

J.A. Kufuor's Educational Intervention in Ghana, 2001-2009: A Historical Analysis

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Abstract

This study critically examined how Ghana's education fared under John Agyekum Kufour (JAK), the second President of the Fourth Republic of Ghana. The study traced his introduction of the 2007 Education Reform and how it took Ghana's education to the highest level possible. The study adopted the appropriate historical and methodological approaches as its research design. It employed the qualitative method and used primary sources like archival data, committee reports, white papers, interviews and scholarly secondary works such as books and journal articles to examine education in Ghana under JAK from 2001 to 2009. An interview guide was used to collect the primary data, especially information from interviewees. Twelve persons were interviewed either based on their knowledge of JAK's education or were beneficiaries of his education. The study points out that JAK's educational intervention was not only directed towards poverty alleviation in Ghana but also, it set out to align the country's education with that of the global village.

Key words: Education, Decolonisation, Historical, Review, Alleviation, J.A. Kufuor, 2007 Education Reform, Basic Education in Ghana.

Background to the Study

Prior to his accession to the highly revered office of President of Ghana, J.A. Kufour, herein referred to as JAK, had contested on the ticket of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) as a flagbearer in 1996 but lost to J.J. Rawlings of the National Democratic Congress (NDC). However, he won the 2000 elections and was sworn in as president in 2001. Having assumed the reins of leadership as 2nd President of the Fourth Republic, JAK set out to transform the economy of Ghana and, in doing so, education became one of his priority areas. He was convinced that education holds the key to poverty alleviation and

wealth creation as the products would acquire the requisite employable skills to enable the citizenry to work to improve their livelihood. This was, indeed, in line with Flt. Lt. J.J. Rawlings' JSS and SSS concepts, which set out to build a school system that not only reflected the Ghanaian realities but also, made each formally educated child more productive. (Boakye, 2020). It also resonates with Kojo Botsio's assertion that "Education is the keystone of people's life and happiness" (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975).

This study, is thus premised on the Modernisation Theory as the post-independence leaders of Ghana, especially JAK set out to transform all facets of the country for socio-economic emancipation. Indeed, this was largely part of JAK's effort to use education as a means to alleviate poverty and, thereby create a modern state of Ghana in the 21st century. With its roots in the ideologies from Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, etc, the Modernisation Theory is seen as universal goal and therefore all nations should strive to attain it. Hence, it is in line with this theory that JAK's educational intervention in Ghana from 2001 to 2008 is analysed.

Although there is extant literature on the subject under study, such works did not particularly explore education in Ghana during the period of JAK. While Oduro Mensah (2012) sees education as an invaluable tool for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, Maison (2010) calls for re-invention of African Universities through indigenous knowledge systems, Yankah (2006) sees education as having the key to success and development in Ghana, Ziorklui (2004) and Gocking (2005) looks at the political history of Ghana and Amamoo discusses Ghana after 50 Years of Independence. Central arguments of such works clearly show that they did not delve into education in Ghana during JAK's regime. Again, these works did not discuss the 2007 Education Reforms and their impact on Ghana's education since these issues were not the focus of the authors.

Takyiwaa, Gariba, & Budu (2007), in their work, titled, *Change and Transformation in Ghana's Publicly Funded Universities* were of the view that accelerated economic growth and drastic social change necessitated the setting up of higher educational institutions in the postcolonial period of Ghana. These institutions, in their view, set out to produce graduates in the fields of science and technology. Despite the fact that the authors suggested strategies for scaling up best practices intended to bring educational transformation in Ghana's

higher institutions, they did not discuss how JAK reformed higher education in Ghana as that was not their focus.

Hayford (2008), in his *Kufuor and the Distinct Ghana* extensively discussed Ghana under JAK. However, Hayford did not pay much attention to the 2007 Education Reforms in the areas of kindergarten, basic, secondary, technical, teacher training, polytechnic and university education. Mahama (2009), although demonstrates a significant relationship between education and social change in the northern territories in chapter six of his work, did not discuss the education intervention of the 2nd president of the Fourth Republic of Ghana.

This paper thus set out to bridge the knowledge gap by offering a historical analysis of education in Ghana during the time of JAK. To achieve this, the paper focuses on issues such as JAK's vision on education prior to the 2000 general elections in Ghana, appointment and work of the Education Reform Review Committee, the 2007 Education Reforms and how it reshaped basic, secondary, teacher training, polytechnic and university education in Ghana.

The study employed the appropriate historical and methodological approaches as its research design and used the qualitative method of critical description, analysis and examination of data. It extensively based on archival data in the form of white paper reports, committee reports and recommendations, manifestos, constitution, dispatches and newspaper articles. Oral interviews were also used. In all, about ten persons were selected through the purposive and snowball sampling techniques and interviewed. These informants, namely Richard Asare Akoto and Jacob Okyere, were interviewed based on their in-depth knowledge of education in Ghana during the period under study. Richard Asare Akoto, for instance, was a headmaster during the period under review. Jacob Okyere was also Unit Committee Member and a Parent during the period of JAK's administration. He was therefore in a position to give an eye witness account of what he saw from 2001 to 2009. Other informants were either teachers, pupils or students at the various levels of education such as KG, basic, technical, secondary, teacher training, polytechnic and university. Such informants were interviewed based on what they experienced and witnessed in school during JAK's administration.

Again, major secondary works such as books and journal articles in the field of the educational history of Ghana, especially those

that dealt with the time of JAK were reviewed for the study. Such works really helped in understanding the views, conversations, debates and conclusions of other scholars in the field of study. In this study, attempts, will first be made to trace the vision of JAK before the 2000 elections.

Vision of JAK before to the 2000 Elections

The NPP won power in the 2000 elections conducted in Ghana and this brought JAK to the political scene as the 2nd president of the Fourth Republic (Okyere, 22). In Baffour Agyeman-Duah's estimation, the NPP had a long-standing Danquah/Busia tradition (Baffour Agyeman-Duah, 2008). Its message for the people of Ghana focused largely on property-owning democracy and this resonated very well with Ghanaians. This, in his view, made it possible for JAK to win the 2000 and 2004 elections and became president for two terms of office (Baffour Agyeman-Duah, 2008; NPP Manifesto, 2000)

Prior to the victory of the NPP in the 2000 elections, the party set out its vision, which was intended to transform Ghana. In its Manifesto 2000, JAK and the NPP attempted to pursue an agenda for positive change in Ghana with a view of building prosperity for all (NPP Manifesto, 2000). It thus, envisioned "a change that will be reflected in a lowering of the intolerable high cost of living and a reduction in the depressingly high rate of unemployment, a change that will bring jobs and a living wage for the majority of our people" (NPP Manifesto, 2000: iv).

To this end, the NPP set out to sustain economic growth, provide equal opportunity for all, commit to law and order and above all, provide a healthy, disciplined, enlightened and caring society (NPP Manifesto, 2000: iv). To develop the people to develop Ghana, the party set out to first of all, ensure that the education system in schools and universities would prepare the youth effectively to enter the work force. Secondly, the people would be well-trained and well-equipped with the requisite skills for socio-economic and political transformation (NPP Manifesto, 2000: 26).

It was towards the realization of these visions that JAK reformed education in Ghana to reflect the aspirations of Ghanaians and to meet current demands in the job industry (Okyere, 22). Actually, he wanted the education system in Ghana to raise the living standards of the people to high levels. Its products were expected to respond largely

“to national development goal of poverty alleviation and wealth creation” (Report of the President’s Committee on Review of Education in Ghana, 2002: xx; White Paper on the Report of Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 10). He thus, wanted the education system designed to enable products “become enterprising, and adaptable to the demands of a fast-changing world driven by modern science and technology” (White Paper on the Report of Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 9-10). This vision of JAK resonates with that of Flt. Lt. J.J. Rawlings’ JSS and SSS concepts which set out to equip products with scientific and technological skills for rural industrialisation (Boakye, 2020).

Be that as it may, JAK wanted to achieve his ultimate vision of letting the youth, especially, those between the ages of 12 and 19 assist Ghana to aspire in its efforts to build a knowledge-based economy within the next generation (White Paper on the Report of Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 10). Hence, the national developmental goals of JAK in the 21st century were to:

1. Promote social justice and equity by ensuring universal basic education and equal educational opportunities for all Ghanaians;
2. Provide individuals with knowledge, occupational skills and attitudes for national development with a sense of dignity for labour and for preserving the nation’s environmental resources;
3. Promote the culture of lifelong learning for all citizens who will continue to develop their intellectual capacities, technical skills and their abilities, to enable them to cope with technological and other changes in the global world;
4. Promote the spirit of self-reliance that will enable individuals to be responsible for their well-being as well as that of the community;
5. Develop in the individual the ability to create, innovate, think critically and be independent-minded;
6. Strengthen national consciousness and cultivate attitudes of good citizenship and patriotism, and through that, help preserve the nation’s cultural heritage by promoting national languages and desirable traditions and values;
7. Develop attitudes conducive to harmonious relations among different ethnic groups and the international

community (White Paper on the Report of Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 14-15).

The first of these national developmental goals of JAK appears to be a continuity of Kwame Nkrumah's education for bringing equality, solidarity and fraternity towards nation building in Ghana and hence, his introduction of the Accelerated Development Plan for Education, which provided every child of school-going age in the country access to education even at the initial stages of self-government in 1951 (Second Development Plan 1959-64). It can, thus, be argued that JAK was influenced by Kwame Nkrumah's ideas in his educational interventions in Ghana, especially the need to provide access to basic education for all children of school-going age.

Whatever be the case, the aforesaid national developmental goals of JAK made it possible for him to adopt, what is termed in this paper, as "the politics of holistic approach" to education in Ghana. This approach implied that the education system should create avenues for the development of the full potential of the individual to contribute meaningfully in all aspects of society's development.

As a result, in its Manifesto 2000, JAK wanted Ghana's education to:

1. provide access to basic education for all Ghanaian children, and to higher levels of education for all capable of benefiting from it.
2. Raise the quality of teaching and learning in our schools, colleges, institutes, universities and polytechnics; and ensuring that quality education and training are available to all citizens, rich or poor, wherever they live, especially, in the historically disadvantaged areas such as the Northern, Upper West and Upper East Regions.
3. Extend basic computer literacy to pupils before they graduate from secondary level education. (NPP Manifesto, 2000: 27)

To achieve this, JAK resolved to have a comprehensive view about the education system in Ghana as part of efforts to reform it. He thus, appointed a Committee to review the previous education reforms in Ghana. It must be said that this is not the first of its kind in Ghana. Colonial and postcolonial actors or leaders set up committees and commissions to advise them on education. Sir Gordon Guggisberg, for example, set up about two committees and one commission namely the

Educationists Committee of 1920, the Phelps-Stokes Commission of 1920 and the Advisory Committee on Native Education in Tropical African Dependencies in 1923; Kwame Nkrumah set up the Erzuah Committee of 1951; NLC government established the Education Review Committee of 1966, the NRC set up the Dzobo Committee of 1973 and Flt. Lt. J.J. Rawlings established the University Rationalisation Committee of 1986, among others.

With insights from the work of the previous committees before his regime, JAK's Committee was inaugurated on 17th January, 2002. (White Paper on the Report of Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 5). It was chaired by Professor Jophus Anamuah-Mensah. Other member were Mr. Paul Effah (Secretary), Hon. James Adusei Sarkodie, Rev. MSGR Hilary Y. M. Senoo, Professor Henrietta J.A.N. Mensa-Bonsu, Professor Kofi Awusabo Asare, Dr. Clement Somuah, Hon. Kosi Kedem, Professor Daniel Afedzi Akyeampong, Professor Frank Obed Kwami, Mr. Kwabina Quansah, Dr. (Mrs) Sylvia A. M. Boye, Rev. Emmanuel Apea, Mr. Edward Bawa, Mr. Alfred Kofi Appiah, Mrs. Beatrice Addo, Rev. Dr. Robert Aboagye-Mensah, Mrs. Marie Alice Agyeman, Mr. Emmanuel K. Agyeman, Mr. Emmanuel Aquaye, Ms. Dinah Dadzie, Alhaji Rahim Gbadamosi, Mr. Seji Saji, Mr. Cletus Joseph Kosiba, Mr. Lucas Kodzoga Alagbo, Mr. Joe A. K. Frempong, Dr. James Flolu, Ms. Lydia Osei, Mr. Gerald Annan-Forson and Professor Robert Addo-Fening. (Report of the President's Committee on Review of Education in Ghana, 2002: ii)

The desire to have education reflect significantly in modern societies explains how professionals of great repute were appointed as members of the Committee. They were 29-members of high intellectual standing many of whom were educationists, professors and stakeholders in the field of education. (White Paper on the Report of Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 5). They were required through their work to advise JAK through recommendations about how to reform the education system in Ghana to make it responsive to the challenges in the 21st century (Akoto, 22)

The Committee was tasked to review the “goals and philosophy of the present educational system, the principles which should guide curricular design, pre-school/basic education, secondary/technical/vocational education, and teacher education, tertiary education as well as management and financing of education” (Report of the President's Committee on Review of Education in

Ghana, 2002: xx). They were expected to review other issues such as private sector participation in education, information and communication technology (ICT), special education, guidance and counselling, distance education, and library and information services (Report of the President's Committee on Review of Education in Ghana, 2002: xx).

The Committee began its work by scrutinizing all previous education committees' reports and documents and white papers issued for education in Ghana. It also contacted many people through press briefings, oral presentations, visits to institutions, phone-in-radio programmes. Again, the Committee embarked on district and regional tours of the whole country (Report of the President's Committee on Review of Education in Ghana, 2002: 9)

In the course of its work, the Committee identified the defects of the existing structure of education system in Ghana. It found that the 1987 Education Reforms excluded pre-school education. It also over-emphasised general type of education and neglected technical, vocational and the informal sector of Ghana (Report of the President's Committee on Review of Education in Ghana, 2002: xxi; White Paper on the Report of Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 11-12).

Again, it found that the 1987 Education Reforms did not strengthen the basic skills of numeracy and literacy acquisition in the youth. Learners of average ability therefore, could not acquire sufficient grounding in basic numeracy, literacy and social skills (White Paper on the Report of Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 12). It also observed that the fundamental weakness of the 1987 basic educational system in Ghana was that too many subjects were poorly taught at the Primary and JSS levels. This was largely attributed to shortage of qualified teachers and materials (White Paper on the Report of Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 12)

Statistically, White Paper report of the Ministry of Education noted that the survival rate from Primary grade 1 to Primary grade 6 was 79. 9% for boys and 78. 9% for girls (White Paper on the Report of Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 12) The Committee also found the situation quite disastrous, especially, with the transition of pupils from Junior Secondary School (JSS) grade to Senior Secondary School (SSS) 1 grade. It noted that only 40% of JSS graduates managed to gain admission into SSS (White Paper on the Report of Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 12)

With these challenges identified, the Education Reform Review Committee carried out its tasks as mandated by the state and submitted its report in September, 2002 with their recommendations and suggestions. Much of the recommendations were incorporated into the 2007 Education Reforms in Ghana. Suffice at this juncture to provide an overview of the recommendations of the Education Review Committee for emphasis. First of all, it suggested a new structure and content for education in Ghana. The new basic education structure comprised 2 years kindergarten, 6 years primary, and 3 years junior secondary school. This, made basic education 11 years instead of the existing 9 years of the PNDC era. Indeed, the 1987 Education Reforms of Flt. Lt. J.J. Rawlings of the PNDC reduced the duration of pre-university education from 17 to 12 years making it more cost effective (Boakye, 2020). However, with the addition of kindergarten education to the public system, JAK from 2007 significantly increased both the duration and cost of education in Ghana (Akoto, 22).

Basic education was followed by 3 years senior secondary leading to post-secondary and tertiary education; a parallel technical/vocational education which would lead to polytechnics and the world of work; Apprenticeship, which would lead to the world of work; and a 3-4 years of tertiary education in Ghana (White Paper on the Report of Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 12).

Again, the Education Review Committee recommended the creation of Open Community Colleges (O.C.C) and an Open University (O.U.) which would make it possible for work-study programmes and life-long education in Ghana (White Paper on the Report of Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 12). In addition, the Education Review Committee suggested an upgrade of specialised institutions (post-secondary institutions which were not considered tertiary under the 1987 education reforms) to diploma awarding institutions and be affiliated to relevant polytechnics and universities. Apart from the foregoing, it suggested that other critical components of education like ICT, distance education, credit transfer, special education and guidance and counselling were to be given special attention in the country.

Almost all the recommendations of the Education Review Committee, with regards to the objectives of education at all the levels of education, medium of instruction, hours of contact, access and participation, duration, continuous assessment, staffing, funding, quality and relevance, management and governance, post-graduate

training and research were adopted by JAK. These significantly featured in the 2007 Education Reforms in Ghana (White Paper on the Report of the Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 14-52). It is now time to reappraise the 2007 Education Reforms in Ghana.

The 2007 Education Reforms in Ghana

The Committee submitted its report to JAK in September 2002. However, it was not until 2007 that the new education reform was introduced. The new education reform programme, in the estimation of Professor Dominic Fobih, the then Minister for Education, Science and Sports was expected to cost more than Twelve Point One Hundred and Sixty Billion Ghana Cedis (Nyarko Hammond, 2007). This would involve, for the next eight years, funds for the provision of infrastructure, textbooks, curriculum development, equipment and management of education (Nyarko Hammond, 2007).

By September 2007, preparations were far advanced in infrastructural expansion, especially, in the field of kindergarten. There were 11, 228 classroom blocks for kindergarten that had been constructed while about 6, 046 of them were earmarked for rehabilitation (Nyarko Hammond, 2007: 1). District Directors and the District Assemblies were asked to collaborate and establish kindergarten. They, thus, converted available community centres and church buildings into interim classroom blocks for about 3, 609 basic schools without Kindergarten (Kate Hudson and Emmanuel Bony: 2007).

This meant that JAK was poised to implement the 2007 education reforms even in the midst of infrastructural deficit. It must be said that he was not the first person to do this. Kwame Nkrumah, for example, after setting aside special two-year capital works grant totalling over £200, 000 for the erection of new classrooms, also made use of churches and of bamboo sheds to get over 132, 000 children enrolled in primary class 1 in 1952 (Annual Report of the Education Department for the Year 1953-54). Despite the foregoing discourse, JAK was convinced that, “implementation is a process that will be continually refined and assessed, and re-assessed to address challenges, such as teacher provision, infrastructure, curriculum, textbooks and conditions of service for teachers” (Nyarko Hammond, 2007: 1). To borrow JAK’s own words, “the implementation, which is plotted in detail over a period of ten years, calls for sustained realistic budgeting

by the government to provide logical support, including fair incentives for teachers and also continued review at all levels of the educational system'' (Kate Hudson and Emmanuel Bony: 2007).

The 2007 Education Reform fully started in 2007/2008 academic year in Ghana. It was principally necessitated by JAK's ''response to the challenges of the present global era, as well as the country's vision and requirements for the 21st century'' (GNA Correspondent: 2007). As stated earlier, the 2007 Education Reform made universal basic education 11 years. It consisted of 2 years of KG education, six years of primary and three years of junior high school ((Nyarko Hammond, 2007: 4). The existing three years secondary school became a four-year senior high school ((Nyarko Hammond, 2007: 4). Technical, vocational and agricultural institutions were to offer 4-year courses and were required to do core SHS subjects (White Paper on the Report of the Education Reform Review Committee: 2004).

Again, teacher education saw a facelift. Teacher training institutions were upgraded from Teacher's Cert ''A'' to Diploma awarding colleges. Conditions of teachers were improved especially with special incentives for teachers who would accept postings to teach in the rural areas. Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies were charged with the responsibility for the provision of infrastructure as well as monitoring and supervision of basic and senior high schools. A new National Inspectorate Board (NIB) was created and charged with periodic inspection of basic and secondary schools. This would ensure quality education delivery at such levels. Guidance and counselling, library and information as well as distance education were made part of educational services in Ghana. (Nyarko Hammond, 2007: 1). Much attention was placed on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Science Technology. Tertiary education was made 3-4 years in Ghana.

Basic Education

The 2007 Education Reform of JAK added Kindergarten (KG) to primary schools as part of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Policy. (Kate Hudson and Emmanuel). It is worthy of note that the pioneers of kindergarten education in Ghana were the Roman Catholic missionaries but, it was operated on private basis. It was JAK

who made kindergarten education part of the public-school system in Ghana (Akoto, 2022).

The first day on which the KG pupils reported to school was observed as “My First Day at School.” This was meant to make school a happy place for the pupils and to “welcome the new entrants to the world of formal education on a happy note” (Nyarko Hammond, 2007: 1). During such events, the KG pupils, who were mostly at the age of four, were presented with assorted gifts such as toffees, biscuits, pencils, exercise books, plastic drinking cups embossed with Ghana @ 50, miniature flags and caps with the inscription “My First Day at School” (Nyarko Hammond, 2007). This is corroborated by Appiah (2025) that Ghana @ 50 Cups were shared to the learners during the 2007 Independence Day.

Kindergarten was made part of the basic school system to predispose children to conditions of formal schooling, inculcate in them the desire for learning and to create the opportunities for the entire development of children. (GNA Correspondent, 2007: 4). The principal aim of kindergarten education by JAK was to ensure that all primary school children in the country have a basic education that is rooted in good kindergarten training (White Paper on the Report of the Education Reform Review Committee, 2004:17). At the KG, lessons were learnt through play with emphasis on Numeracy and Creative Arts (Kate Hudson and Emmanuel Bonny, 2007: 17; Nyarko, 2025; Derrick, 2025). The main Ghanaian language of the geographical area and English, where necessary, were used as the medium of instruction at the kindergarten and even lower primary. (GNA Correspondent, 2007: 17).

It was not only KG education in Ghana that attracted JAK’s attention but also primary education. The principal objectives, at the primary level, were first of all, to consolidate the knowledge and skills which pupils acquired at the kindergarten level (Akoto, 2022; Okyere, 2022). Again, primary education was expected to build a solid foundation for the pupils to acquire the skills of inquiry, creativity and innovation. At this level too, children were also expected to obtain the skills of good citizenship essential for nation building (Okyere, 2022).

The focus on primary education was, thus, to help children obtain literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills. (Okyere, 2022). This was confirmed by JAK himself when he pointed out that, “when schools resume tomorrow and the new syllabi with emphasis on literacy and numeracy put into operation, the nation expected that products of

the system would be better prepared to face the world when they finished school.” (Emmanuel Bonny, 2007: 1) Whatever be the case, subjects studied at the Lower Primary were; English, Basic Mathematical Skills, Natural Science, and a Ghanaian Language. (Emmanuel Bonny, 2007: 1; Abbam Nyarko, 2025; Hadjor, 2025; Akomaning, 2025). To ensure that children were well-grounded in practical and creative activities, Music and Dance, Art and Craft, ICT and Physical Education were also taught at the primary level of education (White Paper on the Report of the Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 18; Hadjor, 2025; Selorm, 2025).

The teaching of English and Ghanaian Languages focused on writing, reading, dictation and comprehension. Texts on Religious and Moral Education, Culture, Hygiene, Civics, Life Skills, Science and Agriculture were taught at the lower primary as part of reading, writing, dictation and comprehension (Report of the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana, 2002; Odoom, 2025). Subjects that were taught at the Upper Primary were English, Integrated Science, Basic Mathematical Skills, Citizenship Education and the major Ghanaian Language of the area. Music, Dance, Physical Education and Creative Arts were taught as practical subjects (GNA Correspondent, 2007: 17; Hadjor, 2025).

The Junior Secondary School (JSS) was rechristened Junior High School (JHS). It constituted a three-year post primary education (Abbam Nyarko, 2025). The JHS was intended to assist pupils discover their abilities, interests, aptitudes and potentials. It was required to reshape and, more significantly, properly equip pupils to move into a diversified system of senior high schools such as Technical, Vocational, Agricultural and General education. (White Paper on the Report of the Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 19). JHS products were also expected to obtain scientific and technical knowledge and skills for further academic work and technical/vocational training. This focus, indeed, was not entirely different from that of the JSS under Flt. Lt. J.J. Rawlings that set out to ensure that learners acquire considerable knowledge in the areas of Mathematics and Science for technological breakthrough (Boakye, 2020). At the JHS level, children were taught Mathematics, English Language, Integrated Science involving Agricultural Science, Social Studies, a Ghanaian Language, Pre-Vocational, ICT and French (White Paper on the Report of the

Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 19; Abbam Nyarko, 2025).

In order to facilitate teaching and learning at the JHS level, well-qualified teachers for subjects such as Mathematics, Science, English and Creative Arts were supplied. Next, laboratories, workshops, libraries and teaching learning/materials were equipped with modern facilities. The JHS curriculum focused much attention on acquisition of skills such as literacy, numeracy, creative arts and problem-solving (GNA Correspondent, 2007: 17). These interventions were meant to enhance the transition from JHS to SHS. This way, it would make majority of the youth have a full course of secondary education prior to their entry into the world of work (White Paper on the Report of the Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 20).

Secondary Education in Ghana

Students were required to have diversified streams at senior high school after JHS. This led to the introduction of parallel streams of secondary education. These were Senior High Schools (SHS), Technical Institutes, Vocational Institutes and Apprenticeship. Here, students were trained for the options of General, Technical, Business, Vocational and Agricultural Education. These enabled products from such institutions enter into a tertiary institution or the job market. Students were, thus, made to imbibe a “common content and flexibility for the recognition and development of individual aptitudes and the adaptability of its products to changing job opportunities and technological developments” (White Paper on the Report of the Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 22; Okyere, 2022). The principal objective, which was in line with that of the JSS of Flt. Lt. J.J. Rawlings, was to train and equip majority of the JHS products to be able to “prosper in a global economy driven by knowledge, skill and technology.” (White Paper on the Report of the Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 22; Akoto, 2022).

All SHS students were required to do core subjects such as English Language, Mathematics, Integrated Science, Social Studies and ICT. Again, it was mandatory for the SHS students to offer one of the following programmes; General Arts, General Science, Agriculture, Home Economics, Visual Arts, Technical, Vocational and Business. (GNA Correspondent, 2007: 17; Abbam Nyarko). French as a subject was introduced later due to insufficient teachers at the time. The priority

of the government was that places for post-JHS level “should be made available on a universal basis to all Ghanaian youth, and that the SHS system should be organized both as terminal education for entry into the world of work, and as a preparatory stage for entry into tertiary education” (White Paper on the Report of the Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 21). It had a four-year duration which was intended to fully prepare students to pursue University, Polytechnic, Vocational and Teacher Training at globally competitive standards (White Paper on the Report of the Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 24).

Apprenticeship schemes were also instituted by the government in which students or beneficiaries obtained some assistance from the state. Apart from the foregoing discourse, government assumed full responsibility for the first year of the apprenticeship programme (White Paper on the Report of the Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 26; Appiah, 2025). The curriculum was diversified to cater for different interests, abilities, aptitudes and skills of students to provide opportunity for them to pursue further education and training. Interestingly, the curriculum exposed students who would not wish to further their education at the higher level to various occupational skills. JAK, in particular, was disappointed about the way Technical/Vocational Education and Training had been neglected in Ghana at the time. By 2002, there were 474 public senior secondary schools in Ghana as against 23 technical and 29 vocational institutes (Report of the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana, 2002, p. xxx). The neglect of technical and vocational education and training was also evident in the budget allocation of government. It was, woefully inadequate. For instance, in the year 2002, the Ministry of Education budget allocation to Technical/Vocational Education and Training was only 1 per cent of funds for the running of such institutions (Report of the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana, 2002, p. xxx).

It was to surmount these challenges that the 2007 Education Reforms of JAK focused much attention on technical and vocational training. The Technical, Vocational and Agricultural streams of the SHS were strengthened and made to do broad elective subjects like Building Trades, Business Studies, Electrical Engineering, Hospitality Trades, Mechanical Engineering and Agriculture. The government set out to develop the curricula of Technical and Vocational Institutes to

reflect the needs of children in Ghana. So, Technical/Vocational Education and Training were rehabilitated and upgraded to provide employable skills through formal and informal training at various levels of education (Okyere, 2022).

To this end, at the pre-tertiary level, Technical and Vocational Education became accessible at Technical Institutes, Vocational Institutes, Agricultural Institutes and Apprenticeship. Emphasis was placed on subjects such as English, Mathematics, Science and ICT to facilitate the development of students' competence and knowledge acquisition. The Government also made a major shift in the state education policy in favour of Technical and Vocational Training, in which these disciplines, were also offered as elective subjects in the SHS. (GNA Correspondent, 2007:17).

In order to co-ordinate, regulate and develop policies for Technical and Vocational Training, JAK's administration established the Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (C.T.V.E.T.) in Ghana. Graduates from Vocational and Technical Institutes, by the 2007 Education Reforms, were allowed to continue their education at the Polytechnics as part of effort to pursue higher studies. Furthermore, Competency-Based Training curriculum delivery methodology was adopted for Technical/Vocational Education and Training system. This system placed strong emphasis on the acquisition of practical skills by students for employment. (GNA Correspondent, 2007: 17).

As stated earlier, even though the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms suggested that secondary education should be made three years on the grounds that with the mainstreaming of kindergarten and the provision of one well-resourced SSS in each district, the quality of education would be enhanced through effective teaching and learning, and as a result, there was no need to increase the duration of secondary education to four years, JAK made the duration of SHS four (4) years in 2007. This sharply contrasted with that of the previous regime in which secondary education in the country remained three years.

Apart from the above discussions, teacher education also witnessed significant changes during the period under discussion. At this juncture, attempts will be made to look at how teacher education fared under JAK's regime.

Teacher Education

JAK and his government thought that the entire success of the 2007 Education Reforms in Ghana rest on effective and efficient training of teachers. Quality teachers, was thus, viewed as the pivot upon which the success of any education reform process rested (White Paper on the Report of the Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 30). This explains why Guggisberg, for example, opened a register of teachers in which those who were not qualified were driven out of the teaching profession. JAK was of the view that, and to borrow the words, “in implementing the reforms, a lot of attention was paid to the role and well-being of the teacher,” saying that “unless teachers at every stage of the educational system embraced the reforms, no amount of money spent on facilities would make the difference in achieving the nation’s goals.” (Emmanuel Bonny, 2007: 1). Thus, Teacher education, became one of the priority areas of John Agyekum Kufuor. It must be said that by 2002, there were some weaknesses in teacher education. These were its undefined standards for teacher development, inadequate avenues for the training of specialized Technical and Vocational teachers, inadequate public teacher training colleges, inadequate initial teacher preparation, lack of co-ordination among various agencies of teacher education such as the Ministry of Education, Teacher Education Division, Inspectorate Division, Curriculum Research and Development Division (C.R.D.D.), NGOs and Development Partners (Report of the President’s Committee on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana, 2002: xxxv).

JAK made strides in his 2007 Education Reforms to address these challenges. The first thing that he did was the establishment of a National Teaching Council (N.T.C.) to co-ordinate and regulate the programmes of Teacher Education and Training in Ghana. Education-oriented universities were made directly responsible for the certification of teachers in Ghana. Basic school teachers, who were not trained, were offered the chance to attend remedial courses through Distance Education. This led to the establishment of Distance Learning Colleges at the University of Cape Coast and the University of Education, Winneba, to train and re-train teachers in Ghana. (GNA Correspondent, 2007: 17, White Paper on the Report of the Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 30-32).

Again, the competencies and skills of serving teachers were upgraded and updated through continuous development of teachers.

This was why JAK upgraded all public teacher training colleges into diploma-awarding institutions to ensure adequate preparation of teachers for effective teaching and learning at the basic schools. Also, the curriculum for training colleges was designed to place emphasis on English, Mathematics and Science. Other subjects were ICT, Creative Arts and Citizenship Education. Training programmes for kindergarten teachers were developed and became part of the curriculum in the Teacher Training Colleges. This was done to enhance the teaching and learning at the KGs in Ghana. Special consideration was also given to the training of teachers in the areas of Technical, Vocational, Agricultural, Special Needs Education, Guidance and Counselling, ICT and French. (GNA Correspondent, 2007). Another area that JAK paid attention to was higher institutions of learning in the country.

Higher Education

The reforms of JAK were not only felt in the field of basic, secondary, specialised training institutions and teacher education but also polytechnics and universities. The polytechnics and universities, in particular, became invaluable in the socio-economic transformation and emancipation of Ghana. They played key roles in the creation, dissemination and application of knowledge. These issues were actually vital for the adaptation of knowledge to meet the urgent needs of the Ghanaian society.

Undoubtedly, it became obvious that the entire system of education dwelt on the role played by the polytechnics and the universities. JAK, thus, made funds available for rehabilitation and expansion of facilities of tertiary institutions in Ghana. The government also strengthened the collaboration between these institutions, industry and society. This was intended to make their programmes significant to the socio-economic needs of the people of Ghana. It was in line with the aforementioned that JAK set out to overhaul tertiary institutions in the country. The government, first of all, prioritised improvement and expansion of academic and physical infrastructure of the various tertiary institutions to ensure their operation at optimum capacity.

Next, the government encouraged private sector participation in the provision of hostels and the running of the existing halls of residence. Again, in order to expand access to tertiary education, he introduced distance education as an alternative mode of delivery of the polytechnics and the universities (Report of the President's Committee

on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana, 2002; Okyere, 2022). Apart from the foregoing, the existing public universities at the time, namely, the University of Ghana, the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and the University of Cape Coast were restructured and made to re-examine their mandates and programmes. This was done in such a way that the programmes of these universities would reflect advances in knowledge and trends of the economy. Tertiary institutions were also made to re-examine their course offerings for effective rationalization. (Report of the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana, 2002: xxxvii)

On the issue of staffing, the government adopted measures which attracted and retained qualified staff of tertiary institutions. He ensured that a more comprehensive salary structure was designed to retain potential lecturers and seasoned professors in the universities in Ghana. The government provided seed money for the establishment of housing schemes in the tertiary institutions for use by lecturers. Funds from GETfund were also allocated to tertiary institutions. These were used to facilitate infrastructural development and improve facilities for teaching and research (Report of the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana, 2002: xxxiv).

Educational Finance and Management

Another significant issue that John Agyekum Kufuor tackled was financing of education in Ghana. The report of the President's Committee had demonstrated that in 2001, the primary sector and the tertiary level received only 20 per cent and 50 per cent of their budget allocations while that of technical and vocational sub-sectors received only 1 per cent of its total budget for education. (Report of the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana, 2002: liv). Even out of these funds, between 80 to 90 per cent of the funds went into the payment of personal emoluments to the neglect of teaching and learning activities. (Report of the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana, 2002: liv)

In order to enhance the financing of education, funds for basic education were obtained from direct government budgetary allocation, District Assemblies, the Ghana Education Trust Fund, development partners and fees by parents and guardians. JAK continued the policy of 'cost-sharing' in education which he inherited from the previous

government. (Report of the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana, 2002: 188)

On the question of funding of education at the secondary level, JAK implemented what it is stated in the 1992 Constitution, which provided for progressive introduction of free education to provide equal and balanced access to secondary education dependent on the availability of resources. (Constitution of the Republic of Ghana 1992: 40, Kwadwo Afari-Gyan, 1998: 33). Resources were not enough for free secondary education, so funds, which were obtained from donor funding, PTAs, Endowment Fund, GETFund, District Assemblies scholarship schemes, Old Students Associations and Direct government provision were used to finance secondary education in Ghana from 2001 to 2009 (Report of the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana, 2002:190, White Paper on the Report of the Education Reform Review Committee, 2004: 41-42).

In the time of JAK, enrolment in tertiary institutions increased tremendously and went beyond the capacity that the government could support. The time also required new technologies and the essential infrastructure to meet the increasing competitiveness in the global market. (Akoto, 2022). At the same time, tertiary institutions were confronted with numerous problems like workshop facilities, library facilities, laboratory facilities, salaries of university/polytechnic staff, classroom infrastructure, teaching and learning materials, use of training equipment, repair and maintenance of facilities and administrative expenditure (Report of the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana, 2002: 192)

JAK made strides to tackle these problems. Firstly, the government intensified income generation from the traditional sources of funding tertiary institutions such as Endowment Funds, GETFund, direct government provision, District Assemblies' scholarship schemes, donor funding, internal generated funds and fees from foreign and local students. Next, he strengthened cost-sharing at tertiary institutions in which government and students shared the cost of library facilities, workshop facilities, laboratory facilities, utilities in academic area, teaching/learning material, provision of furniture, examinations, field trips, thesis/project, maintenance of structure, medical and administrative expenditure (Report of the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana, 2002: 192). These were all

part of efforts by JAK to use education as a tool to alleviate poverty in the country and to improve the living standards of the people of Ghana.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that the trend of education at all levels—basic, secondary, technical, vocational, teacher training, polytechnic and university—in Ghana from 2001 to 2009 underwent significant changes. It has brought to the fore, like the previous regimes, that JAK saw the formative years of children as very crucial to their entire development and, thus, set out to make kindergarten education progressively part of the universal, free and compulsory basic education structure in Ghana. He was the first post-independence president of Ghana to officially add kindergarten to the basic education system in Ghana. Subsequent governments saw the significance of such educational intervention and, that is why, kindergarten is still part of the basic education system in Ghana. JAK ensured that good primary education was rooted in good kindergarten education.

Not only basic education, but all levels of education underwent significant changes essential for socio-economic transformation and emancipation. The aim was to inculcate the requisite skills and knowledge needed by children of school-going age to function effectively in the 21st century. This was found to be the ultimate vision of JAK to alleviate poverty and to improve the standard of living in Ghana's march towards modernity in the global village.

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