arabic instructor and 1 crafts instructor who is a blind man. There was no teacher for Pre-Technical Skills.

[6] This refers to the various tribes living in the Nanumba District.

The school has relatively modest facilities and infrastructure compared to other Junior Secondary Schools in the district. It has three buildings used as classrooms. One of the buildings made up of three classrooms and an office was constructed through the efforts of the Parent-Teacher Association. One of the two remaining buildings constructed through a technical cooperation between the Government of Ghana (GOG) and the Government of China. Unlike other JSS Units in the community and for that matter the whole district, Jilo JSS has a library though not well stocked, toilet facility and some other facilities. The school has also seen renovation from time to time.

Jilo JSS is State-managed where the level of community participation is also high. During the data collection, it was realized from both parents and the teachers of the school that parents pay regular visits to the school to find out the problems of the school; parents are ready to initiate financial contributions to address the needs of the school; has a vibrant PTA and SMC.

4.5. Community Participation in the HCPS

4.5.0. Introduction.

Communities are mandated by the policy document of the FCUBE to participate in the development of schools. It has been argued times and over that the involvement of the community in the life of the school can have a dramatic impact on school retention, access and quality. This is because teachers and other sector professionals would be under the constant monitoring of community members and are, therefore; more likely to do their jobs well when communities take an active interest in what is happening in the classroom. This in turn would bring about improvement in quality of education. (Watt: 2001)

Community participation, the forms it takes, levels of participation, challenges or barriers to effective participation, factors that promote participation and the impact it has on educational development has been examined in the life of the HCPS.

4.5.1. Forms of Participation

(i) Financial contributions

One major form of participation that teachers of the school identified to come from the community is financial contributions by parents. These usually take the form of PTA dues and other development levies. In order to address the development needs of the school, sometimes the parents even initiate contributions on their own. This is usually at PTA general meetings.

Analysis revealed that through such financial contributions, the school was able to acquire electricity. The school also pays the electricity bills mostly from the financial contributions of parents. Some plastic chairs for the teaching staff were also acquired through the contribution of parents. There is a conscious effort on the parts of parents towards financial contributions. The Headmaster of the school noted:

> "*A master of the school once had his name going off the government Payroll. The PTA came in and supported the affected teacher financially until he had his name reinstalled.*"

The Headmaster and a majority of the teachers were, however, quick to note that some of the parents do not want to hear of financial contributions at all. This pertained especially to parents with no formal education. They attributed the unfortunate behaviour to their economic situation as some of them cannot just afford. Thus, sometimes, they are delays in payment of PTA and other development levies while some default. Being a community school, the use of compulsion is not usually encouraged. This could lead to school drop-outs which the FCUBE policy is against. This form of participation is what Williams in Watt (2001) identified as contributing to school resources. Financial contributions have the potential of promoting accountability and increasing community legitimacy to exercise control over their own school.

(ii) Material Donations

Another form of community participation that is closely related to financial contribution is material donations. It was found from the interview that in the school, the community makes various forms of in-kind donations towards the development of the school.

According to majority of the teachers, the school received material donations such as footballs, furniture and wall clocks from parents. The headmaster also mentioned the donation of a three classroom block constructed by the PTA. The study also found that the community made available to the school a plot of land for school farm. One of the teachers disclosed to me at the interview session that the previous year the school had two bags of Soya beans from the school farm. Parents also provided labour on some occasions such as during the construction of urinal pits for school. However, educated parents preferred donating money towards such construction work instead of labour as they have their official duties to deal with.

Material donation has been identified by Williams in Watt (2001) as an in-kind form of contributing to school resources.

(iii) School Management.

Another form of participation identified as existing in the school is through management. The community takes part in the management of the school through their representation in the District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC), the School Management Committee (SMC) and the Parents Teachers Associations (PTA). Under the FCUBE policy, communities are mandated to take part in the decision making processes of schools. Parents interviewed observed that they are consulted through their representatives on the SMC and PTA concerning decisions regarding the development of the school.

On the issue of their representation on the various joint-bodies in the school, parents expressed their satisfaction as they have elected members of the committees and entrusted them with the responsibility of acting on behalf of all of them.

According to most parents interviewed, some NGOs have been involved in organising workshops on school management for them as a way of ensuring that the inputs of communities are incorporated into the decision making processes of the school. Topics they have been taken through usually include composition of the PTAs; SMCs; roles of the PTAs and SMCs; mobilising community resources for school development; taking good care of school property. One of the teachers interviewed asserted:

"Some members of the PTA and SMC also attended a Workshop on maintenance of school facilities and buildings at Ajumako and they are now part and parcel of a committee in charge of school infrastructure"

The study revealed that most of the time parents are also involved in decisions regarding disciplinary issues of pupils. Decisions pertaining to the suspension or dismissal of a particular pupil require the approval of the disciplinary committee. To secure the legitimacy of such decisions from the community, parents are given representation on the disciplinary committee. Community members of this committee together with the teachers take decisions on behalf of all parents. When the committee sits, the parent or guardian of the pupil involved is usually invited when the decision is taken. Decisions reached are then made known to the SMC and PTA; teaching and non-teaching staff as well as the entire student body.

Parents and teachers interviewed pointed out that internal suspension with hard labour is usually preferred. According to them, this is to prevent the potential of such students dropping out of school when they are given external suspension. Decisions, however, are usually in the interest of both the community and the school.

Williams in Watt (2001) noted that community management can be an important building block in creating a sense of ownership of schools, and has practical benefits for poor communities, who may be unable to make additional financial contributions to education, but who are often enthusiastic about being given greater decision making power over the school.

(iv)Participation through Attendance of PTA Meetings

Parental participation through attendance of PTA meetings was identified as one of the most common forms of involvement in the life of the High Community Participating School (HCPS). The teaching staff and the headmaster of the school rated parents' turnout at PTA meetings as high and quite encouraging. They intimated that the PTA has been actively involved in the life of the school. The headmaster was full of praise for the parents of the school in the following remarks:

"The parents are doing well for the school. They have been actively

involved in enrolment drive, looking for accommodation for newly Posted teachers. They interact with teachers to know the problems of the school and they also help financially sometimes".

It must be stated, however, that even though attendance of meetings was identified as one of the major forms of participations parents engaged in, it also came to light that most parents especially the poor sometimes avoid PTA meetings and other school meetings because they fear that any time a meeting is called, a levy is to be imposed. According to the headmaster, to get all parents attending PTA meetings, there was the need for the creation of further awareness that meetings are not necessarily meant to impose levies.

(v) Academic Participation

An interesting form of participation which the teachers of the school mentioned is what they referred to as "academic participation". As a way of ensuring that students academic performance improve further, students are expected to go back for studies after regular classes' hours and in the night for private studies. The school administration has made this compulsory especially for final year students. The teachers explained that students who failed to come for studies after classes hours or in the night, their parents are invited to take a joint decision with the staff. The parents have demonstrated much commitment and enthusiasm when such invitations are sent out. Some parents even report their wards to the school administration when they fail to attend such private studies for no task given at home.

Some members of the community, however, expressed their reservations about pupils going back for studies especially in the night. They were of the view that sometimes this could lead to such negative practices as sexual immorality and other security issues as the school is a bit far from town. This becomes true where the teachers are not around to monitor the pupils. Curiosity and peer influence could thus affect their studies thereby defeating the objective of the after-school studies. Other members of the community also observed that though it is a laudable idea to keep the pupils busy, on the other hand, it overburdens the pupils in a way, and hence affect their performance.

(vi)Participation through Regular Visits to the school

Beside the regular PTA meetings, it was found form the interviews that parents also participated in the activities of the school by paying regular visits to the school. According to a majority of the parents and the teachers, sometimes parents visit the school twice in a week and at other times once. On some occasions, the students are gathered for the parents to advise them on their learning attitudes. At other times too, parents pay such regular visits to find out the academic progress of their wards. The headmaster of the school disclosed that during such regular visits, some parents entrust their wards in the care of specific teachers especially form teachers. In such situations when they meet the particular teacher, the question they pose is: "ka mbia maa be wula[7]?" meaning how is my ward? Literally this is to find out the progress of the child. The teachers admitted that this form of participation has helped in a way in curbing waywardness on the part of the pupils for the fear that they might be reported to their parents. Besides, it has ensured that students come to school regularly, and stay in class and study in order to avoid being found out by their parents since the parents could visit at any time.

(vii) Participation as Resource Persons

In the HCPS, it was learnt that participation as resource persons prevails. Past students of the school have formed an Association called the "Old Boys" and normally give free tuition to pupils during vacation or when schools are on holidays.

On this form of participation, Williams (1997) cited in Watt, (2001:27) notes: "perhaps the single most important contribution communities can make to improve school effectiveness is providing and creating a home and community environment conducive enough to reinforce the work of the school. Practically, parents can ensure that their children attend school regularly, arrive at school on time, eat in the morning before lessons begin, and provide time and space for children to study in the home". This goes a long way to affect learning outcomes and hence the performance of the school in that respect.

[7] Nanumba dialect (local language)

On the issue of this kind of informal support for the instructional program a parent remarked:

> *"I try to make the child feed OK before he or she leaves for school.*
> *I always make sure they have their school needs—books, uniform;*
> *and even if I can't, the mothers come in".*

Besides, parents have also served as resource persons on topics bordering on morality as a way of inculcating in the pupils the values of good morals. Again parents have been invited to give talks on cultural issues during their weekend entertainment sessions. This most of the time is an informal kind of support to the school.

(viii) Participation in Enrolment.

The Primary Unit of the school serves as a pool where students are admitted into the JSS. The pupils who have completed primary six courses are automatically promoted to JSS one. Beside this form of enrolling students, it was realised that parents are also involved in enrolment drive. The headteacher who handles enrolment in the school intimated that parents especially those from the surrounding villages are actively involved in bringing their wards for enrolment. As a result of these conscious efforts on the parts of parents, the school is the largest in the whole district in terms of population.

Closely allied to this form of participation is what the headteacher also described as "bringing children to school". In his view, parents in the Bimbilla community in order to encourage their wards, normally bring them to the school in the morning. This form of participation, he noted is peculiar to the educated elites in the community. Suzuki (1999) identified "bringing children to school" as form of participation that exists in primary education in Uganda.

4.5.2. Level of Participation

From the gathered views of parents and teachers of the HCPS, Jilo JSS was identified as a high community participation school during the data collection phase. This confirmed earlier assumption that the level of participation in the school was high.

4.6. Supporting and Constraining Factors

This section of the chapter is a description of the factors that promote or enhance community participation in education as well as factors that serve as constraints or challenges to communities' abilities to participate.

4.6.0. Factors that account for the form and level of participation.

(i) The Performance of children.

One of the several explanations offered for the high level of participation in the school is the performance of wards. Almost all the parents interviewed identified this factor as playing a very big role in their active involvement in the development of the school. According to the parents, the progress reports sent to them by the school at the end of each term coupled with the interest of the children in schooling have made them to get more involved in the affairs of the school. A parent explained that the interest of the child by attending school regularly and exhibiting potential of performing well in the national exams is itself a motivation to get more involved not just in the education of the ward but in the affairs of the school. When I asked this parent whether he was content with the level of academic performance of the school, he pointed out that the increase in enrolment is an indication that the school is performing better. After all, it is not the only JSS in Bimbilla, why then the desire of every parent to have his or her child in the school. In this regard, the study found that the performance of schools is a very important factor in enhancing participation.

(ii) The Value Placed on Education

The value placed on education was another reason advanced by the interviewees for the high level of participation. A female parent expressed the frustration that she did not have the opportunity to attend school as she was given out to her auntie to be brought up. Now she is a housewife and it is very difficult to make a living due to her inability to acquire formal education. Her counterparts who have been fortunate to have formal education receive something at the end of every month as salary and life is better for them. It is her belief that her daughter would be better off if she acquires some form of formal education and that is what motivates her to get more involved in the affairs of the

school. Other parents indicated that education is now everything. One parent explained that “I am a parent who has been to school before and I have realised that in every work, you have to read and write. With education you wouldn’t need anybody to read and write your letters for you”.

It was also learnt from the respondents of this school community that people with formal education are accorded some respect and prestige in the society. Therefore, in order that their children would be given such recognition in the future, they need to get more involved as a form of encouragement to the children.

(iii) Socio-economic status of Parents.

Analysis also revealed that the socio-economic status of parents of this school community accounted for the high level of participation. The ability and capability of communities to participate sometimes are influenced by resources and the willingness to participate. The headteacher noted that Jilo J.S.S seems to be a school for the children of a particular class in the community-the educated, the rich and town dwellers. Socially, parents of this school are mostly people in the upper and middle classes in the Bimbilla community. Their economic status is thus better off compared to the other JSS in the study as they are mostly government workers. When it comes to contributions towards the development of the school, they are in a better position. It must be mentioned that the non-literate parents of the school community prefer in-kind contributions such as the provision of labour and other material donations. This situation affirms Parry et al (1992) observation that participation may be shaped by people’s economic position, their education, their accommodation, their leisure pursuits or their religion. Thus, if one is unemployed, or has children in primary education, or is living in council housing, this will tend to push one’s participatory activity in certain directions rather than others.

Another interesting and closely related social factor discovered to have a great impact on the level of participation was the education level of parents of pupils of this school. Majority of the parents of pupils of this school are the literates in the community. They are mostly teachers and other public service workers. This educational background

underscored the importance of education to them and hence their active involvement in the school their children attend. A parent noted: “as a parent who has been to school, I know education is very important to all children. Education is everything. Without education, you cannot be what you want to be. As a parent, I need to take active part in order to get responsible children in the future”. Like other educated parents, education is seen as an end in itself and so their active involvement.

(iv) Leadership of the School.

The influence of leadership of the school in promoting the high level of participation in this school was explored. The responses gathered from both the parents and teachers showed a good and cordial relationship between the school’s leadership and the community. A majority of parents and PTA leaders admitted that a good communication link exists between them and the school which makes possible their getting acquainted with the problems of the school. This communication link included information transmitted by head teachers and teachers to the community during occasional visits to the school by parents or during PTA meetings. This situation, they pointed out has created the enabling environment for them to visit the school regularly, share ideas with the headteacher and teachers, find out about the problems the school faces, find out about the performance of their children and offer suggestions on a wide variety of issues. Furthermore, they disclosed that the former headteacher tried to maintain a close relationship with the community as much as possible and the new headteacher has built upon this. According to the treasurer of the PTA, “the headteacher is a genuine man. He doesn’t hide and do things and consults us when taking most decisions”.

On his part, the headteacher also noted that the relationship with the community is very cordial but there was need for more improvement. “The community needs to come in, see how the school is faring because the school is for them. They have to interact with us”. The headteacher summed up by saying: “on the whole, they are doing their best. Sometimes, they come with their wards with complaints and ask that they be punished”.

This situation and trust that exist between the leadership of the school and the community has rendered the mobilisation of the community for school development quite easy. This factor reiterates Uemura`s (1997:7) observation that "where schools are perceived as authoritarian institutions, parents and community members do not feel welcomed to participate in their children's education". Thus, the high level of participation in the life of the school finds expression in the consultative, democratic, and transparent leadership style of the school's authorities.

(v) Competition

The need to maintain standards as the best Junior Secondary School in the Bimbilla community was also adduced as one of the major reasons for the level of participation. Before the 1987 and 1996 educational reforms, a very healthy and intense rivalry and competition existed and still exists between Jilo JSS and Central JSS also in the Bimbilla community. Wherever the two schools meet, in sports or academic competitions, each tries to excel at the expense of the other.

It was discovered that in order not to create a situation where central JSS becomes the best in the Bimbilla Township, parents resolved to get actively involved to provide and address the needs of the school. Whatever is discovered to exist in Central JSS in terms of infrastructure and facilities, the community of this school tries to provide more. Watt identified choice and competition as one of the five rationales for community support for education.

4.6.1. Constraining Factors/ Challenges to Participation

Arguably, participation as analysed above has been quite high in Jilo JSS. However, since the launch of the FCUBE that called for the involvement of communities in the development of schools, its implementation has faced many challenges especially in the northern region of Ghana. The major challenges identified as per the views of respondents in this school community include the below.

(i) Financial Constraints

Financial constraints were identified as one of the major factors affecting the participation of parents. It was learnt from the PTA secretary of the school that sometimes some parents avoid PTA meetings and for that matter the decision making process because of poverty. Majority of the teachers in the school interviewed explained that it is the notion of majority of parents especially the poor that any meeting that is called is meant to levy some contribution. It was disclosed that: "contributions are difficult due to poverty. Parents find it difficult to attend school meetings because of fear of contributions to be imposed". However, a teacher noted that the "illiteracy level is very high and so any time a meeting is called, the assumption is that the meeting is geared towards contributions and so reluctant to attend"

(ii) Time.

Most parents or members of the community are peasant farmers and they are often at the crossroads sometimes as to whether to attend school meetings or go to their farms. More often than not, meetings coincide with time of farm work as they are held during the day time. Parents expressed their desire to fully participate in school meetings if such meetings could be held on Fridays and market days—days they have set aside for resting. One of the interviewees noted: "a parent may want to attend PTA meeting but due to work on farm, he or she would not leave the farm work to attend. Besides, when a meeting is scheduled on a market day, traders would not attend.

(iii) Gender

The issue of gender came up during the data collection phase as a major challenge to effective participation. It was realised during the data collection stage that women participation in the affairs of the school was quite low. A parent had this to say: "as a woman, sometimes it is not easy but we do our best because the men try to shout you down at meetings when you try to be vocal". Participation is thus one-sided, male-dominated. Perhaps this could find meaning in the masculine nature of the Ghanaian society, and more especially the community being predominantly Muslim where the role of women have been made subservient to that of men.

(iv) Lack of formal Education/illiteracy

Another major challenge to effective participation identified by respondents was illiteracy or lack of formal education. Even though majority of parents of children of this school are educated, in this community as a whole the illiteracy level is very high. Some parents expressed their frustrations about their views not being considered at meetings simply because they are not formally educated. As a result, when it comes to decisions regarding the development of the school, some of them find it very difficult to get involved since their opinions, no matter how important they might be, may not be considered.

(v) Fear of interference

In spite of the fact that community participation in education was acclaimed as a laudable idea by all parents, the fear of intrusion was disclosed as a major challenge to their desire to participate. It became abundantly clear from the expressed views of parents that some teachers do not usually welcome the involvement of parents. Some of them complained that the attempt to get more involved is misconstrued to mean a conscious effort on the part of the community to interfere in the administration of the school and a sort of audit system. The teachers on their part were of the view that it was not so much the fear of intrusion by teachers. The community saw school management as the responsibility of the head and his or her staff.

(vii) Other Factors

Other factors identified by interviewees as militating against effective participation include:

- The notion of free schooling
- Some parents staying far distances from where the school is located.
- Perception by the community of the refusal to take suggestions from the community by school authorities.

4.7. Impact of High Participation on the Performance of the School.

The objective of attempts to involve the community in education is to improve the education delivery so that more children learn better and are well prepared for the changing world.

Proponents of community participation have, therefore, argued that where the community actively participate in a school in various ways, this could affect the performance of the school in several respects. (Baku: 1994; Uemura: 1999; Bray: 2000; Watt: 2001; etc)

It was discovered in the study that the involvement of the community has not only contributed to existing resources of the school but has also affected the overall performance of the school. Some of the benefits the interviewees enumerated as emanating from the participation of the community include the following.

(i) Provision of Basic Amenities and Facilities.

Unlike the case in this study, Jilo JSS enjoys a lot of benefits due to the active involvement of parents. Analyses of data revealed that the community helped in constructing urinals. The school authorities also mentioned that the PTA through their financial contributions constructed a three-classroom block to help solve the accommodation problem due to the large student numbers. Even though it is the responsibility of the Ghana Education Service (GES) and the District Assembly to provide classrooms for all basic school under the FCUBE, the community came in to supplement the efforts of the government.

Furthermore, according to the school administration, items such as footballs, jersey and other sports equipment are often provided by the community and the "Old Boys" to encourage the pupils to win more laurels in the Inter-Schools Sports Festival. It was learnt that the school received donations on several occasions.

Another benefit the school enjoyed from the community is a piece of land for farming. In the year 2003, the school cultivated land and harvested two bags of Soya beans. The proceeds from the sale were used to supplement the school's budget. In this regard, there was contribution to the resources of the school.

Fifteen plastic chairs were also donated to the staff of the school by parents. These they have kept in the staff common.

The electricity bill of the school is always taken care of by the dues gotten from PTA. This has made it possible for students to study at night.

On the whole the school enjoys active participation where members of the community lend their support in various ways culminating in the development of the school.

(ii) Availability of Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM)

The benefits of the high community involvement in the school, it was discovered is the availability of teaching and learning materials. The teachers of the school disclosed that even though it was not the best, what they had was enough to take care of the present student numbers. The teachers pointed out that there were textbooks for the pupils, common garden tools for demonstration in Agricultural Science lessons, a workshop for Pre-Technical Skills. However, the teachers immediately disclosed that there was no teacher for the Pre-Technical Skills subject.

As to whether pupils come to school adequately prepared for learning, a teacher remarked: “at least they have enough exercise books for all subjects, mathematical sets and some even have supplementary English Readers”. These according to the teachers are provided by parents. As a result, they the teachers as well as the pupils are motivated to teach. The quality of teaching and learning in the school has been positively affected as a result.

(iii) High Enrolment and Retention

It was made clear by the teachers that parents in the community sometimes personally bring their children to the school for enrolment. Besides, some parents of children of the school again are involved in bringing their children to the school every day. This motivates the pupils to stay in school. Parents are concerned with the education of their children. Learning kits are provided to enable pupils learn effectively. At home, some parents even engage the services of some teachers to give after-school tuition to their children to complement the efforts of regular teachers. One parent commented: “I have just acquired a wooden chalk board. I try to teach my daughter and son English language. I am also in the process of seeing some other teachers to help in mathematics as I am not

very good at that subject. I hope to make sure that they get tutors for the other subjects as well in the future." This kind of attitude by the school community, the teachers explained has helped to enhance the enrolment and retention rate in the school over the years. This no doubt has affected the performance of the school in this respect. This has equally affected the development of the school with regards to resources since any development levy receives a greater contribution. The table below is an illustration of the enrolment and retention over the years.

Table 3: School Enrolment and Drop-out Rate over the years

YEARS	ENROLMENT	DROP-OUT	TOTAL
1997	388	15	373
1998	464	13	451
1999	482	11	471
2000	439	8	431
2001	458	12	446
2002	523	9	514
2003	547	7	540
2004	554	1	553

SOURCE*: *School's Records from the Head Teacher

It can be seen from the table above that the enrolment rate is progressively growing while the drop-out rate is correspondingly going down over the years.

The school authorities attributed the positive growth in enrolment to the active involvement of the community. The Headteacher of the school explained that the community's involvement in looking for accommodation for teachers, interacting with teachers to know the problems of the school and sometimes helping teachers financially has motivated the teaching staff to give off their best. He further stated that this has

affected the performance of the school in terms of student achievements thereby resulting in the desire of every parent to have his or her child in the school and hence the high enrolment and retention the school is witnessing in recent years. It was again gathered that unless the community do something more, in the near future the school might not be able to admit more pupils given the rate at which the numbers were growing.

(iv) Better Academic and other Extra-Curricular Achievements

I also found that although not the best, both parents and teachers of the school attributed the moderate achievements of the school in national examinations somehow to the involvement of the community. Majority of parents interviewed explained that they tried to do their best for the children. Thus, learning kits such as exercise books, mathematical sets, and supplementary readers in various subjects are provided. Besides, when it comes to payment of examination fees, parents do not hesitate to contribute. Children become used to writing printed paper examinations.

It was learnt from parents as well, that at home, atmosphere conducive for after-school learning is provided. This serves as a source of motivation for both the pupils and teachers of the school. According to the teachers, this commitment by parents positively impact on the learning outcomes of pupils.

Again, the strong showing of the school in the Inter-schools sporting competitions over the years have been partly explained by the high level of community participation in the affairs of the school. It was revealed that the school on several occasions received sporting items such as footballs for training towards competitions. Some parents, it was also learnt go to watch their children trained. This kind of concern, according to the teachers, in a way inspired the pupils to work hard in order to impress not only the teachers of the school but their parents as well. Therefore, for some years now, the school has always placed first or second in sporting competitions in the community.

The performance of Jilo JSS in the BECE is moderately better compared to the Islamic JSS. Though not extremely outstanding like the academic performance of other Junior Secondary schools in the urban areas of the Northern region or their counterparts in Southern Ghana, by the local standards of the community, the performance of the school

is recognized as one of the best. The table below is an indication of the performance of the school in the National Examinations over the years.

Table 4: Academic Performance over the years

YEAR	AGGREGATES					TOTAL NO. OF CANDIDATES.
	6-12 (Best)	**13-15**	**16-20**	**21-30**	**31-54 (worst)**	
1997	11	30	16	44	18	119
1998	8	12	22	55	12	109
1999	-	6	17	64	38	125
2000	-	3	7	37	95	143*
2001	-	5	25	85	17	132
2002	-	8	33	61	15	117
2003	-	-	12	57	86	155

***Source*: School Records from the Head Teacher**

*One student's result was cancelled by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) for exams malpractice.

It is interesting to mention that a review of the results showed that the performance of girls as against boys has rather been quite interesting. For instance, in 1999, only three girls had aggregates ranging from 16-20, 25 had aggregates falling within the range of 21-30. In 2000, the trend was even worse. The best performance of girls fell within the range of 21-30. 11 girls had aggregates within this category. Even though in recent years the trend has improved, it is still not one of the best.

The decline in the performance of the school in spite of the high level of participation perhaps could find meaning in school related factors, such as quality of teaching, standards at the National level as WAEC stressed so much on ideas rather than other aspects at the early stages of the reforms.

(v) Resources and Motivation

It was also revealed that the school is somehow well-resourced and motivated. Almost all the teachers in the interview schedule agreed that in terms of financial resources, the school is better. Parents pay levies fixed towards the development of the school. Sometimes they even initiate contributions. Such commitments by the school community have enabled the school to undertake and carry out projects and acquire certain things on its own. Teachers referred to a three classroom block constructed by the PTA of the school, plastic chairs for teaching staff, school library, urinal pits etc. However, more awareness creation is still needed to enhance the financial resource base of the school as it is a hell to get some parents to get involved financially the headteacher disclosed.

The involvement of the community has also resulted in a high motivation in the school. All the teachers interviewed including the headteacher expressed happiness with the level of participation. The teachers pointed out that in order to keep them up and doing, the community is involved in looking for accommodation for newly posted teachers, helping them financially sometimes when they are in need, paying regular visits to the school to find out about their welfare, and some parents even entrust their children in the care of specific teachers. This concern, according to the teachers has helped in forging a closer relationship between the school and the community which is a good development as they view the problems of the school with a single eye. This no doubt has served as finding a common ground for solving some of the problems of the school to enhance teaching and learning.

On the part of the pupils, the teachers equally agreed that performance of the school with regard to motivation is affirmative. Pupils come to school adequately prepared for

learning. The necessary environment is created both at home and at school to ensure that children learn better.

4.8. Summary

In this chapter, a brief overview of the organisational structure of the Basic Education system in Ghana has been examined. The grading system in national examinations at the Basic level was also given prominence in an attempt to explain the performance of the two schools under study.

The second part of the chapter is a presentation of the first case. The experience of the school as far as participation is concerned in terms of forms, supporting and constraining factors form the concern of this part.

The last part looks at the impact of high participation on this school. The development of the school in terms of facilities and amenities, enrolment and retention, academic and other extra-curricular performance, availability of teaching and learning materials, and resources and motivation have been looked at.

CHAPTER FIVE

PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

The Low Community Participation School

5.0. Introduction

This chapter is a presentation of findings on community participation in Islamic Junior Secondary School. The practical experience of the school in terms of forms, level, conditions that promote or hinder participation as well as the challenges to community participation is examined. The impact of the level of participation on the performance of the school is also presented. Data used were mainly obtained from interviews, school records and other official documents from the school during the field research.

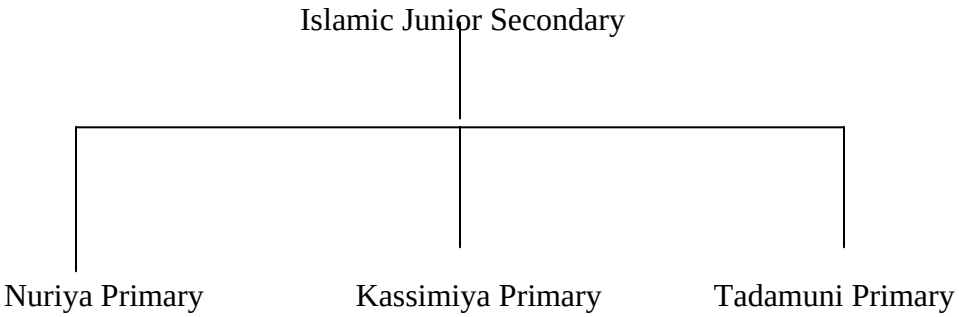
5.1. Low Community Participation School (LCPS)

Like the first school in this study, Islamic Junior Secondary School is located in the Bimbilla community of the Nanumba district. The JSS has three primary Units (Schools) all located in this same community but on different grounds each with its own head teacher. These primary Units were established by Islamic or Quràn scholars to teach the religion before the government took over the running of those schools. Thus the Islamic Junior Secondary School draws students from three Arabic primary schools. These are Nuriya, Kassimiya and Tadamuni. The Islamic Junior Secondary School came into being in 1987 with the new educational reforms. It was first housed in the old Nanumba District Council before it was moved to its present site.

The school has a student population of 342 pupils for the 2003/2004 academic year and a teacher capacity of about fifteen including two Arabic Instructors. One is an HND holder, two are City and Guilds certificate holders while the rest are Certificate `A` holders. These number falls short of the required number to handle the about ten to twelve subjects taught at the basic level in the school.

With regards to the situation of facilities and physical infrastructure, Islamic Junior Secondary School cannot be compared to other Junior Secondary schools in the Bimbilla Community. It has two classroom buildings. One of the buildings was constructed at the time the reforms were implemented and the second building constructed by the Nanumba District Assembly. This building is still uncompleted. Since then, these two buildings have never seen any renovation and they are almost dilapidated. The school has no library and other basic facilities. According to the Headmistress, the school is "the neglected child[8]" among the Junior Secondary Schools in the community. Diagrammatically, this is how the school is presented.

Figure 3:Structure of Islamic JSS



5.2. Community Participation in Islamic JSS.

Islamic Junior Secondary School experiences a different level and forms of participation as observed during the interview schedules with the teachers and parents of the school. Stakeholders of this school disclosed that even though it is mandatory for communities to take active part in the development and affairs of schools their children attend, participation in this school is quite dormant or low. A number of parents disclosed at the interviews that they have never taken part in any decision of the school. According to the teachers, as result of the fact that, secular education takes precedence over Islamic education at this level in the school, community members and parents largely distance themselves from the affairs of the school. While at the Primary level, Islamic education is

[8] Educational administrators in the district do not care about the school in terms of providing facilities and infrastructure.

emphasised, parents and community members are more involved than at the Junior Secondary School level. However, a number of forms of participation have been identified by both parents and teachers as prevailing in the school. These forms of participation are examined below.

5.3. Forms of Participation.

(i) Participation through attendance of Parent Teacher Association Meetings.

Patronage through PTA meetings was identified as a form of participation that exists in the school. Almost all parents interview asserted that they take part in the affairs of the school through PTA meetings. It was, however, learnt that turnout at PTA meetings in this school unlike the other school in the study is quite low. According to the Headmistress of the school, majority of parents do not often show up at PTA meetings because they think such meetings are for contributions which they do not want to hear at all. The teachers also attributed low turnout at PTA meetings largely to the fact that such meetings are often fixed on Fridays. Being a school that has majority of parents being Arabic or Quràn scholars, they find this difficult in attending the meetings with the Friday prayer which is so much valued.

It was also learnt that the PTA in the school is not very active. According to the PTA secretary who is a teacher in the school, the last PTA meeting in the school was held sometime in 2003. Most parents, thus, explained that they do not have the opportunity to participate as they are not regularly invited for meetings. This situation denies the teachers the opportunity to discuss the development of the school with parents.

(ii)Financial Contributions

Interviewees again identified financial contributions as one of the forms of participation that prevails in the school. Unlike Jilo Junior Secondary, however, there is a major challenge in getting the commitment of the community to contribute financially towards the development of the school. It was gathered from the responses of both community members and the school authorities that the ability and willingness to contribute towards

the financial resources of the school is virtually non-existent. The Headmistress of the school described the situation of financial contribution as a “tug-of-war”. The issue of payment has prevented majority of parents from attending PTA meetings and other school gatherings.

In her opinion, the head lamented over this situation saying: “at times when you invite them (parents) for meetings, they’ll not turn up because of contributions. Even though, a parent has two children in the school, he said he would not contribute towards getting electricity in the school. As a result the school is still without lighting system as majority of parents have not contributed”. A parent who is one of the proprietors of the three Arabic Primary Schools from which the JSS draws students asserted: “is an old school but as parents we do not come out to help in the development of the school. We do not contribute financially to help the school but I hope to contribute in the future”.

Teachers interviewed disclosed that parents do not understand why under the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) programme, which is supposed to be free, they still buy books, school uniform and other materials for their children. In their view, that should be the responsibility of the government. This notion has affected the performance of the school in terms of infrastructure, enrolment, retention and quality of teaching and learning. Unlike other basic schools, most of the time, they write exams questions on the chalkboard as they do not have the financial resources to print the questions as is done in other schools. It was further disclosed that parents consider other forms of payments besides the school fees as burden. It was learnt also that in this school: “ parents do not cooperate in paying examination levies and complain of poverty when they have two or more wives and can conveniently take care of them”. A number of parents according to the PTA secretary of the school threatened withdrawing their children if the school authorities insisted on immediate payment of the PTA levies.

Even though some parents admitted their willingness to contribute to the financial resources of the school, they are not capable as they are not employed. Majority of parents lamented over the abject poverty that militates against their desire to contribute

financially. However, as noted by earlier researchers, communities ability to participate should be distinguished from its willingness to participate. Almost all the teachers in the interview schedule observed that the willingness to get involved financially in the affairs of the school by the community is virtually lacking. As a result, the school's performance in academic and sporting activities as well as other schools competitions has been very poor. The teachers lamented that even the community cannot get a football for the school in preparation for competitions hence, the school always being last in all sporting activities.

An interesting observation made by one of the teachers of the school is that his interaction with a number of parents showed lack of trust for the school authorities. According to him, some parents are reluctant to contribute because previous contributions under the former headteacher of the school were not put to good use. So the feeling that teachers would once again squander the monies from such financial contributions has made them feet-drag when it comes to payment of monies.

(iii) School Management

Communities are under obligation of the FCUBE programme to participate in the management of schools their children attend.

It was realised from the interviews that the community of this school takes a backstage in the management of the school. The awareness to participate is low among parents of the school. Most parents claimed that they are not involved in the decisions and management of the school. According to them, management is usually in the hands of the headmistress and her staff. No conscious effort is made to involve them. Further, parents disclosed that PTA meetings are not called regularly at all and it is only through such meetings that they can contribute their quota towards the running of the school. An interesting revelation, however, was that majority of parents were not aware of the existence of the SMC in the school.

On the part of the teaching staff, it was discovered that the headmistress maintained a large power distance with members of the community in terms of managing the school. According to the PTA secretary, the SMC only exists in name as this body is not often

consulted in taking certain crucial decisions. Teachers of the school were, however, quick to point out that even though meetings are not called regularly, the patronage of parents for those meetings is very discouraging as they do not usually show up. The Headmistress intimated that parents largely isolate themselves from the management of the school. According to her, her interaction with some members of the management Committee showed that they do not get much involved in the management process of the school because they consider it an interference which perhaps some of the teachers might not welcome.

In view of the poor attitude of parents to the affairs of the school, the Committee is not really active and does not get involved in raising the performance level of the school through taking and implementing school decisions and programmes as such acts are often difficult to get the blessings or approval of the community or parents. Management is, therefore, more or less in the hands of the school administration.

(iv) Participation in Moral Education.

An interesting mode of participation that both the community and teachers of the school identified as prevailing in the school is what they referred to as participation in moral education. According to the community and teachers, as a school with a religious tradition, the community is actively involved in some form of civic education. This is a form of moral education which is organised from time to time in which community members interact with pupils by advising them on virtues of life. They are admonished against bad acts that would cast a slur on their personality as future responsible citizens. All this according to the school administration is done to ensure moral discipline in the school.

However, both the teachers and the head of the school pointed out that this form of participation has little impact on the pupils. In their view, discipline is not the best and that most of the school drop-outs especially on the part of the girls emanate from teenage pregnancy. One teacher commenting on the low level of discipline asserted that “they (students) do not come to school always. They prefer to attend dances and discos. They

do not fear parents at home and so do not take issues serious". In the view of this observer, this partly explains the poor performance of the school both in terms of academic achievement and other extra-curricular activities.

On the whole, these were the major modes of participation identified by both parents and the school administration as existing as far as the relationship of the school and the community is concerned.

5.3.1. Level of Participation.

From the responses gathered during the field research, it was realised that in this school community, parents do not show interest in the affairs of the school. Most of the parents or members of the community interviewed lamented over the state of affairs in the school. On the issue of how often they take part in the decisions of the school, it is interesting to reveal that some parents have never taken part in any. What baffled me during the interview was the testimony of an educated parent who admitted that he had never taken part in any decision of the school and had equally never attended any PTA meeting.

Again, teachers disclosed that parents do not pay visits to the school to find out the progress of their children; to find out whether the school has problems and that sometimes when children are punished parents are not happy. They reported that on one occasion, a teacher was confronted by a parent for flogging his child who persistently absents herself from school.

In reality, the teachers maintained, participation the school is virtually non-existent. The community does not contribute towards the welfare of the school and does not as well levy its members to address the needs of the school.
Thus, the teachers referred to the level of participation as not just being low but non-existent in practical terms.

5.3.2. Factors explaining the level and forms of participation in the LCPS (Challenges to Participation)

(i) Non-commitment and Unwillingness of the community

One of the several reasons adduced for the low level of participation in this school is what the teachers of the school described as the unwillingness of the community to get involved in the affairs of the school. In the opinion of the teachers of the school, members of the community lack the commitment and willingness to participate in school affairs. As a result, when they are invited for meetings, they fail to show up. On this issue, Watt (2001:20) has observed that the willingness of communities to support education needs to be distinguished from their ability to support education. Communities may be able to provide additional support to the local school but be unwilling to do so, typically because the costs of support outweigh the benefits. This may be due to the low quality of education provided and the related failure of children to learn much in school; or because of the low returns to schooling, especially at the primary level. In some cases, it may be because the community views education as inappropriate for some, if not all, children.

In this regard, the teachers maintained that the community lacks the willingness to support the school and not that the community does not have the ability to do it. Contrary to the assertion by some researchers in the field that community participation is determined by financial capabilities of community members, this study has found that the level of participation is determined more by attitude and good-will, which depends on relevant knowledge rather than financial capability. Creating awareness on the need for communities to participate is indispensable to raise the level of participation.

(ii) Poverty

Another major issue that explained the forms and level of participation in the LCPS is poverty. Even though teachers of the school blamed the level of participation in the school on unwillingness of the school community to participate, they admitted that poverty has also served as a barrier to the ability of parents to participate. Some of the teachers bemoaned the fact that poverty has prevented parents from getting more involved in the activities of the school. It was learnt from one teacher that parents are

involved but sometimes because of poverty they cannot respond as expected. The PTA secretary buttressed this point by disclosing that as a result of poverty, even exams fees are not easily paid and so sometimes they write on the chalkboards.

On the part of the headmistress, she maintained that the level of participation is very low because of poverty. According to her, sometimes they deliberately avoid school meetings and other functions because of contributions. She summed up by saying "it is only the children of the poor, Arabic scholars and village folks who attend this school".

Parents interviewed lamented over the poor state of affairs of the school in terms of infrastructure. Even though Parents expressed their desire to help the school, however, their main "enemy" according to a disturbed parent is poverty. It was realised that majority of parents of this school are the poor in the society; mostly farmers with no stable income. They are not gainfully employed.

Closely related to the problem of poverty is the socio-economic status of parents of the school. Parents of the school according to the school authorities are not government workers and for that matter do not have stable and regular income that would enable them participate fully when it comes to contributing financially to the resources of the school. According to the Headmistress, "most of the children come from broken homes and so sometimes they work on farms and sell in the market before they get money to pay for some of the levies that are instituted by the school".

Besides, most of them are Arabic Scholars who are yet to see the importance of secular education which they consider as Christian attempts to gain more converts.

(iii)Illiteracy and Notion of Free Education

Allied to the issues of unwillingness and poverty, the form and low level of participation also find meaning in the high illiteracy of the school community and the notion of free education. The teachers of the school explained that parents of children of the school are semi-literates, Qurànic scholars or people who have no formal education at all. As a result, the importance of education is lost on majority of them and hence they largely isolate themselves from the activities of the school.

Flowing from the illiteracy is the notion of free education. Parents were of the view that the government has made basic education free under the FCUBE. Thus, they are not supposed to pay money or any levy since the government has made everything free. Furthermore, they argued that the development of the school in whatever form is the responsibility of the government and not the community. What baffled them is the fact that they still buy school uniforms, exercise books, other learning materials and even some text books. In their view, the needs of the school should be referred to the Ghana Education Service and not them the parents or the community.

It was learnt that due to the illiteracy and notion of free education held by this school community, the degree to which members of the community take up their responsibility to support the school leaves much to be desired. Thus, resources and other teaching and learning aids needed to teach the pupils to acquire vocational and technical skills are seriously lacking as a result of lack of support from the community to acquire some of these items that have not been provided by the GES.

(iv)Leadership of the school

Another important factor explaining the form and level of participation in the school is the issue of leadership. In spite of the fact that the school staff maintained a cordial and good relationship with the community, it was learnt from the community members that they do not have trust in the leadership. According to a number of parents, the immediate past headmaster of the school could not account for contributions made towards getting electricity in the school. This situation has thus created lack of trust towards the leadership by the community. As a result, the social capital and for that matter civic engagement of the community in the activities of the school has been eroded somehow. This unfortunate situation emanating from the leadership of the previous head of the school has rendered the initiation of new ideas to get the community to support the school almost impossible by the present headmistress as explained by one of the teachers. This participant observed that “some parents do not want to participate when it comes to contribution because of the feeling that teachers would squander the moneys after contributions as happened in the past”. It was learnt that there is a distance between the

leadership and the community. Issues affecting the development of the school with regards to infrastructure, enrolment, retention and academic performance are not, therefore, discussed at the school-community level as done in the other school in the study.

(v) Time

An interesting factor that came up as constituting a barrier to the participation of the community in the activities of the school is time. Being a farming community where majority of parents of children of the school are peasant farmers, they alleged that most of the time the activities of the school conflict with their farming activities. According to the parents, the school authorities often call PTA meetings on Fridays. This is not equally healthy for them as they have to attend the Friday Muslim prayers.

It must be stated, however, that this factor can only partially account for the low level of participation in view of the fact that such PTA meetings do not cover the whole day. This once again brings to the fore the issue of unwillingness and non-commitment on the part of the community to get involved in the life of the school, after all Jilo JSS is also located in the same community where majority of parents are also Muslims.

5.3.3. Impact of Low Participation on the Performance of the School.

The level of participation in this school has been rated by the teachers as quite low compared to the other school in the study. As a result the school is robbed of the opportunity of reaping the benefits of increased participation. As observed by a teacher of Jilo JSS: “in terms of competition and academic performance, the Islamic JSS is always down. This is due to the fact that the level of participation there is very poor”.

The impact of the low level of participation on the performance of the school has been discussed below.

(i) Inadequate Infrastructure and other Basic amenities.

As found out by other researchers, community participation in the affairs and activities of a school can have positive impact in terms of the school’s performance. In this school, this observation was made manifest as both the headmistress and teachers of the school

disclosed that the school lacked basic amenities and infrastructure due to the low involvement of the community.

I found that the school has only two classroom blocks which is quite inadequate to accommodate the students. These two buildings according to the teachers are incomplete and have never seen any renovation. One of the teachers noted that “the low level of participation has affected the development of the school. “We are yet to get electricity in the school which is affecting studies as the pupils cannot study in the night as is done in the other Junior Secondary schools. The two blocks could not be wired as majority of parents did not contribute”.

On her part the headmistress lamented bitterly over the poor state of infrastructure in the school. She catalogued the problems the school has in the area of infrastructure because of the inactive involvement of the school community. According to her, “we (School) have no furniture. The form ones (First year students) buy their own furniture. We need renovation. All the doors are not functioning well. We need to plaster the floor, no doors and windows. We don’t have any text book in the school apart from mathematics”. The headmistress intimated that unlike other Junior Secondary schools and especially “Our Lady of Peace JSS” where the community is actively involved, this problem of accommodation, renovation and other basic infrastructure so important to teaching and learning are not present. She summed up by saying, “the low participation greatly affects the learning environment in the school as sometimes makeshift classrooms are created particularly during new admissions”.

It was disclosed further that as a result of the inadequate classrooms, there is overcrowding which makes it very difficult for movement in the classrooms and hence teaching and learning. This partly explains the not-too-good performance of the school.

Again, it came to light that the school has no workshop for the teaching of practical-oriented subjects such as Pre-Technical and Vocational Skills. Student are thus, taught only theoretical aspects without having the opportunity of even seeing or handling some

of the implements or tools that are mentioned in the textbooks. The aim of the FCUBE programme of equipping these pupils with some skills to start vocations or trade of their own is therefore, defeated.

Other amenities like urinals, Kumasi Ventilated and Improved Pits (KVIP)[9] are equally lacking in the school. The Teachers admitted that this creates room for indiscipline as some times the pupils use that as an excuse to leave the classroom and dodge home.

Thus the absence of these basic infrastructure and other facilities have been largely attributed to the lack of involvement of parents of the school by the teaching staff. This situation in the view of majority of the teaching staff has affected the enrolment, retention, motivation of teachers and the school's academic performance.

(ii)Lack of Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM)

Another important impact of the low level of participation on the performance of the school is the lack of Teaching and Learning Materials. The teaching staff admitted that teaching and learning materials are very important factors that affect the learning of pupils; yet this is virtually non-existent in the school. It was learnt that textbooks are lacking in the school and children do not have the necessary learning aids such as mathematical sets, exercise books and supplementary readers, These items are supposed to be provided by parents. Besides, the teachers also mentioned that the school lacks cardboards for drawing, syllabus and other concrete materials like knapsacks for the teaching of agricultural science. While the other schools have acquired some of these materials through the efforts of the school community, in Islamic JSS, they have resigned to fate because the parents of this school do not want to get involved.

The Headmistress's view was not different from her staff. She opined that the only textbook in the school is that of mathematics.

Furthermore, it was discovered that the absence of these teaching and learning materials have affected the motivation of teachers. Some of the teachers did not hide their disgust

[9] Toilet facility developed by the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

about having to conduct end-of-term exams sometimes on the chalk boards which are equally in bad states. Thus they do not have teachers for all the subjects in the school as most teachers refuse posting to the school.

The lack of these basic teaching and learning materials has impacted greatly on the performance of the school. While teachers do not have the necessary resources with regards to teaching aids, students equally come to school ill-prepared in terms of learning kits. Teaching and learning process are subsequently affected resulting in low enrolment, retention and academic achievement in national exams.

(iii) Low enrolment and Retention.

It has been argued earlier in chapter one that community involvement in the life of the school could have a dramatic impact on education access, retention, and quality. Earlier researchers have argued that where the community is actively involved in the activities of a school, this could have corresponding impact in terms of school enrolment and retention.

In the Islamic JSS, it was made clear that parents are not involved in enrolment drive as is done in the other school in the study. Parents show little concern for the education of their children. They do not supervise their children. Perhaps this could be due to the high illiteracy rate of this school community. As a result, the retention rate of the school has been declining over the years as some serious students run to other JSS in the Bimbilla community. The table below is an illustration of the enrolment and retention rate in the school over the years.

Table 5: School Enrolment and Drop-out over the years

YEARS	ENROLMENT	DROP-OUT	TOTAL
1997	265	4	261
1998	290	8	282
1999	292	8	284
2000	296	5	291
2001	303	23	280
2002	308	18	290
2003	365	26	339
2004	342	17	325

SOURCE: School's Records.

From the table, it is very clear that even though the enrolment seems to be increasing some how over the years, the drop-out rate rather increases though not significantly.

Some of the teachers and the headmistress expressed the frustration that unlike in other schools where the community is actively involved in the enrolment of pupils, in the Islamic JSS this is not the situation. As a result the development of the school in terms of enrolment and retention is highly hampered as seen from the table above. According to them, children are not motivated and encouraged to go to school regularly. The environment is not created at home to motivate pupils to learn after school hours. This is beside the fact that majority of pupils in the school do not have school uniform and the needed learning materials.

On the progressive enrolment rate in spite of the low involvement of the community, the teachers of the school attributed it to the fact that the school draws pupils from three Arabic Primary Schools and also children of Arabic scholars from neighbouring communities.

The school authorities, however, hinted that unless the community becomes actively involved, over the years, the school would lose a greater percentage of its population to other Junior Secondary schools in the Bimbilla community. They admitted that the level of participation by the community has a corresponding impact on the level of

development of the school as far as enrolment and retention is concerned. One of the teachers referred to "Our Lady of Peace JSS[10]" in the Bimbilla community where the parents are more actively involved than in any other school. He disclosed that they experienced less drop-outs and a very high enrolment and retention.

(iv)Poor Academic and other Extra-curricular Performance

Further, it was noticed that the school's poor academic performance over the years coupled with its abysmal showing in sporting and other competitions partly find expression in the low level of involvement of parents. It was learnt from the teachers that they are not motivated as in other schools. Children come to school ill-prepared as they do not have the necessary learning aids. Teachers equally do not have the needed teaching materials for some of the subjects such as Pre-Technical and Vocational skills as the school has no Workshop of its own. The school has no garden where practical agriculture can be taught. Besides, there are no common farm tools to show to pupils during lessons on topics involving these items. Demonstrations are thus difficult to do and the pupils have to learn everything based on what is in the books.

On the other extreme is the uncooperative nature of parents as they do not just want to hear of payment. Most of the time, therefore, end-of-term and end-of-year examinations are conducted by writing on the chalkboard. In the view of the teachers, this does not make it possible for pupils to get used to writing printed exams. This thus affects them in national examinations as opposed to their colleagues in other schools who normally have the opportunity to sit printed examinations before the national exams as their parents are ready to pay. The headmistress, however, blamed the situation partly on single parenthood. According to her "most of the children come from broken homes and so sometimes they work on farms or sell in the market before they get money to contribute and support themselves in school".

In addition to the above, the poor showing of the school in the Inter-Schools sports and Quiz competitions organised by the District Education Office has also been attributed to

[10] A Junior Secondary School established by the Catholic Church in the Bimbilla Community.

the low level of participation by the community. It was learnt in this school that basic kits for training are non-existent as this is the responsibility of the school community to acquire. The school authorities also pointed out that as a form of encouragement, in some schools such as Jilo JSS, Central and Our Lady of Peace JSS, parents sometimes go to watch their children trained during times of sporting competitions. Here, however, parents are just indifferent about what goes on and hence the poor performance in these competitions. The headmistress lamented that the best they have often achieved in sporting events is usually the last position. The high illiteracy rate of the school community could account for this.

The table below is an illustration of the school's academic performance over the years.

Table 6: Academic Performance over the years

YEAR	**AGGREGATES**					**TOTAL NO. OF CANDIDATES.**
	6-12 (Best)	**13-15**	**16-20**	**21-30**	**31-54 (Worst)**	
1998	-	3	18	53	16	90
1999	-	9	15	62	11	97
2000	-	1	27	40	12	80
2001	-	-	2	79	15	96
2002	-	3	15	70	17	105
2003	-	-	-	50	21	71

Source: School's Records from the Head Mistress.

5.4. **Summary**

In this chapter, there is a discussion of the practical situation of community participation in the life of the LCPS. There is an overview of the school's background, the forms of participation identified by respondents as existing in this school. A brief examination of the level of participation is also discussed. Then are the factors that account for the level

and forms of participation; and finally the impact of the low level of participation on the development of the school.

CHAPTER SIX

COMPARISON OF THE CASES

6.0. Introduction

Having looked at community participation in the two schools in the previous chapters, the present chapter is devoted to a comparative study of the two cases as far as the involvement of the community and its impact on the performance of the schools are concerned. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part looks at areas that the two schools are similar; the second part discusses the variations in the level of performance. In the last part, an attempt is made to provide reasons for the differences in the forms and levels of participation resulting in the varying patterns of performance. Therefore, the differences and similarities between the two schools have been analysed based on the location and size, teacher and student recruitment mode, schools socio-economic situation, curriculum, retention, academic performance and the status concerning infrastructure and facilities.

6.1. Similarities Between the schools.

As seen in the two previous chapters, the two schools exhibit a lot of similar characteristics in a number of respects. The below is a discussion of the area that they look similar.

6.1.0. Location and size of the two schools.

As mentioned earlier in the background of the two schools, geographically, they are both located in the Bimbilla community of the Nanumba District. Thus both schools are found in an urban environment. It is a semi-literate community with the bulk of government workers living there as it is the District capital.

With regards to school size, there is some slight difference between the two. The HCP School has a student population of 554 pupils and the LCP School has 342 pupils. Being

located in the same community, they have about the same cultural values in terms of organisation and management.

6.1.1. Teacher and Student Recruitment Mode.

The mode of recruiting teachers and pupils into the two schools are the same. Teachers are supplied to both by the Ghana Education Service through the District Directorate of Education. Teacher trainees who have successfully completed the three-year post secondary course; and those from Technical Institutes and other Vocational schools are posted to all public basic schools of which the two are part. The teachers are supplied by the Ghana Education Service

On the issue of student enrolment, primary class six pupils who have successfully completed the primary six courses are automatically admitted into JSS one. Both schools have primary Units from where they draw pupils. Sometimes surrounding villages also send their children to these schools.

6.1.2. Curriculum and Syllabus.

As community-based schools, both are also run on the same curriculum and syllabus developed by the *Curriculum Research and Development Division* (CRDD) of the GES. They have the same number of contact hours at school. Besides, they adhere strictly to the GES code of conduct and discipline for all public basic schools in the country. Thus in both schools, about 9-13 subjects are studied depending on the availability of teachers and whether the school offers French or not. Thus, they take the same national examinations (i.e.BECE) organised by the West African Examinations Council. Finally, they participate in the same sports and cultural festivals.

6.1.3. Schools sources of funding.

The Central Government still remains the main source of funding for the development of basic education in Ghana, though communities have been given responsibility in education provision and delivery. The HCPS as well as the LCPS, therefore depend on

government subvention. Provision of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials come from the government through the District Education Office. However, communities are supposed to supplement government efforts in this direction. Construction, equipment and maintenance of school infrastructure are the responsibility of local governments. The salaries and other emoluments of teachers are paid by the Central Government. In order to increase their financial bases, the schools are encouraged to work closely with the communities and parents. PTAs, therefore, constitute another source of funding for both schools. In this regard, community participation in one form or the other is available in both schools.

6.2. **Differences between the Two Schools.**

Even though the two schools show similar features in a number of areas as seen in the above discussion, they nevertheless differ in so many respects especially in terms of performance. Majority of the interviewees attributed different level of performance to the differences in the forms and level of community participation in the schools. In the ensuing part of the chapter follows discussions of the differences.

6.2.0. **Schools Enrolment**

One major area of performance in the two schools where there is a marked difference is the issue of enrolment. As indicated in earlier discussions, while the HCPS benefits from enrolment drive from the school community, this is not the case in the LCPS. This has resulted in the pupil population growing over the years. Jilo JSS has, thus become the biggest school in the community as far as student numbers are concerned. From the records of the two schools, the HCPS has a population of 554 as against 342 in the LCPS. It was learnt that parents of the HCPS is quite elitist; and socially and economically better. Thereby the value of education is not lost on them and hence the involvement in the enrolment process of the school.

6.2.1. **Retention**

Following from the above is the issue of retention in the two schools. It was discovered that the retention rate in the HCPS is quite high compared to the LCPS. While the drop-out rate in the LCPS is increasing progressively over the years partly because of the lack

of parental concern for their children, it is the opposite in the HCPS. Teachers of the HCPS intimated that parents often pay regular visits to check on the progress and welfare of their children in the school. Also, parents try to find out and address the problems of the school. This according to them serves as a source of motivation for the children to stay in school. Again, it explains the low drop-out rate over the years.

In Islamic Junior Secondary, however, it was learnt that parents do not motivate and encourage their children at all. Children come to school without learning kits. According to the Headmistress, some of the pupils sell at the market to take care of themselves in school. The needs of the school are not addressed. In some of such situations some pupils drop out as a result.

6.2.2. **Infrastructure and Amenities.**

In terms of physical infrastructure and other amenities for smooth teaching and learning, a vast difference was noticed with regards to the two schools. While the LCPS has two classroom buildings that are yet to be completed or seen any renovation, the HCPS has three classroom buildings. The latter has benefited from a classroom block under the GOG-China Government cooperation. The second building according to teachers of the school was constructed by the school's PTA. On the issue of school buildings, therefore, the HCPS looks quite better and imposing. On the other hand, the headmistress of the LCPS bemoaned the poor level of involvement saying at least one of the two buildings would have been completed had the community been more involved in the affairs of the school. . In her view, in the other basic schools, it is the parents who provide some of the needs of the school and not the government. According to her, the classrooms are woefully inadequate. It becomes very difficult therefore, during new admissions where most of the time they rely on makeshift classrooms. Sometimes too they organise classes under the many mango trees in the school. It was learnt that the HCPS has somehow adequate facilities in terms of classrooms to accommodate the pupils for now but more would be needed in the future in view of the increasing enrolment.

It must be stated here, however, that the school faces this problem somehow as a result of the financial status of parents as well as lack of support from the state and donors. Even if parents were more involved, given their precarious financial situation, perhaps

the situation would not have been that different since they could not contribute financially towards some of the projects.

Generally regarding teaching and learning materials, the headmistress of the LCPS disclosed that apart from mathematics textbooks that are adequate, there were virtually no textbooks for the other subjects. The school also lacks workshop for practical subjects as well as a library to engage the pupils. Furthermore, it was revealed that parents do not get involved in looking for accommodation for newly posted teachers hence the lack of teachers for some of the technical subjects. On why the school faces these myriad of infrastructural problems, the headmistress pointed out that the parents are indifferent and adamant to the plight of the school moistly due to poverty. They cannot afford most of the time. This has in no doubt affected the overall performance of the school and the quality of teaching and learning in the school.

On the other hand, the HCPS seemed better in terms of these listed facilities including a library though not well stocked. Besides, the school also has electricity facility provided through contributions by parents. Urinals have also been built through the community. In the main, in terms of infrastructural development, the HCPS is many miles ahead of the other case in the study.

Generally, the performance of a school is also determined by the resources available to the school for its daily management. The focus here is on economic or financial resources. As indicated before, even though the policy document of the FCUBE called for community involvement, the government still remains the principal financier of basic education in the country.

It was, however, found from the field work that in Jilo Junior Secondary, parents or the school community contribute immensely to the financial resources of the school. It was learnt that through the financial contributions of parents, the school was able to acquire electricity for the use of the pupils in the night. Again, the school has a library although not the best, kits for training, toilet facilities and urinals and above all always print examination questions. The headmaster pointed out that contributions from the school community come in the form of special levies, examination fees, material donations and

in-kind contributions as well. The PTA secretary, however, pointed out that contributing to the resources of the school financially has met some resistance from a few parents. On the whole, it was good and has affected the performance and development of the school in a positive way.

In the case of the LCPS, it came to light that the school is financially handicapped. Parents even avoid school meetings because of contributions. They are financially incapable as majority of them are not employed. Their income is, thus, not regular. The unavailability of basic facilities and amenities find meaning in the financial status and lack of commitment on the part of the school community. This no doubt has affected the quality of teaching and learning negatively in the long run.

6.2.3. Motivation

Another important ingredient of school development is the issue of motivation. As mentioned in the previous two chapters, the level of motivation by the school communities differed markedly in the two schools emanating from the variations in the levels and forms of participation. In the HCPS, teachers noted that the community is highly involved in encouraging and motivating both the teachers and students of the school. A case was cited where the community came in to help a teacher of the school financially when his name went off the government payroll. Besides, the regular visits by parents, the teachers noted were a source of motivation for them to give off their best. Parents are also actively involved in finding accommodation for newly posted teachers of the school. In relation to pupils, it was learnt that except in some few cases, students come to school well-prepared for learning. Learning kits are provided for the children. Some parents even bring their children to school and come to pick them after lessons. To the teachers, this indeed is an indication that parents are concerned and hence it motivates them as well as the children thereby the development of the school in terms of enrolment, retention, infrastructure and academic and other extra-curricula activities.

However, as far as the LCPS is concerned, the same could not be said of it. A proprietor of one of the Arabic Primary Schools pointed out that even though the JSS is an old school, they as parents do not help in the development of the school.

The PTA secretary of the school disclosed that unlike in other schools, teachers are not motivated. The same is the same for pupils. Sometimes some of the children come to school not in the prescribed uniform. He, however, attributed the low motivation to the socio-economic background of parents of children of the school. Perhaps, because they are mostly illiterates and Qurànic scholars, the importance of education is lost on them. This situation, the secretary concluded has affected the development of the schools with regards to the quality of teaching and learning and the overall academic performance.

6.2.4. **Academic and other Extra-curricular Performance**

Development of a school cannot be effectively discussed without referring to the academic performance as well as performance in other extra-curricula activities. A review of the records of the two schools showed great variations. While the HCPS seemed to be performing modestly well academically, the performance of the LCPS was rather poor. When the District Education Office published a League Table of JSS schools in the BECE for 2003, the LCPS placed 16th out of the 17 Junior Secondary schools in the Nanumba District. Even though participants could not draw a line or relationship between community participation and academic performance, they asserted that the involvement of communities has the potential of improving students learning outcomes. This is because necessary learning materials for the children can be acquired. Again, the necessary and conducive learning environment can be created at home for after-school learning. Parents of the HCPS partly attributed the modest performance of the school to their active involvement. A participant in the interview schedule has this to say about the LCPS**:** “in terms of competition and academic performance, the Islamic Junior Secondary School is always down. This is due to the fact that the level of participation there is very poor”. (See chapters four and five for the individual performance of the schools over the years).

It was also learnt that in terms of other extra-curricular activities such as quiz and sports competitions, the HCPS performs better than the LCPS. According to the headmistress of the latter school, because the community is not actively involved, pupils are not motivated and encouraged. This has affected the performance of the school in that respect. It was bitterly admitted by Head Teacher and the other teachers interviewed that for many years, the school has always been last in the Inter-schools sporting competition. On the other hand, the Jilo Junior Secondary equally performs well in other competitions.

6.3. Reasons for Variations in Performance.

It is clear from the previous discussions that community participation as a government policy exists in both schools in one form or the other.

From the discussions, however, it is observed that notwithstanding the location of the two schools, the curriculum and syllabus, upon which they both operate, student and teacher recruitment mode, as well as both being funded by the government of Ghana, in terms of performance, there are slight variations. The following section tries to find explanation for the variations in the level of performance.

6.3.0. Variations in the forms and Level of participation.

The study found that the forms and levels of involvement in the two schools are not the same. While the school community of the HCPS was found to be actively involved, the level of involvement in the other school was quite low. This brings to the fore Watt's (2001) observation referred earlier to in this work that the capability of communities to participate should be distinguished from their willingness to participate. Have the communities been adequately and sufficiently well resourced to take up this responsibility of education provision and delivery? What can communities do and cannot do in the development of education? What are the limits of communities in the development of education? In the light of these myriad questions, the study discovered that certain economic and social factors underpinned these variations. Participants in the interview schedule, however, identified the forms and level of participation as having

impact on the degree of development of the two schools. For details on the forms and levels of participation prevailing in the two schools, see the previous two chapters.

6.3.1. Educational Background of the school communities.

A very important factor identified as explaining the variation in the level of development of the two schools was the educational background of parents of both schools. As mentioned earlier in the study, it was revealed that parents of children of the LCPS are mostly Qurànic scholars, farmers and people from the lower class in the community. Given this background, in spite of the enlightenment, some of them still view western-type education as Christian machinations to gain more converts. Therefore, the need to get more involved in the affairs of the school does not appeal to them. They prefer to spend the little they have on polygamous marriages to contributing to the development of the school. With regards to the farmers, it was disclosed that they are basically peasant with no stable and regular income. Thus, when it comes to contributing financially, some prefer withdrawing their children. Being illiterates, the importance of education according to the headmistress is yet to take its toll on them. Furthermore, the headmistress, noted that the educational background of parents affect their participation and hence the performance of the school. This is because the perception of an educated parent for formal education is quite different from an illiterate.

At the other extreme end is the “elitist” community of the HCPS. Majority of parents of children in the latter school are government employees. Being very aware of the policy to get involved as well as the importance of education, they easily respond and sometimes even initiate participation. This helps in keeping children in school. The study found that commitment in education among the parents is highly determined by the educational background of parents. As indicated already, most of the parents are educated enough to realise the importance of education to their children. Unfortunately, this is not the situation in the LCPS:

Thus, in spite of the fact that both schools are located in the same community, the educational background of the two school communities has some influence on their participation in the development of the respective schools.

6.3.2. Social Conditions

The study found that parents of the High Community Participation School are well placed.

The headmaster noted that parents of this school are mostly people in the upper and middle classes in the Bimbilla community. Their economic status is thus better off compared to the other JSS in the study as they are mostly government workers. When it comes to contributions towards the development of the school, they are in a better position. Besides, because of their better social conditions, proper care is taken of the children.

On the other hand, the study found that social status of parents in the Low Community Participation School is not high and they are at a disadvantaged when it comes to contributing towards the development of the school. As mentioned by the headmistress, majority of children in this school come from broken homes. Sometimes they even have to sell at the market to take care of their schooling. Thus, being single parents as noted by the head of the school, sometimes children's behaviour are not well monitored and this has an impact on their learning abilities as well. Saida (2002:73) have noted that "close follow up of children performance in the school, is important factor in academic achievement of a child and a school in general". The abysmal performance of the school in national examinations over the years could be partly explained by this social situation.
In the main, the inequality that exists in the social situations of the two schools communities also account for variation in the level of development.

6.3.3. **Economic Factors**

Closely related to the issue of social conditions is economic status of parents. The economic factors pertain to whether the parents are economically viable for effective and efficient participation. Where parents are gainfully employed and have stable income, they might have the economic resources to support school development. As indicated before, parents of the HCPS are mostly government workers, businessmen and somehow successful small scale traders. Their income status is thus stable. With regards to the LCPS, majority of community members are not gainfully employed. They are mostly subsistent farmers, with no wage or salary. The little that is gotten more often than not is spent to sustain the family and provide other necessities.

Another important factor in relation to economic factors has to do with provision of learning materials for the children. Learning materials such as exercise books, mathematical sets, pens and pencils, erasers, school uniform, paying of examination levies etc are the responsibility of parents. Given the economic conditions outlined above, it was observed that most parents from the LCPS cannot afford these learning kits.

However, it must stated that in this study, it was found that willingness to participate is a very important factor in determining the extent to which communities really get involved in the development of their areas.

The table below is an illustration of the situation of community participation in relation to the development of the two schools.

Table 7: Participation and School Performance (Comparison)

	HCPS	**LCPS**
Community participation	1	5
School Facilities	2	5
Academic & other extra-curricular Performance	2	5
Socio-economic Background of parents	1	4
School Resources (Financial)	3	5
Enrolment and Retention	1	4
Motivation of pupils and teachers	2	6

Source*: Researcher's Analysis*.

Note: *The Factors are in order of ranking from 1 to 6; where 1 refers to adequacy or somehow better and 6 not adequate.*

These and other factors identified in the previous two chapters as responsible for the variations in the level of participation equally explained the difference in development.

6.4. Summary.

In this chapter, it has come to light from the comparative study of the two cases that those variations in the development of the two schools find meaning in the forms and level of community involvement. Also the capability of communities to participate from the analyses hinges on a number of factors. Informed school communities are likely to contribute effectively to the development of schools as against disadvantaged and illiterate school communities. On the whole, it is revealed from the analysis that unless community participation is well implemented, it has the potential of creating imbalances in the performance of schools as poor, uninformed, unwilling and not well-resourced communities might not be in a position to take up the task as seen above.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

7.0. Introduction.

The fundamental objective in this study was to draw a map of community participation in school performance in Ghana. This map was intended to display three fundamental dimensions of participation relevant to understanding the issue of participation as it relates to school performance in Ghana. School performance is here defined in terms of enrolment, drop-out rate, availability of teaching and learning materials, basic infrastructure and amenities, motivation of teachers and pupils to carry out their duties and obligations, school resources as well as academic performance. The first dimension would show the forms participation takes; the second dimension aims at bringing out the social profile of participation- factors that explain or account for participation or otherwise; the last dimension would show the effects of varying degrees or levels of participation on school performance.

Following from these, it would then be possible to try to trace the impact of participation on school performance based on the individual experiences of the two cases in the study. In addressing the above pertinent issues, the research was conducted in two Junior Secondary Schools both located in the same community in Ghana.

This final chapter is thus divided into two parts. The first part is a summary of the study as an attempt is made to recap the previous chapters. The key empirical issues raised in community participation in the chapters are revisited, as well as interpretation of research findings and implications of the research findings to theory and for further research.

The last part examines the relationship between participation, community profile and school performance.

7.1. Summary.

Chapter one drew attention to the centrality of participation by providing the setting for the discussion of participation in education in Ghana. “Government by the people” is the

fundamental definition of democracy, and one which implies participation by the people. Within the context of grassroots democracy, therefore, communities are mandated by government policy on education to participate in the development of basic education. The research problem which hinges on the attempt of government to get communities more involved in the development of schools their children attend is thus explicitly stated in this chapter. Since the inception of the policy, however, participation in the decisions and management of schools has varied from one school community to the other resulting in different levels of development. An attempt is made to uncover the factors explaining these variations.

In order to uncover and explain the factors responsible for the variations, a qualitative methodology was adopted in the study. A comparative case study design was subsumed under the qualitative approach. Two cases were strategically selected to serve the purpose of the study. The instruments used for gathering data are also presented in the chapter.
The major limitations of the study such as time constraints, initial reluctance by some of the participants to give information, and the scope of study being restricted to two public Junior Secondary schools thereby limiting its generalisation are also highlighted in the chapter. The organisation of the study is equally presented. A major limitation of the research design, however, was the absence of empirical data to conclude whether school development is determined by community profile or participation.

Chapter two addressed the theoretical focus of the study. It presented the review of literature within the larger framework of participatory democracy. Key concepts and theories of community participation in education are then discussed within this larger framework. The forms, reasons or conditions for participation, challenges and impact on school development are extensively and exhaustively discussed based on the arguments of earlier researchers.
A framework for analysis was then established in the other half of the chapter. The *Communitarian Participation Model* as developed by Parry & others (1992) and other literatures by Watt (2001), Uemura (1999) and Bray (2000) were used to explain the concept of participation. Within the framework, it was argued that participation and the

forms it takes depend on socio-economic and cultural conditions of school communities. The chapter also touched on the variables in the study.

Though the smallest, nevertheless chapter three sets the contextual background in order to put the study in perspective. In this chapter, therefore, trends of participation in education in Ghana are presented. The main modes of participation identified in the Ghanaian context are also presented. The challenges to participation are not also left out.

Chapters four and five are presentation and analyses of empirical data on community participation in the life of the two cases investigated in the study. In these chapters, there is examination of the extent to which participation is replicated in each school community. How far do local circumstances produce variations in participation and participation of the two schools?

In chapter four, an overview of the Administrative structure and grading system at the basic level is presented in the first part. In the second part, there is an in-depth presentation and analysis of data on community participation. The forms participation took, the factors explaining the forms and levels of participation, the challenges to effective participation and the benefits participation have on the school.

The fifth chapter also took an in-depth presentation and discussion of the forms, level and impact of community participation in the second case. An effort was also made to provide a brief background to the school.

Being comparative study, chapter six was devoted to a comparative analysis of the two cases. Similarities between the two cases were presented. It was found that the level of community involvement in the two schools were not same. These variations found meaning in certain socio-economic and cultural factors. These factors underpinning the variations were briefly discussed. It was also discovered that the differences in level of participation resulted in variations in the development of the two schools. On the whole it was found in the chapter that even though both schools are located in the same

community, socio-economic status of the two school communities are not the same. This greatly affected and still affects the ability of the two communities to support the development of the respective schools.

In the concluding chapter, a review of the preceding chapters by way of summary is done. This is followed by a summary of research findings.

7.2. Discussion and Interpretation of findings

7.2.1. Participation or the "desire to be there?"

Findings show that communities involvement in the performance of schools as required by the policy document of the FCUBE takes a number of forms. However, the forms may vary from one school community to the other.

In the High Community Participation School which is the first case, it was realised that the three broad forms as identified by Williams (1997) in Watt (2001) exists. These include support for the instructional program, school management and contributions to school resources. Besides these three broad forms, other forms of participation were identified as being available in the school.

With regards to the Low Community Participation School, the second case in the study, these three broad forms did not exist well. The mandatory non-compulsory nature of participation has made this school community adopt "the desire to be there" attitude towards effective participation in the development of the school. Thus it was discovered that participation was mainly through attendance of PTA meetings which was very low. The school community does not really get involved in other areas as seen in the forms of participation prevailing in the school as against the various forms available in the first case. This situation has affected the performance of the school with regards to infrastructure, teaching and learning materials, enrolment and retention, performance in academic and other extra-curricular activities.

7.2.2. Disparity in Schools Performance

Another major finding this study uncovered is that there is an inherent tension between community participation and the unity and coherence of education systems. This happens for two connected reasons. First, some communities are better placed to help themselves than others. That is some communities have the skills, resources, and confidence needed to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by education decentralisation while others such as those communities that are not well-resourced and motivated lack the means to respond fully. Second, the same communities that are best placed to help themselves will often receive more and better quality public services than poor and remote communities. This can have a strongly regressive effect, in part because poor households tend to have more children and higher dependency ratios than better-off households, and in part because of low and irregular cash-income flows. Among poor households, this can lead to the withdrawal of children from school, failure to enrol, early dropout, and a general disengagement from the school.

In the case of the two schools in the study, it was realised that the level of performance of the schools was not the same. The Low Community Participation School was found to lack certain vital resources and facilities and this make teaching and learning very difficult. Also the school was observed to be witnessing poor enrolment, progressive dropout rate, and lack of motivation for both teachers and pupils. Besides, financial resources of the school were disclosed not to be the best. It was also learnt that due to irregular income flows, some parents threatened to withdraw their children if the authorities insisted on the collection of PTA levies and other dues imposed on community members.

On the other hand, it was discovered that the High Community Participation School had a lot of facilities and resources mostly provided by the school community. This situation has made teaching and learning in the school quite smooth. The teachers and pupils are also motivated to carry out their duties and responsibilities. Again, it was learnt that the school in recent years has witnessed rise in enrolment, and low dropout,

The differences in the level of performance in the two schools were attributed to the forms and levels of participation existing in the schools. While the community of the first case was found to be well-resourced, willing and committed to participate, the other case was the direct antithesis. This study thus observed that this constitutes a threat to equity objectives in education delivery. This is particularly greatest where decentralisation of education provision to the community level is spontaneous or is poorly planned and regulated.

In this regard, governments need to consider such equity objectives in decentralising responsibilities of education provision and delivery to communities in order to ensure that there is parity in the rate of development of schools.

7.2.3. Capability, Willingness and Culture.

The study also found that communities ability to get involved in education provision and delivery to a very large extent depend on their capability, willingness and culture to participate.

This study found that there was a high level of participation in the activities of Jilo Junior Secondary. This was attributed to capability and commitment of the school community as well as effective communication between the school administration and the community. The former always involved the community in most of the decisions of the school through the SMC and the PTA. Besides, parents of this school are educated, mostly government employees, and in the upper and middle classes in the community. As a result they are able to support the school financially and through material donations as well. This school thus experiences much better participation from the community both in forms and level compared to the other case in the study. The differences in the forms and level of participation have equally brought about variations with regards to the performance of the two schools. The study found that in terms of infrastructural development, contribution to school resources, availability of teaching and learning materials, raising academic and other extra-curricular achievements as well as enhancing

motivation of both teachers and pupils, there is a vast difference between the two schools. The level of participation confirms the rationalists' observation that participation is more likely to emerge among "upper-status" individuals because they have financial security which permits them to invest time, energy, money and other resources into participation.

On the other hand, it came to light in the study that the capability of the school community of Islamic junior Secondary to participate is greatly hampered. This in a way has affected their willingness to participate. It was discovered that parents of pupils of this schools are mostly illiterates, unemployed and hence do not have regular and stable income. These socio-economic conditions greatly constrained their ability to contribute financially to the resources of the schools. The cumulative effect of this is that the school lacks basic amenities, teaching and learning materials, and teachers and pupils are poorly motivated; hence resulting in poor academic performance. Enrolments and retentions are thereby affected negatively.

It was also argued within this study that much as participation largely depends on socio-economic factors of school communities, willingness and culture are equally crucial in determining the forms and levels of communities involvement in schools affairs. It was realised in the individual experiences of the two cases that the commitment and willingness of the school communities were not the same. While in the High Community Participation School parents were more willing and committed to participate in the affairs of the school; the same could not be said of the Low Community Participation School. Thus poor and remote communities that are willing and committed may take active part in the affairs of the school in different ways while rich, well-resourced and endowed school communities may lack the commitment to get involved. On this argument Watt (2001:20) noted that the willingness of communities to support education needs to be distinguished from their ability to support education. Communities may be able to provide additional support to the local school but be unwilling to do so, typically because the costs of support outweigh the benefits. This may be due to the low quality of education provided and the related failure of children to learn much in school; or because

of the low returns to schooling, especially at the primary level. In some cases, it may be because the community views education as inappropriate for some, if not all, children.

Closely related to the issues of capability and willingness is culture. Culture has been explained as the mental programming of the mind. In other words a pattern of thinking, feeling and acting that has been established over the years. The study found that to a lesser extent, culture plays a part in determining the extent to which communities can get involved in various ways in the affairs of schools. In the case of the Low Community Participation School, it was noted that the low level of participation found meaning in some cultural undertones. In spite of the level of civilisation in the community, it was noted that some parents of this school still viewed formal secular education as Christian machinations to convert their children to the Christian faith. This it was explained was due to the Islamic background of the school. This cultural conflict, the study discovered partially accounted for the poor level of participation in the affairs of the school. On this issue of culture, Parry et al (1992) submit that, wider participation may, perhaps, be stimulated where people think of themselves as equals and where they believe their neighbours are mutually supportive. For this reason, it becomes important not only to establish whether people living in a particular area regard it as a community, but whether they share a belief in what makes for a community. That is a sense of communal identity plays a part in participation.

On the whole it was found that individuals ability to participate depend on social, economic and cultural factors as well as their orientation in terms of willingness. Communitys`resource endowments also come into play in determining the forms and level of participation. In assigning educational provision and delivery responsibilities to communities, therefore, governments need to take into account the capability, willingness and cultural backgrounds of communities in order to ensure that there is effective participation and for that matter school development.

7.2.4. Community Participation-Any Impact on Academic Performance?

While some researchers have demonstrated a positive relationship between participation and academic achievement of schools, this study agreed to this only to some extent.

In the two cases being investigated in the present study, it was realised that in spite of the full and active involvement of the community in the HCPS, this did not reflect much in the academic performance of the school even though performance was moderately better compared to the other case in the study. (Refer to chapter four for the academic performance). While the level of participation was found to be high, the academic achievement rather is declining. The question that arises is "is there any influence of community participation in the academic achievements of school?" This study, therefore, concurs with Bray (2001) that it is difficult to prove empirically the impact of community participation in schools academic achievement since many other factors such as contextual and school-related affect achievement, and evaluations cannot easily isolate the specific effects of community participation.

7.2.5. Implications for Theory and further research

Across Africa and elsewhere, community participation in education has been implemented in various ways and for various reasons. Several authors and researchers including Watt, Bray, Uemura, Suzuki and others have demonstrated in their researches how participation can facilitate or hinder educational development.

In the view of these researchers, education development in Africa cannot be achieved without the active support of communities, but for this support to be forthcoming, the limits of what communities can do need to be recognized, and certain conditions must be in place. Reflecting on what is discussed in the literature, the present study seems to hold some theoretical implications especially with regards to the work of Watt.

In relation to the role of communities in education, Watt (2001) observes that community support for education carries important risks for education quality, efficiency, and equity. In the light of the two cases in the study, the issue of quality, efficiency and equity came to the fore. It was realised that because of the high involvement of the community in the

affairs of Jilo Junior Secondary, quality in terms of teaching and learning seems better compared to the other case in the study. Again, in the HCP School, teachers and students are motivated to give off their best due to the availability of certain basic infrastructure and amenities provided by the community that make teaching and learning smooth. It was also noted that in terms of performance, the school is better off as against the other case in the study raising the issue of equity.

For community support to realise its potential, programmes need to recognise these risks, and safeguard against them. Increasing participation, therefore, may have the effect of making educational opportunities-and the long-term social and economic opportunities linked to education-unequal. In most African countries including Ghana, where wide wealth, educational and political inequalities exist, the equity risks associated with expanding the community role in education are especially high.

Besides, Watt again notes that community demand for change and a willingness to contribute to education are necessary conditions of successful mobilization and participation. Thus, willingness and ability to participate in education are affected by the level, timing, and duration of community contributions, and the extent to which resources are used transparently at the community level to address the needs of schools. Openness and judicious use of resources, thus, underpin the commitment of communities towards participating in school activities. This observation came up in the LCP School where members of the community disclosed that they were somehow reluctant to contribute towards the resources of the school because the previous head master of the school failed to account for moneys levied towards acquiring electricity for the school. Thus, communities may be able to provide additional support to the local school but be unwilling to do so. This may be due to the low quality of the education provided and the related failure of children to learn much in school. In these circumstances, the underlying causes of weak demand for education need to be identified and addressed before community support can be mobilised. Households are also less likely to support a school when their children have already passed through the school system, or where their children attend a school outside the geographic community. In these circumstances, the

willingness of communities to contribute or participate in the affairs of the school may conceal the inability on the part of some community members to participate. In effect, where a large number of households do not have a direct stake in the school, mobilizing the whole community may be difficult, and participation is more likely to depend on direct users. In this regard, communities are seen as rational actors as they get involved so far as such involvement serves the best interest of the community. In other words, communities judge what are reasonable choices. The question that arises is how can communities be mobilised to take education provision and delivery responsibilities in the wake of ensuring equity?

Another theoretical implication is that participation by local communities as a government policy ensures democracy, transparency and efficiency. One cardinal principle of democracy is competition and choice between and among various alternatives. Parents or members of communities should be able to choose between or among various competing schools. This ensures quality and efficiency. It also provides for greater say by communities in schools affairs. In the two cases in the study, it was learnt that one of the reasons for the high level of participation in Jilo Junior Secondary School is competition. Parents observed that in order to ensure that Jilo did not lose its position as the best school in the Bimbilla community especially against central JSS, its closest competitor; they are encouraged to get more actively involved. Community participation also ensures that users have alternatives to choose from in terms of education provision. The issue of competition and choice has been identified by Watt as one of the five rationales for participation.

Besides, participation ensures that communities have a greater say in the affairs of schools. This is because the inputs and influence of communities are incorporated into the management of schools. This important building block of democracy ensures that communities hold education providers accountable thereby providing for transparency and for that matter better governance or management of schools. The reluctance of the community of Islamic JSS could be partly seen as an attempt to hold the authorities

accountable for failing to account for moneys collected for a development project that was not executed.

Furthermore, it makes for maximization of limited resources. Education especially in Africa is seen as a joint endeavour between the government and other stakeholders. Where education responsibilities are decentralised to communities, communities add to, rather than substitute for, the education development efforts of government. In the two cases under study, it is very clear that the two school communities in their own ways have contributed to complementing the efforts of the state in education provision and delivery. This is through the provisions of classrooms, chairs for staff, urinal pits and toilet facilities for both teachers and students as in Jilo JSS. Therefore, community support can make a vital contribution to improvising access and quality. On this Watt (2001) has observed that community participation has the potential to enhance ownership and accountability, improve efficiency, and expand choice in education.

Against these, the major findings of this research find some meaning. Much as community participation in education has been recognised to complement government efforts, in assigning education responsibilities to communities, governments need to recognise equity risks, willingness that go with it. Analysing the level, forms and impact of community participation in school performance, this study came to the conclusion that communities profile determines the level and forms of participation. Policy makers, therefore, need to identify the uniqueness of each community when assigning roles to them.

The forms and level of participation and its impact on school performance constitute the central focus of the study and thus leave the following open questions that could be the basis for future research:

1. Is it community profile or participation that determines school performance since it is difficult to disentangle the two?
2. How do local circumstances produce variations in participation and development of schools?

3. What roles do schools play in promoting participation?
4. How can communities be mobilised to undertake education development efforts?

7.3. Relationship among Community profile, Participation and School Performance

7.3.1. School Performance-community profile or participation?

An interesting challenge that came up in the study is whether school performance is determined by participation or community profile in terms of socio-economic status, resources, cultural and other community factors.

Previous researches have focused on participation in relation to education development without disentangling community profile from the former. So the question that arises is "is it socio-economic status and other institutional factors of communities that determine school performance or participation?" There lies the challenge as the available literature seems to be silent on this issue.

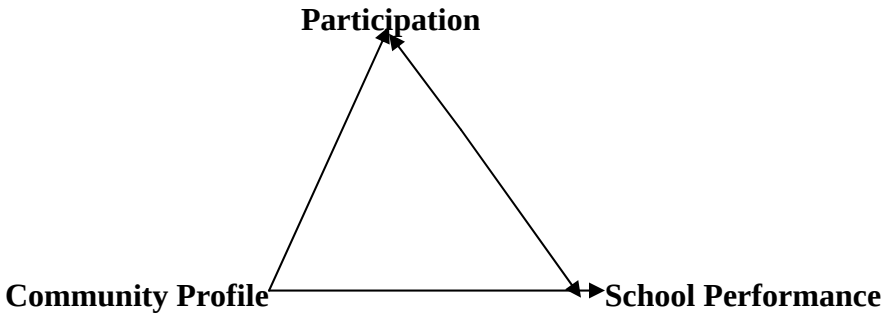
It is, therefore, argued within this study that if socio-economic, institutional and other factors determine participation as the majority of researches have shown, then the profile of communities to a large extent play a crucial role in school performance. This is because communities can only participate effectively when the socio-economic and other factors place them at a better position.

This observation was made clear in the study of the two cases under study. It was found that even though both schools are located in the same community, socio-economic status of the two school communities are not the same. This situation has affected the level and forms of participation as well as the performance of the two schools in terms of enrolment, availability of teaching and learning materials, motivation of teachers and pupils, retention of pupils in school, financial resources of the schools etc.

Since communities ability to participate is determined by their socio-economic status, resources, willingness, cultural and other factors, then the two are intertwined.

In making this submission, however, it must be pointed out that just like previous researches; it has been difficult to disentangle community profile from participation in explaining whether "community" or "participation" actually underlines school performance. Parry et al (1992) have noted that there have been few attempts to establish whether there is in fact, any relationship between community and participation. Diagrammatically; therefore, this analysis can be presented as a triangle as seen below.

Figure 4: Analysis of the relationship of participation, community profile and school performance



From the figure above it can be explained that participation to a very large extent depends on community profile such as socio-economic factors, resources, culture, willingness and leadership of the community. Individuals and communities can participate fully and effectively when their social and economic status allows them. Therefore, the form and level of participation by any community underline these factors. Based on this, participation in turn leads to school performance in terms of enrolment, retention, motivation of teachers and pupils, availability of teaching and learning materials, adequacy of basic infrastructure and amenities that make teaching and learning smooth thereby improving academic achievements. On the other hand, from the figure it could also be argued that much as participation leads to school performance, performance could also lead to participation. This is because it was

learnt from interviewees especially of Jilo JSS that they get involved because of the performance of the school in various ways.

In this regard, it can logically be argued that implicitly, school performance much more depends on the profile of the community since that determines the level and various ways in which the community can get involved.

7.6. Conclusion

The influence of community involvement in school performance in Ghana has been explored in the study. The study has been guided largely by the Communitarian theory of participation and the articles by Patrick Watt, Uemura, Bray, and the Educational Research network for west and Central Africa. It is argued within these literatures that certain socio-economic and cultural factors determine community participation which in turn affects school performance. These also help us to understand participation in the larger context and within the context of education.

The findings of the study confirmed earlier findings that community's ability, capability, in terms of certain socio-economic and institutional factors explain the level and forms of participation. Furthermore, the study concluded that much as these factors explain the forms and level of participation, community's profile, willingness or attitude is equally important in determining the extent to which communities can get involved.

Finally the study confirms the assumptions that: Socio-economic, cultural and other factors determine the level of participation in education development;
Where the level of participation is high, the better would be the development; and that varying forms of participation produce different degrees of impact on school performance.

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APPENDIX I

UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANIZATION THEORY

TOPIC: Community Participation in School Development: Understanding Participation in Basic Schools Performance in the Nanumba District of Ghana

INTERVIEW GUIDE: 2004

Please I am a student of the above University and as part of my final year project; I am conducting a research into the above topic. I would be very glad if you could spare some time to answer the following questions. This exercise is purely academic and confidentially would be maintained.

SECTION A

PERSONAL DATA

1. Community……
2. Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]
3. Occupation……

SECTION B

MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the forms of community participation in school performance in Ghana?
- How does community participation impact on school performance?

- What conditions promote or hinder the participation of communities in school performance?

SECTION C

C.1 QUESTIONS TO PARENTS

1. As a parent, are you happy with the academic performance of the school your children attend?
2. Would you explain your views concerning participation and development of this school?
3. How often do you take part in the decisions of the school?
4. What are your suggestions to improve the performance and or development of the school?
5. How would you characterize your relationship with the teachers of the school?
6. In which ways can you explain your contributions as a parent towards the development of the school?
7. What challenges do you face in your attempt to participate in school activities?
8. Are you satisfied with your representation on the PTAs and SMCs?
9. Do you think parents`involvement in school development impact on the child's academic performance and the School's performance in the BECE? How?

C.2 QUESTIONS TO HEAD TEACHERS

1. What is the enrolment of this school?

2. What is your opinion as regards community participation in the development of the school?
3. How can you explain academic performance in this school?

4. What is the staff capacity of this school and their qualification?

5. What forms of contributions are made by parents towards the development of the school?
6. In which ways does the community participate in the activities or running of the school?
7. Are you satisfied with the level of community involvement?

8. What do you think are the causes of the level of involvement?

9. What challenges do you face in trying to involve parents and the community in school activities?

10. Parent-Teacher relationship is very important in the development of a school. How can you explain that relationship in this school?

11. What is your opinion about future community participation and development of the school?
12. Could you please explain the situation of physical infrastructure of the school?

C.3 QUESTIONS TO THE TEACHING STAFF

1. Following the launch of the FCUBE programme, local communities are required to participate in the development of schools. What are your views about this?
2. How would you describe the level of participation by the community?

3. As teachers of this school, are you content with the level of performance?

4. Schools need the support of communities in which they are situated in order to develop. How can you explain the situation when it comes to collaboration with parents?

5. As professionals, what factors do you consider very important that affect the learning of pupils?
6. In your opinion, how do you think school-community relationship can be improved?
7. In your view, how can the community get more involved in school development?
8. How can you describe the patronage of PTA meetings by parents?
9. Do you have a PTA and SMC in place in this school?
10. If yes, how do these bodies influence school decisions?
11. Is the school community involved in the management or running of the school? Which ways?

C.4 QUESTIONS TO DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER

1. What part does your office play in the development of basic education in the district?
2. To what extent is the local community involved in education development projects in the district?
3. How can you describe the situation regarding the junior secondary education in the district i.e. in terms of school performance (infrastructure, enrolment, drop-out, academic performance etc)
4. In your view, how important is community participation in the development of education in the district?
5. In which ways are the community involved in the management of Schools?
6. Do you think communities participate differently in school affairs?
7. What are your views about the future of community participation and the development of education in the district?