

# The Role of Remedial Schools in the Development of Education in Ghana

Oduro-Ofori Eric Charles Peprah Priscilla Cann

Department of Planning, College of Architecture and Planning, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi

oduroforieric@yahoo.com; eoduro-ofori.cap@knust.edu.gh

## Abstract

The primary objective of the study was to find out the contributions of remedial schools to development in the country. To achieve this, the study adopted the exploratory research design. It applied both quantitative and qualitative research techniques. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources and critically analyzed for result. A total of 120 remedial school students were interviewed during the study. Also, data was collected from teachers, schools headmasters and the education directorate of the metropolitan local government office. The interview guide and questionnaire were the tools applied in soliciting data from the respondents. Findings were that remedial schools aside preparing students adequately to pass their external examinations, contributed massively to development in diverse ways. For instance, these schools provide employment; provide a platform to upgrade the skills of workers and also to upgrade the moral standards of society. Interestingly, aside poor performing secondary school graduates who enroll in these schools; workers, school dropouts as well as continuing secondary school students are among the population that make up the remedial schools. Challenged by the fact that they are not being recognized and thus not supported by the government, remedial schools tend to face problems with funding. Support from the government is needed by these schools, considering their numerous contributions to the country, to upgrade their existing capacities to do even better than now.

## 1. Introduction

Education has been identified by many developing countries including Ghana as a basic human right which every citizen must have access to in order to achieve both individual and national development (Nsiah-Peprah, 2004). Increased demand for education in Ghana coupled with limited resources has made it increasingly unbearable for the government alone to provide educational services, thus the need for private sector involvement. One noticeable provision made by the private sector in the education sector is the provision of tutorials for students who were unable to make the grade at their first attempt at examinations. This educational provision is known as remedial schools. The rate at which remedial schools is increasing in Ghana is quite alarming. Despite the fact that performance of students in West Africa Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) has various challenges and setbacks, it is unwise to conclude that this increase in remedial schools in the country is due to that as there might be associated economic benefits to the entrepreneurs of these schools. However, there has been a number of perceptions concerning remedial schools. Consequently, finding out whether or not the perceptions underlying the increase in remedial schools in Ghana is true or not would serve as a platform to knowing the contributions of these schools to educational development in the country. This is informed by the fact that, there has been little research done in the area of remediation in Ghana. Therefore, in order to bridge the gap between the generic and contextual reasons as regards the contributions of remedial schools in the country, this research has to be done.

The main objective of the study is to find out the contribution of remedial schools towards improving education. In pursuance of this, the study seeks to achieve the following specific objectives:

- ❖ To pinpoint the categories of people who enrol in remedial schools
- ❖ To assess the teaching and learning environment of remedial schools
- ❖ To identify the challenges of remedial schools and make recommendations based on the findings of the research.

## 2. Research methodology

The research design adopted was the exploratory research. Exploratory research design is very flexible and is used when there are few or no earlier studies to refer to (USC Libraries, 2014). This research design can also answer research questions of all kinds (why, how, what) due to its flexible nature. In this research, the exploratory design was useful in finding out what the actual situation is with respect to the contributions of remedial schools to educational development in the country. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were applied in order to make good and accurate judgments.

Selection of remedial schools for investigation

In order to ensure the validity of this research, the choice of remedial schools had to satisfy the

following criteria:

- Must be a registered school.
- Must offer courses that are read in the Senior High Schools.
- Should be able to prepare their students adequately for private examinations.
- Must have the ability to sit their students as candidates in the November/December Examinations (by the West African Examination Council).

Three remedial schools that satisfied the above criteria in the Kumasi Metropolis were chosen for this study. These are the Elite College, Ideal College and Success City Academy. All three schools are not solely remedial schools but also run as Senior High Schools. Below is a brief information about these schools. Information presented here was derived from the respective schools' websites as well as the school.

Ideal college is a registered private educational institution under the Ghana Education Service. It is located at Kentikrono near the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi. It commenced in 2002 as solely a remedial school with student and teacher population of 50 and 6 respectively. At the time of the study, the student population was 400. The institution was established due to the inefficiencies in the secondary school system that led to the mass failure of students at the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination. The school runs with the philosophy that "every student has a seed of genius inherent in them which only requires a conducive environment and guidance to flourish". The school has ultra-modern facilities coupled with a highly sophisticated and well-furnished library, computer and science laboratories among others. One of the greatest achievements of the school is that in 2008, 94% of students who graduated from ideal college found themselves in higher education institutions (Ideal College Ghana, 2014).

The second remedial school studied is the Success City Academy. It commenced in the 2007/2008 academic year as full-time and part-time West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination remedial school in the Ashanti Region. Currently, student enrolment is over 1,400 out of which 500 are remedial students. The year 2010 saw the school awarded the best remedial school in the Ashanti Region. As part of the success story of the school, records have it that over 80 per cent of their students gain admission into the tertiary institutions (Success City Academy, 2014).

The last remedial school studied is the Elite College. It is located at Ayeduase in Kumasi close to the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). The remedial schools operate on a two-way system that is to say it runs a secondary school alongside the remedial school. Students' enrolment is about one thousand (1000) out of which about four hundred (400) are remediated students. The school is known for their good performance in WASSCE in the Ashanti Region.

#### ***Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique***

With reference to Kothari (2004), all objects under consideration in any field of inquiry constitute a "population". It is the entire set of relevant units or cases or individuals that fit a certain specification. A complete enumeration of all the items in the population is known as a census inquiry whilst the consideration of only part of the population is called a sample survey (Kothari, 2004). The census inquiry in this research makes up the total population of all the remediated students in the selected schools. However, census inquiry involves great consumption of time, money and energy and not possible in practice. Hence, like many other research works, a sample size was selected among the census inquiry of the three schools studied. The probability sampling technique was used in selecting the sample from the schools. However, since the total population is a heterogeneous one, that is to say there are different classes offering different courses in the same school, it was important to use stratified sampling. Stratified sampling is often used to obtain a representative sample of the heterogeneous population. Additionally, to select the members of each strata, the method of proportional allocation whereby the sizes of the samples from the different strata are made proportional to the sizes of the strata (Kothari, 2004). A sample of 120 students was selected. In order to ensure representativeness so as to generalise findings for the entire metropolis, the sample size of 120 was distributed among three schools based on their population. Teachers and heads of the schools were also interviewed. The teacher population in all three schools together is thirty-three (33). The researcher thus interviewed all thirty-three teachers.

Both primary and secondary data were used in the study. Largely this research made use of questionnaires and interview guides as the instruments for collecting primary data. The interview guides were used to interview heads of the various schools to get data concerning certain key issues pertaining to the topic under study as well as from the Ghana Education Service (GES) in the study area. Questionnaires were used to access information from remediated students who enroll in these schools. The choice of using questionnaires as a data collection tool was because it is cost effective, free from the bias of the interviewer and also gives respondents adequate time to give well thought out answers.

After having collected the data, it was processed and analyzed in line with the research objectives to come up with answers to the research questions. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel were the softwares used in processing the data as well as analyzing it. The first step taken after

data was collected from the study areas was “field editing” of the completed questionnaires. This was done to ensure that data is accurate, evenly entered, fully completed and neatly arranged to facilitate coding and tabulation. The next step was coding. Questions asked were coded and an SPSS template was created. This was done to facilitate the analysis stage. The next step taken was classification of data. Due to the heterogeneous nature of data gathered, data was classified into various homogenous groups. This classification was done according to the schools selected and the subjects offered. This was done to ensure easy inputting of data into the SPSS software. The data analysis involved a number of carefully related processes which were performed with the purpose of summarizing the collected data and organizing these in such a manner that they answered the research questions.

### 3. Remedial Education

When remedial education is mentioned, names such as “developmental education”, preparatory studies, academic support programmes, compensatory education, basic skills education, college preparation, amongst others may come up (Kozeracki, 2002) especially in the Western Countries. Most often than not, the widely used names are “remedial education” and “developmental education”. However, due to the negative connotation associated with the word “remedial” it has resulted in the wider usage of the term “developmental”, (Parker et. al, 2010). Owing to the substitutable use of remedial and developmental education, these terms are used interchangeably in this research as well. Defining what remedial education actually is to a large extent, depends on who is defining it and where. This is because, research has shown that, remedial education varies tremendously from country to country. Consequently, what goes or should go into remedial education, the variety of students who take remedial courses as well as the scope of remedial offerings, is relative (Merisotis and Phipps, 2000; Kozeracki, 2002). Thus the findings and conclusions that can be drawn on remedial education programmes can also vary. Irrespective of these variations, certain characteristics are common to all remedial programmes. For instance, the motive of every remedial school is purposed to build on the “academic stature” of students who do not meet a certain minimum level of academic proficiency to complete and succeed in college (Bettinger and Long, 2004).

One may ask, what then is remedial education? To come up with a workable definition for remedial education, it is expedient to research into what scholars and researchers have said concerning the subject matter. Bustillos (2012:37), pointed out that “remedial education in postsecondary is a course or a sequence of courses for college-admitted students who, upon taking required placement examinations, are found not to have the knowledge and skills necessary for success in college-level courses.” Calcagno and Long, (2008) also defines remedial or developmental education as coursework below college-level offered at a postsecondary institution. By “coursework below college-level”, Calcagno and Long imply any academic endeavor or programme involving teaching and learning that takes place after secondary education but before college education. Battistin et.al (2002) views remedial programmes as “a course consisting in extra-class time offered to low-achieving students in order to improve their performance in one or more subjects”. Developmental education incorporates human development theories, is intended to bring together academic and student support services to assist students in preparing to make choices appropriate to their current stage in development, and is viewed as being appropriate for all students”(Kozeracki, 2002:84; Brants and Struyven, undated). From the above definitions, the following key points can be noted:

- It is a coursework.
- It is offered at the postsecondary level.
- It is meant to improve students’ academic performance.
- It is also meant for underprepared or low-achieving students.

From the above, the following workable definition is deduced. Remedial education is a coursework that is offered at the postsecondary level to boost the academic performance of underprepared or low-achieving students in order to earn them a place in the higher institutions.

#### 3.1 Basis for remediation

Remedial education is not a recent phenomenon. Literature has it that it can be traced back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century when Harvard University in America implemented special courses for freshmen with insufficiencies in writing skills and inadequately prepared students (Oklahoma State System of Higher Education, 2009). Also, in 1849 the University of Wisconsin established the first preparatory program for students with inadequate preparation for college studies (Oklahoma State System of Higher Education, 2009).

Since the 17<sup>th</sup> century till date, students demand for remediation has increased especially in recent decades (Calcagno and Long, 2008). Owing to this, it is essential to probe into the issues that gave birth to their existence. It can be noted that the two universities mentioned above undertook remedial programmes due to the under preparedness of their students for postsecondary education. Literature reviewed on other documents, journals, research works amongst others, saw the same reason. For instance, Brants and Struyven (undated), in

their research came up that one of the numerous reasons why European universities are adopting remedial strategies are the transitional problems students face when entering the tertiary institutions. Kozeracki 2002 implied in his research that students required enrolling in developmental reading and writing courses are those who are said not to have met the literacy standards of the university in which they have been registered. Many more researchers and scholars, have also shared the opinions of the above researchers that the basis for remedial education is to provide extra academic tuition to students who have academic deficiencies in certain courses and hence qualifies them as underprepared for college or university education (Calcagno and Long, 2008; Bettinger and Long, 2004).

### **3.2 Cost associated with remedial education**

Remediation may also differ in cost across colleges, schools, location and countries. The disparities in the cost of developmental education could be attributed to the factors like: preferences of the administration providing the remediation, political and economic conditions of the community or country, among others. There have been quite a number of hullabalos surrounding “who should pay” for remedial education. Amidst these controversies, one school of thought came up with the argument that remediated students should bear the cost of remediation. To them, students should have acquired the skills of literacy and numeracy in their secondary schools to have enabled them further their education. Thus, if such student is unable to make it to the post-secondary-level institutions, he/she must bear the cost for remediation. It is therefore not surprising that quite a number of policy makers have questioned the need to pay for academic preparation they believe should have occurred in the secondary school (Calcagno and Long, 2008). In Florida for instance, the legislature elected required that remediated students pay the full cost of their remedial course work, which was estimated to be a 400% increase on their regular tuition rate (Ignash, 1997). Research has shown that, remediation is costly to students who are made to pay for their remedial education (Calcagno and Long, 2008).

The second school of thought is also of the view that the secondary schools should be responsible for their graduates’ remedial expenses. In other words the remediation costs should be borne by the secondary schools that graduated the student needing remediation. This is because, they believe that, if students are unprepared enough to be enrolled in the higher institutions, it is because these secondary schools did not perform their duties well; thus they must pay for the remediation cost of their former students. Rudolph Giuliani (undated) duly expressed the emotions of various government officials by arguing that the “university system currently devotes far too much money and effort to teaching skills that students should have learned in high school” (Schmidt, 1998: A33 cited in Davis and Palmer, 2010). As a result, secondary schools in Minnesota were billed for the cost of their graduates’ remedial classes while several secondary school districts in Virginia “guarantee” their diplomas by taking up the cost of their former students remedial expenses (Wheat, 1998).

Another school of thought also argues that the colleges or universities should be responsible for the cost of remediation. According to Merisotis and Phipps (2000), these institutions stand a chance of benefiting when students successfully complete their remedial programmes and continue their education. Such successes are “beneficial for the institutional bottom line since it enhances revenue that can partially offset costs associated with providing remediation” (Merisotis and Phipps, 2000, pg. 78). The last school of thought contends that the state or government should be responsible for the cost of remediation as it brings returns on their investment (Davis and Palmer, 2010). In the case of Ghana, the remedial cost is borne by the students themselves since it is owned by the private sector. However, due to insufficiencies in data in the area of remediation, it is quite impossible to get the actual cost borne by the remediated students, the private sector and the public sector as well.

### **3.3 Benefits of remedial education**

By helping students to strengthen their basic academic skills, like the ability to read, write, analyze, interpret, and communicate, students’ opportunities for success at the labour market are significantly expanded (Brants and Struyven, undated). Aside the traditional students who enter, non-traditional students as in Ghana would be called the “mature” students, enroll in remedial schools to gain skills needed for a better job on the labour market (Breneman, et al., 1998).

### **3.4 Category of students in remedial/developmental education**

There are six categories of students usually in need of remedial education (Hardin 1988 cited in Melton, 2008:18). They are:

- Those with poor academic prospects due to bad decision-making in the past,
- Adult students who return to school with additional responsibilities beyond what the typical college student experiences,
- The students whose academic weaknesses were not attended to but rather ignored in previous educational settings,

- Students with disabilities,
- Those who struggle with the English language,
- Those with weak academic commitments.

#### 4. The role of remedial schools in the Kumasi Metropolis

##### 4.1 Sex-Composition of Students' respondents

About 55.8 per cent out of the remediated students interviewed were females while 44.2 per cent were males (see table 1). Also for every 100 males, there are 126 females in these remedial schools studied. The prime reason for such a gender dichotomy in remedial schools is generally due to the male students obtaining scores that see them into the next stage of the educational process such as entry into tertiary institutions unlike their female counterparts. This finding is supported by the assertion by the Ministry of Education Report (2013) which suggested that female students usually fail their core subjects during the final external examinations (West Africa Senior Secondary Certificate Examination) which denies them entry into tertiary education as compared to their male colleagues. This situation has resulted in most of the remedial schools in Ghana being populated with more female students than male colleagues.

Table 1 Sex-Composition of Students' respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
<b>Males</b>	53	44.2
<b>Females</b>	67	55.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, February 2014.

##### 4.2 Age-Composition of Students

From the survey, it was revealed that 5 percent of the students interviewed were below the age of 18 years, 57.5 percent of the respondents were between 18-20 years, 17.5 percent were between age 20-23 and 5.8 percent were between 30-32 years (refer to Table 2). The variation in terms of the scores implies that age is a critical issue when remedial education is under consideration. It was indicated during the survey that, a total of 75% of the students those who have not long finished their secondary education but were denied access to the tertiary level due to unqualified grades. This is believed to have informed the emergence of remedial education in the Ghanaian context. This implies that such perception has not changed to-date and the trend still has a steady momentum in our educational arena. Considering the case of the age cohort 30-32, the survey showed that remedial students in this age group are full-time employees who held SHS certificates and were employed in lower ranks of their occupations. According to respondents in such cohort, remedial education as a more flexible option in terms of bettering their previous grades and at the same time working to make ends meet. They argue that while they are engaged in some menial jobs to make ends meet, their hopes of gaining admission into tertiary institutions someday have been restored due to the presence of remedial education. Such assertion by the respondents implies that the absence of remedial education would have resulted in most of them being a burden on society since they are considered unfit for any reputable jobs that better ones standard of living.

Table 2: Age-Composition of Students

Age (Years)	Frequency	Percent
<b>Below 18</b>	6	5.0
<b>18-20</b>	69	57.5
<b>21-23</b>	21	17.5
<b>24-26</b>	11	9.2
<b>27-29</b>	6	5.0
<b>30-32</b>	7	5.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Author's Construct, 2014

##### 4.3 Category of Students in Remedial Schools

Remedial school students as identified in the study can be categorized into four groups as shown in Figure 1: Underprepared SHS Graduates, Workers, School dropouts and secondary school students (see figure 1). Underprepared SHS graduates are those who were unable to excel in their external examinations. This group of students constitutes about 89 percent of remedial students in the schools studied. Looking at the categories of people remedial schools offer education to, it can be deduced that these schools would readily offer assistance to

anyone that needs them. It gives a chance for those who have dropped out of school due to certain unfortunate circumstances another opportunity to continue their education. The schools impart knowledge to their students to make them better people in society. Had it not been remedial schools in the country, the formal education of these students would have come to a premature end thereby suffering the consequences of low level educational attainment. They could have ended up being social misfits and a nuisance to society.

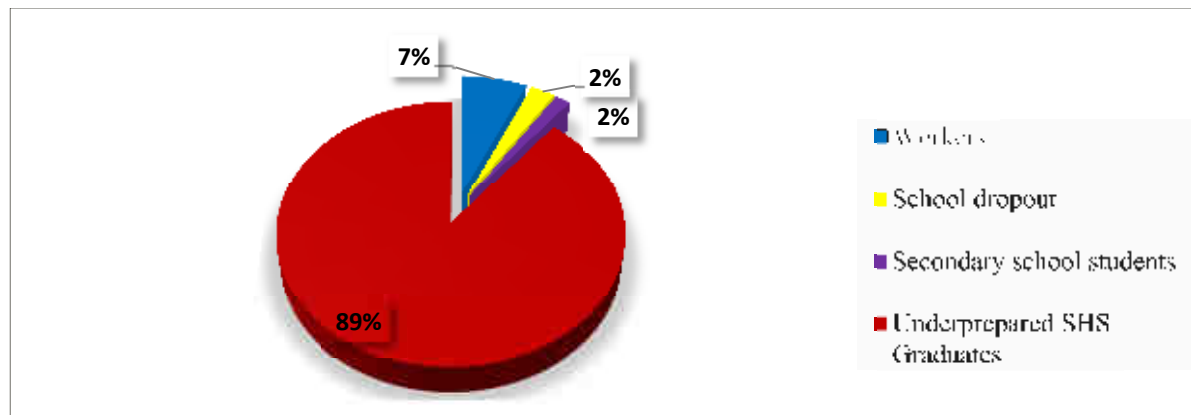


Figure 1: Categories of Student  
 Source: Author's Construct, 2014

#### 4.4 First timers versus non-first timers

Student respondents were asked whether it was their first time attending a remedial school. About 96 percent of them said “yes” while the remaining 4 percent said “no”. On the basis of this, it can be seen that remedial schools do make an impact on their students in terms of performance. To further explain this, in a situation where students were unable to perform even after attending a remedial school, they would under normal circumstances enroll for a second time or more. However, judging from this scenario, the fact that a student attends a remedial school does not mean a hundred percent guarantee that he/she would make it in the external examination. This is because, for 4 percent of the study population, it is not their first time of enrolling in such school.

#### 4.5 Teaching and Learning Environment of Remedial Schools

##### 4.5.1 Class Sizes

It is suggested in education literature that, the class size has impacts on the performance of students and hence the survey captures it. From the survey, the average class size in remedial schools is 53 students per class. This figure is apparently lesser than that of the secondary schools which is 56 students per class, as revealed by the Ministry of Education. Considering the class size of study schools labelled A\* and C\*, in Table 3, with a class size of 45 and 55 respectively, both teachers and students are likely to have a healthy interaction than a school with a class size of 70. This implies that remedial schools students may have better enabling environment to promote effective teaching and learning. This is true since teachers have lesser number of students to handle in terms of assessments and assignments, hence being in better position to help weaker students. Contrarily, in the context of cases with very large class size, teachers always act on assumptions, as they perceive all students have fully grasped the lesson. This immensely undermines the effectiveness of teaching and learning and as such the weaker students are always at a disadvantage in terms of passing their exams.

Table 3 Average class size

School	Average no. of students per class
Remedial School A*	45
Remedial School B*	60
Remedial School C*	55
Total	<b>160</b>
<i>Average class size of remedial schools</i>	<b>53</b>

Source: Author's Construct, 2014 \*Note: To ensure information confidentiality, the specific remedial schools have been connoted with A, B and C.

##### 4.5.2 Classroom-Laboratory Integration

Survey revealed that all three schools had a science laboratory by virtue of the fact that they run remedial and

secondary school concurrently. Nonetheless, none of the remedial students have access to the science laboratory. This is because teachers do not integrate classroom lessons with practical lessons. However, teachers put to use equally effective methods of using charts and diagrams to explain certain laboratory tests that could have been done in the laboratory. This implies that since science practical examinations may not require a laboratory, the method adopted by the teachers would make it easier for students to understand the questions and answer them accurately.

#### 4.5.3 Class-Schedules

It was further realised that the class schedules within remedial schools is a key factor that most respondents appreciated. According to them, life after secondary school is very hard and therefore how classes have been schedules in remedial schools enables them to engage in other socio-economic activities to keep life moving. It was evidenced that the duo-system of remedial schools places tuition schedules in the evenings and on weekends. In this case, students with families to take care of, have time to ensure the proper management of their homes while studying. Concerning jobs, classes are organised on weekends to prevent overlaps in terms of tuition period and working times. This flexibility within the class-schedules implies that people can build on their work experience and earn income while engaged in studies for their total human development.

#### 4.5.4 Learning-aids available in remedial schools

Remedial schools were assessed based on the availability and accessibility of certain facilities which aid in learning. To assess the facilities and resources of the schools, the researcher selected four learning aids/facilities that should be available to students to assist them in their studies. These are: library facilities, computer laboratories, study materials and desk. These were chosen because they are the basic necessities that are required to ensure effective teaching and learning. Due to the impact learning aids have on students' performance, remedial schools have and still are putting in commendable efforts to providing such facilities to students despite the zero-support they receive from the government. From the survey it was found out that the lower access to these aids in remedial schools is because of the insufficiency and the poor nature of these aids in the schools. Furthermore, another inhibiting factor that prevents students' access to the library and the computer laboratories is their class schedules. Nonetheless, students are being encouraged to make judicious use of the slightest free periods they have to access these facilities. By so doing, students learn the act of being disciplined, principled and also time-conscious - all of which are qualities that they would need in the field of work and beyond.

### 4.6 Assessment of Teachers

#### 4.6.1 Sex-Composition of Teachers

The total number of remedial school teachers in the study schools is 33 as shown in Table 4. Out of this number, 82 percent are males while 18 percent are females. It has however not been proven if this inequity between male and female teachers has a significant influence on students' performance. Nonetheless, "given that usually female teachers serve as role models to students than male teachers, this might have an implication on students' performance" (Mwebaza, 2010).

Table 4 Population of Teachers

	School	Number of Remedial Teachers
1	Remedial School A*	11
2	Remedial School B*	14
3	Remedial School C*	8
Total		33

Source: Author's Construct, 2014

#### 4.6.2 Teacher Qualification and their Methods of Tuition

The minimum requirement for a person to teach at a remedial school is a university diploma in education. From the field survey, 15 out of 33 teachers representing 45.5 percent hold a diploma certificate while the remaining 18 teachers representing 54.5 percent hold a first degree certificate. Due to the level of qualification of teachers, they adopt modern teaching methods that enable students have a better understanding of topics. The methods of tuition they adopt are: Oral transmission with the aid of prescribed textbooks and approved syllabus, class presentation and group discussions. These are mostly methods of tuition adopted in the tertiary institutions. Thus by exposing them to such methods at that stage will make it easier for them to cope with the academic environment in the post-secondary institutions. The caliber of teachers in remedial schools with reference to their qualification and tuition methods could be said to have an influence on students' academic output.

#### 4.6.3 Student-Teacher Assessment

Students were made to assess the performance of their teachers in terms of certain characteristics: punctuality, ability to teach and entertaining discussion outside class. From the data, 78 percent of the student respondents said that the teachers are punctual. This implies that teachers' would be able to finish their syllabus on time and thus leaves students with more time for revision. This guarantees the students' chances of passing their examination. Out of the 120 students interviewed, 54 percent affirmed that teachers are easily approachable when it comes to discussions even during non-class hours. This is in agreement to the positive response given by the teachers. It can be insinuated that not all the students seek clarifications of issues from their teachers after class. It could be that these students have understood what was taught and so did not need extra elucidation considering the fact that 89 percent of the respondents agree that the teachers teach to their understanding. Students were also made to give an overall assessment of their teachers' performance. About 92 percent rated the teachers' performance as 'good' while 6 percent rated them as poor'. Probing further to know why some students rated teachers' performance as poor, the study exposed that these students are normally those who do not attend class regularly.

The remaining 2 percent however were indecisive about what score to give. With this incredible performance of the teachers, it can be said that teachers in remedial schools put in their best to ensure that students are well-taught and this serves as a motivation for students to also study hard and pass their examinations.

#### **4.6.4 Teachers' Assessment of Students' Performance**

Teachers also assessed students' performance using various methods. They organize periodic class tests, give out take-home assignments, class debates and class exercises. Teachers through these means are able to deduce the level of knowledge acquisition of their students. Reasons why these assessments are done are as follows:

- It ensures easy recollection of concepts studied;
- It builds students ability to get used to answering questions and writing examinations;
- It helps students have mastery over the topics studied;
- It helps students in exploring knowledge; and
- It causes students to revise now and again.

All of which will build the academic proficiency of students' once labelled as 'weak students'.

#### **4.6.5 Teachers' Motivation**

Remedial school teachers in the metropolis are motivated as they receive salaries and bonuses. These are the only forms of motivation they receive. However, interviews with the teachers revealed that, most teachers in remedial schools are not motivated to teach because of the benefits they derive in the forms aforementioned, but by the passion they have for teaching, students and the country. This is the response of one teacher when asked what motivates him to put in his very best:

*"I consider myself not left out in the process leading to national development and so with passion and a sense of sacrifice, I do my best for my students".*

Another interesting comment came from a male teacher:

*"My desire to bring up a generation better than my generation and also my passion for excellence are my motivation."*

The teachers described their salary as attractive and normal. Questioned as to whether their salary affected the way they teach, all the teachers responded in the negative. This implies that teachers in remedial schools do not compromise on quality when it comes to delivering their services. This is the kind of attitude that is needed to improve productivity and hence the development of the country.

#### **4.6.6 Measures put in place to ensure teachers' performance**

Like most private schools, remedial schools in the metropolis also put in place certain measures to check on the performance of teachers. These are:

The use of attendance book: The schools' administrations provide a register that allows teachers to sign in whenever they report to school. This book helps the administration to identify teachers who miss their class periods without any tangible reason and sanction them accordingly.

The second check on teachers is the payment of salary based on the number of times a teacher holds classes. Thus the existence of these checks propel teachers to work as expected and when this happens, students also receive the services for which they paid monies.

### **5. Contributions of Remedial Schools in Developing Education in Ghana**

From the study, the following are the contributions of remedial schools to the development of the country:

#### **5.1 Employment**



For a remedial school to function effectively, they employ the services of teachers, staff workers, administrators, as well as cleaners. From the study, 33 teachers have been given employment to teach in these schools. Though there is no data on the percentage of labour force remedial schools employ, it can confidently be said that the increase in remedial schools all over the country has led to an increase in employment opportunities for teachers as well as other professionals. Also, observation made during the survey saw food vendors near and within the premises of these schools. This means an increase in employment and thus an improvement in income sources.

### **5.2 They help students pass their examinations**

Remedial schools have been in existence for a long time now though records that confirm their first existence in the country are not available. However, data gathered from the field proved that the purpose of every student's enrolment in remedial school is to acquire knowledge that would help them pass their external examinations. Information provided from the schools studied saw that every year, about 80 to 90 percent of their students were able to further their education which is very laudable. This shows that students are able to achieve their purpose for which they enrolled in these schools.

### **5.3 It serves as a platform for workers to upgrade themselves**

Remedial schools help improve the quality of human resource in the country. As mentioned previously, 7 percent of students who were workers said they enrolled in these schools in order to get the opportunity to enter into tertiary. This is because their experience in the field of work has shown that higher education is a very important element in promoting self-development and increasing productivity.

### **5.4 It reduces the burden on government**

If students' academic journey comes to a halt because of poor performance, in the long-run the government suffers. This is because there would be more unskilled labour in the country. In a situation where skilled labour is short in the country, the government would have to employ the services of such labour from outside the country. This means money will be flowing out of the country and this can render the country poor. However, the existence of remedial schools serves as a correction in the educational system and help develop the capacities of underprepared students.

### **5.5 Help improve moral standards in society**

In one of the institutions interviewed for instance, they described some of the students who enroll in their institutions as having low moral standards. This is true because some of the students who enroll in these institutions are school dropouts. Thus, these schools in addition to taking students through academic exercises, they also take it upon themselves to instil discipline in the students.

### **5.6 Bridge the gap in the educational system**

Due to the biases within the educational system, it is not possible that all SHS graduates will get a place in the post-secondary institutions. For instance, certain secondary schools have access to certain educational facilities that are missing in other schools, and so these schools tend to have a wider scope of knowledge and exposure. Therefore, students who are unfortunate to enter into schools that lack certain requisite educational facilities tend to be disadvantaged. Thus, remedial schools provide these facilities so as to expose students to things of important consideration in the world of academia.

### **5.7 Establishment of Secondary Schools**

The study saw all three schools as operating on a two-way system. That is to say, in addition to the remedial sections, each of the schools runs a secondary school system. Previously, they were only operating as a remedial school but currently they have expanded to provide secondary school services to the general public. This in a way has the ability to reduce the pressure on existing public secondary school facilities in the country.

## **6. Challenges facing Remedial Schools**

The field survey revealed a number of challenges that the remedial schools are facing. These are explained as follows:

### **6.1 Lack of recognition by the Ghana Education Service**

It was discovered that the GES does not recognize remedial schools as part of the educational system. This is because according to GES, the existence of remedial schools is a contributing factor to students' poor performance in WASSCE. To explain further, students knowing that there is always another opportunity for them should they fail, do not sit up and study. As a result they do not get support from the government in terms of provision of study aids.

## **6.2 Lack of support from the government**

Despite the availability of resources and facilities in remedial schools, most of them do not come in the right quality needed. As was found out from the study, most of the students do not get access to learning aids because of its inadequacy and poor conditions. From the study, it was observed that the library facilities were not well-stocked with books that would aid students in their studies. However, these schools do not get support from the government in terms of materials donation, funding and others because the government does not recognize them.

## **6.3 Poor attitudes of students**

Information obtained from the teachers interviewed showed that some students especially the grown-ups do not give respect to these teachers whom they see to be younger than themselves. Thus, they report to school late and also do not show any sign of seriousness. This distracts the smooth teaching and learning atmosphere and has huge repercussions on their final performance.

## **7. Major findings/lessons for policy making**

### **7.1 Better Relationship among students, teachers and other staff**

#### **7.1.1 Teacher-Students Relationship**

The study revealed that the teachers are easily approachable as 54 percent of the respondents affirmed to this statement. In their opinion, the teachers make time for them anytime a student approached them for more clarification or for a personal advice. A positive teacher-student relationship plays an important role in students' performance. Unlike the secondary school students who spend about 40 hours a week with teachers, remediated students spend just about 23 hours a week with teachers. Thus, they seize the little time available to seek for help from their teachers and they receive the needed attention. Additionally, teachers interviewed said that their wish is to see all the students pass their examinations. Therefore, no matter the help students need, they are ready to deliver. Thus they see teaching, not as a profession but servitude to students and to the nation at large. This positive teacher-students relationship that exists in remedial schools must be encouraged in all schools.

#### **7.1.2 Teacher-Staff Relationship**

Remedial schools maintain the open door policy in their operations. This policy allows teachers to approach the staff or proprietors of the schools, should they face any situation. Interview with the management body revealed that, the only way to maintain teachers and to boost their morale is to have a very cordial relationship with them. He added that, there is competition among remedial schools since they all claim to be the best. Thus, if the school loses the good teachers they have to other schools, enrolment during the next academic year will be low. Since most parents consider the school's performance in external examination as their major reason for their wards' enrolment. Teachers interviewed also confirmed that, indeed they have a good relationship with the management body of the schools they teach in. The open door policy serves as an impetus to boost the delivery of teachers in class. This should be encouraged in all schools.

### **7.2 Better Class Schedules**

Although remedial schools open in the evening during the hours of 4pm to 7pm to students, it in anyway does not inconvenience the students or teachers. This is because the schools have separate teachers for the remedial section, however just a few of them teach the regular students. Thus, the issue to teachers getting exhausted during that time does not become a factor when assessing remedial schools' performance. In other words, the time class schedules do not limit the teachers' ability to deliver in class. On the part of the students also, due to their composition, it gives them the chance to engage in other productive activities during the day as well as enables them to study during the evenings.

### **7.3 Teacher Motivation**

Teachers receive in addition to their salaries, bonuses such as accommodation or accommodation allowances, transport allowances, free lunch among others. All these are ways the management bodies of the schools adopt to realize the maximum output from teachers. Additionally, teachers interviewed stated that despite their attractive salaries, their greatest motivation is the service they are rendering to the society and to the students especially. This is because, the students success though sometimes depends on the individuals themselves, it largely depends on what the teacher give out.

### **7.4 Supervision**

It is a known assertion that there is proper supervision and management in private sectors. This is because of the profit-making motives of these private investors. As a result, the management body of the schools closely monitors their teachers. Due to competition among the schools, the management of the schools makes sure

teachers in no way shirk their responsibilities. Thus measures such as the use of attendance records, periodic assessment of teachers by students and staff, laid down rules and regulations for teachers are all ways used to check that teachers render their services as expected. Consequently, teachers in these schools are compelled to attend class and teach during their periods.

### **7.5 Teaching Aids**

Without teaching aids or facilities, teaching becomes difficult and appreciation of what is being taught diminishes. Thus remedial schools are provided with textbooks, computers, library, study charts, boxes of chalk and markers, just to mention a few. All these make it easier for both teachers and students to give out their best performance. However, these are not adequate as disclosed by the study. Therefore measures are being put in place to ensure its adequacy.

### **7.6 Improved ways or methods of teaching**

Due to the caliber of teachers employed in these schools with 54.5 percent holding a first degree certificate, they use modern methods of teaching. For instance, teachers adopted class presentation, group discussions, the use of pictorial charts and diagrams etc. to facilitate the learning process of students. These helps students to appreciate what is being taught and also prepares them for post-secondary education as these methods are predominant in these institutions.

### **7.7 Seriousness of Students**

Despite the lackadaisical attitude of few students in the schools, most of the students take their classes seriously. Having not been able to make it to the tertiary level on their first or so attempt, students see the importance of taking their classwork serious when they enter the remedial schools. Aside the classroom work, the staff makes sure that discipline of students and their moral standards are not compromised. It is therefore not surprising that the schools interviewed boast of having about 80 percent of their graduates excel in the external examination and continuing their education.

## **8. Recommendations**

The Government should recognize remedial schools as part of the educational system in the country. They should show interest, support and work hand in hand with these schools so that together they can provide students with the help that they need to qualify for tertiary education. They can do this by giving subventions in the form of free approved textbooks to the schools. A more reason is that these schools contribute to development in diverse ways as explained earlier on. Also, students who attend remedial schools should seize the opportunities provided by the remedial schools and study hard. For instance, they should patronize the other educational facilities such as libraries and computer laboratories provided by the schools in order to widen their understanding and knowledge of certain relevant issues. Moreover, parents whose wards were unable to enrol in the tertiary institutions because of poor performance should take advantage of the opportunities provided by remedial schools and enrol their wards so that they can further their education. This is because, in the job-market today, the level of education also plays a vital role in an individual's success. Finally, remedial schools should also make available their educational facilities at all times to all categories of their students. This would enable them access these facilities outside their class periods

## **9. Conclusion**

The study has brought to light the roles remedial schools play in the country and these cannot be downplayed. Remedial schools have come to stay and they are performing in terms of helping students upgrade their results for higher education. These schools should in no way be underestimated but rather supported to give the help the youth in the country need to develop.

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