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Studies

**Exploring the policy implementation paradox:
the case of the Free Compulsory Universal
Basic Education (fCUBE) policy in Ghana**

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the policy implementation paradox. That is, the view endorsed by policy literature that although tremendous investment is made in making policies, change agents and implementers often pursue different agendas when it comes to implementation. The study explored this policy phenomenon using the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) policy in Ghana as an exemplar and with a view to investigating the extent to which the ‘free’, ‘compulsory’, ‘universal’ and ‘basic education’ provisions, claimed in the policy documents, are reflected in its implementation process.

The research aimed to find out how the conception and articulation of the policy purposes encapsulated in official documentation impacted on the implementation process. This approach involved the critical discourse analysis of a range of publicly available documentation and the analysis of interviews with eleven elite individuals and five groups of policy mediators at the meso-level of the Ghanaian educational system.

The study posits that, owing to its commitment to the ideals of social justice, the ‘fCUBE’ policy is seen as deeply rooted in social democracy. However, the advent of neo-liberal ideological discourse on education wrapped in the rhetoric of ‘skills for knowledge-based economy’ has triggered the neutralization of progressive undercurrents, resulting in a significant discursive shift in language and policy direction. As such, it is contended that as long as there are private costs to education vis-à-vis disparities in educational provision and delivery, the ‘free’, ‘compulsory’, ‘universal’ and ‘basic education’ components of ‘fCUBE’ cannot be said to be adequately reflected in the implementation process.

It is concluded that the policy implementation paradox is a natural policy phenomenon occurring as a result of the moving discursive shifts that occur as policy is enacted, and that this needs to be acknowledged and concerted efforts made to effectively manage its effects on policy processes.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

AD: Assistant Director.

ADB: African Development Bank.

ADF: African Development Fund.

ADP: Accelerated Development Plan.

AUX: Auxiliary.

BECE: Basic Education Certificate Examination.

BESIP: Basic Education School Improvement Programme.

BS: Basic Stage.

CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis.

CASA: Clear and Simple Analysis.

CIDA: Canadian International Development Agency.

CRDD: Curriculum Research Development Division.

CS: Circuit Supervisor.

DA: District Assembly.

DANIDA: Danish International Development Agency.

DEO: District Education Office.

DEOC: District Education Oversight Committee.

DFID: Department For International Development.

DTST: District Teacher Support Team.

EFA: Education For All.

E.P.: Evangelical Presbyterian.

ESP: Education Strategic Plan.

EU: European Union.

'fCUBE': Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education.

F.T.: Future Tense.

GDP: Gross Domestic Product.

GES: Ghana Education Service.

GETFUND: Ghana Education Trust Fund.

GNAT: Ghana National Association of Teachers.

GOG: Government of Ghana.

HIPC: Highly Indebted Poor Countries.

IEC: Information, Education, Communication.
ICE: International Conference on Education.
ICT: Information, Communication Technology.
ID: Inspectorate Division.
IMF: International Monetary Fund.
JHS: Junior High School.
JICA: Japan International Cooperation Agency.
JSS: Junior Secondary School.
KG: Kindergarten.
KVIP: Kumasi Ventilated Improved Pit.
MDG: Millennium Development Goals.
MOE: Ministry of Education.
MOEYS: Ministry of Education Youth and Sports.
NACVET: National Council for Vocational Education and Training.
NCTE: National Council for Tertiary Education.
NDC: National Democratic Congress.
NERP: New Educational Reform Programme.
NGO: Non-Governmental; Organisation.
NP: Noun Phrase.
NPP: National Patriotic Party.
NSCE: New Structure and Content of Education.
NTC: National Teaching Council.
NVTI: National Vocational Training Institute.
PP: Prepositional Phrase.
Ph. V: Phrasal Verb.
PREP: Primary Education Programme.
P.R.O.: Public Relations Officer.
PTA: Parent Teacher Association.
RECAAST: Regional Colleges of Applied Arts, Science and Technology.
SHEP: School Health Education Programme.
SHS: Senior High School.
SMC: School Management Committee.

SSS: Senior Secondary School.

STEP: Skills Training and Employment Programme.

UC: Unit Committee.

UK: United Kingdom.

UN: United Nations.

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme.

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

UNICEF: United Nations Children Emergency Fund.

USAID: United States Agency for International Development.

WAEC: West African Examinations Council.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Chapter outline

This chapter sets out the background to the study. It is divided into seven main sections. The first section provides an outline of the chapter. This is followed by a brief description of what the study is about. The third section gives an overview of the education system in Ghana, detailing key facts and features which together help define the context of the 'fCUBE' policy, its implementation process, as well as helping to put both the actors of policy (meso-level implementers) and documents selected for analysis into the context of this study. The section discusses four main themes, namely: the geo-historico-political context; the history of education development; the structure, organization and management of education; and education policy formulation/making and implementation processes and procedures in Ghana, respectively.

Thereafter comes an outline of what is known in methodological and sociological terms as 'the statement of purpose', where the research problem, purpose, aim and objectives, rationale, and relevance of outcomes are outlined and explored. Section five outlines and explores issues of research design. That is, how the study was conducted, drawing on the methodological approaches, strategies and techniques for identifying, gathering and analysing data to answer the research questions posed. Thereafter an outline of the thesis is presented in section six before the chapter summary in section seven.

1.2. Preamble

This study is a follow-up to the findings of a small-scale exploratory study conducted on the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) policy in Ghana by the researcher in 2004. The current study concerns the apparent policy implementation paradox. That is, the view which litters education policy literature that although politicians and other policy activists and actors invest tremendous time, resources and energy in enacting policies, when it comes to putting these policy provisions and recommendations into practice, different agendas are more often pursued by the policy implementers and change agents.

Shulock (1999, p. 226) for example, contends that although we invest tremendous resources into policy making, implementation and analysis, yet common wisdom, political science theory and years of empirical research all point to the fact that our policies rarely make any impact. Whitty (2006) endorses this view strongly and proceeds further to identify what to him is the root cause of the issue. He pins the issue of disjuncture between policy provisions enacted and what eventually gets implemented down to the lack of 'processual' relationship between Government, politicians, non-departmental public bodies and stakeholders on the one hand, and education policy researchers on the other. He explains that education research is more often the culprit and goes on to argue that in recent times education research is criticised by policy experts, change agents and politicians as being characterised by lack of rigour, theoretical incoherence, ideological bias, irrelevance to educational issues among other things. This for him explains why the politicians are impervious to put to use policies which to them are informed by 'biased and irrelevant' research.

This study explores this issue of disjuncture between policy provisions formulated for implementation and the strategies developed to guide implementation tasks with a view to gaining and offering in return, a better understanding of the issue as well as giving meaningful insights into the theoretical and conceptual perspectives and explanations advanced in the policy literature to explicate and demystify this global policy phenomenon. It does this by using the 'fCUBE' policy in Ghana as a case in point, and with a view to achieving 'a means to an end' agenda of critical policy analysis.

It must be acknowledged however that although the study purports to use the 'fCUBE' policy in Ghana to exemplify the policy paradox, the intention is not to over-emphasize the issue at hand by suggesting for instance, that the issue is more visible in low-income countries because of the poor socio-economic and political conditions there present. Rather, the decision to ply this methodological route is grounded in the need to trace, bring to the limelight and exemplify the existence and magnitude of the policy paradox

in the Ghana, which more or less is in a secluded academic enclave as far as research and other educational debates are concerned.

Thus, while the study generally concerns what in the context of this study is described as the ‘policy implementation paradox’, the researcher tends to focus more specifically on the implementation and institutionalisation of the ‘fCUBE’ policy in Ghana, thus making the findings of the study relevant to a wide range of national and international contexts. Essentially, while the study uses the ‘fCUBE’ policy as a means to better understanding and explicating the policy implementation milieu, an attempt is made particularly to explore the points of convergence and divergence between what the ‘fCUBE’ policy documentation says both implicitly and explicitly about the purposes as well as the various components of the policy, and how these purposes/components are perceived and articulated by the meso-level implementers and actors. Based on this assessment, a further attempt is made to offer explanations as to why this policy issue exists, particularly in education, and how this mirage could better be understood using Ball’s (1994) composite theory of policy as both a ‘text’ and ‘discourse’.

As ‘text’, the conceptualization of educational policies goes beyond the traditional conception of both written and spoken policy-texts/documents to include all cultural artefacts of human communication. However, for the purpose of this study, the term is used to refer exclusively to written documents and implied or taken to mean those provisions enacted through the process of policy making and are contained in the ‘fCUBE’ policy documentation.

The conception of policy as ‘discourse’ on the other hand is taken to mean the whole process of social interaction of which the policy-text production is a part. The interaction process includes, in addition to the process of text production (of which the policy-text is a product), the process of interpretation, for which the policy-text is a resource. The discourse process focuses mainly on the various dimensions of the relationship of power and language (policy-text), and explores what Fairclough (2001) refers to as ‘power in

discourse’ and the ‘power behind discourse’. Specifically, and as far as this study is concerned, the theorization of policy as discourse is taken to mean the ways in which the constraining effects of the discursive contexts set up by the policy-makers and actors come to the fore in the policy implementation and institutionalization processes (Trowler, 1998, p. 78). That is, the ways by which the ideas and provisions contained in the ‘fCUBE’ documentation are perceived, articulated and interpreted by the meso-level actors and implementers and the impacts that these have on the process of implementation.

The term ‘meso-level actors and implementers’ is used throughout this thesis to mean those actors of policy, who by virtue of their position between the policy-makers and politicians on the one hand, and the actual implementers—headteachers and teachers—of policy on the other, are involved in recontextualizing or mediating policy. Examples of meso-level implementers of policy in the Ghanaian context include the ‘high-ranking’ officials of the Regional and District Directorates of Education, the executive members and their regional and district counterparts of the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) and other autonomous bodies or organizations, senior officials of both the Ghana Education Service (GES) and Ministry of Education (MOE) at the National Headquarters, among others. Given the overall focus and purpose of the study, the meso-level actors and implementers are deemed to have particular dominant roles and power in influencing discourse, and the success of the task of implementation. This as a result calls for the need to explore their views, reactions and articulations of the ‘fCUBE’ policy provisions and components.

So, while the concern of the empirical work is on exploring the paradox in educational policy implementation, the focus particularly on the meso, rather than the macro or the micro-levels, is aimed at exploring the role of the meso-level actors with regards to the formation of policy discourse as well as describing and analysing what Bowe et al. (1992, p. 13) describe as ‘the process of active interpretation and meaning-making which relate policy texts to practice’. Bernstein (cited by Jephcote & Davies 2004, p.

549) writes of the importance and/or the relationship between meso-level agencies and those at other levels as one which can be understood in terms of their work as constructors of pedagogic discourse who delocate and relocate discourse, moving it from its original site to a pedagogic site.

1.3. The development and context of education in Ghana

1.3.1. The geo-historico-political context of Ghana

Ghana is located on the west coast of Africa. It shares boundaries with Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta Republic) on the north, the Republic of Togo on the east, the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire (formerly Ivory Coast) on the west, and the Atlantic Ocean on the south. The estimated population of Ghana is 21,029,853 comprising 41.18% 0-14 year olds; 55.35% 15-64 year olds; and 3.47% of people aged 65 and over (GOG, 2005 census estimate). This rapid increase in population from 18.5 million (GOG, 1990 census estimate) to over 21 million coupled with a population growth of 2.4% (GOG, 2000 Census) and 1.25% (GOG, 2005 census estimate) means that there is a serious implication for national planning in general and for education provision in particular.

Well endowed with natural resources, Ghana has twice the per capital output of the 'poorer' countries in West Africa (GOG, 1994). Even so, Ghana remains heavily depended on international financial and technical assistance, a phenomenon which resulted in the tagging of the country as 'Highly Indebted Poor Country' (HIPC) in 2001. The domestic economy continues to revolve around subsistence agriculture, which accounts for 36% of GDP and employs 60% of the work-force, mainly small landholders (GOG, 1994).

Culturally, Ghana is diverse. The estimated population of over 21 million is divided into ten administrative regions. Overall, there are over seventy-two (72) tribal groups and several other dialects, each having its own custom and language. Although linguistic classifications have undergone considerable amendment in recent years, the people of Ghana may be divided into five principal groupings distinguished not only by linguistic

affinities but also by the possession of common cultural attributes and, to some extent, by common myths of origin. These are the Akan, the Ga-Adangme, the Ewe, the Guan, and the Gur-speaking people (Foster, 1965, p. 16). This diversity accounts for the inability of governments, until to day, to adopt a common national language, explaining why English Language, the language of our colonial masters, is still used as the official language and medium of instruction in Ghanaian education system.

Religion plays a significant role in education in Ghana. There is complete freedom of worship with all groups co-existing peacefully. There are different Christian denominations and sects making up about 43% of the population, while believers of Islamic faith and traditional religion constitute nearly 43% and 12% respectively. The remaining 7% estimate of the population, are eclectic (GOG, 1994). Each of these groups, particularly Christians and Muslims, establishes its own schools to supplement government's efforts of provision and delivery of education, and of course, for the promotion of their missionary activities.

Historically, Ghana was formerly called the 'Gold Coast', a name given it by the early Portuguese explorers who first set foot on the shores of the country in the fifteenth century AD. The name Gold Coast aptly describes the country's resources which include up to present day, rich mineral resources (gold, diamond, manganese, bauxite, iron and clay and salt deposits); rich forests with wide range of fine tropical hardwoods; a wide variety of agricultural products and fishing resources, and unique tourist attractions including beautiful landscapes, sunshine, golden beaches, wild life parks and countryside with its rich cultural heritage and the proverbial warmth and hospitality of the people (GOG, 1994).

The 'Gold Coast' was a British colony for 113 years, that is, from the signing of the Bond of 1844 to 1957. However, on the 6th of March, 1957, it gained its independence from British colonial rule, adopting its present name Ghana (McWilliam et al., 1975; GOG, 1994).

Politically, there have been nine governments/regimes since the attainment of independence. Four of these (1960, 1969, 1979 and 1992) were constitutionally constituted governments while five (1966, 1972, 1978, 1979 and 1981) were military take-overs or juntas. The 1992 Constitution of the 'Fourth Republic', which is in operation today, provides among other things, for an Executive President elected by universal adult suffrage for a term of four years and eligible for re-election for only one additional term. The current government of the National Patriotic Party (NPP) is led by His Excellency, John Agyekum Kufour, who won the 2000 presidential elections and has been re-elected in December 2004 for a second four-year term. The legal system of the country is based on English common law and customary law.

1.3.2. The history of the development of education in Ghana

An examination of the policy history and practice of 'basic education' in Ghana could be compartmentalized into three major phases (Kadingdi, 2004, p. 3), namely: pre-Independence era; the period from 1951 to 1987; and the period from 1987 to present.

The first phase is described by historians as one which was dominated by missionary activities in relation to literacy for trade and the teachings of the Bible. Formal education, according to historians, dates back to the mercantile era preceding colonisation. European merchants and missionaries set up the first schools and Christian missionaries are said to have introduced western-style education into Ghana as early as 1766 (Antwi, 1991; Foster, 1965; Graham, 1971; McWilliam et al., 1975). These schools, set up mostly by Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries, were located in the south of the country in what became the British Gold Coast Colony. The main aim of these institutions was to facilitate the training of the local inhabitants as interpreters for purposes of trade and as a conversion of Ghanains to the Christian faith and religion. The curriculum of these early schools was thus narrow, with focus on literacy and the Bible and scripture as the main texts of schooling.

Under colonial rule, that is after the signing of the Bond of 1844 which officially marked the beginning of British rule in Ghana, series of attempts to improve the quality of primary education were made. However, of all these attempts, the one which was most significant in terms of how it had impacted the system and helped to transform basic education provision and delivery in Ghana, was that of Governor Gordon Guggisberg (1919-1927). He emphasized a need for better teaching and improved management of schools and had introduced what is known in the history of education in Ghana today as the 'sixteen principles of education' (McWilliam et al., 1975, pp. 54-65). However, a shortage of teachers and inadequate funding meant that his plans for improving primary education could not materialise as most schools, particularly in the rural areas, were still based in unsuitable buildings, were poorly equipped or, in some cases, centred under trees.

The first decade of the second phase in the development of basic education policy and practice in Ghana (that is, from 1951 to 1961) was characterised by the activities of leaders of national independence (Turner, 1971), who sought to use education to fulfil a 'decolonizing purpose'. The nationalists sought to use education as a tool, a weapon and a resource to emphasize the goals of national integration and nation-building (Turner, 1971; Nwomonoh, 1998; Dei, 2004, 2005), and thereby disabusing the minds of the citizens of the colonial histories, experiences and vestiges. Dei (2004; 2005) for example contends that this decolonizing argument stemmed from the revolutionary ideas of avowed nationalists such as Franz Fanon, Mohandas Gandhi, Albert Memmi, Aime Cesaire, Kwame Nkrumah, Che Guevara, among others, who sought political liberation for all colonised people and communities using the power of knowledge. He argues that following from this example, prominent anti-colonial African thinkers such as Kwame Nkrumah, Amilcar Cabral, Sekou Toure, Julius Nyerere and Leopold Senghor strategically evoked the goal of nation building as a necessary pre-condition for decolonization of the mind, the spirit and the state. These anti-colonial decolonizing tenets were inculcated into Ghanaian Educational Acts and programmes, especially the Accelerated Development Plan of 1951 and the 1961 Education Act, under which

provisions were made to make basic education free, universal and compulsory for all children from 6 years of age. (See the discussion in Chapter 9 for details on the decolonizing argument.)

Prior to 1972, the structure of the education system in Ghana bore much resemblance to the British grammar schools and was thus severely criticised for being selective and elitist. As a result of this, in 1973, the then in-coming military government carried out a review of the educational system, and formed the so called Dzobo Committee to recommend appropriate measures to improve the falling standards in education (Dzobo, 1974). This led to the government putting into operation the first major post-independence reform in pre-tertiary education in 1974. This reform, which is generally referred to as 'the New Structure and Content of Education' (NSCE), reduced the length of pre-tertiary education, from seventeen years to thirteen years. Its major aim was to vocationalise pre-university education in Ghana and to make it more functional and oriented towards contextual demands and challenges (Kadingdi, 2004, 5). Unfortunately however, despite its laudable intentions, the NSCE did not have any sustainable impact on the general education system of the country. The reform was faced with serious issues which included the huge number of unqualified teachers in the education system and inadequate resources to support teaching and learning in schools.

Thus, most parts of the rest of the second phase (that is, from 1966-1981) in the development of education in Ghana was characterized by instability in government as a result of successive military take-overs. This political instability coupled with the rise in oil prices in the early 1970s for example, resulted in economic decline in the country. It was a period of a harsh and repressive revolutionary zeal on the part of the military regime of 1981 and resulted in a significant number of trained and highly qualified teachers leaving the country (Nti, 1999, cited by Kadingdi, 2004, p. 4). Basic education, and in fact, education in general, at this period was therefore faced with political instability, ad hoc measures, and frequent changes in education policy. Teaching and learning in basic schools had deteriorated to the extent that the majority of school

leavers were illiterate, and confidence in Ghana's once enviable education system was shaken (Kadingdi, 2004, p. 4).

The third phase structuring this historical account embraces the period referred to as 'the military to the rescue' phase (Kadingdi, 2004, p. 6), and covers the period of major reform from which the 'fCUBE' policy of 1996 emerged. The phase was characterised by Ghana's participation in, and endorsement of, international conferences and agreements such as 'Education For All' (EFA), the United Nations Convention/Declaration on the Rights of the Child, the Beijing Declaration on Women's Rights, and the Lome Convention (Bray, 1987; GOG, 1998; 2004; Kadingdi, 2004; Tomasevski, 2004, 2005). This phase marks the period where Ghana has enjoyed, and continues to enjoy a lot of goodwill from developed wealthy countries and donor agencies, particularly the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). As Kadingdi (2004) for example explains, Ghana's participation in, and endorsement of these agreements means that the Government is obliged to remain committed to her constitutional obligations as a guide to policy and would be influenced by the bilateral and multilateral negotiations it had taken part in (p. 7). This also implies that Government has a responsibility for reforming its education system and thereby restructuring the nation's economic base to bring into conformity with the financial credibility criteria required by donor agencies, particularly the World Bank and the IMF.

The most significant policy developments which apparently marked the start of this phase was the introduction of the New Educational Reform Programme (NERP) in 1987. This reform was based on the recommendations of the NSCE (MOE, 1974; 1998) and was focussed on the total restructuring of the entire pre-tertiary education system and improving access through the provision of infrastructure whilst making the curriculum more relevant to social and economic needs. A major thrust of the reform was the diversification of the formal academic courses offered in pre-tertiary institutions by the inclusion of practical courses. According to the MOE Report (MOE, 1998), the NERP sought among other things, 'to salvage the educational system to make it more

meaningful to the individual and the nation as a whole'. The 1987 reform became necessary as a result of virtual collapse of the system due to insufficient supply of trained and qualified teachers, inadequate funding which led to the lack of textbooks and other needed curriculum materials, lack of adequate supply of furniture and equipment, and the deteriorating of school-buildings.

However, in 1994, just seven years after the inception of the NERP, the poor performance of school pupils at age 12 led to the setting up of yet another Education Review Committee to review the education system. At this time, only 6% of the pupils at grade six in public schools tested nation-wide achieved a criterion score of 60% and above in English. Even worse, less than 3% achieved a criterion score of 55% and above in Mathematics (MOE, 1994). The work of the Committee culminated in the National Education Forum of 1994 with a focus on basic education to the year 2000. The forum attended by 150 representatives of various stakeholder groups, received critical comments from participants and also provided an opportunity for discussion of problems of the sector.

The outcome of the public discussion of the problems of the education sector as well as the constitutional demands or requirements of the Fourth Republican Constitution of 1992 led to the formulation and introduction of a further major reform or a new basic education policy, 'fCUBE' in 1996, which is now being implemented. The 'fCUBE' policy focuses on primary education and seeks to improve the 1987 reform by addressing the shortcomings identified in the implementation process. The policy also aims at increasing the participation of primary school-going-age children so as to make it as close to one hundred percent of the population as possible. Additionally, the 'fCUBE' policy seeks to address a particular policy focus of raising the enrolment of girls in basic education (MOE, 1998, p. 2). Article 39(2) of the 1992 Constitution for example, entitled every child of school-going age in Ghana to a balanced and broadly based curriculum which promised to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and society. It also, aimed to prepare pupils

for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. (See Section 1.4.1. of Chapter 1 for detailed discussion on the ‘fCUBE’ policy.)

November 1999 saw yet another National Education Forum, organised to identify the challenges of the education sector, especially with regard to funding of tertiary education and the structure of the SSS programme. The outcome of the forum brought among other things, the establishment of the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFUND), the institution of ‘cost sharing’ (paying towards one’s education) in education, the development of Education Strategic Plan (ESP) to give direction and focus to the sector. In response to the concerns and recommendations of the National Education Forum, the President, in January 2002, set up a Committee to review the entire education system of the country with the view to arriving at decisions that would make the education sector responsive to the challenges of the 21st century. Working under the theme, “Meeting the Challenges of Education in the Twenty-First Century”, the Committee came out with a comprehensive report dealing with the current issues affecting access to quality and relevance education in October the same year, and the Government issued a White-Paper on the report in 2005. Among the changes that the Government’s White-Paper recommends and/or endorses, those that are particularly relevant to this study are: the addition of two years kindergarten (pre-school) education to nine years of basic education, the reduction in number of subjects taught at the basic education level; the introduction and operationalization of the concepts of ‘capitation grant’ and ‘school feeding programmes’, and the strengthening of ‘fCUBE’ policy implementation to ensure that the global vision of EFA is attained by the year 2015. These changes are currently underway and are meant to combat the challenges of basic education provision and delivery in the years that lie ahead.

Thus, by outlining and exploring the three phases in the development of education in Ghana in this section, the chapter has set the ‘fCUBE’ policy in the context of the major educational developments which seem to have informed and necessitated its initiation as well as detailing the processes involved in its implementation.

1.3.3. The structure, organization and management of education in Ghana

A review of the educational policy literature and documentations in Ghana reveals that comparatively, new educational reforms, policies and innovations introduced seem to borrow extensively from the ideas of previous educational policies of past governments. As Kadingdi (2004, p. 10) for example, contends, whenever conferences or commissions are called upon to form a plan for education in Ghana, the tendency seems to be to maintain the existing system with slight modifications. Generally, the relevance of this view to the purpose of discussion in this part of the chapter is evident in the fact that Ghana, until the third quarter of the 1980s operated the 6-4-5-2 (6 years primary; 4 years middle; 5 years secondary; and 2 years sixth form) pre-tertiary education system. However, due to concerns among Ghanaians that the seventeen years of pre-tertiary education was too long and was having telling effects on the national budget, a new system of education, which was mooted earlier on in 1974, was introduced in 1987. This new educational system reduced the length of pre-tertiary education from seventeen to twelve years comprising of 6-3-3 (6 years primary; 3 years Junior Secondary School (JSS); and 3 years Senior Secondary School (SSS)) education (MOE, 1987).

Again, owing to the perceived weakness in both the 1987 education reform programme and 'fCUBE' policy to the effect that too many subjects are taught and are poorly handled at the primary, JSS and SSS levels (MOE, 2005, p. 14), a new universal and continuous basic educational programme from 4 to 15 years is currently being introduced by the government of the NPP. This new programme purports to change the primary-JSS-SSS structure with a 2-6-3-4 pre-tertiary structure comprising of 2 years kindergarten; 6 years primary; 3 years Junior High School (JHS); and 4 years Senior High School (SHS).

So while the illustrations above suggest fundamental differences in the various educational systems Ghana has had, it is important to note that generally, the structure, organization and management of education in Ghana bears much resemblance to those of the western world, particularly that of the UK. The system starts at the first-cycle

level or Basic Education level, which comprises of pre-school, primary and JSS (now JHS). It continues through the second-cycle level which is made up of SSS (now SHS), Technical and Vocational Institutions, and ends at the tertiary-cycle, consisting of Teacher Training Colleges, Health Training Institutions, Polytechnics and the proposed Regional Colleges of Applied Arts, Science and Technology (RECAAST), the Colleges of Education, and Universities.

Given that this study concerns what in the Ghanaian context is referred to as 'Basic Education' or 'first-cycle' system of education, particular attention is paid to the curriculum contents of courses/subjects constituting this level or cycle while the other levels, notably the second and tertiary are mentioned briefly.

The first-cycle or Basic Education level, as noted earlier, comprises of 2 years pre-school (kindergarten), 6 years primary, and 3 years JHS. Before 2002, pre-school education was not part of the first-cycle (Basic Education) system of Ghanaian education. It was introduced as a result of recommendations made by the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms in October, 2002 (GOG, 2002), and had by September 2006, become a progressive part of the universal, free, and compulsory basic education structure (MOE, 2005, p. 17). The programme runs for two years, starting from the age of 4 to 6. It prepares children for formal education and it is mandatory that every child goes through it before starting his/her primary education.

Primary Education, as the formal basis of the educational system has the following objectives: literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills, creative arts/activities (art and craft, music and dance, physical education and ICT), life skills and citizenship (MOE, 2005, p. 3). These objectives outlined are incorporated into a revised national curriculum comprising the following subjects areas for all primary schools: Psycho-social skills (self-confidence, assertiveness), Language and Literacy, Mathematics, Environmental Studies, Creative Activities, Health, Nutrition and Safety. In addition to the general and special objectives outlined for primary schools, the JHS curriculum is designed to

provide opportunities, and properly equip students to move into a diversified system of SHSs comprising options in Vocational, Technical, Agricultural and General education. Access to the various SHS options is through externally supervised examinations in the core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and Ghanaian Languages.

The second-cycle education in the SHSs consists of a four-year programme which is organised both as terminal education for entry into the 'world of work', and as a preparatory stage for entry into tertiary education. The SHS education embraces the underlisted four streams: General Education, Vocational Education, Technical Education, and Agricultural (MOE, 2005, p. 22). In the first two years of the four years of SHS education, Mathematics, Computer Studies, General Science, Social Studies, and English (French to be added later) are compulsory subjects. The effect sought here is that, the addition of very specialized training at tertiary level to this broad-based SHS training should produce graduates and diplomates with a well rounded education adaptable to the advancement of knowledge and offering enlightened leadership for national progress (MOE, 2005, p. 23).

The third or tertiary level of education in Ghana currently comprises of a number of institutions, namely: Teacher Training Colleges; Polytechnics, Health Institutions (Midwifery Training Colleges/Schools, Schools of Hygiene, Nurses Training Institutions etc) and Universities. These institutions offer all kinds of training for graduates from the second-cycle level, who wish to further their education or specialise in a particular field or career. For example, the Teacher Training Colleges and the Health Institutions train teachers and health workers respectively, while the Polytechnics and Universities offer a plethora of academic and professional courses to their respective students.

1.3.4. Education policy-making and implementation in Ghana

Education policy-making in Ghana adopts a traditional/rational problem-solving model of policy processes, and is channelled through various stages (MOE, 1998), namely: conception, consultation, development, implementation and evaluation stages.

The process of education policy formulation in the Ghanaian context begins with a perceived need for change in the education provision and delivery systems. Such a change may be necessitated by various reasons, for example, a recognition that a particular educational reform programme is no longer appropriate, or in other words, has outlived its usefulness, or from the findings of a research project on school effectiveness. Equally, the introduction of new policies within the education system may be prompted in some cases, by the concern to fulfil earlier promises made, especially by politicians seeking the mandate of the electorate. At the conception stage, and in the Ghanaian context, the practice is to respond to demands for change by first setting up a national committee or commission with membership from a wide range of stakeholder organizations to review the situation (MOE, 1998). The main task here is for the membership of the committee/commission so formed, to convene, to discuss, brainstorm and collaborate on particular issue or issues on the policy agenda of the GES, the government body responsible for formulating and implementing education policies in the country. Some good examples to demonstrate the conception stage of the policy process in the Ghanaian context, is the setting up of the Education Reform Review Committee in 1993/94 and another one in 2002 with the mandate to review Ghana's policies on basic education. It is important to add that mostly, the decisions taken at this stage depend on the convergence of a number of influences to create a policy imperative.

The consultation stage solicits views for the purpose of review by the government. The concern here is not only to find out why targets set are not being achieved and whether implementation of current policies have gone on as planned. The task here also borders on examining what unintended or unforeseen obstacles and debacles have emerged during the process of implementation and how these could be overcome (MOE, 1998).

Similarly, an integral part of the task here is considering which options are available or are still open to the sector, while taking into account the past experiences and the extent to which the sector has drifted off course. Generally, at this stage, an all-round stakeholder conference/meeting is convened to discuss the options proposed by the review committee. The review committee then re-convenes to put together the various options discussed and adopted at the round-table conference and the outcomes is submitted to the MOE in the form of policy recommendations. As Humes (1994) contends, a relatively open process of consultation canvasses views widely and sets few limits to the issue(s) that are up for debate whilst a relatively closed consultation restricts both those who qualify as legitimate respondents, and what they are invited to comment on. While this holds true for the developments at the consultation stage of the policy formulation process in the Ghanaian context, it is important to stress that, whether an open or closed process is used, it is the prerogative of government, particularly, the Minister in charge of education portfolio, to either revise or not to revise the original ideas in the light of the responses received. In fact, for reasons of political expedience, the extent of revision at this stage depends on the degree of political will behind the policy initiative.

At the development stage, the policy formulation/making process is moved beyond the broad enunciation of principles to the clarification of aims, detailed planning, pre-testing of materials among others. Sometimes, new policies are pilot-tested before wholesale national implementation. A case in point is the piloting of the JSS concept which took-off in 1981 before a nationwide implementation in the 1990s. The important management implications involved at this stage include the remit given to the individual and groups, and particularly, the role of institutions such as the GES Council, the Curriculum Research Development Division (CRDD), the Inspectorate Division (ID) of GES, GNAT, the National Teaching Council (NTC) and many others. In the Ghanaian context, the development stage of the policy process also has as its integral part, the submission of the policy recommendations/bills to Parliament for approval after which the policy is then ready for implementation.

Once the policy decision has been taken, the policy is then implemented, normally by an established agency under the MOE. It has been a long-standing practice backed by the 1974 and 1996 laws for pre-tertiary education policies to be implemented by the GES. The implementation stage calls for decisions on phasing and timing as well as the production of explanatory documentations and the provision of in-service courses for the implementers of the policy (teachers). Here, the involvement of institutions involved in teacher education, local authority advisers, inspectors (Circuit Supervisors) and headteachers is also paramount if the policies are to be successfully implemented and institutionalised.

The final stage of evaluation is where the success or failure of the new policy is assessed and this is normally separated in time from the other four stages. The recent practice is to set up a unit to monitor the implementation process and carry out periodic impact monitoring. In some cases, a sector analysis is conducted virtually at all stages but particularly at the policy analysis, pilot testing and impact monitoring stages. Generally, the practice has been to choose persons who have been closely involved in the conception, consultation, development and implementation of policy initiatives (MOE, 1998; 2002). Whilst this obviously is advantageous in that the evaluators' knowledge and understanding of the background, in most instances, are greater than those of outsiders, the practice is known to be prone to the issues of 'insider bias' and 'blinded objectivity'. That is, the tendencies and predispositions of the evaluators, as insiders, toward finding successes rather than failures of policy initiatives.

Thus, the traditional/rational problem-solving approach illuminated above broadly describes policy formulation/making process in Ghana. Policy implementation process in Ghana, on the other hand, is decentralised and can be conceptualised as a hierarchical structure involving four main levels, namely: governmental, regional, district and school levels.

Policy implementation at the governmental level in Ghana is controlled by the MOE which under the current NPP Government is merged with the Ministry of Youth and referred to as the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports (MOEYS) (GES, 2004). The MOEYS has overall responsibility for education sector policy formulation, planning, monitoring, evaluation as well as budgeting and co-ordination (GES, 2004). The MOEYS, obviously, is headed by a Minister who is directly responsible to the President of the Republic on all educational matters. The tertiary sector management of education falls into the hands of the governing Councils of the Tertiary Institutions and co-ordinated by the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE). The pre-tertiary level management of education, which is the focus of this study, is managed by the GES, which is the legally constituted body for implementing all educational policies at the pre-tertiary level. The GES is headed by a Director-General who carries out his/her functions of implementation and advice through the Regional Directors of Education, the General Managers of the Mission/Faith Schools, the Regional Managers of all Mission/Faith Schools, the District Directors of Education, Headteachers and Teachers of all the schools, both public and private, in the country.

Two other bodies within the GES, the CRDD and ID, play an invaluable role in the implementation process. These are independent bodies created by, and with members appointed by government for the purposes of quality improvement and control in pre-tertiary education (QUANGOS), and are accountable solely to government. The CRDD is responsible for curriculum development, evaluation, innovation and implementation, while the ID is responsible for the inspection and supervision of schools to ensure educational standards at the pre-tertiary level. Thus, the functions of the ID augment the endeavours of the CRDD.

Apart from the CRDD and ID, there are other national agencies whose activities also augment the endeavours of the GES. These agencies include: the NTC, GNAT, the West African Examinations Council (WAEC), the National Vocational Training Institute (NVTI) and the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NACVET).

The job of the NTC includes the accreditation of teacher training institutions and the accreditation of individuals who pass out of teacher training colleges. GNAT is the official and exclusive bargaining agent representing teachers in pre-tertiary educational institutions in matters relating to employment working conditions. WAEC is a regional examining body of the Anglophone West African States, which conducts all types of academic examinations for students in the sub-region. The NVTI and NACVET are involved in the development, assessment, training and certification of pre-tertiary technical and vocational subjects.

The implementation of educational policies in each of the ten regions in Ghana is carried out at the Regional Directorates of Education. Each directorate is headed by a Regional Director, accountable to the Director-General of the GES. The Regional Director of education is responsible for educational matter in the region and therefore liaises with the District Directors, Regional Managers of the various religious educational units in the region for the implementation of all policies introduced by central government, through the MOEYS to the GES. The Regional Director is also responsible, among other things, for the provision of funds, educational resources and materials, as well as support for all the districts under his/her jurisdiction.

At the district level, the implementation of educational policies is done by the District Directorate of Education which is commonly known as the District Education Office (DEO). The DEO is headed by the District Director of Education, who takes charge of all educational matters as well as the implementation of educational policies and programmes of the GES within the district. He/she is responsible to the Director-General of Education through the Regional Director of Education for his/her region. The implementation tasks of the District Director of Education include: dissemination of information to headteachers, teachers and institutions (both public and private) under his/her jurisdiction, training of teachers, resolution of conflicts between schools and members of education staff, provision of educational materials, organizing programmes to encourage community participation in education provision and delivery, and setting

up in schools of Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), School Management Committees (SMCs), District Education Oversight Committees (DEOCs), District Teacher Support Teams (DSTS), Unit Committees (UCs) among others, throughout the district.

The activities of the DEO is supported and complemented actively by District Assemblies (DAs). The DAs are statutory bodies created for the purposes of decentralizing government business at the local level. The DAs are charged with the development of school infrastructure and the mobilization of local communities to support and be actively involved in the provision and delivery of education at the local level. They have statutory duty for providing communities with education in accordance with national policy guidelines laid down by central government.

At the school level, the actual implementation of educational policies formulated and recommended for action, is carried out. There are two important groups of actors and/or facilitators who undertake the implementation tasks—headteachers and class teachers. The headteachers are the chief executives or administrators of the schools. They are the key implementers of change that central government has at its disposal. They are responsible for the running of their entire schools in the districts, and as such the success or failure of the education organizations, to a considerable extent, rest on their shoulders. The role of the headteachers, within the resources available include: to conduct the affairs of the schools to the benefit of all the pupils and the communities they serve through pursuing achievable and measurable objectives; to implement policies set by the education authority under the overall direction of the District Director of Education. They are responsible to the education authority for the general administration and management of schools. They also have the discretion to determine the job description of other members of staff in implementing policies or rendering services to their clients, the stakeholders of education (GOG, 2001).

The class teachers have responsibilities for the management of the teaching and learning of their classes and are therefore seen as the actual implementers of policies formulated

by central government. They are responsible for meeting the educational as well as other related needs of the pupils they teach, which they must conduct in line with national policy. Apart from their teaching roles, they are also expected to liaise with parents and communities to reflect the local circumstances, needs and aspirations of the children they teach (GOG, 2001). They bear much of the 'heat' and realities of the implementation of policies, programmes and innovation introduced either by the school authorities or central government.

Thus, while the 'top-down' approach to policy implementation illustrated above vividly captures and describes the policy implementation process at the pre-tertiary level of the Ghanaian educational system, for the purposes of this study, it is important to add that owing to their roles as mediators and/or re-contextualizers of policy, the first three stages or levels of the hierarchy, are conceptualized as constituting the 'meso-level' elites or implementers of policy. Foster (1965) for example, speaks of 'education elite' as 'a generalized reference group with a capacity for setting standards over a whole range of behaviour beyond those in which the elite may enjoy manifest superiority by virtue of the possession of specific skills' (p. 5).

1.4. Statement of Purpose

1.4.1. The 'fCUBE' vis-à-vis the policy implementation paradox

The history of education in Ghana suggests that educational developments since the attainment of independence in 1957, have been, and continue to be guided by various education acts and programmes, the most fundamental being the Education Act of 1961 (MOE, 1996; 1998; GES, 2004; Kadingdi, 2004; Agbenyega, 2007). The Education Act of 1961 is the principal legislation on the right to education and it states in section 2(1) that:

Every child who has attained the school going age as determined by the Minister shall attend a course of instruction as laid down by the Minister in a school recognised for the purpose by the Minister (MOE, 1961).

The 1992 Republican Constitution gives further impetus to the provision of education in Ghana as a basic right for the citizens. In fact, the term ‘free, compulsory, universal basic education’, was derived from the wording of the 1992 Republican Constitution whose formulation and passage into law gave rise to the establishment of the ‘fCUBE’ programme/policy. The ‘fCUBE’ policy/programme was set up in fulfilment of the Fourth Republican Constitutional mandate which states in Chapter 6, Section 38, subsection 2 that:

The Government shall, within two years after Parliament first meets, after the coming in to force of this Constitution, draw up a programme for implementation within the following ten years, for the provision of Free, Compulsory and Universal Basic Education to all Ghanaian children of school-going age. (GOG, 1992)

According to the ‘fCUBE’ policy documentation, the ‘fCUBE’ policy is the brain child of the 1987 Education Reform Programme which sought to transform education in Ghana from being purely academic oriented activity to a dynamic, technical and vocational based enterprise. It is a comprehensive sector-wide programme designed to provide good quality basic education for all children of school-going age in Ghana by the year 2005 (MOE, 1996).

The Fourth Republican Constitution of 1992 came into effect officially on the 7th of January, 1993 and in line with the constitutional provision enshrined within the Constitution itself, the then Government of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), through the MOE and GES came out in April 1996 with a policy document to officially implement the ‘fCUBE’ policy/programme. The policy implementation process took off in 1996 and was expected to be completed by 2005. Among the aims of the programme, those that are of paramount importance and worth stressing, as far as this study is concerned are:

- to make schooling from basic stage 1 through 9 (5-13yrs), free, compulsory and universal for all school age children by the year 2005.
- to improve the quality of teaching and learning: recognizing the fact that 22% of children of school-going age (that is, P1 to P6) are not in school, 29% of students in JSS are not in school, and that there are less vacancies for students who qualify to enter SSS (MOE, 1996; 1998; GES, 2004).

A policy document designed purposefully to guide the execution of the 'fCUBE' programme was also developed. The policy document sets out to address four main constraints to the provision of good quality universal basic education in Ghana. The constraints are:

- poor teaching and learning resulting in poor performance of children throughout the basic education level;
- inadequate access to educational services;
- weak management capacity at all levels of the educational system; and
- unsatisfactory financing arrangement for the educational sector. (MOE, February, 1996, p. 3)

An 'fCUBE' implementation plan which adopts a range of strategies for achieving quality, efficiency and access to educational services, often referred to as the objectives of the 'fCUBE' programme was also developed. These strategies revolve around three main components and are geared towards:

a) Improving quality of teaching and learning through:

enhancing specific teaching skills through pre-service and school-based in-service training of teachers; improving teacher morale and motivation through incentive programmes; promoting quality of learning and pupil/student performance through curriculum reviews and improving teacher-pupil instructional contact time; ensuring adequate and timely supply of teaching and learning materials to all schools.

b) Improving management efficiency through:

management reforms; discipline and accountability in schools; increased enforcement of effective teaching and learning; elimination of teacher absenteeism, lateness and misuse of instructional time and building of high morale of the pre-tertiary personnel.

c) Improving access and participation through:

expanding infrastructural facilities and services to enhance access for all children of school-going age; addressing issues of enrolment and retention of all children of school-going age; enhancing equity in the provision of educational services and facilities for all, with particular focus on girls and disadvantaged children; and ensuring good quality teaching and learning by setting performance targets (MOE, 1996, 1998; GES, 2003).

In 1997, a fourth objective—decentralization and sustainability of management structures—was added to the three main objectives (MOE, 1998, p. 15). The objective of the decentralization component of ‘fCUBE’ includes decentralization of the management of the sector’s budget for pre-tertiary education. This involves capacity building and financial management at the district level (GES, 2004).

Again, according to the ‘fCUBE’ documentation, the programme is a reinforcement of ongoing educational reform programmes at the basic level and thus differs from previous reform programmes for the following reasons:

- it is a constitutional requirement;
- it is sector-wide and integrated in scope;
- it is to reinforce the national decentralisation policy by transferring ownership, management and control of educational services and facilities to local levels;
- it is to achieve high level equity, quality and efficiency in the provision of educational services within a stipulated time frame (MOE, February, 1996, pp. 1–5).

Regarding funding for implementation, the 'fCUBE' policy documentation (MOE, 1995, 1996, 2001), intimates that the Government of Ghana is the main sponsor of the policy. It goes on to say that the programme is being implemented by the MOE and GES, and that it is financed by the annual government budget for basic education. However, the documentation is quick to add that a number of international funding agencies provide technical and financial support for the policy/programme and that these, up to date, include: the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank; Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom; United States Agency for International Development (USAID); German Government through KfW and GTZ; African Development Fund (ADF) through the African Development Bank (ADB); European Union (EU); United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF); Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA); Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) (MOE, 1995, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2004). As argued by Kadingdi (2004), a major donor among these agencies is the USAID. The USAID introduced a range of initiatives aimed at rebuilding the Ghana education system. Notable among these initiatives is the Primary Education Programme (PREP), which was introduced in 1990 to provide essential inputs such as textbooks, in-service teacher training courses and national assessment systems to re-build an education system that had nearly collapsed during the 1980s (p.11).

Ironically, given that the year 2005 by which time the 'fCUBE' policy is expected to be fully implemented and institutionalised has already passed, the pronouncements and actions of the current Government create the impression that the 'fCUBE' policy is still being implemented. A particular case worth illuminating for the purpose of this study is the State of the Nation Address presented to Parliament by the President of the Republic of Ghana, His Excellency John Agyekum Kufour on the 3rd of February 2005. In this speech, the President is reported to have stated among other things that although few changes in the educational system (particularly the change of names of JSS and SSS to

JHS and SHS respectively, coupled with the increase in years from 3 to 4 years of the SSS programme) will be effected during his last tenure of office, no immediate plans have far been advanced by his Government to disrupt the implementation of the 'fCUBE' policy (People's Daily Graphic, January, 2005, pp.1-3). In other words, what President Kufour is reported to have reiterated in his sectional address is that, although the ten years constitutionally allocated for the implementation of the 'fCUBE' policy finally grinded to a halt the same year of his speech, the implementation and institutionalisation process was going to be continued by his administration amidst some modifications.

The tenacity of the above claim is seen in the fact that recent years, particularly from the year 2000 onwards, Ghana has witnessed the introduction of new policy initiatives, which directly or indirectly may be said to have been intended to strengthen and revitalise the 'fCUBE' policy implementation process. Notable among these policies are the introduction of the 'capitation grant concept/policy', the school feeding programme, and the 'eleven year basic education system' concept (GES, 2004; MOE, 2005, 2006). As noted by Agbenyega (2007, p. 42), the capitation grant concept which provides, among other things, feeding for vulnerable children in deprived settings, is designed to reinforce the existing 'fCUBE' policy of attracting and retaining children in school. In fact, a total amount of 95 billion Cedis, an equivalent of US\$ 10.4 million is reported to have been allocated for the capitation grant in the year 2006 (GOG, 2006).

Two years on, after both the President's speech and the ten-year grace period mandated by the 1992 Republican Constitution for the implementation and institutionalization of the policy therefore, it seems reasonable therefore to evaluate the extent to which the constitutional responsibilities bestowed on the Government and its organs and structures of governance to provide all Ghanaian children of school-going age with a free, compulsory, universal basic education have been or are being achieved.

In the interim, the national mid-term stocktaking exercise undertaken on the 'fCUBE' policy by GES in the year 2000 (MOE, 2000) came out with interesting findings. The aim of this nationwide exercise was to assess the 'fCUBE' policy/programme for the first half of the implementation period (that is, from 1996-2000) to identify achievements, weaknesses, constraints with the view to mapping up strategies for improvement and to fashion a way forward (MOE, 2000). In short, the field verification exercise was an attempt to find out how far the strategic objectives and/or components of the policy were achieved. The findings showed that through the capacity building programmes carried out at the various level of implementation, children's enrolment and retention had improved tremendously, and so were the quality of teaching and learning and the management of the schools. Taking Human Resource Development (which may be subsumed directly and indirectly under efficiency in management and improvement in teaching and learning components of 'fCUBE' respectively) for example, the report indicated that, out of a total of 3, 534 teaching staff declared to be at post in 106 districts, 2,494, representing 70.65% received sufficient training in teaching methods. Similarly, regarding community participation in education, the report showed that, of the 13,770 Basic Schools reported on by responding districts as having both SMCs and PTAs, a total of 11,434 of them, constituting 83% had both structures functioning (MOE, 2000, pp.1-5).

These and the other findings of the stocktaking exercise are reverberated in the report on the development of education in Ghana, presented by representatives of GES at the forty-seventh session of the International Conference on Education (ICE) in Geneva (MOE, 2004, pp. 5-9). The report emphasized that with the help of International Funding Agencies and donors, the education sector, particularly over the last decade has made a lot of progress in the areas of access, equity and content of education. Citing an example from the 'access to education' component of 'fCUBE' to buttress this point, the report noted for example that, the second phase of the Basic Education Sector Improvement Programme (BESIP) which took off in May, 2000 under the sponsorship of the World Bank for instance, provided the following infrastructural facilities for 44 districts:

- 172 No. 4-Unit Teacher Accomodation Blocks;
- 50 No. Basic Stage (BS)-6 Classroom Blocks;
- 19 No. BS7-9 Classroom Blocks and;
- 69 No. 4 Seater Kumasi Ventilated Improved Pits (KVIP) Blocks (Toilets) (MOE, 2004, p. 5).

Regarding the constraints that have, and continue to militate against the achievement of the ‘fCUBE’ policy targets, both reports (MOE, 2000; 2004) catalogued a number of issues which include among other things: inadequate supply of logistics, lack of community cooperation and participation in education, inability of parents/guardians to supply school needs of children owing to poverty, high level apathy of parents/guardians towards the programme, inadequate supply of teachers, inadequate financial support from DAs, low retention rate, especially for girls, due to the parents/guardians’ inability to pay school fees.

Similarly, a small-scale exploratory study conducted by the researcher (Nudzor, 2004) on the ‘fCUBE’ policy, in its final phase of implementation in one of the districts—Akatsi District—of Ghana, came out with findings which, to a large extent, appear to corroborate the findings of the two reports enlisted above. The aim of that study was to give a snap-shot of progress made through the programme and to consider if there were any problems and hindrances that affected the implementation and institutionalization processes at the district level. The findings showed that teaching and learning in basic schools in the district had improved tremendously and this was reflected in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (B.E.C.E.) results. Similarly, through the capacity building programmes designed to guide the ‘fCUBE’ policy implementation, community involvement and participation in education was said to have improved dramatically and so also was pupils intake and attendance. Additionally, the findings revealed that the basic educational sector in the district also saw a considerable improvement in terms of the provision and expansion of infrastructural facilities.

That notwithstanding, the study, however, did identify a serious ambiguity in the wording of the policy title. This ambiguity was explicated in the fact that although the policy states explicitly that basic education in Ghana shall be free for all children of school-going-age, the parents/guardians who took part in the study complained that they still paid substantial amounts of money as fees/levies for their children/wards. Similarly, although one is made to believe that schooling for the first nine years constituting basic education in Ghana is mandatory, the Educational Authorities confirmed that there was hardly any legal framework or law to enforce compliance with this constitutional order. Thirdly and not the least, the findings portrayed a gross disparity and inequality in basic education provision and delivery between rural or deprived communities and the semi-urban ones. The rural or deprived communities lacked qualified personnel, teaching and learning materials, equipment and facilities for effective teaching and learning whilst the semi-urban ones were better endowed with these resources. This as a result, suggested that perhaps the ‘universal’ purpose of the ‘fCUBE’ policy was also not fully reflected in the implementation process.

It has to be acknowledged however that the validity and reliability of the findings of this small-scale enquiry could be contested, in that the methodology—the strategy (survey) and instruments (self-completion questionnaire and document study)—could be said not to have been ‘wide ranging’ enough for such inferences and generalisations to be made. That notwithstanding, the point still stands that the ambiguity in the wording of the policy title which was highlighted, coupled with the issues raised as militating against the ‘fCUBE’ implementation process by both reports of/by the GES above (MOE, 2000; GES, 2004), do raise interesting concerns worth researching further into. These issues do point a finger to the policy paradox illuminated earlier. They do suggest that the ‘fCUBE’ primary aims and objectives which the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana bestows on the Government and its structures of governance to provide Ghanaians with are not being met fully. This revelation thus justifies the resolve of the researcher to conduct a further enquiry into the ‘fCUBE’ policy.

1.4.2. Research purpose

In view of the policy implementation issue highlighted above, the main purpose of this study is to explore, gain and offer deeper conceptual understanding and explanation as to why policy makers do invest a lot of time, energy and resources in making policies but when it comes to putting into practice the provisions enacted, policy actors, implementers and change agents are often seen as pursuing different ideas and agendas. In other words, the study purports to find out why policy outcomes more often than not are different from actual policy provisions and intents.

1.4.3. Aim and objectives of the study

Given the ‘means to an end’ agenda of critical policy evaluation the study sets for itself, the major aim of the study is to:

Explore the policy implementation paradox using the ‘fCUBE’ policy as an exemplar and with a view to investigating the extent to which the ‘free’, ‘compulsory’, ‘universal’ and ‘basic education’ components have been implemented, and are reflected in the implementation and institutionalization processes.

In attempting to satisfy this aim, the study focused on achieving the following objectives:

1. To find out what the provisions enshrined in the ‘fCUBE’ documentation say or suggest about the purposes of the ‘fCUBE’ policy and how these provisions are perceived, articulated and interpreted by the ‘meso-level’ actors and implementers.
2. To find out, using the composite theory of policy as both a ‘text’ and ‘discourse’, the extent to which the ideas enshrined in the ‘fCUBE’ documentation and the interpretations of the ‘meso-level’ actors and implementers converge and diverge.

3. To explicate and exemplify what the points of convergence and divergence in (2) say or suggest about the 'fCUBE' programme and indeed the implementation paradox.

1.4.4. Research rationale

First and foremost, the decision to undertake this study stems out of the desire to explore the relationship between research and policy and practice. As Whitty (2006) explains, this issue has been high on the agenda of the research and policy communities for a number of years now but became a particular issue of interest from the mid-1990s onwards, particularly for the New Labour Government in the UK, whose proclaimed commitment is on evidence-informed policy and the commitment to finding out and disseminating 'what works'. According to him, much of this debate recently has been centred on criticisms levelled against education research which is said among other things to be characterised by lack of rigour; failure to produce cumulative research findings; theoretical incoherence; ideological bias; poor dissemination and irrelevance to schools (p. 161). Whilst, as Whitty also maintains the picture is not entirely bleak, this study could perhaps be said to be a response and an affront to one aspect of the debate. It stems out of the researcher's desire to bring to the limelight, the inconsistencies of politicians and policy actors in keeping 'faith' with initial policy provisions and guidelines formulated for implementation, which policy researchers continually unearth and which best explains why all educational research has tended to be tarred by the same brush and judged as wanting against the policy priorities and parameters of the politicians. Whitty (2006) justifies the need for this kind of research. He writes:

...while some of our[policy researchers'] work will be aligned in various ways to the Government's agenda, some of it will necessarily be regarded by government as irrelevant or useless. Furthermore, some of it may well be seen as oppositional. Such a range of orientations to government policy is entirely appropriate for education research in a free society. (p. 162)

Another concern that has culminated in the decision to undertake this study is the need to gain more knowledge and understanding about how, or the extent to which social justice and its underlying ideas and principles have informed, influenced or helped to reshape educational policies in both developed and low-income countries. It is contended by researchers, for example, Dale (1986) and other historians and scholars alike that the acceptance after the Second World War of the principle of equality of opportunity in Britain for instance, had resulted in the modification and restructuring of education provision and delivery, from predominantly a selective to predominantly comprehensive system. Hence the desire of the researcher to undertake this study to implicitly probe this contention further, with a view to finding out whether the same is true of Ghana, and if so, how the concept is being conceptualized and put to use in practice.

Closely related to the above is the need to learn more about the extent to which the concept of social justice and its underlying principles of equity, inclusion and equality of both opportunities and outcomes have found support within the Ghanaian context and as a result, alert the citizenry to the influence of existing patterns of provisions on policy. The researcher is of the view that knowledge about this may enlighten him as well as others interested in educational research enterprise, a bit more about the ways in which the strength of existing attitudes, beliefs and values in any democratic society could either serve as 'facilitators' or 'barriers' to policy change.

Furthermore, as echoed by Pat Sikes, 'much educational policy appears to be shaped by, and oriented towards the economizing and marketization of education resulting in the depoliticization of citizens who become uncritical consumers, clients and technicians in globalized, post-Fordist society' (in editor's preface to Ozga, 2000). As a check on this, the researcher has decided to undertake this study with a view to using the findings not to serve purely political purposes, but to provide education policy practitioners and researchers, with the 'guided' information, as well as informed, critical and independent

base to evaluate critically and speak against (if need be) any policies pertaining to education that are considered misguided, unjust and out of touch with the masses.

Finally, it is believed that the findings of this research quite apart from assisting the researcher to identify the interface between research explanation and factual accounts, may also arouse the keen interest of teachers and other educationists in educational policy research and analysis, and may enhance their capacity for producing research that can act as commentary or critique of official research inputs. While this feeds quite neatly into Ozga's (2000, p. 116) claim that looking at how the history of education policy has been written and in effect examining the history of policy research allows us to see the extent to which explanation and factual account become intermingled, the findings may also be of interest to those who implement or mediate policy to orient themselves in relation to official research claims.

1.4.5. Relevance of research outcomes

In line with Cohen et al's (2000, p. 40) statement about research as a tool for advancing knowledge, promoting progress and enabling humans to relate more effectively to their environment, accomplish their purposes and resolve conflicts, the relevance of the outcomes of this study are three fold. Firstly, by using Ball's (1994) composite theory approach which identifies policy as both 'text' and 'discourse', the study seeks to provide interesting insight into the policy implementation paradox, through shedding light on some of the ideological, cultural, theoretical and institutional issues and practices that go to promote and support this implementation issue in practice. Also, through the exploration of the 'fCUBE' documentation and the semi-structured interviews conducted with the meso-level implementers of policy in the Ghanaian educational system, the study hopes to suggest possible and practical ways by which this policy milieu could be read into and understood, if not unravelled.

Also, the study hopes to at least bring out perspectives, which even if not shared or supported by Government, Education Authorities and the research community at large,

would serve as useful pointers to the socio-economic, cultural and political structures as well as and the institutional infrastructures that sustain inequality in schools, particularly in low income countries. Thus, although concerned mainly with advancing knowledge about the ways by which the 'fCUBE' policy and in fact, basic education in Ghana could be made more effective, the study could show clear implications for social justice. The evidence could indicate for instance, that the various ways by which the components of the policy are interpreted could potentially exacerbate inequalities, as they make it difficult for the citizenry, especially the poor and the under-privileged to access basic education. The perspectives and suggestions that the study brings out could as a result be useful in showing the ways by which strategies could be developed to achieve a more widespread and authentic respect for diversity. Similarly the findings of the study could also be helpful for the Government and the Education Authorities to develop strategies which would be useful for practitioners—teachers and advisers—in implementing and improving social justice in schools.

Finally, it is hoped that the findings of the study would add to knowledge about the discursive frames within which policies are implemented and how these impact on the attainment of policy goals. Particularly, the findings would be useful in offering explanations about the general conditions out of which the shift from welfarist to post-welfarist settlement arose and the rhetorical questions that this shift poses to basic education provision and delivery in Ghana in particular, and other low income countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, in general. These explanations, the researcher believes would enable the policy actors in general and the policy-makers most especially, to re-direct and orient themselves appropriately to future policies aimed at improving the educational system. Similarly, the researcher believes the study would also offer meaningful explanations about how educational policies implemented by those mandated and/or positioned to do so are informed, shaped and modified by the earlier educational and constitutional developments of the country. These explanations, the researcher believes could possibly serve as meaningful benchmarks for assessing future

policies, innovations and change programmes which are aimed at improving equity, equality of opportunities and inclusion in schools either explicitly or implicitly.

1.5. Methodological approach

This study adopts the interpretivist approach to research. It takes the ‘fCUBE’ policy implementation and institutionalization processes as a ‘case’ and studies it within its real life context—within a specified and social setting—using more than one source of evidence. Primarily, the study investigates the similarities and dissonances between what the ‘fCUBE’ policy documentation says both implicitly and explicitly about the purposes of ‘fCUBE’, and how these policy provisions are perceived, articulated and interpreted by the policy actors at the meso-level of implementation. Based on this assessment, the study offers insights into why policy outcomes in practice are often different from initial policy goals, intentions and provisions.

In pursuit of these objectives, four key documents from the ‘fCUBE’ policy documentations were elicited and from these, five extracts were taken for analysis using the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework or approach. These were complemented by semi-structured opened-ended interviews with policy actors and implementers at the meso-level of the Ghanaian education system. The analyses were generally geared towards explicating the view endorsed by the policy literature, political science theory and empirical research that whilst substantial inputs are made into policy processes, there is lack of credible evidence to suggest that these policies do make meaningful impacts on the lives of those on whom they impinge. (See chapter 2 for perspectives on the policy paradox.)

1.6. Organisation of the thesis

As has so far been illuminated, Chapter 1 is an overview of what is to come. It sets the tone for what is to be investigated by the study. The chapter explores mainly what is known and described in sociological research terms as ‘the statement of purpose’, where the general issue to be investigated or under investigation is introduced and the study

purpose, aim and objectives, rationale and relevance of outcomes are identified and illuminated. Thereafter, significant historical issues as well as key facts and features relating to the development and context of education in Ghana are identified and discussed before the methodological design employed in the conduct of the study is outlined and explored.

Chapter 2 foregrounds an appraisal of the major policy issue to be investigated. It explores the meaning of educational policy and then goes on to illustrate and exemplify perspectives that are put forward by educational ‘think tanks’ and policy researchers to explain the existence of the paradox in education policy implementation. Through that, the chapter highlights the conceptual framework that drives the study.

Chapter 3 discusses issues of methodological design. In consideration of the major aim and objectives of the study coupled with the research questions asked, the study adopts a case study strategy to researching the issue at hand. It takes the implementation of the ‘fCUBE’ policy as a case and elicited data from the ‘fCUBE’ policy documentation, complemented by semi-structured opened ended interviews with the meso-level implementers and actors of policy in the Ghanaian educational system for analysis.

Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 present and discuss the evidence in this study. Chapter 4 analyses the documentary evidence gathered whilst chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 explore data from the interviews with the policy actors at the meso-level of the Ghanaian educational system on a thematic basis. These five chapters together provide an overview of both documentary and interview data analysed for the purposes of answering the research questions.

Chapter 9 presents a discussion of the findings of the study along the lines of the research questions posed whilst chapter 10 provides a summary and conclusion to all the issues raised in/by the study.

1.7. Summary

Thus, by outlining and exploring the background to the study, this chapter sets the tone for the discussion of the issues that will at a later stage, count towards the evaluation of the 'fCUBE' policy in Ghana vis-à-vis the exploration of the wider policy phenomenon—the apparent policy implementation paradox.

The next chapter explores the theoretical context of the study.

CHAPTER 2: THE THEORETICAL CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

2.1. Outline

A review of the educational policy literature endorses the view supported by political science theory and empirical studies that whilst educational policy makers and actors invest tremendous amount of time, efforts and resources in making policies, when it comes to the actual implementation of such policies, different agendas and programmes are more often pursued by the change agents and implementers. It is claimed that policy-makers' and implementers' core beliefs are unaffected by policy information, major policy change results rather from external factors such as inflation and elections (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, quoted by Shulock, 1999). This chapter draws on this policy milieu. It first explores the meaning and/or definition of educational policy. It then moves on to the discussion of three perspectives advanced by policy researchers and change management experts to explain and/or unravel the policy paradox, and the weaknesses inherent in these perspectives. Through this discussion, the chapter highlights the conceptual framework which forms the axis of the study. Thereafter, the chapter goes on to provide the justification for the use of Ball's (1994) post-modernist conceptual framework of policy as being both a 'text' and 'discourse' in exploring, understanding and determining the extent to which the 'free', 'compulsory' and 'universal' components of the 'fCUBE' policy are implemented and are therefore reflected in the implementation process.

2.2. What is educational policy?

An investigation into the everyday as well as scholarly usage of the term 'policy' reveals that the term is elusive, owing to the many different ways it is used to refer to highly diverse set of phenomena. Illustrating the elusiveness of the term, Harman (1984, p. 13) explains that in a single day in many countries, one is likely to hear among other things, the Prime Minister announce changes in the nation's foreign policy, a City Mayor discussing an aspect of city traffic or parking policy, and a shop assistant explaining to a customer why particular goods cannot be returned or exchanged because of company policy. According to him, the same lack of a precise meaning is true in the world of

scholarship in which 'policy' is sometimes used synonymously with words such as 'plan' or 'programme' or used in a narrow sense to refer to formal statements of actions to be followed.

While the explanation about the lack of precise meaning alluded to above holds true for all kinds or types of policy, scholars have always attempted a formal definition of policy in general, and educational policy in particular. For example, Harman (1984) himself attempts a 'working' definition of the term. He defines policy as 'the implicit or explicit specification of courses of purposive action being followed or to be followed in dealing with a recognised problem or matter of concern and directed towards the accomplishment of some intended or desired set of goals' (pp. 13–14). According to him, 'policy may also be conceived as a position or stance developed in response to a problem or issue of conflict and directed towards a particular objective'. Jennings (1977) takes a similar position. He describes policy as 'a guide for taking future actions and for making appropriate choices or decisions towards the accomplishment of some intended or desired end'. He adds that, 'policy may also be thought of as setting out solutions to a problem' (p. 30). That is, the intent of changing existing conditions in ways which will solve a problem.

Gallagher (1992) on her part holds a very rigid view of what policy is. She describes the basic components of the term, which she derives from the review of the work of Dunn (1981), Patton & Sawicki (1986); Michell (1984); Guba (1984) and Duke and Canady (1991). For her, 'policy is a formal act, has an agreed-upon intent, is sanctioned or approved by an institutional body or authority, and provides a consistent standard for measuring performance'. She, on the basis of these elements, defines 'school policy' as 'the official choice of a school board or a local school to achieve a purpose systematically and consistently' (pp. 2–3). The importance of the narrow limitation of policy to formal choices of school boards and other legitimate school authorities, according to her, allows for a move in to the discussion of how the formal choices can be made more effectively.

Viewed from the perspective of the authors above, policy, especially education policy is, and could be taken to mean a thing or a product: a policy-document of some sort, containing a page or flips of pages indicating statement of intentions and/or of practice as it is perceived by policy actors or as they desire it to be. Nakamura and Smallwood (1980) capture this view nicely. According to them, 'policy may be thought of as a set of instructions from policy makers to policy implementers that spell out both goals and the means for achieving those goals (p. 31).

While these definitions are relevant to theory as they appear to identify or capture the problem solving intent of policy, however, the arguments or positions at the heart of these definitions appear limited and static. This is because the problem-solving agenda implicit in definitions such as these, tend to suggest or reduce education policy to a specification of principles, actions and routines (Trowler, 1998, p. 48) related to educational issues, which are followed or which should be followed and which are designed to bring about desired goals, as opposed to a far more complex, dynamic and interactive undertaking and process (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1983; Ranson, 1995). Whitty and Edwards (1994) for example reiterate the problem of conceptualizing education policy this way. They write:

But to reduce education policy to the sum of innumerable individual decisions, even decisions seen as partly predetermined or considerably constrained, is to ignore what in some analytical traditions would be called the power relations between different parts of the system and in others how decision-makers are positioned by different discourses (1994, p. 15).

This view is strongly supported by a number of other researchers/writers (Ball, 1994; Trowler, 1998; Ozga, 2000; Olssen, Codd, & O'Neil, 2004; for example) who hold rather different, more diffuse and less entrenched views from those who understand policy in quite straightforward terms as the actions of government body or institutions aimed at securing particular outcomes. These scholars portray the dynamism of the

policy process and use this as an impetus to emphasize the fact that there is no fixed and single definition of policy. For this school of thought, how policy is understood depends to a considerable degree on the perspective and motive of the person or persons undertaking the research or doing the interpretative work. Ozga (2000, p. 2) for example, sees education policy as a process rather than a product involving negotiations, contestations or struggle between different groups who may lie in or outside the formal machinery of official policy making. Rist (2000) agrees with Ozga. He points out that policy making as a process is multi-dimensional and multifaceted and stresses that:

The emphasis here on policy making being a process is deliberate. It is a process that evolves through cycles, with each cycle more or less bounded, more or less constrained by time, funds, political support, and other events. It is also a process that circles back on itself, iterates the same decision issue time and again, and often does not come to closure (p. 1002).

Trowler (1998) endorses this view. He indicates that the dynamism of the policy process comes from three main sources. Firstly, he argues that there is usually conflict among those who make policy and those who put policy in to practice, about what the important issues or problems for policy are and what the desired goals should be. Secondly, he points out that interpreting policy is an active process rather than a passive one. According to him, policy statements are almost always subject to multiple interpretations depending upon the standpoint and orientations of the people doing the interpretive 'work'. Finally, he explains that the practice of policy on the ground is extremely complex, both that being 'described' by policy and that intended to put policy in to effect. For him, simple policy descriptions do not capture its multiplicity and complexity, and that the implementation of policy in practice almost always means outcomes differ from policy-makers' intentions (p. 49).

This argument put forward by the latter group of scholars is important and appealing for a number of reasons. Firstly, it suggests the need for a modification, if not a fundamental

reframing, of the traditional understanding of the policy process in which decision-making in the policy arena is understood as a discrete event, undertaken by a defined set of actors who reach their decision-making point on the basis of an analysis of their alternatives. Rist, (2000) endorses this argument and quotes Weiss' (1982) words to demolish the traditional view of 'decision making as an event':

Given the fragmentation of authority across multiple bureaus, departments, and legislative committees, and the disjointed stages by which actions coalesce into decisions, the traditional model of decision making is a highly stylised rendition of reality... The complexity of governmental decision making often defies neat compartmentalization. (cited by Rist, 2000, p. 1003)

Secondly, the argument points out to the fact that policy is not an end in itself but rather a process through which a desired outcome is reached. As a dynamic process involving contestations, muddles, negotiations and agreements suggests that policy is not an end-product in and by itself but, rather a vehicle, involving the use of political power (Olssen et al., 2004) through which an end is, or could be reached.

Thirdly and not the least, the argument about policy as a process alerts us to the fact that, policy making is not the preserve of political figure heads or politicians alone. People outside the official machinery for policy-making, depending on their orientations, motivations and interests towards the particular policy issues, may also be involved. As a dynamic process, policy making and implementation is therefore often messy and involves dialogues, struggles, contestations and confrontations. Ball (1994) takes these concerns into account when he says:

Policy is...an 'economy of power', a set of technologies and practices which are realized and struggled over in local settings. Policy is both text and action, words and deeds, it is what is enacted as well as what is intended. Policies are always incomplete insofar as they relate to or map on to the 'wild profusion' of local

practice... Policy as practice is 'created' in a trialectic of dominance, resistance and chaos/freedom. Thus policy is no simple asymmetry of power. (Ball, 1994, pp. 10–11)

Taking a more comprehensive and less entrenched view of what education policy really is, it is suggested therefore that whether policy is thought of as either a course of action to be pursued by government body or institutions for specific purposes, or as a process involving negotiations, contestations or struggle, the deliberations in this section of the chapter portray three significant characteristics and which indicate a possible overlap between the term 'policy' and other notions such as 'goals', 'plans' and 'programmes'.

Firstly, policy like goals has aspects of giving direction to choosing or deciding. That is, 'stating a policy has the effect of indicating the choices that are preferable in terms of what is to be achieved' (Heclo, cited in Jennings, 1977, p. 30). Secondly, policy has a future orientation. Notions of intent and of accomplishment over time or at some later time mean that a series of choices or decisions are expected and required. Thirdly, in the context of decision-making, policy, like programmes and plans allows for changes and modifications to be made. These suggestions outlined above therefore lead one to agree more with Olssen et al. (2004, pp. 71–72) that policy in general and education policy in particular is fundamentally about the exercise of political power and the language that is used to legitimate the process.

2.3. Perspectives on the policy paradox

Having briefly attempted the definition of educational policy, the next pertinent issue which deserves exploration for the purpose of this study is why change agents and policy implementers fail or are unable to put in to action the initial ideas, provisions and guidelines enacted for implementation? In other words, why, as Shulock (1999, p. 226) for instance puts it, are the policy implementers so impervious to implementing actual policy provisions? I draw on three perspectives: change management; democratic/participatory; and post-modernist perspectives: from different and disjointed

policy sources, to give insight into some of the reasons that have been adduced by policy researchers and change activists to explain and unravel the education policy implementation paradox. I use these perspectives intentionally with a view to highlighting and showing in explicit terms the conceptual framework and focus of the study.

2.3.1. Change management perspective

Those who subscribe to a change management perspective (for example, Bennett et al., 1992; Newton et al., 1992; Fullan, 2001; Huczynski & Buchanan, 2001; Everard & Morris, 2004) hold the view that the policy implementation paradox, particularly in education exists because the policy makers, activists, implementers and change agents are unable or fail to put in place operational plans to ensure efficient and effective implementation of policies enacted. For this school of thought, policy implementation is not just a question of defining an end and letting others get on with it. It is a process of interaction, dialogue, feedback, modifying objectives, recycling plans, coping with mixed feelings and values, pragmatism, micropolitics, frustration, and muddle (Everard et al., 2004).

Everard et al. (2004) for example point out one area—the short sightedness and, or rationality of the policy actors—where both policy makers and implementers are found wanting and which explains why attempts to implement particular policy provisions either fail or become impossible to effectively handle. They write:

The first reason why those who initiate change often fail to secure successful conclusion to their dreams is that they tend to be too rational. They develop in their minds a clear, coherent vision of where they want to be at, and they assume that all they have to do is to spell out the logic to the world in words of one syllable, and everyone will be immediately motivated to follow the lead. The more vivid their mental picture of the goal, and the more conviction they have that it is the right

goal, the more likely they are to stir opposition, and the less successful they are likely to be in managing a process of change. (pp. 239–240)

These words echo the apparent dissonances between the assumptions and perceptions of the ‘policy actors’ and the people on whom policies impinge. By policy actors, I mean all those individuals and groups who take part in the policy process in general and the task of implementation in particular. The words thus explicate the fact that more often than not, educational policy makers and implementers make assumptions about the world and the causes of things which differ from what pertains in the world of those on whom such policies impinge. Hence the need for them to address themselves not just to the world they see, but also to the world other people see however misguided, perverse and distorted they may think the outlook of others are, if they are to be successful in managing policy implementation processes.

Fullan (1988; 2001) on his part problematizes the implementation process itself. According to him, one of the initial sources of the problem is the commitment of reformers to see a particular desired policy implemented, irrespective of the fact that commitment to what should be changed often varies inversely with knowledge about how to work through a process of change. He argues that ‘strong commitment to a particular policy may be a barrier to setting up an effective process of change’ and therefore the tendency of the change agents or reformers to oversimplify the approach, especially when they are confronted with the initial problems of implementation (2001, p. 96). For him, understanding the meaning of implementation and its associated problems is not as straightforward and rational as it seems at first glance. He identifies implementation as a “variable”, in other words “changing practice” and goes further to explain that it is the process of altering existing practice in order to achieve more effectively certain desired learning outcomes. Giving more insight into what implementation actually entails, he writes:

Implementation is multi-dimensional. To take a curriculum guideline or document as an illustration, we can immediately discern that at least the following three kinds of changes are at stake—possible use of new or revised materials: possible use of new approaches (e.g. teaching strategies), and the possible incorporation of new or revised beliefs (e.g. philosophical assumptions and beliefs) underlying the particular approach (1988, p. 196).

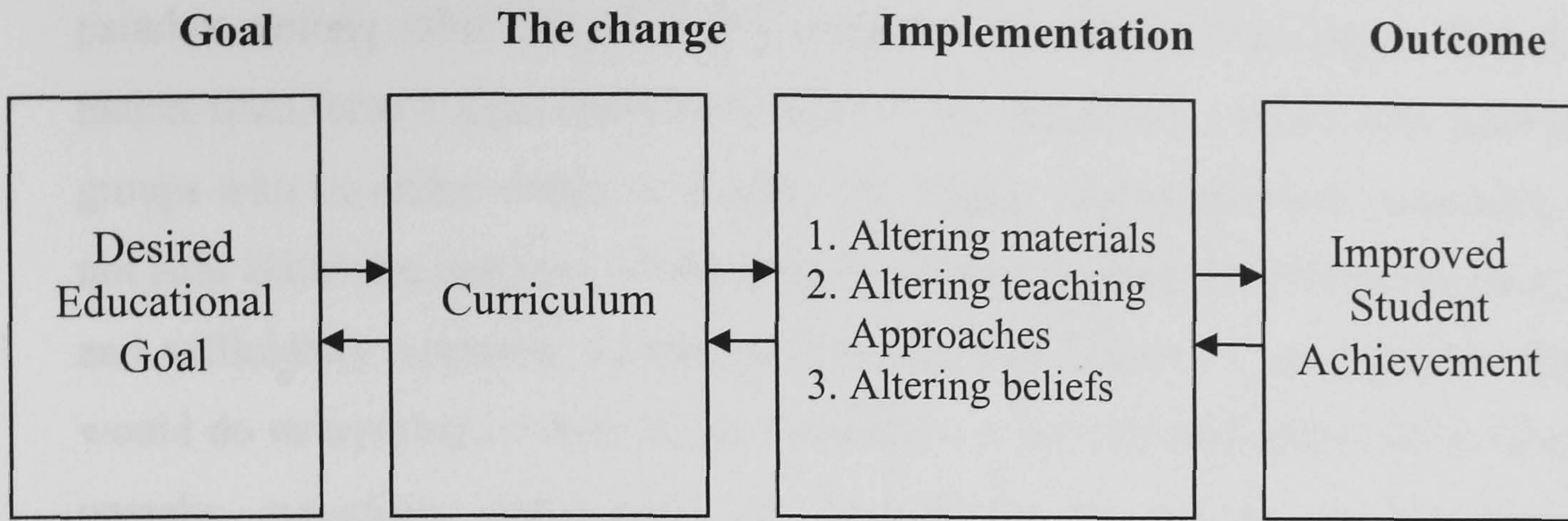
A critical look at Fullan's words suggest that the three dimensions he identifies regarding curriculum guidelines are presented in a hierarchical order of complexity when it comes to the task of implementation. The materials are the most visible and tangible to produce and use literally and could be said to be at the base of the hierarchical structure. Alteration in teaching approach or style present greater difficulty when significant new skills must be acquired or additional time to plan must be found and therefore lies at the sub-level. Changes in beliefs are yet more difficult to bring about as they challenge the core values held by the people regarding the fundamental purpose of education and they are often not explicit or recognised, but rather buried at the level of unconscious assumptions and therefore at the apex of the hierarchy.

Rist (2000) adds to Fullan's (1998; 2001) words. He identifies policy implementation as the second phase of the policy cycle and goes on to say 'it is in this stage that the policy initiatives and goals established during policy formulation are transformed into programmes, procedures and regulations'. He explains that the knowledge base that policy makers and actors need to be effective in this phase necessitates the collection of different information from that found in policy formulation. He goes on to emphasize that with the transformation of policies into programmes, the concern moves to the operational activities of the policy tool and the allocation of resources, and how to use the available resources in the most efficient and effective manner in order to have the most robust impact on the programme or condition at hand. He cited Pressman and Wildavsky's (1984) words to summarize the complexities involved with the task of implementation:

Policies imply theories. Whether stated explicitly or not, policies point to a chain of causation between initial conditions and future consequences...Implementation, then, is the ability to forge subsequent links in the causal chain so as to obtain the desired results. (cited by Rist, 2000, p. 1007).

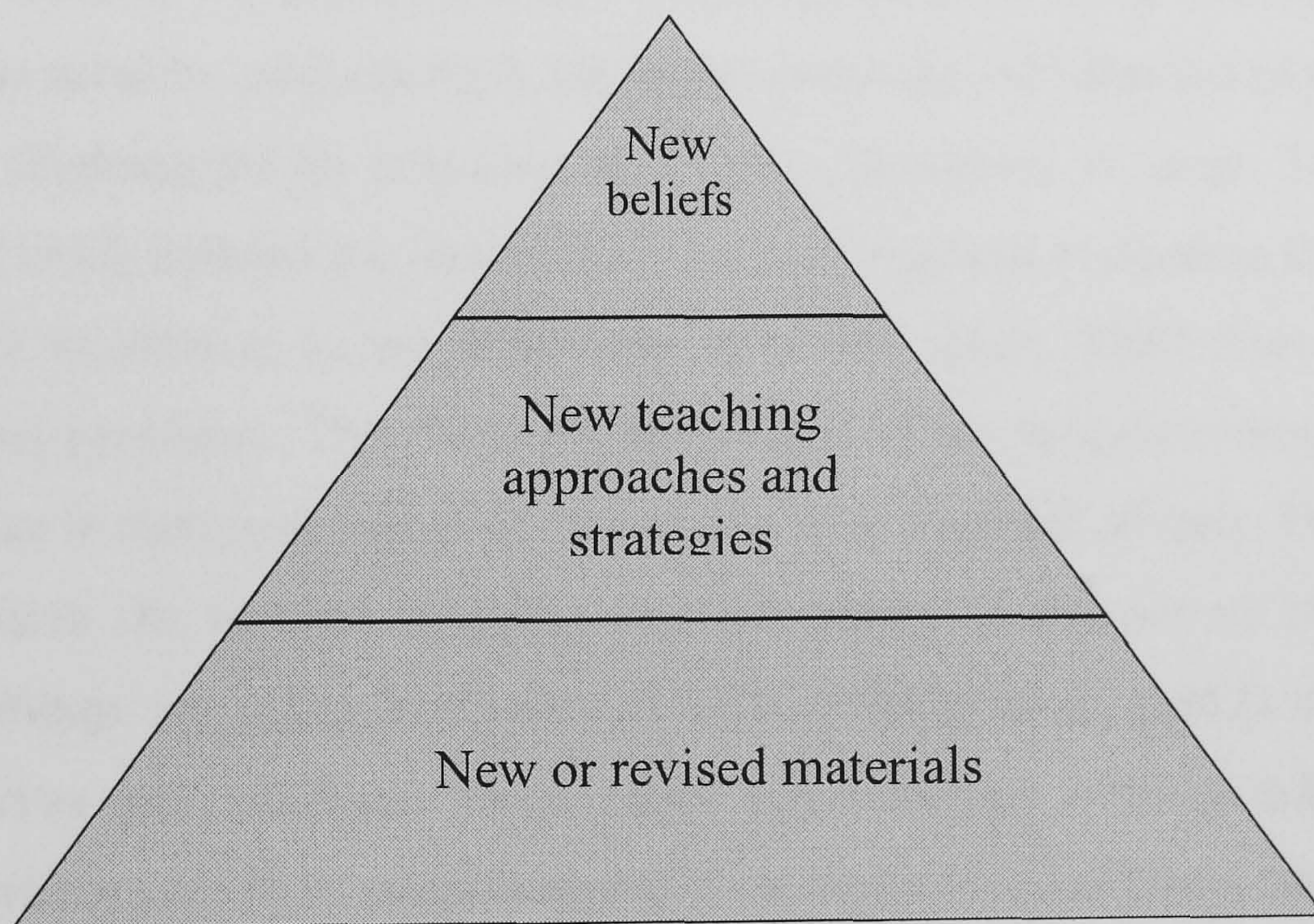
These illustrations thus present the multi-dimensional structure of implementation processes, which many change agents and policy implementers fail to acknowledge and appreciate, and are therefore not able to successfully implement and manage educational policies. (See figures 1 and 2, on page 49 for diagrams illustrating the logic of implementation and the multi-dimensional structure of policy implementation respectively.)

Figure 1: A diagram illustrating the logic of implementation:



(adapted from Glatter et al., 1998, p. 198)

Figure 2: A diagram illustrating the multi-dimensions of implementation.



Huczynski and Buchanan (2001) attribute the existence of the policy implementation paradox, among other things, to the resistance to change. They argue that change, no matter what form it takes leads to temporary incompetence, and as such, individuals and groups who lie either within or outside the change implementation machinery, who are not sure about the outcome of the change process because they have not been properly and sufficiently educated, communicated with and helped to conceptualise the process would do everything in their might to resist it. They cite Bedian's (1980) four reasons, namely: parochial self-interest of individuals or groups in the organisation; misunderstanding and lack of trust of the change process; contradictory assessment of change; and low tolerance for change, to exemplify why change in organisations and institutions are strongly resisted and go on to project that as long as these conditions exist in organisations, change and policy outcomes will forever remain partially met or totally neglected (pp. 599–560).

Another issue cited by the change management proponents as being responsible for the existence of the paradox, particularly in education is the lack of effective monitoring and evaluation of implementation processes and policy processes at large. For example, Newton et al. (1992) buttress the importance of monitoring and evaluating the process of implementation in relation to the attainment of policy goals. They draw a fine line between the two processes. They describe the former, as the process of keeping an eye on a situation as it continues, develops or changes over a period of time. They add that monitoring within the context of policy implementation is the act of checking and ensuring that things are going as planned (p.180). Bennett et al. (1992) also add that monitoring serves two functions. Firstly, they argue that by making information on innovative practices available, monitoring provides access to good ideas. Secondly, they contend that it exposes new ideas to scrutiny, helping to weed out mistakes and further develop promising practices (pp. 123–124). Regarding the latter, Newton et al. define it as a process of systematically gathering information for the purpose of making judgement or determining to what extent the educational objectives are being realised. Summarizing their argument about the importance of evaluation they contend that

evaluating change helps to involve the whole organisation more in the planning as well as the outcome, allowing a range of contributions and a less personally dependent debate (Newton et al., p. 175).

Bringing these conceptions to the context of the policy paradox, proponents of the change management perspective are saddened by the fact that this idea of effective monitoring and evaluating policy implementation and the entire policy processes is either misunderstood and are therefore being misapplied or is totally neglected. One practical reason for this development, according to them, is that the change agents, practitioners and policy activists are constantly seen as being interested and, or over-zealous to achieving policy results, rather than paying attention to the means to those results.

A rather alarming and ironic reason advanced to explain the existence of the policy implementation paradox by the proponents of the change management perspective is the view that most often, attempts to implement policies are directed at unsolvable issues and problems. The proponents of this view (for example, Bennett et al, 1992; Fullan, 1997; Everard et al., 2004) argue that there is an acknowledgement, particularly within the change management paradigm that solving educational problems it is not just the number of factors to be understood but rather the reality that these factors sometimes change during the process of implementation that is most important. Fullan (2001, pp. 97–99) for example, argues that with complex social problems, the total number of variables and their interactive, changing nature is so large that it is logically not feasible to obtain all the necessary information, and cognitively impossible for individuals to comprehend the total picture even if the information is available. Secondly, he points out that even if some experts were able to comprehend the total picture themselves, our theories and experiences with meaning and implementation suggest that they would have a difficulty getting others to act on their knowledge. This, according to him is partly because others will not easily understand the complex knowledge and partly because the process of implementation contains so many barriers that have nothing to do with the

quality of knowledge available. Seen in this light, implementation processes are perceived as doing very little to solve some of the undesirable complex conditions of society that are not fully understood and can therefore not be explained causally.

Viewed through a change management lens, this perspective seems useful and insightful in advancing and attributing the causes and effects of the apparent education policy implementation paradox. It does particularly exemplify the kind of practical, operational and strategic plans or works—for example, educating and actively involving people on whom policies impinge in the implementation process; meeting the training and developmental needs of implementers; taking steps to reduce resistance to change; building collegiate culture; and effective monitoring and evaluation of the policy process—that need doing in order to bring about the desired policy outcomes.

2.3.2. Democratic/participatory perspective

The democratic/participatory perspective is in itself a counter-criticism of the policy implementation paradox. It criticises what Gallagher (1992) for instance, refers to as clear and simple approach—CASA model—to policy implementation and analysis. That is, it abandons the traditional and rational policy analysis theory in favour of an interpretive and participatory approach.

The democratic/participatory perspective registers the claim that the globalisation of capitalism in recent years has exerted considerable influence on countries and their educational systems worldwide leading to a paradigm shift in leadership. This phenomenon, proponents of this perspective claim, has resulted in decision-making becoming a participative activity shared among various local school constituents, namely teachers, parents and members of the school management committees. As such, it is suggested that it is not the case that policy provisions enacted for implementation are not being pursued to the latter, but rather that the problem lies considerably in the way policy itself is conceived, conceptualised and more importantly positioned in a way to solely serve the rationalist, traditionalist or ‘technicist’ purposes.

Proponents of this perspective (Fieldman and March, 1981; Smith, 1984; Dunning, 1993; Jones, 1994; Shulock, 1999 and others) argue that the traditional approach to the policy process presumes that experts trained in proper analytical techniques can apply their expertise to the political marketplace, can discover and measure the impact of policy on citizen interests, can project policy consequences with some accuracy, and can affect the decisions of identifiable clients, who will use policy and its analyses to solve problems. This approach to the policy process, according to this school of thought, is an optimistic view that reflects a positivist view of the social sciences that forms the core of its interdisciplinary approach. It is driven as well by the 'stages' view of policymaking in which one of the final stages is a timely recommendation to a client or a timely intervention to solve a pressing problem. Weiss (1982) for example, exemplifies this view. She sees the traditional approach to policy process as an event. Illuminating this point further, she writes:

Both the popular and the academic literature picture decision making as an event; a group of authorized decision makers assemble at particular times and places, review a problem...consider a number of alternative courses of action with more or less explicit calculation of the advantages and disadvantages of each opinion, weigh the alternatives against their goals or preferences, and then select an alternative that seems well suited for achieving their purposes. The result is a decision. (1982, p. 23)

This view, according to scholars and researchers in the interpretive and participatory tradition to the policy process is simplistic, inadequate and could be advanced to explain the existence of the policy implementation paradox particularly in education. For critics, the traditional approach to policy making and implementation falls short of the dynamics of the policy process. To them, the 'client orientation' as invigorated in the traditional theory seems to endorse the prevailing view of policymaking as relatively orderly in which analysis and implementation are seen as advice to clients and their usefulness is

assessed as its contribution to eventual decisions or actions by policymakers, rather than as a contribution to the broader political discourse.

One of the researchers, whose work has been most influential in offering this theoretical argument in support of the democratic/participatory perspective, and in an attempt to explain and/or resolve the policy paradox, is Shulock (1999). She uses data on policy analysis use by Congressional Committees from 1985 to 1994 in the United States of America to test the theoretical claim that ‘analysis is not used by policymakers to solve problems or even to choose among alternatives in the design of public policies’ (Webber, 1984, 1986; Whiteman, 1985; Booth, 1990; Mooney, 1991; Jones, 1994). She uses two variables—congressional committee jurisdiction and the degree of public attention to policy issues—to question whether policy analysis is a tool for problem-solving or a weapon in the battle to shape debate, claim jurisdiction, and gain public approval of legislative activity.

Although Shulock’s study appears a bit removed from the issue in contention as it does not address a particular educational event or activity, however, the point still holds that such an endeavour has serious implications for education. The findings from her study for instance, have led Shulock to criticise the traditional and rational view of policy implementation and analysis in favour of a more dynamic and interpretive/democratic approach. She argues that the rationalist foundation of the traditional policy process unduly limits our understanding of policy analysis and its role in the policymaking and implementation process. This for her is because the traditional/rational approach views policy and its analysis as a tool for choosing among alternatives in an effort to solve problems. From her view point, policy analysis is used in three ways not validated by the traditional view. Policy analysis, and in this context, policy implementation is used: (a) as a language for framing political discourse; (b) as a legitimate rationalization for legislative action where prospective rationality is inhibited by ‘garbage can’ decision environments; and (c) as a symbol of legitimate decision processes that can increase support for governance processes in a society that values rationality (p. 229). Stressing

the importance of this alternative view of policy analysis derived from contemporary literature on the policy process and decision-making, she writes:

...policy analysis is more a tool of the democratic process than the problem-solving process. Its value lies in its contribution to the understanding that citizens have of issues and the political process. These understandings can profoundly affect policy outcomes and popular support for those outcomes. Analysis can lead to better policies if by 'better' we mean more responsive to, and supported by, the public. (Shulock, 1999, p. 227)

It is thus clear that the democratic/participatory perspective advanced to explain and possibly resolve the apparent policy implementation paradox is in itself a counter criticism of the implementation paradox. It is a reiteration of the claim that it is not the case that the exact policy provisions and guidelines are not pursued and implemented by those who have the responsibility for doing so. Rather, it suggests that the globalization of capitalism in recent years has resulted in a paradigm shift in leadership and as such there are other legitimate uses for policy other than the problem-solving use originally envisioned by policy actors but apparently rarely attained. The democratic perspective thus lends support for an alternative interpretive and participatory view of the policy process based on a more contemporary set of theoretical premises which identify the implementation process as an effective instrument and/or means of the democratic process rather than a problem-solving one typified by the stages view and approach.

2.3.3. Post-modernist perspective

Unlike the previous perspectives, the post-modernist approach to the policy paradox is a call for a fundamental re-conceptualisation and re-definition of policy and its role in the decision-making and implementation processes. Such a call for a fundamental re-conceptualisation of policy stems out of the understanding of contemporary society which stresses the existence of different 'life-worlds' (Trowler, 1988, p. 75) and the realisation of small communities within larger society with their own understanding of

the nature of reality and how to move on in life. Researchers in this tradition (for example, Codd, 1988; Ball, 1994; Corbitt, 1997; Trowler, 1998, 2003; Walford, 2000; Fontana, 2002; Olssen et al, 2004) argue that although we do invest heavily in policy making processes, there is lack of credible evidence to suggest or support the claim that those policies make any difference in solving our myriad of problems. They emphasize that if information has an impact on policy outcomes at all, it does so only over the long term because the policy makers and implementers either fail or are unable to clearly define and conceptualise policy. 'The meaning of policy is taken for granted and a theoretical and epistemological dry rot is built into the analytical structures constructed' (Ball, 1994, p. 15) making it difficult, if not impossible for policy provisions and intentions to be implemented and outcomes attained.

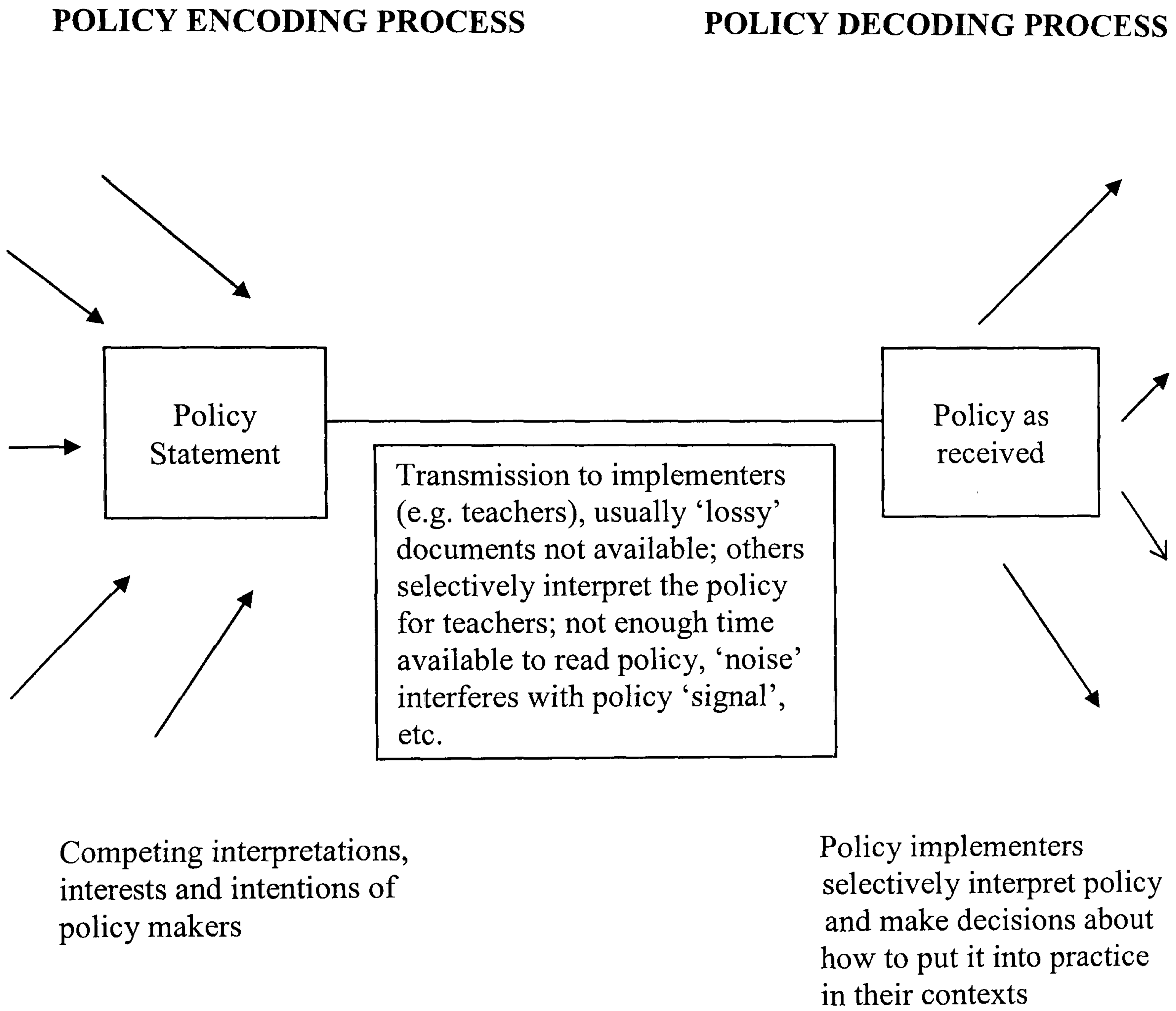
From this stand point, adherents to this perspective inhabit and propose two very different conceptualizations of policy: 'policy as text' and 'policy as discourse', based on what they see as a post-modernist understanding of social issues where 'two theories are probably better than one' (Ball, p. 14) and on that premise, they argue for what Olssen et al. (2004) call a 'materialist theory of language'—a theory which sees policy as being made of language and therefore a social practice—as a basis for understanding the policy implementation paradox. Although the accounts of this model, remains tentative (Walford, 2000), it is however highly illuminating in the sense that it identifies the challenge of relating 'together analytically the ad hocery of the macro and the ad hocery of the micro without losing sight of the systematic bases and effects of the ad hoc social actions: to look for the iterations embedded within chaos' (Ball, 1994, p. 15).

As 'text', the conception of policy embraces both written and spoken text. However, for the purposes of this study 'policy as text' is taken to refer exclusively to written text, and implies the end-product of the contestations, struggles, negotiations, compromises and dialogues involved in making policies. Policy as 'discourse', in this context is taken to mean the way the ideas and propositions contained in the texts are expressed and how their interpretation constrains the 'intended' meanings of such texts.

2.3.3.1. Policy as 'text'

According to post-modernists, whether post-modernism is considered as a radical break from modernity or merely modernism's continuation, profound changes have occurred leading to the focus on smaller parcels of knowledge and the study of society in its fragments and in its daily details (Fontana, 2002, p. 161). As such, viewing policy as a text according to the researchers who subscribe to post-modernist tradition refers to the contested, changing and negotiated character of the policy process. 'Policy as text' for these researchers and scholars draws upon the insights of literary theory and recognises the complex ways in which textual representations are encoded as a result of compromises and struggles. Policy documents and statements as Trowler (1998) for instance contend are always a result of struggles and compromises between the different individuals, groups and interests involved in the policy process. The contested and disputed character of policy, according to him is evident at two main levels of the policy process: the point of 'encoding' and of 'decoding' (p. 78). He refers to the 'encoding' level as the initial stage of formal policy-making where the ideas, values and aspirations of both the key actors involved in the policy process, and the people and/or interests they represent are elicited and enlisted via struggles, compromises, authoritative public interpretations and reinterpretations. The 'decoding' stage, according to Trowler, is marked by the disputed and complex ways by which the policy messages and outcomes are interpreted by the policy actors and implementers in the contexts of their own culture, ideology, history, resources and expertise. (See figure 3 on page 58, for an illustration illuminating the (policy encoding and decoding processes) conception of policy as both 'text' and 'discourse'.)

Figure 3: An illustration of policy encoding and decoding process.



(adapted from Trowler, 1998, p. 49).

Seen in this light, the conception of 'policy as text' appears to endorse the rejection of the technical-empirical approach to understanding policy implementation where there is a quest for what Walford (2000, p. 124) calls the authorial intentions presumed to lie behind the text. Rather, what the conception does recognise and reiterate is the point that texts are made up of language and as such contain divergent meanings, contradictions and structured omissions and that a plurality of readings that are liable, or likely to be produced are in themselves indicative of the existence of a plurality of readers (Codd, 1998, p. 238). This however does not imply, as many proponents of this theoretical perspective believe, that any 'reading' of the text is possible and indeed valid. What it does explicate is the idea that while authors of texts cannot completely control the meaning that they attach to their texts, they strive to put in a reasonable amount of effort to exert such control by the means they have at their disposal. As Walford (2000) puts it, 'only a limited range of readings is possible, but that range permits a diversity of forms of implementation' (p. 125).

Thus, the conception of policy this way is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, it appears to endorse the poignant rejection of the 'idealist and technocratic assumptions' (Olssen et al., 2004, p. 60) underpinning traditional conceptions of policy. That is, it lends support to those researchers and scholars who understand and or see policies not as the expression of political purpose or statements of the courses of action that policy-makers and administrators are to follow, as the traditional or technocratic view would like to have us believe. Rather, the conception of policy as text helps us to see the policy process as a contested terrain involving muddle, negotiations and compromises. Policies, according to this conception are representations which are encoded and decoded via complex ways:

The texts are the product of compromises at various stages, at the points of initial influence, in the micropolitics of legislative formulation, in the parliamentary process and the politics and micropolitics of interest group articulation. They are

[indeed] typically the cannibalised products of multiple but circumscribed influences and agendas (Ball, 1994, p. 16).

Secondly, the conception brings to the fore the idea that policies by their very nature do shift and change in the face of modifications in their contexts over time. The contested and negotiated nature and character of the policy process presupposes that given time, policy representations are liable to shift and change and so are the key actors and interpreters as well as the possible interpretations and meanings that actors attach to policy. Ball captures this character of policy in his explanations, '[once formulated], policies shift and change their meanings in the arenas of politics; representations change, key interpreters...change...Policies are represented by different actors and interests' (1994, p. 17).

Similarly, conceptualizing policy as a process involving contestations, negotiations and compromises, implies invariably that it is very rare for a text, in this context, policy to be the work of one person and as such for any text, a plurality of readers, as Codd (1988) puts it, must necessarily produce a plurality of readings. The differences in the interpretation of policy texts, stems out of the difficulty that policy authors face in their attempts to control the meaning of their texts and as a result achieve a 'correct' reading of their texts. The texts themselves, as Ball (1994, p. 16) maintains are not necessarily clear, closed or complete and therefore to assume that a text can actually have a single meaning or portray the actual intentions of the author(s) is to subscribe to what Olssen et al. (2004, p. 60) refer to as the 'intentional fallacy' which holds that the meaning of literary text corresponds or can be taken as being evidence of what the author or authors intend to express. Intentions, as Olssen et al. argue, are not private mental events neither are they the same as statements of intentions. As such, apart from the various features of the policy text itself and the context in which it is interpreted, absolutely nothing can be said about the author's or authors' intentions in the interpretation of policies. Emphasizing the diversity and/or plurality in the interpretation of policy texts, they quote Barthe (1977) to reiterate their argument. They state, 'a text is not a line of words

releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash (quoted by Olssen et al., 2004, p. 62).

The major criticism here, of course is that where the concept of 'policy as text' allows for social agency and the making of meaning, it may be, as Ball (1994, p. 21) maintains that this misses Ozga's (2000) idea of 'the the bigger picture'. Perhaps, to use Ball's own words, the conception of 'policy as text' concentrates too much on what those who inhabit policy think about and misses and fails to attend to what they do not think about (p. 21). However, what thus emanates from this discussion, and in fact, the conception of 'policy as text' is a clear indication that the conception of policy as texts implies that education policies are taken as sites of struggle, negotiation and dialogue, in that they show traces of differing discourses and ideologies contending and struggling for dominance. By conceptualizing educational policy in this way, the researchers who adopt a post-modernist understanding of contemporary society to fashion a perspective on the policy implementation paradox stress the importance of social agency of struggle and compromise and use this as an impetus to emphasize the understanding of the different ways that policies are read.

2.3.3.2. Policy as 'discourse'

Recognizing 'policy as discourse' basically draws on and emphasizes a postmodernist view of the ways in which the discourse available to us as people, limits and shapes our views and perspectives about the world (Trowler, 1998, p. 79). Such an idea according to Walford (2000) 'links to those of Foucault (1997) and many others and emphasizes the limitations on what can be said and thought, and also who can speak, when, where and with what authority' (p. 125). Related particularly to the apparent policy paradox, the conception draws on the ways in which the constraining effects of the discursive contexts set up by the policy-makers come to the fore [in the policy implementation and institutionalization processes] (Trowler, 1998, p. 78). 'Policy as 'discourse' gradually builds over time, such that some interpretations and some patterns are more likely than

others. It sets boundaries to what actors are allowed to think and do' (Walford, 2000, p. 125).

By way of definition, researchers and scholars in this conceptual tradition understand discourse to embody the meaning and use of propositions and words, that is, the way ideas are expressed. They take discourse to refer to language as a social practice determined by social structures. By conceptualizing policy this way, researchers in this tradition, suggest that discourses, and in this context, policies do not merely represent social reality but help as well in creating it. To them, in the process of representing reality, discourses disguise the created nature of social reality by denying and or limiting the language resources needed to be able to think about and describe alternatives. This idea of discourse creating and constituting reality, that is, the objects we speak is reiterated by Foucault (1977) whose work arguably is an inspiration for subsequent authors and researchers in identifying and conceptualizing policy, especially educational policy as discourse. He comments:

...discourses are practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak...Discourses are not about objects; they do not identify objects, they constitute them and in the practice of doing so conceal their own inventions. (cited by Trowler, 1998, pp. 78-79)

Stressing how discourses in the process of creating social reality conceal their own identities and therefore consequently limit and shape our own understanding and initiatives about issues, Foucault in another discussion adds:

We do not speak a discourse, it speaks us. We are the subjectivities, the voices, the knowledge, and the power relations that a discourse constructs and allows. We do not 'know' what we say, we 'are' what we say and do...we are spoken by policies, we take up the positions constructed for us within policies. (quoted by Ball, 1994, p. 22)

What this conception of policy, particularly with regards to policy implementation paradox signifies is that policy-makers and actors in general can and do, as Trowler, (1998) also believes; generally constrain the way we think and act on policies. The conception does explicate the practicalities involved in the policy process. It thus for instance, exemplifies the point that although policy actors, in practice are embedded within a variety of discordant and contradictory discourses, some of the discourses within which they are embedded are more dominant than others and that 'those discourses supported by the state have an obvious dominance in circumstances linked to the law and Acts of Parliament' (Walford, 2000, p. 125). Ball (1994) endorses this view. Taking education as a case in point, he argues that conceptualizing policy as discourse means that a specific set of intellectuals inhabit, disseminate and legitimize the new 'science' and ideas (such as, discipline, quality of teaching, efficient use of resources and instructional time, just to mention a few) that have to do with the attainment of learning objectives. With regards to those on whom these ideas impinge, he explains that they may only be able to conceive of the possibilities of response in and through the language, concepts and vocabulary which the discourse makes available to them. Reiterating the discursive nature of policy as discourse, he concludes:

...in this terms the effects of policy is primarily discursive, it changes the possibilities we have for thinking 'otherwise', thus it limits our responses to change, and leads us to misunderstand what policy is by misunderstanding what it does...policy as discourse may have the effects of redistributing 'voice', so that it does not matter what some people say or think, and only certain voices can be heard as meaningful or authoritative. (Ball, 1994, p. 23)

Having briefly described the ideas behind the conceptualization of education policy as both 'text' and 'discourse', the issue to grapple with then is, how does this conception help to explain the apparent policy paradox? In other words, how relevant is this perspective in helping to demystify and resolve the policy implementation dilemma? Trowler (1998, p. 77) for instance, attempts an answer. He points out that what the

conception of policy as both 'text' and 'discourse' does is, to help to explicate and exemplify the issue of the power of the local actors of policy. He explains that conceptualizing policy in this way is a very useful attempt to keep in view both the way behaviour and ideas are constrained by factors external to the individual—policy as discourse—and the relative freedom of individuals to change things—policy as text. Ball (1994) supports Trowler's views. He stresses the point that conceptualizing policy in this way is a demonstration, for example, of the relationship between policy texts at the governmental level and how these policy texts are read within schools. He goes on to draw a line, differentiating the two conceptualizations from one another. He reiterates that the idea of 'policy as text', rather than showing the various ways that policy is read, particularly emphasizes the social agency of the policy process. That is, it indicates and explicates the point 'that there are real struggles, disputes, conflicts and adjustments in the policy process and that these take place in a pre-established terrain' (p. 23).

Thus, the post-modernist perspective could therefore be taken as a framework for analysis. In fact, it is portrayed here as a framework for critical analysis of policy which is discourse based, people/participants centred and language/socio-culturally focused. Although this description and conceptualisation appears credible and convincing, the question is has it really resolved the paradox involved in the implementation of policies? What Trowler, Ball (1994); Corbitt (1997) and others are driving at, I suppose, is the idea that the policy paradox, particularly in education exists and could be better understood, if not resolved completely, by looking at policy and in fact conceptualizing it as a complex concept whose success, in terms of how successful the implementation of the ideas in it would be, is influenced and determined by two variables: 'policy as text' and 'policy as discourse'.

As 'text', the conception shows that there are real struggles over the interpretation and enactment of policies due to the contested, muddy, changing and negotiated nature and character of the policy process. 'Policy as discourse' on the other hand buttresses the moving and discursive frames within which these struggles are set and how these

articulate and constrain the interpretation and enactment of policies. The weakness here, of course, is that of engaging in the old unfashionable position in educational and sociological research which stipulates that in the analysis of complex social issues, two theories are better than one. However, as Ball (1994) for instance, points out, and as far as the issue in contention here is concerned, the difference between these two conceptualizations are rather 'dramatic and in sociological terms rather hoary and traditional. Policy is not one or the other, but both: they are both 'implicit in each other'. As an aside, but an important aside...' (p. 15).

So, while the exploration of the perspectives on the policy implementation paradox is useful in setting the scene for the study, it is however to be acknowledged that the change management, democratic/participatory and post-modernist perspectives are not the only perspectives on the policy implementation milieu. In fact, other policy researchers and experts have offered other useful conceptualizations and perspectives (for example, functionalism, Marxism, actor/network theories of policy change etc) to explain and substantiate this policy phenomenon. Given however that the focus of this study is primarily on using the 'fCUBE' policy in Ghana as an exemplar and/or a lens through which to explicate this major policy issue, it was felt that employing all the theoretical perspectives advanced by policy researchers and experts to explain the policy paradox in this study could lead potentially to a duplication (due to the over-lapping nature of the theoretical underpinnings of the various perspectives) rather than an exploration and exemplification of the policy issue under investigation. For this reason, use is generally made of the three (change management, democratic/participatory and post-modernist) perspectives first, as lenses through which the issue could be conceptualized with the view to understanding the possible causal factors, and second, as implicit themes to look out for in analyzing particularly the interview data.

It is also to be acknowledged that while the three perspectives are treated as distinct perspectives, it not suggested that they are mutually exclusive. There are in fact, some

over-lapping features in these perspectives as the interview data analysis and presentation will reveal later in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8.

2.4. Weaknesses inherent in the three perspectives

This section of the chapter considers the weaknesses inherent in each of the three perspectives outlined above. By so doing it highlights the conceptual framework of the study based on the relative strengths and appropriateness of such a framework to the aims and objectives of the current study.

It is clear from the discussion in the previous section of the chapter that the change management perspective on the policy paradox is particularly relevant to theory and practice, as it sets out the kind of works that need to be done in order to successfully implement change. However, one major weakness appears to be inherent to this paradigm. That is, the perspective appears limited in both scope and rationality. It either misses out completely or fails to recognize and exemplify the socio-cultural and political dimensions and dynamism of the policy process and indeed, the task of implementation. Policies, whether taken to mean official documents of institutions or dynamic processes, use languages for legitimatization of their enactment and implementation, and therefore constitute social practices which are to the greatest extent determined by social structures. 'Language, [and for that matter policy] is a medium of domination and social force' It serves to legitimize relations of organised power (Wodak, 2001, p. 2).

While this criticism does not imply that change management practices should be ignored when implementing policies, the perspective arguably appears to have oversimplified and/or reduced educational policy making and implementation to routines or strategic and operational plans which need to be undertaken in order to achieve the desired policy outcomes. As Trowler and Knight (2002) succinctly put it, the technical-rational approach to policy/change assumes that if sufficient energy can be elicited from those involved by enthusiastic leaders with clear vision of change then large scale transformations can be accomplished relatively quickly and economically (p. 144). The

perspective further appears to presuppose that once these change management routines are well conceptualized, put in place and efficiently and effectively pursued, policy implementation is bound to succeed—that is a positivist presupposition of ‘objective reality’ waiting to be explored (Denscombe, 2002; Neuman, 2004; Gephart, 1999), which seemed not to have held any water as far as the views from the other perspectives on the paradox are concerned.

Similarly, it is also clear that the democratic/participatory perspective on the policy implementation paradox does provide an alternative role of policy. It does argue quite explicitly that it is not the case that policies enacted for implementation are not being put to practice, but rather that policies perform alternative roles that the traditional problem-solving approach to policy implementation and analysis fails to recognize and document. Specifically, the perspective does posit the claim that policy is used as a language for framing political discourse as well as a means of getting people involved in democratization processes—roles that the traditional approaches to policy implementation strategies fail to recognize and gazette.

In spite of these alternative roles of the democratic/participatory perspective, there are however, serious issues intrinsic to this approach to the policy process. The biggest issue the democratic/participatory perspective is entangled in is the question of whether the alternative ‘view’ it provides on the paradox is in fact, the prime concern of policymakers and implementers. Shulock (1999) answers this question in her analysis and conclusion. She concedes that although the interpretive and participatory use of policy is neither a trivial nor illegitimate use of information resource, this kind of use is not what policy actors nor analysts hope for (p. 229). As it is claimed by Shulock, if the alternative interpretive use of policy is secondary, or in other words, subsidiary to the real intent and purposes of policy, then it implies therefore that the whole issue—policy paradox—in contention here, does fall outside the parameters of the alternative democratic and participatory view and use of policy. The problem, its explanation and possible solution according to the democratic/participatory perspective, and as Kingdon

(cited by Shulock, 1999, p. 228) puts it, follow different chronologies and therefore appear fortuitous. The thrust of the matter therefore is that, although the democratic perspective and its interpretive and participatory proposal to the policy implementation process do genuinely provide substantive and a more comprehensive insight into the policy process as a whole—what (more often) is rarely documented and validated by the traditional problem-solving approach—it has failed to offer practical explanations and measures to resolve the policy implementation paradox. What it does succeed in doing, is a duplication of the issue at hand by providing alternative uses of policy.

Again, for the purposes of this study, the post-modernist perspective on the policy paradox exemplifies how the conceptions, articulations and interpretations of the policy provisions and intentions encapsulated in official policy documentations by those actors of policy who wield political power and authority do impact on the policy processes. The inherent weakness here, of course rests in the fact that such a model remains tentative (Walford, 2000), as it seeks to ‘replace the modernist theoretical project of abstract parsimony with a somewhat more post-modernist one of localized complexity’ (Ball, 1994, p. 14), and in the process fails to take account of what Ozga (2000) refers to as ‘the bigger picture’. Trowler (1998, p. 80) captures this weakness much more succinctly. Citing the accounts of Marsh and Rhodes (1992) and Sabatier, (1986), he points out that the post-modernist perspective, and in fact, all phenomenological approaches to policy, among other things:

- overestimate the discretion of the lower level actors and fail to recognise sufficiently the constraints on their behaviour;
- do not explain the sources of actors’ definitions of the situation, perceptions of their own interests;
- do not recognize the fact that the upper levels set the ground rules for negotiations; and finally they;
- do not focus on the implementation of policies, but on understanding actor interaction in a specific policy sector.

While these criticisms are quite critical and damning, for the purpose and context of this study however, Ball's (1994) defence of the post-modernist perspective and model is particularly relevant. Although he does not take these issues head-on, he argues particularly against the ruling out of certain forms and conception of social action on the grounds that they are simply awkward, theoretically challenging or difficult. The issue for him is the uttermost need and urgency of 'relating together analytically the ad hocery of two levels (macro and micro levels). (See Ball's quote on page 56.) The point therefore, and as Ball (quoting Harker and May, (1993) to support his argument), also agrees is that of accounting for agency in a constrained world, and showing how agency and structure are implicit in each other.

So, while all three perspectives alluded to above do explore the reasons for the existence of the policy paradox, for the purposes of this study, the post-modernist view of the need to conceptualise policy as a 'toolbox' of diverse concepts and theories appears to be far more suitable and appropriate to be used for the analysis of the social policy issue. For this reason, the perspective is thus employed as a substantial and a comprehensive framework, particularly in exploring and analyzing the extent to which the 'free', 'compulsory', 'universal' and basic 'education' components of 'fCUBE' are implemented and are therefore reflected visibly in the implementation process.

Again, while the justification above does highlight the choice of the post-modernist perspective as a framework to be employed in meeting the 'means to an end agenda' (refer to 'research purpose' and 'aims and objectives of the study' in Chapter 1) which the study sets for itself, it is not being suggested that the change management and democratic/participatory perspectives are being relegated to the background. In fact, as the chapters on the interview data analysis (Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8) as well as the discussion and summary in Chapter 9 would show later, the three perspectives are together put to another analytical use. They are considered as implicit themes to look out for in analyzing the interview data. Whilst this justifies the inclusion of the three perspectives in the thesis, the major rationale for the use of the post-modernist

composite conceptualization of policy as ‘text’ and ‘discourse’, as an analytical framework of the study however are justified more fully in the next section of the chapter.

2.5. Policy as ‘text and discourse’: a framework for analysis

In considering the theoretical framework to use in analysing the ‘fCUBE’ policy, I have decided to settle on the post-modernist composite theory approach of conceptualizing education policy as both ‘text’ and ‘discourse’ (Ball, 1994). The decision to follow this conceptual path is in part grounded in consideration of the broader aims of the study and partly as a result of the three reasons alluded to below:

Firstly, conceptualizing educational policy as both text and discourse explicates and legitimizes the issue of ‘power’, its uses and relations within the policy process. As ‘text’, education policy is conceived as a multi-dimensional process involving struggles, contestations and negotiations, whilst as ‘discourse’, it is thought of as what can be said and thought and by whom, when, where and with what authority (Foucault, 1977, p. 125). What this conception of policy means is that, although multiple and competing voices can or are always heard in the policy process it is actually only certain influences, agendas are recognised as authoritative. Policies typically posit a restructuring, redistribution and disruption of power relations, so that different people can and cannot do different things at a given time during the entire policy process. Ball (1994) points out this issue of power and how it affects the task of implementation when he says:

[In the policy process] only certain influences and agendas are recognised as legitimate, only certain voices are heard at any point in time...quibbling and dissensus still occur with babble of ‘legitimate’ voices and sometimes the effects of quibbling and dissensus result in blurring of meaning within texts, and in public confusion and dissemination of doubt. (p. 16)

As a framework for analysing the 'fCUBE' policy therefore, the conception of policy as both 'text' and 'discourse' does not only help to bring to the fore, and touch on the legitimate voices in the policy process, but it more importantly, explicates and exemplifies how this issue of power and its exercise affects the 'fCUBE' policy implementation and institutionalization processes.

Similarly, unlike Foucault's conception of discourse which arguably became the bedrock for discourse analysts, conceptualizing education policy as 'text' and 'discourse' allows for linguistic and discursive analysis of social issues. Foucault's approach and conception of discourse as indicated earlier did contribute immensely to discourse analysis by focusing mainly on the social and political analysis of discursive practices as systems of rules. However, as Fairclough (1992; 1995; 2001c) points out, this approach neglects the textual analysis of discourse. It fails to point out and engage in textual analysis of real instances of what is said or written; that is, with the analysis of actual texts. As a framework for analysis therefore, the conception does integrate the social and political theories of discourse with more linguistically oriented approaches to discourse analysis. It also requires that attention be given to the relationship between texts and the wider domains of discursive and social practices to which the texts belong. Again, the conception of 'policy as text' focuses mainly upon the linguistic features as well as the discursive and or intertextual analysis of the 'fCUBE' policy texts. On the other hand, as a piece of discursive practice, the conception of 'policy as discourse' typically touches on and illustrates the linguistic and intertextual processes and features and goes beyond that to exemplify the interpersonal relationships of power involved in the processes of text production, distribution and consumption and how these impact on the implementation process. All of these processes as Fairclough (1992, p. 71) puts it are social and require reference to the particular economic, political and institutional settings within which discourse, in this case, policies are generated.

Thirdly, as a framework for analysis, the conception of education policy as both text and discourse is useful because it draws on language as a resource for the analysing social

issues. To use Kress' (1989) expression, such a model sees language, and in fact policy as a 'social semiotic', and as a resource for meaning, centrally involved in the process by which human beings negotiate, construct and change the nature of social experience. Viewed in this sense, the constant unity of language and other social matters as Wodak and Meyer (2001) aptly point out ensures that language is entwined in social power in a number of ways: 'indexing and expressing power, involved where there is contention over and a challenge to power as well as providing a finely articulated means for differences in power in hierarchical structures' (p, 11).

The point then is can social issues or policies be reduced to language? In other words, how is language used or portrayed as a resource in critical analysis of social policies? Fairclough, (1995) helps us with an answer. He explains that in seeing language as discourse and as social practice or the vice versa, one is committing oneself not just to analysing texts, nor just to analysing processes and interpretation, but to analysing the relationship between texts, processes and their social conditions, both the immediate conditions of the situational context and the more remote conditions of institutional and social structures. What this means in one sense is that nobody who has an interest in the relationships of power in modern society can afford to ignore language. As Fairclough (2001) again emphasizes, language contributes to the domination of some people by others. He goes on to say that 'it rests upon commonsense assumptions, and the ways in which these assumptions can be ideologically shaped by relations of power' (p. 3). The conception of policy as both text and discourse is thus useful not only in helping to analyse and determine the extent to which the 'free', 'compulsory', 'universal' and 'basic education' components of the 'fCUBE' policy are enacted at various levels, but also in raising the consciousness of the people about the ways in which their language use does contribute to the domination of one another.

2.6. Chapter reflection

The discussion of the issues in this chapter employs narrative (in terms of thematic exploration of issues as situated accounts) and systemic review approaches and can thus

be criticised respectively for being subjective or superficial and ‘impressionistic’. However as Higgins and Hall (2004, p. 3) maintain, these strategies for reviews have counterbalancing advantages. The narrative approach on the one hand is sensitive to context and provides thematic depth of the review process. It also gives appropriate weight to exemplary studies and as well provides context-rich information about educational innovations in a way that is accessible to practitioners. Systemic review on the other hand allows the researcher to access the relevance of the literature to his/her own concerns and to make judgements about how comprehensive the contributors have been.

As a strategy for reviewing the education policy literature, particularly for the purposes of this study, the approach has helped immensely to set the focus of the entire study. It has helped to explore the meaning of education policy and thereafter moves to engage in a discussion of what is suggested as ‘the policy implementation paradox’, helping to touch on and explore perspectives brought to bare on this milieu and through that highlights the theoretical framework of the study.

The next chapter delves in to the issues of research design.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Outline

This chapter explores the issues of methodological design. It begins with an outline of the research questions that drive the study. This is followed by the description and justification for the respective research approach and strategy adopted as well as the study's conceptual framework. Thereafter, the data gathering sources, methods and techniques for analysis are outlined and explored in detail. Implicit in the research design are brief descriptions of the ethical considerations and limitations as well as delimitations of the study.

Whilst the choice of methodology is grounded in consideration of the background to the study, especially the issue of the policy implementation paradox illuminated in the review of the literature in the previous chapters, and which gave rise to this study, the rationale for plying this methodological route however stems from the need to ensure that the findings of the study are thoroughly grounded in the evidence gathered and not based upon speculations or weak inferences.

3.2. The research questions

This study aims at exploring what is described in this context as the paradox in policy implementation, using the 'fCUBE' policy in Ghana as an exemplar and with a view to investigating the extent to which the 'free', 'compulsory', 'universal' and 'basic education' components and provisions have been implemented and are therefore reflected in the implementation process.

From this aim, as well as an exploration of the education policy literature, emanate the following questions:

1. What does a critical discourse analysis of the policy provisions contained in the 'fCUBE' policy documentation say about the purposes of the 'fCUBE' policy?

2. In what ways are the fCUBE policy provisions and components perceived, articulated and interpreted by the meso-level actors or implementers?
3. Where do the views presented in (1) and (2) converge and diverge?
4. Given a conceptual framework which sees educational policy as both a 'text' and a 'discourse', what can a theoretical analysis of the discussions in (1), (2) and (3) suggest about the 'fCUBE' implementation process and indeed the policy implementation paradox?

3.3. Research approach

In recent times, methodological approaches to social science research, of which education research is part, has come under intense criticism and attack. The criticism relates to, and questions, the 'validity' of the measurement on which the findings of such research is typically based, as well as the underlying 'truths' of the findings. 'These philosophical and theoretical debates have been deep, complicated and, sometimes abrasive between researchers who hold different beliefs about the nature of social reality—ontology, and competing visions about the ways that humans create their knowledge about the social world in which they live—epistemology' (Denscombe, 2002, p. 5). Succinctly, these criticisms are typically based on two commonly used paradigms—the positivist and interpretivist paradigms and thus question the 'validity', 'reliability' and 'objectivity' of our empirical beliefs of the world.

The positivist approach to research is described as an approach to social research that seeks to apply the natural science model of research to investigations of social phenomenon and explanations of the social world. It is concerned with uncovering truths and facts conceived in terms of specified correlations and associations among variables (Gephart, 1999, p. 4; Denscombe, 2002, p. 14). This assumption is based on the premise that the purpose of social research is to use scientific research methods to reveal and analyse the reality of social life. 'It assumes that social reality is made up of objective

facts that value-free researchers can precisely measure and use statistics to test causal theories' (Neuman, 2004, p. 41). This lends support to the idea shared in positivist realms that that researchers do not by themselves create the patterns and regularities of social life but rather, they discover them. In short, the presumption here is that there is an objective reality 'out there', which is deemed to be fixed/static and waiting to be discovered, and that this reality exists independently of whether or not the social researcher has yet discovered its existence.

The interpretivist approach on the other hand, is based on the philosophical doctrine of idealism which maintains the world view that what we see around us is the creation of the mind. For the interpretivists, this doctrine does not in anyway mean or imply that the world is not real, but rather that 'we can only experience it personally through our perceptions which are influenced by our preconceptions and beliefs' (Walliman, 2001, p. 15). This approach, unlike positivism thus takes a different ontological view to research. That is, the belief that social reality is something that is construed and interpreted by people, rather than something that exists objectively 'out there'. In the view point of interpretivists, the social world does not have tangible, material qualities that allow it to be measured, touched or observed in some literal way. Rather, it is a social creation, constructed in the minds of people and reinforced through the interactions with each other. It is a reality that exists only through the way people believe in it, relate to it and interpret it. In brief, the interpretivists assume that 'knowledge and meaning are acts of interpretation hence there is no objective knowledge which is independent of thinking reasoning humans' (Gephart, 1999, p. 4).

Given the major aim of the study, which is outlined in Chapter 1 and again at the beginning of this chapter, the research described in this thesis falls into the interpretivist camp. This however does not mean that this approach is superior to other approaches to research, neither does it implies that the researcher intends to downplay the positivist approach. The decision to follow this methodological path is grounded in consideration and reinforcement of Denscombe's (2002) view that there are certain aspects of social

life that are difficult, if not impossible to research using a scientific or positivist approach and that for these aspects, different or alternative approaches are much more helpful in discovering and generating knowledge (p. 16). Similarly, the researcher is of the view that the interpretivist approach is best suited on this occasion because 'through its inherent flexibility, its detailed and directed approach, it provides an explanation and an understanding of the respondent as an individual' (Robson, 1989, p. 24).

One of the major characteristic features of the interpretivist approach is its 'common sense' appeal to social researchers to reconsider the grounds on which they claim to be objective. That is, a warning to researchers to be generally more careful, more modest, and more tentative about their claims to have produced theories about the social world. As Denscombe (2002) explains, rather than claiming objectivity, interpretivists tend to focus their attention on the way people make sense of the world and how they create their social world through their actions and interpretations of the world (p. 15). Gephart (1999) adds that interpretivists assume that knowledge and meaning are acts of interpretation hence there is no objective knowledge which is independent of thinking, reasoning humans (p. 5). Eisner (1993) on the other hand, takes a very critical stance. For him, 'objectivity in research in general is a naïve notion because what we come to see depends upon what we seek, and what we seek depends upon what we know how to say' (p. 49). Drawing a leverage on the problems with both the ontological and procedural objectivity in research, he states categorically that 'ontological objectivity which natural science researchers advocate for, cannot in principle provide what we hope for whilst procedural objectivity offers less than we think' (p. 50).

This view contrasts with a positivist approach to research where the central task is to arrive at fixed and definite answers through the deployment of reliable, replicable, objective and valid research. This however does not imply that this study is not objective or valid. Rather, what it does mean is that instead of occupying itself with the task of providing what positivists refer to as 'conclusive evidence' to judge between competing accounts, the study seeks rather to interrogate, obtain and offer explanation as to why

policy implementation agendas are more often different from original provisions enacted for implementation. Creswell (1998) captures these ideas in his view of what he calls the nature of qualitative study:

Qualitative research is an enquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of enquiry that explores a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. (Creswell, 1998, p. 15)

More specifically, this study purports to use the composite theory conceptualization of education policy as both a 'text' and 'discourse' (Ball, 1994) to explore, gain and offer insight and explanations about the ideological assumptions made in the 'fCUBE' policy documentation, and the ways these assumptions are perceived, articulated and perpetuated by policy actors at the meso-level. The idea of seeking an articulation and interpretation of the 'fCUBE' policy components at the meso-level is to find out the ways by which dominant discourse(s) either within the policy texts themselves, or those belonging to the policy actors and implementers at the meso-level, neutralises or normalises particular ideological stances to policy, and the effects that these have on the implementation process. (See Chapter 1 for the terms of reference for both the conceptualization of policy as 'text' and 'discourse', and 'meso-level implementers' respectively.)

Thus, while the chosen approach for this study could be subjected to a number of criticisms regarding the issues of reliability, objectivity and validity, it has to be acknowledged that inasmuch as these criticisms relate to the manner and conduct of interpretivism, they equally reflect the positivist view of research in which the purpose of an enquiry is to explain social issues in terms of patterns and regularities, cause and effects, one thing leading to the other. The difference however is that, unlike the positivist approach, this study does not aim to apply the natural science model of

research to investigate a social phenomenon, neither does it aim to explain a social issue in terms of causal relationships, patterns and regularities. Rather, it purports to explore, gain and offer a much deeper understanding and insight into a major sociological policy issue. That is, why policy implementation plans and programmes are more often different from initial provisions enacted for implementation. In this regard, the issue concerning these criticisms therefore, and as Robson (2002) also concurs, is about whether the social researcher would or could develop and put into good use unique skills, such as the need for an enquiring mind; the ability to be a good listener; adaptiveness and flexibility; the ability to grasp and interpret all of the emerging issues. It also involves ensuring a lack of bias through triangulation and involving critical colleagues for suggesting alternative explanations and suggestions for data collection (p. 169).

Also, it has to be acknowledged that while in justifying the study's methodological approach, the illustration appears to have polarised the two research paradigms, this is not necessarily the case in theory. In fact, methodological research philosophies or approaches exist on a spectrum rather than being polar opposites.

3.4. Research strategy

The general approach taken in educational research is commonly referred to as the research strategy. Three traditional types of research strategies namely: experiment, survey and case study: are identified by Robson (2002). In considering the choice of research strategy for a particular study, it is expedient to consider what the purpose of the research is, and here again Robson's (2002, pp. 59-60) four classes of the purposes of enquiry are salutary. These classes are: exploratory, descriptive, explanatory and emancipatory.

For the purposes of this study, particularly in the light of the research questions asked, the research approach adopted, and the fact that the study purports to intertwine the exploratory, descriptive and explanatory approaches with the view to finding out the

extent to which the various components of the 'fCUBE' policy reflected in the process of implementation, the design which the researcher deemed most appropriate is flexible in nature, and to be precise, case study.

Case study, as Yin (1994; 2003) describes it, is a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence. He goes on to outline three conditions indicating when it is practically expedient to use case studies in social science research, and which are particularly relevant to the context of this study. These conditions consist of: (a) the type of research questions posed; (b) the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioural events; and (c) the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events (2003, p. 5).

While Yin's description is self explanatory, it does not mean that case study is a methodology in itself, nor does it imply that it will be used as a method for data gathering for analysis. Rather, what it means is that the 'fCUBE' policy implementation and institutionalization process will be taken and looked at in its natural setting as a case. Stake (2000) states this position more clearly. For him, 'case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied'. He adds that some researchers emphasize the name 'case study' because the term draws attention to the question of what specifically can be learned from the single case (in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 436). In this sense, Miles & Huberman's (1994) suggestion of the term 'site' which Robson (2002) draws on, is more helpful because it reminds us that a 'case' always occurs in a specified social and physical setting and that we cannot study individual cases devoid of their context in a way that a quantitative researcher might.

The central defining features of case studies according to Robson (2002, pp. 178–179) and as far as this study is concerned are:

- concern for research; in this enquiry, collecting information/data in a more sustained and systematic way to ascertain the points of convergence and divergence between what the 'fCUBE' policy documentation says about the purposes of 'fCUBE' and how these are interpreted by the meso-level actors and implementers;
- empirical in the sense of relying on the collection of evidence about what is going on; in this case relying on the 'fCUBE' documentary evidence and the meso-level actors' interpretations and experiences of the way the policy is being implemented to determine the purposes and impacts of the policy;
- investigating a particular or specific 'case' or contemporary phenomenon to answer specific research questions: the 'case' here being the implementation of the 'fCUBE' policy, whilst the research questions centre on the conceptualization of policy as both 'text' and 'discourse', and the impact that this has on the process of implementation;
- the focus on phenomenon in context, the phenomenon here being the 'fCUBE' implementation whilst the context is the Ghanaian educational system.

From the above, the concentration on a particular case studied in its own right, and the focus on a specific context or setting within which the study is taking place remain the central defining characteristics and advantages as far as this particular study is concerned.

That notwithstanding, Robson gives a cautionary warning by stating explicitly that there is some danger in using a well-worn term like 'case study'. For him, although the history of case study has been successfully traced to, or within social science, it has been argued by researchers that it can be found in areas as disparate as administration, anatomy, anthropology business studies, counselling, criminology, artificial intelligence

gerontology, biochemistry, clinical medicine, psychiatry, social work among others. For this reason, he warns that care should be taken when using such a term, because the terms with which it has often been associated carry around with them, 'excess baggage', surplus meanings and resonances from their previous usages. Similarly, he points out that case study, until recently was commonly considered by researchers in methodology texts as a kind of 'soft option', possibly admissible as an explorative precursor or introduction to some more 'hard-nosed' experiment or survey, or as a complement to such approaches, but of dubious value by itself (pp. 179-180). From this view point, the alternative strategies, particularly, surveys could be seen as more forgiving as far as studies of this kind are concerned. For this reason, some considerations will be given later in the concluding chapter to the possible role that these other strategies might have in extending the investigation in this thesis for future research. Bromley (1986) on his part gives what can be considered as 'a fatal blow' to the use of case study as an alternative approach in social science research. According to him, case studies are sometimes carried out in a sloppy, perfunctory, and incompetent manner and sometimes even in a corrupt, dishonest ways (cited by Robson, 2002, p. 180).

While these weaknesses in fact, are indictments, as they appear to suggest that case studies are the 'soft options' in empirical studies, Robson's (2002) defence is particularly significant and relevant to the context of this particular study. He points out that even with good faith and intentions, biased and selective accounts can undoubtedly emerge and that similar criticisms could be made about any research strategy. The issue, according to him and as far as this study is concerned therefore, is whether or not it is possible to devise appropriate checks to demonstrate what in experimental design terms are referred to as the reliability, validity and objectivity of the findings. These issues are taken up and explored into considerable detail in the latter part of this chapter.

3.5. Conceptual framework

In designing a model for qualitative research, Maxwell (2005) recommends the creation of concept maps as a tool for developing conceptual framework which drives the entire

study. He explains that concept maps do not depict the study itself, nor are they a specific part of either the research design or proposal. Rather he claims that it is useful for visually presenting the design or operation of the study (p. 47). Miles and Huberman (1994) refer to concept map as ‘intellectual bins’ and point out that they are derived from three sources—theory, experience and the general objectives of the study—and that they leads to the creation of conceptual framework for a study (p. 18). In line with this commendation, a concept map was created and through that a conceptual framework which shows an overview of the research model and design, was developed. Illustrations of both the mind map and the conceptual framework of the study are represented in figures 4 and 5 on pages 85 and 86 respectively.

The creation of the concept map was helpful in the overall theoretical development of the study in that the process enhanced the pulling together from different disjointed policy sources of three of the perspectives drawn upon or adduced by policy researchers and authors to explain the existence of the major policy issue under investigation. Specifically, the creation of the concept map has allowed for the implicit theory driving the entire study to be made visible. It also enabled the researcher to see the unexpected connections and potential contradictions in his own line of thinking and/or theory in relation to the emerging issues from the policy literature. The process of developing the conceptual framework on the other hand, has enabled important decisions such as: which variables are most important, which relationships are likely to be the most meaningful and as a consequence, what pieces of information should be collected and analysed respectively to be made. Thus, the process generally made it possible to show, through the flexible and evolving nature of the study, the processes involved in arriving at the substantive conclusions for the study.

Thus, as represented in figure 5 on page 86, the conceptual framework has shown that although the research focus and purpose was clear from the onset, the review of the education policy literature coupled with the consideration of an appropriate research design have led to a significant reorganisation of the research questions and the practical

approaches and techniques. Also the right-hand side of the model has indicated the on-going interaction between emerging data and the data collection strategies and approaches.

Figure 4: An illustration of the mind map which culminated in the development of the conceptual framework for the study.

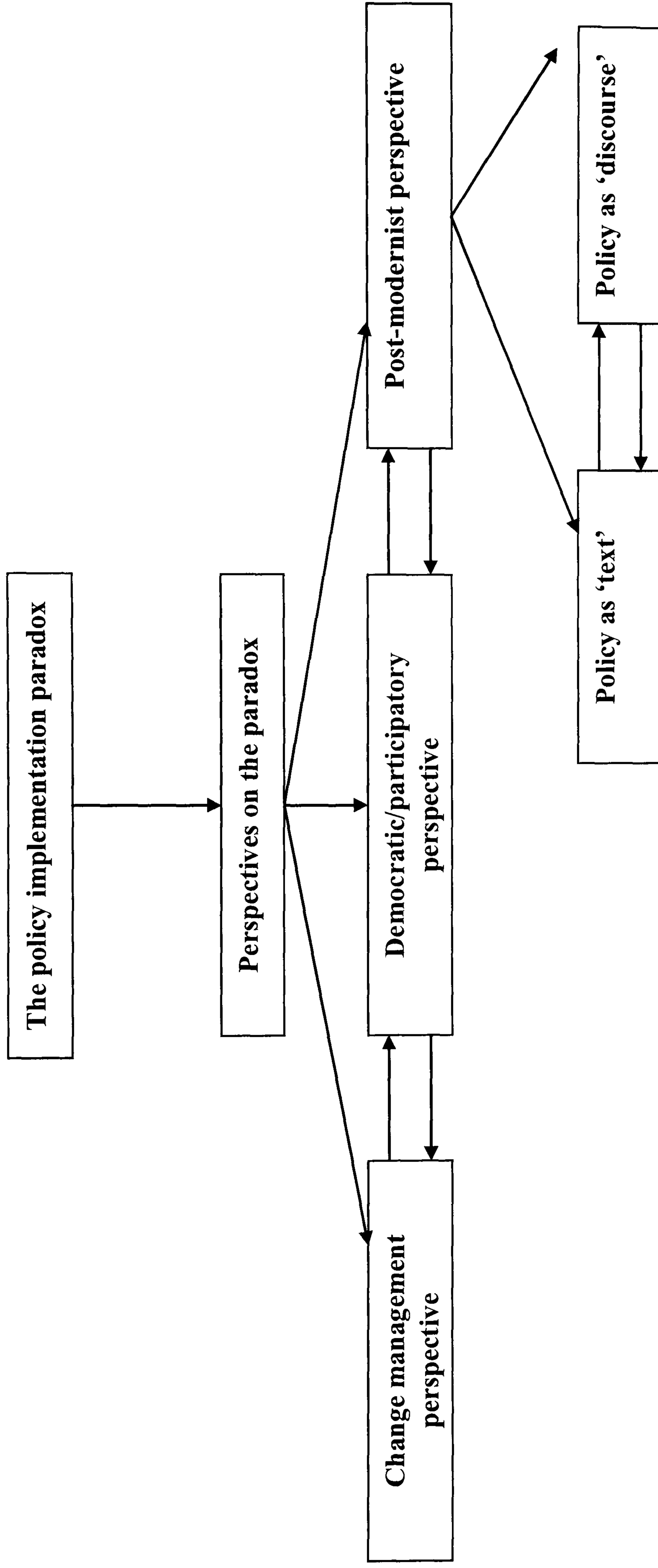
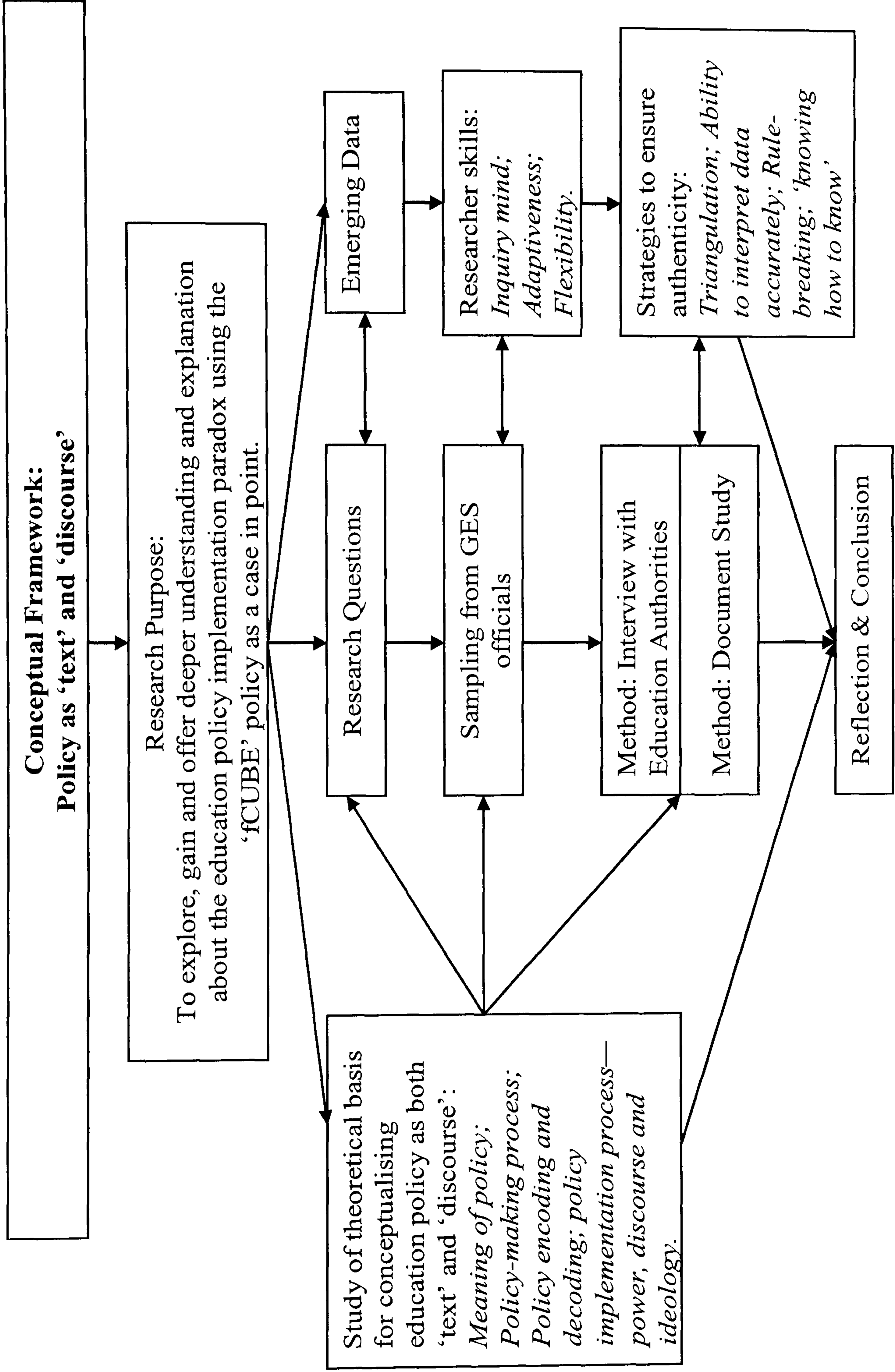


Figure 5: Conceptual Framework



3.6. Data collection: sources, instruments and approaches to analysis

Taking the aims and objectives into consideration, the study combined both primary and secondary sources of data gathering for the purposes of analysis. Specifically, semi-structured opened-ended elite interviewing was used to elicit first-hand, site/context-specific information from the selected interviewees from the meso-level of the Ghanaian educational system, whilst relevant pieces of information retrieved from the 'fCUBE' documentation, particularly on the policy enactment and implementation processes were subjected to documentary study and analysis.

3.6.1. The interview

This section explores how the interviews were conducted with the meso-level actors of policy in the Ghanaian education system, focussing particularly on the rationales, sampling technique, selection, access and preparation, procedures and ethical concerns as well as the approach used to analyse the interview data.

Whereas the rationale for the use of elite interviewing for the purposes of this study is justified more fully in the sub-section below, the decision to employ interviews as one of the instruments for gathering data for this study rests in the words of Robson (1989). She states that 'the interview process is the opportunity to listen, observe, question freely and, in the light of what is being said, interpret the individual's behaviour within context' (p. 26).

3.6.1.1. Why use elite interviewing?

A review of the qualitative research methodology literature reveals that whilst social scientists commonly acknowledge elites in their research, they less frequently use them, opting instead to investigate and/or interview those without influence, over whom power is exercised rather than the society's decision makers. Whilst practical reasons, such as the difficulty to identifying and gaining access to elites, difficulty of getting past 'gate keepers' and personal assistants among others are often adduced to explain this preference, one major issue which surface frequently in the literature and which might have served to deter the social researchers most often is the ambiguity in meaning of the word 'elites' itself. Odendahl & Shaw (2002) drawing on Miles

(1956) for instance, refer to elites as ‘those individuals and groups who occupy the top echelons of society and who are integral to every community, government, occupation, religion and as well as other institutional spheres’ (p. 299). They go on to emphasize the vagueness of the word by saying that the term elite is closely linked with abstract notions of power and privilege, generally in connection with certain identifiable individuals or groups of individuals. They quote Marcus (1983) to show the elusiveness of the term:

Clear in what it signifies, but ambiguous to its precise referents, the concept of elite in general usage has a certain force...Only when *elite* is elaborated as an interest of social theory and research, which address as their purpose the empirical referents of the concept, does the inherent vagueness of the concept become a major difficulty (quoted by Odendahl & Shaw, 2002, p. 301).

In view of the above problem, the few social researchers who are brave enough to employ elite interviewing as a methodology tend to delineate and/or classify elites into sector categories—business elites, political elites, community elites—for the purposes of determining criteria for selection. In line with this, and for the purpose of this study, the word elite is used synonymously with the ‘meso-level’ actors and implementers of policy and refers to those individuals and groups of policy actors that are involved in recontextualizing policy in the Ghanaian education system. Although the subjects for this study—the meso-level implementers—may not have qualified as ultra powerful (elites), by virtue of their position between the policy makers and politicians, on the one hand, and the policy implementers—headteachers and teachers on the other, they are believed to wield a significant amount of power and influence. Hence the decision to have them interviewed as a way of probing and exploring how they construct meaning from ‘what they do’ and how this affects the entire process of implementation. This therefore is in line with Walford’s (1994) contention that ‘those who have influenced events directly have a detailed knowledge of events and a sophisticated understanding that is worthy of careful examination’ (p. 227). The term ‘elite interviewing’ is thus contextually used in this study to refer to

interviews with the ‘meso-level’ actors of policy within the Ghanaian education system.

Whilst there are varied reasons for the employment of elite interviewing as a methodological approach for this study, the principal ones are the ones alluded to in the following;

Firstly, as members of the elite community and as part of an influential policy network, the meso-level actors and implementers in the Ghanaian education system are seen as perpetually engaged in controlling educational discourse through the power and influence they wield. They are influential people, each of whom occupies a unique privileged position, holding important information as to what or who else is deemed to be significant within the Ghanaian educational cycles. Hence the desire to get them involved in this study for the purpose of eliciting first-hand, site/context-specific information from them as to how their views, perceptions, reactions, articulation and interpretation of educational issues do impact on the ‘fCUBE’ policy implementation in particular, and the entire policy process as a whole. (See Chapter 1 for examples of meso-level actors/elites as far as the Ghanaian educational system and context are concerned.) Cookson (1994) captures this power of elites vividly. Drawing extensively on his experience through interviews with education elites, he explains that much of the power of elites is perpetuated through their control of educational discourse and that they create public conversation that sets legitimate boundaries of discourse (p. 116). He goes on to point out that this resultant dominant discourse then becomes accepted due to the concept of the ‘power discourse’ as ‘authoritative narrative’ and which serves to suppress divergent or opposing viewpoints (p. 126). This however does not mean that the position espoused by the elites, in this case, the meso-level actors and implementers are always necessarily factual, as what constitutes truth is in itself problematic and does not explicitly constitute the core, or is not at the heart of the issue under investigation here. Rather, what the decision to employ this technique has as its central plank is exploring the issues of perception, experience, interaction and individual influence by virtue of position.

Similarly, the decision to use elite interviewing in finding answers to the research questions posed, follows from the acknowledgement of the fact that one of the ways to permeate the workings of any given institution is through an analysis of the 'power base' within. That is, the study of the very individuals and groups who are central to or, at a minimum, influence the functioning of the entire structures of the institution. This is particularly the case when one considers the fact that what appear to be democratic, open, and accessible institutions are more often than not revealed to be closed structures operated at the behest of a few individuals. Odendahl & Shaw (2002) throw more light on this by citing philanthropic elites as a case in point. They claim that despite the existence of organizations set up to serve the public good, in the governance and operation of foundations, the idiosyncrasies of the donors are paramount (pp. 300–302). Seen in this light, although the meso-level actors of policy could not be said to lie at the apex of the 'power base/structure' of the Ghanaian educational system, their position as agents of recontextualization of policy run paramount to gaining a better understanding of the issues of power and how its exercise does have effects on the process of implementation and the policy process as a whole.

Last but not least, the preference for elite interviewing in general, and the version used: meso-level actors interviewing: for the purposes of this study is based on the realisation of the ways in which an examination of the issues of power and its exercise helps relatively in explaining the 'whys', 'whos', 'hows' and 'whats' in resolving sociological policy issues. As was indicated earlier under the heading 'data collection: sources, instruments and approaches' in section 3.6. of this chapter, for purposes of triangulation, documentary evidence (from four main 'fCUBE' policy sources) was also analysed, both to gather facts about the 'fCUBE' policy and to examine the messages that each document conveys or tries to convey. However, as one might expect, a critical examination of those documents revealed that they were limited and constrained mainly to the 'official policy line', that is, information that is deemed suitable for public consumption. What were explicitly unavailable in such documents are information on the issue of power and its influence on the policy process. This as a result necessitated the use of elite interviewing as a way of

exploring and probing for instance, how the policy provisions were developed; why they were developed; who the beneficiaries are; and what the intended outcomes are. Walford (1994, p. 227) captures this point nicely. According to him, although published and documentary sources may reveal much information about policy, it is actually by talking with the participants themselves that significant gains in understanding can, and is fully made.

The use of elite interviewing, just like any other instrument in social science research, has its own strengths and weaknesses. Robson (2002) for one points out that face-to-face interviews offer possibilities of modifying one's line of enquiry, following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motives in a way that postal and other self administered questionnaires cannot. He adds that the interview is a flexible and adaptable way of finding things and that the non-verbal cues displayed in the process for example, give messages which help in understanding verbal responses. Fielding et al. (2001, p. 125) also explain that the versatility of interviews is apparent in the list of uses to which interview data can be put. For them, interviews are often used to establish the variety of opinions concerning a topic or to establish relevant dimensions of attitudes. They add that interviews are also used to form hypothesis about the motivation underlying behaviour and attitudes, as well as to examine non-motivations; that is why people do not do certain things. Thus, the bottom-line here and as Robson (2002) also puts it is that, observing behaviour or social phenomenon is clearly a useful enquiry technique, but asking people directly about what is going on in the communities and social settings through interviews is an obvious 'short cut' in seeking answers to one's research questions.

On the other hand, the use of interviews as a research tool is sometimes criticised for lack of reliability and the difficulty of ruling out interviewer fabrications and biases. Robson (2002) concedes to, and reiterates these criticisms by pointing out that the lack of standardization that interviews (semi structure and un-structured interviews, most especially) imply, inevitably raises concerns about reliability and interviewer biases. For him, although there are ways of dealing with these problems, they call for

a degree of professionalism and competence which do not come easily. They call for considerable skill, time and expertise to be able to effectively reduce such threats. Wengraf (2001) adds to these criticisms by arguing that the introductory texts on in-depth and depth interviewing more often turn towards a ‘social unrealism’ in which the real histories and real social identities of those involved in the research enterprise or those from whom data is collected are in some ways ignored (p.16). Wengraf’s point thus goes to reiterate how taking ethical steps to safeguard the anonymity and confidentiality of respondents, particularly giving them pseudonyms could sometimes result to the findings losing part of their importance and validity because they end up being presented without prior knowledge of the subjects and the contexts within which the study was conducted.

While it is acknowledged that owing to the fact that the interviewer is as much a part of the interview process, these weaknesses, especially the lack of reliability, and the difficulty of ruling out interviewer biases in interviewing is inevitable, the point also needs to be made that these could be minimised. In this particular study, documents study and analysis was employed as a complement, and hence provided a framework or benchmark as well as a degree of triangulation of the research findings. This way, the researcher believes that the problems associated with the use of interview as a research tool, particularly in this study might have been minimised considerably.

3.6.1.2. Sampling technique

The issue of sampling is crucial and lies at the heart of any good research. Robson (2002) citing Smith’s view refers to it as “the search for typicality”. That is, finding out the extent to which what has been observed in a particular situation at a particular time applies more generally (p. 135). Walliman (2005) defines a ‘sample’ as a selected number of cases in a population. He goes on to say that if you wish to assess the opinions of the members of a large union or organisation, you will have to devise some way of selecting a ‘sample’—kind of subset-of the members of the organisation who you are able to question, and who form a fair representation of all the members of the organisation, particularly if you wish to generalise from it (p.

276). These words emphasise the point that, a good sample should be of the right type and size that reflects an accurate profile of the population it represents.

Given the aims and purpose of this study however, the notion of ‘sampling’ is taken to mean a ‘reflection’ of broad characteristics of the population (meso-level implementers) rather than being ‘representative’ which implies or connotes the ability to use certain statistical techniques. In line with this thinking, the ‘purposeful’ sampling technique was adopted in the identification and selection of interviewees.

By definition, purposeful sampling is described as the selection of the respondents for an empirical study with a specific purpose in mind. That is, selecting respondents who (by virtue of their position) have experience and knowledge of the case under investigation (Berg, 2004, p. 36; Neuman, 2004, p. 138). Walliman (2005) refers to this method of sampling as ‘theoretical sampling’. He defines it as ‘a method of getting information from a sample of a population that the researcher thinks knows much or has a considerable amount of knowledge about the subject in question’ (p. 279).

The application of this sampling technique, particularly for this study is grounded in consideration of the three crucial conditions outlined by Neuman (2004, pp. 138–140) and which are particularly relevant to this investigation. These situations are;

- when the researcher wants to select unique cases that are informative for in-depth investigation—in this case, to find out how, or the extent to which the conceptualization and interpretation of the ‘free’, ‘compulsory’ and ‘universal’ components of the ‘fCUBE’ policy at the meso-level affects the implementation process;
- when the researcher wants to select members of a difficult-to-reach, specialised population—in this case the meso-level implementers who by virtue of their work, position and influence are very difficult to reach and interviewed for research purposes;

- when the purpose of sampling is less to generalise to a larger population than it is to gain deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied—in this study, gaining more insight and understanding about the policy implementation paradox through an exploration of the ‘fCUBE’ policy in Ghana.

3.6.1.3. Selection, access and preparation

In view of the sampling technique used coupled with the fact that the researcher himself is a professional teacher, the identification of an initial list of potential interviewees who could be classed as elite figures within the Ghana education system was not unduly difficult. This was done by listing all the district and regional education offices, as well as the senior-most positions within the National Headquarters of GES, and conveniently choosing from among this list those officials that were initially thought of as ‘easy to reach’ for the interviews.

In all, sixteen officials of the GES were initially selected using the convenient sampling technique for in-depth, semi-structured open-ended interviews. The officials selected included; three senior-most officials of the GES, namely the Director-General of Basic Education, the National Coordinator of the ‘fCUBE’ policy and the Director for Monitoring and Evaluation in charge of Basic Schools. The rest of the interviewees were; four Regional-Directors of Education, eight District-Directors of Education within the four regions from which the Regional Directors are selected and an executive member of GNAT. The choice and number of interviewees was primarily based on securing a ‘reflection’ of broader characteristics of the population and involved the kind of variation sampling that includes a range of sites and people. Coverage was about achieving a fuller understanding of the implementation process and the meso-level implementers’ understanding of the policy implementation milieu.

Specifically, the rationale behind the selection of these groups of interviewees for the empirical part of the study stemmed out of the need to make some sense of the way the various components of the policy are perceived and interpreted and the issues of

conceptualization and discourse that are involved in the implementation process at the meso-level. The district and regional offices of the GES by their composition are headed by prospective District and Regional Directors and their Assistants, each of whom occupy a venerable position with regard to the influence and the knowledge they wield. Inasmuch as these 'powerful' people belong to the policy community, they are also deemed to have useful information about who or what is deemed to be significant within the educational cycles. They are involved in what Cookson (1994, p. 116) for instance describes as the 'symbolic dominance', and hence the decision to solicit from them the information that would at a later stage be useful in determining how the 'fCUBE' policy provisions and components are being implemented and the level of success that is being attained. Similarly, the choice of the four regions from which the four Regional Directors of Education and the eight District Directors of Education were conveniently chosen for the study is aimed at exemplifying the diverse socio-cultural, economic, political and religious contexts (GOG, 1994) within which the 'fCUBE' policy is being implemented and the impacts that these have on the implementation process.

Following from the initial selection process, a formal letter was written to the education authorities in Ghana to seek permission to involve the selected officials of the GES in the study. In accordance with research ethics, this letter spelt out clearly the conditions under which the study was being conducted and the benefits therein for the GES. The letter for instance spelt out the purpose of the study and the fact that the researcher is a Ghanaian and a student of the University of Strathclyde, and that the study is being conducted under the auspices of authorities of the Strathclyde University and counts towards an award of PhD to the researcher.

Following a receipt of a formal approval from the education authority in Ghana, letters of consent to participate in the research, indicating the credential of the researcher, purpose of the study, date, time, place and the issues to be covered, were despatched to the individual officials of the GES selected for the interviews (a sample of each of the letters of approval and consent can be found in Appendixes 1). Again upon reaching Ghana for the fieldwork, a formal letter introducing the

researcher to the various participants was solicited from the Director-General of Basic Schools, and attached to an introductory letter from the researcher's supervisor from his institution of study, which were together sent to the prospective interviewees. This added more weight to the study and aided access to the participants or interviewees since the researcher himself was studying abroad and was not personally known to majority of the interviewees.

In order to maximise the depth and breadth of the insights that were to be generated, an interview guide/schedule was developed and the procedures and guidelines for administering semi-structured in-depth interviews as proposed by Robson et al. (1989); Kogan (1994); Wengraf (2001); Fielding et al. (2001); Robson (2002); Neuman (2004) and Berg, (2004) were carefully followed in order to keep the possible problems associated with its use to a minimum. These guidelines include: interviewer personal appearance and approach; introducing the interview with the appropriate introductory remarks; familiarity with the interview schedule and items; question wording, content, order and style; communicating effectively; keeping regular eye contact with interviewees; probing and prompting; recording of answers; and the concluding remarks.

The interviews themselves were expected to last between 45 minutes to 1 hour. The interview items were drawn from a thorough search and reflection on the wealth of literature on the formulation, implementation and the management of educational policies, and particularly, a thorough reflection and study of the 'fCUBE' policy-documentation. The focus of the critical assessment of the 'fCUBE' documentation was on pointing out the issues of convergence and divergence between what the documents say about the policy purposes, the various components and provisions of the policy and how the meso-level implementers perceived, articulated and/or interpreted the policy provisions. That is, how the interpretation of these components by the policy actors or agents at the meso-level, impacts on implementation vis-à-vis realisation of policy aims and objectives.

The reliability, validity and clarity of the items on the interview schedule were improved by pre-testing the interview schedule. Two steps were involved at this stage. The first was to submit the initial draft to the researcher's supervisors for the necessary corrections and amendments. This facilitated the identification of poorly worded questions, questions with offensive or emotion-laden wording, or questions revealing the researcher's own biases, personal values, or blind spots. The second step involved piloting. It involved several practice interviews with colleagues to assess how effectively the interview would work and whether the type of information being sought will actually be obtained (Berg, 2004, pp. 90–91). After piloting, the necessary amendments and restructurings were once again made after which the schedule was finally ready for use.

It is worth noting however that during the process of the interviews, a number of changes did take place regarding the choice of interviewees. For instance, it was not possible to interview the Director-General of Basic Schools, due to his busy work schedule and time constraints, whilst at the same time the two other posts within the GES—National Coordinator of the 'fCUBE' policy and Director for Monitoring and Evaluation in charge of Basic Schools—whose occupying officials were intended to be interviewed, were in non-existence. This as a result compelled the researcher to do what is referred to in methodological terms as 'snow-ball sampling'. One senior-most official of the GES was identified and approached for the interview and based on his recommendation, two other officials who serve in various capacities of management and leadership in respect to the implementation of the 'fCUBE' programme were approached and interviewed.

Similarly, instead of the intended semi-structured open-ended individual interviews, five out of the sixteen interviews ended up becoming group interviews. The reasons for this occurrence were that, in one out of the five cases the Director of Education in-charge of the District could not be reached for interview because she was indisposed. This as a result led to interviewing in her place, two Assistant Directors of Education from the same education office who volunteered to be interviewed. In two other cases, the Regional and District Directors were hard-pressed. They were on

official assignments and therefore detailed their respective frontline Regional and District Assistants Directors to hold the fort for them. In the last two scenarios, the District Directors themselves requested to be joined by their respective frontline Assistant Directors. They explained that they were newly appointed to their posts and therefore preferred to be assisted by their assistants who have lots of experience and were directly involved in the 'fCUBE' implementation and institutionalization processes.

In summary, a total of eleven individual and five group interviews were conducted. The numbers of people represented in the five respective groups were: three; five; two; three; and three. Two tables, representing the two forms of interviews conducted, the pseudonyms assigned to interviewees and their corresponding transcript numbers, as well as a sample of the interview transcripts can be found in Appendices 3 and 4 respectively.

This unexpected turn of events, particularly the shift from individual interviews to group discussion did pay off, in the sense that it allowed for more views on the issues, than expected to be elicited, helped to reveal consensus views, generated richer responses by allowing participants to challenge one another's views, enhanced reliability of responses among other things. That notwithstanding, there was a significant down side of the group interviews. As pointed out by experienced social researchers, (for instance, Fontana & Frey, 2000; Odendahl & Shaw, 2002; Robson, 2002; Warren, 2002; Denscombe, 2003), in most of the group interviews certain views, especially those of 'quieter' people were to a large extent seen to have been drowned by the dominant group members and so also were opinions that were contrary to prevailing ones of the group members. Also, on a personal level, the unexpected turn of events presented the researcher with a much bigger difficulty since that meant the interview schedule had to be re-organised in a way to take on-board and reflect the level of comprehension and articulacy of each and every member of the groups.

Against this backdrop, it was not too difficult to locate and gain access to the officials within the GES who were classed as elites, for the purpose of this study. As asserted by some researchers, Odendahl & Shaw, 2002 in particular, the relative willingness on the part of the elites to take part in the study is particularly likely to be the case when and where knowledge about the professional credibility and identity of the researcher have already been established to a considerable extent within the elite network under consideration. In this case, and as reported earlier, this was established through the ethical steps taken, that is, the formal letters of approval and consent, backed up by an introductory letter from the researcher's Supervisor, sent to the individual participants to introduce the researcher to the research community prior to undertaking the field work. Similarly, being a University of Strathclyde funded, full-time doctoral student was also likely to have aroused the interest of the elites towards this study. This is particularly likely to be true since they might have noticed that there were no strings (in terms of having to sponsor the researcher or fund the study) attached to their participation, but rather the study was a reciprocal favour being done to them and the educational system in Ghana for that matter, for participating in the study. This goes to support Odendahl & Shaw's (2002) claim that in order to obtain information from respondents from elites interviewing, it helps if the researcher can offer something in exchange that will be of practical use to the agency, person or institution featured, such as the likely generation of favourable publicity or a report that can have positive uses internally (p. 311). Again, it is also to be acknowledged that the relative positive reaction of the participants towards the study might have stemmed out of the desire of the elites to seize this opportunity to 'set the records straight' by weeding out certain misconceptions and pre-conceived ideas that are not in line with what the 'fCUBE' as a policy set out to do or the official policy line. This therefore is in direct contrast to the claim that where policy is particularly controversial or fiercely contested, the likelihood of gaining access to elite interviewees diminishes (Walford, 1994).

3.6.1.4. Conducting the interviews: procedures and ethical issues

Subsequent to receiving a formal letter of approval from the education authority in Ghana, potential interviewees were immediately sent letters of consent outlining the

study, explaining why they were being selected to take part in the study, the anticipated duration of the interview, a list of topics and areas to be covered in the interview as well as how the data generated would be analysed and disseminated. This was followed, after a period of three months, when the researcher had arrived in Ghana for the empirical part of the study, by individual telephone calls to participants, to negotiate the date, venue, and time the interviews were expected to take place. This exercise enabled few changes to be made regarding the interview guide as well as the list of officials initially selected but for one reason or the other could not partake in the study.

All the interviews took place in the interviewees' offices and in the case of the group interviews the regional and district education conference rooms were used. As acknowledged by experienced elite interviewers (for example, Cookson, 1994; Hertz & Imber, 1995; Kvale, 1996; Odendahl & Shaw, 2002), it is often the case in elite interview settings that the interviewees enjoy greater status and power than the interviewer. This is claimed to be the case since the elites do wield power and are arguably used to being treated with deference. In other words, the elites, as Cookson (1994) for example implies, control the 'symbolic world' and are thus able to shape and manipulate the market place of educational ideas (p. 116). In this light, a word of caution is sounded about the researcher's behaviour, not necessarily to be subsumed under the assumptive worlds of the elites, but to conform to expected norms, regulations and practices.

In view of this, serious considerations were given to a number of techniques which potentially could modify the researcher's behaviour in order to change the dynamics and outcomes of the interviews. One of such techniques as pointed out earlier was the development of good ethical reputation within the elite network in order to gain and maintain access. Two others—'rule breaking' and 'knowing how much to know'—are those that Kennedy (2006, pp. 86-87), drawing on Kogan, 1994; Gamson, 1995; and Pierce, 1995; emphasizes in her study as techniques in elite interviewing. By definition, she describes 'rule breaking' as 'a faux-pas, an intrusion, a roll of the eyes', whilst she referred to 'knowing how much to know' as pretending

to know either far less or more than the researcher really knows in order to be able ascertain the interviewee's version of events. The rule-breaking in practice involved the researcher taking advantage of the interview situation and context to break some of the ethical rules—for example, asking the respondents to express personal, non-official policy views—involved in elite interviewing. The practical side of 'knowing how much to know' as far as this study is concerned involved the researcher pretending not to have known or had certain pieces of information, in order to probe for more details from the interviewees. The ethical considerations associated with these two techniques concerns the need for the researcher to be well conversant with the use and limit of these techniques so as not to cause the interviewees to re-coil into their shells. In all these, it is however important to stress that because the researcher was well aware of the potential strengths and weaknesses associated with each of these techniques, he had to strike a balance between them as a way of reducing or eliminating the threats accompanied with the use of each of them.

It is also acknowledged that in elite interviewing, the issue of psychologically separating the person being interviewed from the institution he or she represents can be especially challenging with elite subjects (Odendahl & Shaw, 2002). This is generally the case since the interviewees within institutions are likely to present what Walford (1994, p. 226) refers to as 'a public relations' account of events, that is, the kinds of statements intended to propel the image of the institutions they serve and/or represent. In order to curtail this phenomenon, use was made of one major technique for eliciting specific and personalised responses and opinions from the interviewees. The researcher instead of accepting certain general responses to specific questions probed for specific responses by personalizing the issues and putting them in various ways, such as; '*What is your personal view on that?*', '*What do you think?*', '*What would you personally recommend?*'. This approach enabled the interviewees to be differentiated from the institutions they represented thereby circumventing the formalised responses with which the people in responsible positions of the policy process, in this case, meso-level actors of policy tend to communicate with the press and the public.

For the purposes of ease of transcription for on-ward analysis, all the interviews were recorded on mini-disk, and subsequently transcribed verbatim. This was done in line with Fielding et al's. (2001) justification that the verbatim transcription offers the advantage that all possible analytic uses are allowed for (p.135). Thus, although laborious and time consuming, the researcher was of the opinion that since he did not know in advance, what otherwise would have been the most significant point of analysis when doing the transcription, doing it verbatim means he would not have lost any data which may later become significant. The mini-disk recorder proved a reliable instrument since it provided a permanent and an objective record of the proceedings in the sense that in itself, it has no value and no vested interest in the outcome of the interview (Denscombe, 2003, p. 177). Equally, since the research focus was much more on interpretation and articulation of the 'fCUBE' policy provisions and components than the direct issues of power, the researcher felt it was not necessary to use field notes to record observations such as the body language of the interviewees, environmental factors and other such factors which could otherwise not be possible to capture through the use of the mini-disc. Instead, post-interview observational technique was used where the general impressions of the interviews and in particular the relationship that developed and unfolded in the entire interviews were documented. (See Chapter 8, under the sub-heading: 'the dynamics of the interview process': for detailed consideration of this.)

As part of the ethical procedure, formal permission to attribute quotes was sought from the interviewees after each of the interview encounters. However, out of the total number of sixteen interviews (eleven individual, and five group) conducted, twelve declined to having the words quoted and attributed to them. One pattern which did run through the reasons given was political. The participants expressed the fear that because of the unfavourable political atmosphere, they could be easily victimised or vilified for making certain comments and pronouncements. This therefore resulted in pseudonyms being assigned to the interviewees as a way of protecting their anonymity and also safeguarding the validity of the data generated. This practice enabled the interviewees to be quoted directly in the analysis and dissemination of the findings without necessarily revealing their identities. In so

doing, typical Ghanaian household names have been attached to the official titles or posts of the interviewees, for example, Akpene, a Regional-Director of Education, Kojo, a senior-official of the GES, or Yayra, a District-Director of Education, making it difficult, if not impossible for readers who are even familiar with the Ghanaian educational system to identify the interviewees. Although the ultimate rationale for assigning pseudonyms to respondents was aimed at safeguarding their anonymity, the practice equally seemed to have fallen in line with Cookson's (1994, p 129) suggestion to remain very close to the words of the respondents with a minimum interpretation when analysing elite interviews. This, Cookson (1994) argues enables the interviewees' views to be understood before jumping to conclusions.

The interviews were all semi-structured in nature, making it relatively easy to obtain the flexibility required to elicit the required information from the selected group of interviewees. Also, the development of an interview schedule was instrumental in maintaining a reasonable degree of control over the interview process. This is crucial in interviewing elites who by virtue of the fact that they are accustomed to exercising power, are imbued with elite social status and are generally skilled at controlling interviews and regulating the release of information (Odendahl & Shaw, 2002). Kogan (1994) makes a comment about the difficulty of the interviewer taking control in elite interviewing. He explains that it is in the nature of political or organisational studies that interlocutors with distinguished records and minds of their own are not likely to exert too much control over the questions they answer. He however goes on to contradict himself by pointing out that such controls are necessary in order to ensure responses that help comparisons to be made with the declared objectives of the programme and to compare perceptions of impacts in a time series of evaluations (p. 71–72). In this regard, the choice of the semi-structured in-depth interviews was intended to help elicit from the respondents, rich and detailed materials that was to be used in the analysis at a later stage. Similarly, the use of this interview type was grounded in consideration of the fact that whilst it allows major questions to be asked the same way each time, it also allows the interviewer to alter the sequence of questions and to probe for more information. The interviewer is thus able to adapt the

research instrument to the level of comprehension and articulacy of each and every interviewee, and perhaps also to adapt it to their knowledge/experience.

The interview schedule/guide (which is found in Appendix 2) was developed and organised around four main themes or topics all related directly to the aim of the study: (1) interpretation and evaluation of the 'fCUBE' policy components and provisions; (2) successes, achievements and contributions of the 'fCUBE' policy to basic education provision; (3) problems and issues confronting the implementation process; (4) recommendations and suggestions to improve practice. Although the order and content of the items/questions on the schedule, especially in case of the group interviews were adjusted slightly, to suit the particular interview situations, all the interviewees were basically subjected to the same questions. Similarly, as the interviews progressed and patterns of responses began to emerge, the schedule was again modified as and when necessary to reflect new areas emerging and to probe for more information. Given the overall aim of the study and the fact that this part of the data gathering process purported to find out how specific provisions and indeed the 'free', 'compulsory' and 'universal components of the 'fCUBE' policy were articulated or interpreted by the officials who are involved in recontextualizing the policy, it would have been inappropriate on this occasion to ask the individual interviewees and group of interviewees totally different sets of questions. Such an approach would have generated different set of responses, making it extremely difficult to draw lines of convergence and divergence between the interviewees themselves on the one hand, and between the interviewees and the body of data generated from the documentary source for analysis on the other.

3.6.1.5. Interview data analysis

Given the research purpose and the respective approach and strategy adopted, use was made of Wengraf's (2002) common-sense hypothetico-inductivist model for the analysis of the interview transcripts. The common-sense hypothetico-inductivist model is an approach to qualitative data analysis in which theories emerge from the examination of the 'relevant facts' gathered for the empirical study by the researcher. This approach is thus situated firmly in the original 'grounded theory' tradition

(Glaser and Strauss, 1968) in which theory emerges from data through or by a process of 'induction'. In it, 'the researcher sees micro-level events as the foundation for a more macro-level explanation' (Neuman, 2004, p.30).

This is in contrast with the anti-common-sense hypothetico-deductivist model (Wengraf, 2002) which rejects the idea that there is such thing as 'all the relevant facts' which can be examined in order to come out with theories. It claims that what only exists are 'hypothesis-relevant facts', and that research must always start with a body of prior theory, if only to decide which set of 'collectable facts' should be collected or generated. For Wengraf (2002), it is this prior body of theory from which the researcher generates a particular hypothesis whose truth or falsity could be 'tested' by a particular selection of 'hypothesis-relevant facts'. The hypothesis-relevant facts are then collected, and the hypothesis is either supported by the evidence of those facts or it is refuted by them (pp. 2–3). Macdonald (2001) using Gellner's (1988) quotation distinguishes between these two models by describing the anti-common-sense hypothetico-deductivist model thus:

Basically it is deductive. Conclusions are extracted from clearly stated assumptions; various possible conclusions are then checked against the available facts. Assumptions are revised if the implications fail to tally with available facts. (cited by Macdonald 2001, p. 195)

Thus, the data generated from the elite interviews for the purpose of this study were subjected to the common-sense hypothetico-inductivist model, and theories about the 'fCUBE' policy implementation, developed. However, in the actual reportage of the interview findings, a combination of the narrative and interpretive approaches were used. The rationale for this stemmed out of the need to narrate the interviewees' experiences as a story while pausing intermittently to reflect upon what is being said, its interpretation and the implications therein. The narrative approach treated the interview data as a story, a situated account, a narrative (Jephcote et al., 2004), and as an outcome of the application of the study's conceptual framework to the meso-level actors' stories and experience of events whilst the interpretative approach

allows social actions and human activities to be seen and treated as texts or as a collection of symbols expressing layers of meaning (Berg, 2004, p. 266).

This however was in contrast with the analysis of the documentary evidence gathered, where the CDA approach was put to use. The justification for using different approaches for data generated through the use document study and interviews for the purpose of this study are two fold. Firstly, the decision follows from the need to avoid falling a victim to what some discourse analysts, especially most of those working with education policy, have fallen to. That is, the tendency or temptation to reduce or deduce all of social life to discourse, and all of social science to discourse analysis. Secondly, it was thought that such a composite approach could serve as a means of triangulation and a complement to the documentary data analysis which makes use of CDA and which analyses and interprets data at both linguistic/semiotic and interdiscursive/intertextual levels.

Also, in the actual analysis, particular attention was paid to Cookson's (1994) four elements of the 'power discourse'—the ideological field; the institutional setting; the individual actor; and the syntactic style of presentation (p. 121–126)—as a guiding principle. The analysis was done manually. The data from the elite interviews was condensed to codes from which emerged themes for the analysis and interpretation. This allowed for the interviewee accounts to be narrated as a story, and direct quotes attributed to them, falling in line, in many respects, with Cookson's (1994, p. 129) suggestion cited earlier about the need to remain very close to the words of the respondents so as to understand their views before jumping to conclusions. Details of the actual codes and themes around which the data have been organised for analysis are given in Chapter 5 which reports on the findings of the interview data.

3.6.2. The documentary study

3.6.2.1. Justification for the use of documents

As mentioned earlier, documentary study was used as a complement to the data generated from interviews with the meso-level implementers and thereby provided a means of triangulation for the study. Macdonald (2001) describes documents as

things that we can read and which relate to some aspect of the social world. He points out that the term includes a vast range of materials and could therefore be conveniently classified in to five broad categories which exemplify the nature of materials that bear the trade mark of documents. His classification involves public records, the media, private papers, biographies and visual documents (p. 196).

Document study has in recent times been acknowledged as a viable data collection method in social science research, particularly in education research in evaluating the impact of policy on education. The reason for this growing interest is in part attributed to the well established research claim (Hodder, 2000) that ‘what people say’ is often different from ‘what they do’, and that for any piece of research concerned primarily with authenticating and documenting ‘official policy line/decisions’, written texts do provide a ‘factual’ reflection of original meanings and/or intentions than do other types of evidence.

Like any other instrument in social research, the use of document study as a method of gathering data for analysis also has its merits and demerits. Robson (2002) citing Krippendorff (1980) for instance, notes that a document study has the ability to help the researcher make replicable and valid inferences from data to their context (p. 350). He goes on to add that the use of document analysis is an example of, an unobtrusive measure. That is, you can ‘observe’ without being observed whilst at the same time the nature of the document is not affected by the fact that you are using it for an enquiry. He concludes that in the use of documents as a research instrument, the data are in permanent form hence can be subjected to reanalysis, allowing reliability checks and replication studies (p. 249).

On the other hand, a number of problems appear to attend to the use of document study/analysis. Kumar (1999) points out that the effectiveness of the use of document as a research instrument tends to be determined by a host of factors which include: the availability of information; the format of that information as well as the quality and validity of the information available. Similarly, like most forms of qualitative data analysis, the use of document study also poses questions about the degree of

inference which the researcher is able to make when categorizing and analysing items. Robson (2002) talks about this in terms of manifest and latent contents, corresponding essentially to low and high inference items respectively. He explains that manifest items refer to those items that are physically present in the document from which inferences can be made whilst latent is a matter of inference or interpretation on the part of the coder or researcher (p. 354). The point being made here relates to the inevitability of researcher bias in the construction of knowledge regarding the use of documents. That is, an acknowledgement of the fact that, texts do not necessarily encapsulate 'truth' for the reader/researcher to find out about. Rather, they present particular forms of discourse with which the reader/ researcher interacts and makes meaning, and therefore the possibility that his/her own 'assumptive world' might intrude or creep into his/her readings of the texts.

Hodder (2000, p. 704) states this more succinctly. For him, once words are transformed into written texts, the gap between the 'author' and the 'reader' widens and the possibilities of multiple reinterpretations increase. He adds that, once written, the text can say so many different things depending on the motivation and orientation of the person doing the interpretive work. This to him stems out of the fact that once documented, the written text then becomes an artefact, capable of transmission, manipulation, and alteration, of being used and discarded, reused and recycled, that is, doing different things contextually through time.

Macdonald (2001) states explicitly that many of the problems that the documentary researcher may encounter are about how to evaluate documentary materials and that these problems can be grouped under four headings: authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning. With regards to the authenticity of documents in an investigation, he points out that it involves the difficult task of testing one's self, using Platt's (1981) proposed set of questions to determine whether a document is genuine, complete, reliable, and of unquestioned authorship. The set of questions that the researcher needs to ask him/herself are:

- Does the document make sense or does it contain errors?

- Are there different versions of the original document available?
- Is there consistency of literary style, handwriting or typeface?
- Has the document been transcribed by many copyists?
- Has the document been circulated via someone with material or intellectual interest in passing off the version given as the correct one?
- Does the version available derive from a reliable source?

On the issue of credibility, Macdonald (2001) argues that it refers to the question of whether the document is free from error or distortion. This according to him occurs when the time between the event and the account of it being written down is too long, or when the account itself has been through several hands. For him, possibilities such as this leaves the social researcher asking who produced the document, why, when, for whom and in what context, so as to be assured of its quality. Regarding the problem of the 'representativeness' of documentary data, he claims that it involves determining whether the document available can be said to have constituted a representative sample of the universe of documents as they originally existed. If not, then the researcher is left asking what is missing, how much and why. Finally, he identifies that establishing the meaning of a document in research, more often, poses much difficulty for the social researcher. For him, this exercise involves working at two levels: the surface or literal meaning, and the deeper meaning arrived at by some form of interpretative understanding of structural analysis. According to him, understanding the surface message may be troublesome for the social researcher since language use varies between different groups, cultures and periods, whilst the deeper meaning of a document or text may well prove more difficult because it boils down on how important particular themes are to the author(s) (pp. 203–208).

For these and other weaknesses in the use of documents, Macdonald (2001), drawing on Denzin (1970) suggests four kinds of triangulation: data, investigator, theory and methodological triangulations (pp. 208–209). For the purpose of this study, the data (person) triangulation and the methodological (between-method) triangulation technique were intertwined and used inter-changeably. The rationale for using these

methods of triangulation stemmed from the need to reduce the potential interviewer biases threats and weaknesses associated with the use of policy documentation as a research tool. The person triangulation involved interviewing the different groups of interviewees identified, whilst the ‘between-method’ triangulation technique involved complementing the documentary data with the data from the in-depth interviews with the various groups of interviewees.

3.6.2.2. Access and selection of documents/extracts

As pointed out by Hodder (2000, p. 704), access to public documents for the sake of analysis is relatively easy, whereas access to records is normally restricted by laws regarding privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. For this reason, and in keeping with research ethics, formal permission, as opposed to ‘free will selection’ of text, was sought in writing from the education authorities to have access to, and analyse some extracts from the ‘fCUBE’ documentation. This was done in order to avoid any potential confrontations about the issues of validity of interpretations as well as ethical implications that might erupt later when the research findings are disseminated.

In this regard, more importantly for the purpose of giving the study the focus, five extracts from four key ‘fCUBE’ policy documentations, some of which were not in the public domain were identified, accessed, studied and analysed. The documents from which the extracts were taken included the Fourth Republican Constitution of Ghana; the Education Strategic Plan (ESP); the Programme for Implementing the fCUBE; and the Government’s White Paper on the Education Reform Review Committee Report. These were analysed using a version of critical discourse analysis (CDA) conceptualised at two analytical tiers, and used in Taylor’s (2004) evaluation of the Education Queensland Reform Agenda. Details of what the CDA framework entails and how it was applied in this particular study are given under the sub-heading ‘*analysis of extracts*’ below.

The rationale for the selection of extracts for analysis from the above documents was two fold. Firstly, the decision stemmed from the need to provide a ‘time-line’,

expressing an overview and chronology of the major landmarks and events regarding the 'fCUBE' policy formulation and implementation processes. Secondly, the decision followed from the need to bring to the limelight and explicate the experiences of the interviewees regarding the process of implementing the 'fCUBE' policy. Particularly, the rationale for selecting extract 1 (that is, from the 1992 Republican Constitution of Ghana) for analysis followed from the need to bring to the limelight, the constitutional and democratic principles and processes that seem to underpin 'fCUBE' while explicating the political, philosophical and ideological undercurrents and purposes of the policy. Extracts 2 and 3 were taken from different issues/series of the same document (The Programme for Free, Compulsory, Universal Basic Education), and so the purpose for their inclusion for analysis invariably were different. Extract 2 was intended to highlight the official policy position of the Government in power at the time of the take-off of the policy, regarding the purposes, goals and purposes of 'fCUBE' whilst extract 3, which constitutes an integral part of documentation immediately preceding the formal launching of the policy in April 1996, was selected purposefully to outline the practical approaches and strategies that were designed to aid the implementation process. Given that these two extracts, (particularly extract 3) were supposed to have been adopted as part of the implementation strategy, the rationale was towards analyzing them with the view to finding out the impacts they have had and still have on the implementation process. Extract 4 (taken from the ESP, 2003) forms part of series of on-going strategic guidelines introduced by the current NPP Government to inform and assist the development of education in Ghana from 2003 to 2015 and was thus selected for analysis mainly for its potential for highlighting the broad philosophical stance adopted by Government, especially after the renewal of the 1990 Jomtien commitment at the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 (Tomasevski, 2004, 2005). Finally, extract 5 (taken from the Government's White Paper on the Report of the Education Reform Review Committee's Findings) in addition to the purposes of highlighting the philosophical and ideological stance of Government, was selected for analysis with the view to predicting or forecasting the future direction of basic education in Ghana, particularly after the initial ten years

allocated constitutionally for the implementation of the 'fCUBE' policy elapsed two years ago. (See Appendix 5 for full details of extracts selected for analysis.)

While these points alluded to above explain the primary purposes of the selection of extracts/texts in this study, it is also important to mention that there were other general reasons for the decision to employ documentary analysis for the purpose of this study. One of these stemmed from the need to study, analyse and document textual or linguistic formations (in the form of hybrid genres and discourses) in the policy texts, to indicate possibilities for highlighting marginal discourses and 'silences' within the policy documentations, as well as exploring and/or tracing the possibilities of any discursive shifts in the policy implementation process. Similarly, the decision was to ascertain the extent to which the various interpretations ascribed to the policy components by the meso-level actors and implementers fell in line with the positions espoused in the policy documentations, particularly the positions privileged in this study as the original or authentic readings of the policy provisions. This is crucial to the general aim of the study, which is to determine the extent to which the 'free, 'compulsory', 'universal' and 'basic education' components of the 'fCUBE' policy were implemented and were or are therefore reflected in the implementation process. That is, investigating the equity and social justice implications and effects of the implementation of the 'fCUBE' policy. Furthermore, the use of documentary analysis was intended to enable the researcher to make inferences about the extent to which the policy implementation process was/is affected by the diverse ways by which the policy provisions and components are conceptualized and interpreted by the meso-level actors and implementers.

The text/extract selection process itself was not done capriciously. This was carried out, bearing in mind Macdonald's (2001) text eligibility criteria as well as van Dijk's (2001), 'text-context theory'. The former's eligibility criteria comprise of four main factors namely authenticity; credibility; representativeness; and meaning of the texts. The latter's 'text-context theory' refers to the process by which the topics under investigation inform the type of sources likely to be relevant in the selection procedure. It also requires due consideration to be given to the context within which

the text was produced and the audience for which it is acknowledged. Specifically, van Dijk's (2001) suggestion has been most valuable in selecting the texts to be analysed in order to answer the research questions. He suggests that rather than subjecting an entire piece of text for analysis, it makes sense to concentrate on analysing those factors which enable the speaker or writer to exercise power: stress and intonation, word order, lexical style, coherence, local semantic moves (such as disclaimers), topic choice, speech acts, schematic organisation, rhetorical figures and most forms of interactions are in principle subject to the speaker control (p. 99). So while critics of CDA might consider the limited sources from which data has been extracted for analysis and interpretation for purposes of this study potentially invalid and less authentic, the choice of extracts have in themselves been informed by a careful consideration of the 'wider' policy issue—the policy implementation paradox—under investigation and therefore more appropriately focussed than a wider selection might be.

3.6.2.3. Analysis of extracts

The data from document study were retrieved and organised for theorizing using a CDA approach. The CDA as Scollon (2001) argues is 'a programme of social analysis that critically analyses discourse' (p. 140). Its focus is on the ways by which knowledge, power and social relations are constructed through the analysis of written and spoken communication. Fairclough (1995) describes the CDA as 'an analytical framework—a theory and a method—for studying language in its relation to power and ideology' (p. 1). Elaborating further on the interrelatedness of the concepts of language, power and ideology within CDA, he writes:

CDA is consolidated...as a 'three-dimensional' framework where the aim is to map three separate forms of analysis onto one another: analysis of (spoken or written) language texts, analysis of discourse practice (processes of text production, distribution and consumption) and analysis of discursive events as instances of sociocultural practice. (Fairclough, 1995, p. 2)

MacLure (2003) takes these issues further by outlining what she describes as ‘two broad discourse traditions’. The first tradition has its roots in European philosophy and cultural theory and associates itself with poststructuralism whilst the second originates from Anglo-American linguistics (p. 174). Although there is a common ground and a research purpose in all traditions of CDA; that is, to identify ways in which people exercise power through their engagement in discourse, it is important to note that MacLure’s (2003) identification and classification of these two broad traditions of discourse does suggest that there is no one way of carrying out a piece of analysis using the CDA. This criticism is grounded in consideration of the fact that although such an identification does genuinely provide a useful spectrum along which various approaches to CDA might or are placed, it however does not relate the CDA itself, as a framework for analysis, to any specific issue, but rather a range of theoretical positions and concepts—knowledge, power, social relations, ideology, language—which are by themselves very subtle. For this reason, the analysis of extracts from the ‘fCUBE’ documentation has aligned itself more explicitly to the second tradition of MacLure’s (2003) classification. That is, the tradition which originates from Anglo-American Linguistics and emphasizes how language use, by virtue of position could contribute to domination. The justifications for the decision to ply this route are two fold.

Firstly, the decision is an endorsement of Fairclough’s (1992; 1995; 2001; 2003) argument for the inclusion of a substantial element of textual analysis within discourse analysis as a method of social research. The premise of this argument is the fact that the sort of social and cultural phenomenon that the CDA is orientated towards are realised in textual properties of texts in ways which make them extraordinarily sensitive indicators of socio-cultural processes, relations and change. As well as linguistic analysis, textual analysis here includes intertextual analysis of how available genres and discourses are drawn upon and combined in texts (Fairclough, 1995, p. 3). Against this backdrop therefore, one can contend that the version of CDA employed for the purposes of this study is premised on the contention that no analysis of text content and meaning can be satisfactory if such an

analysis fails to attend to what Fairclough refers to as ‘the content of texture’, or the ‘content of its form’.

Secondly, and as a complement to the previous point, the decision rests in the fact that such a tradition adopts ‘a discourse-based view of language which involves us in looking not just at isolated, decontextualised bits of language but rather examining how bits of language contribute to the making of complete texts’ (MacCarthy and Carter, 1994, p. 38). That is, the process explores in addition to the linguistic forms and patterns of texts, the relationship between the linguistic patterns of complete texts and the social contexts in which they function. It also involves considering the high-order operations of language at the interface of cultural and ideological meanings and returning to the lower-order forms of language which are often crucial to the patterning of such meanings. As MacCarthy and Carter (1994) conclude, such a discourse-based view of language also prioritizes an interactive approach to analysis of texts which takes proper account of the dynamism inherent in linguistic contexts.

Specifically, the kind of CDA framework used in analysing documentary data in this study has been informed by Taylor’s (2004) version of the CDA approach. This framework draws on Fairclough’s (2003) distinction between textually and non-textually oriented discourses and is thus a model for analyzing social policy which focuses particularly on both the social context as well as the linguistic/semiotic features of texts. The social context as far as this study is concerned, refers to the social practices of policy actors (meso-level implementers especially) that are relevant to theorizing the context of the research problem under investigation. The networks of social practices relevant to this study are located in the GES—the state bureaucracy—the site for the production of the specific policy-texts analysed. The linguistic/semiotic aspect of the framework on the other hand, refers to the ‘key concepts associated with the networks of social practices’ (Taylor, 2004, p. 437). In the context of this study, these key concepts include ‘genres’, ‘discourses’ and ‘styles’ which are dialectally related. “Discourses are enacted in genres, discourses are inculcated in styles, actions and identities are represented in discourses”

(Fairclough, 2003, cited by Taylor, 2004, p. 437). However, for the purposes of this study, only genres and discourses are of importance. These are understood as:

- Genres—ways of (inter)acting or relating, interactions;
- Discourse—ways of representing, representations (Taylor, 2004, p. 437).

The analysis itself was conducted at two levels—the linguistic/semiotic and inter-discursive/intertextual levels. The former was centred on bringing to the fore, the linguistic and semiotic choices which were made in the writing and layout of the ‘fCUBE’ policy-texts. These are understood in an extended sense to cover not only the traditional levels of analysis within linguistics—phonology, grammar up to the level of the sentence, and vocabulary and semantics—but also analysis of ‘textual organization above sentence, including inter-sentential cohesion and various aspects of the structure of texts’ (Fairclough, 1995, p. 188). Similarly, particular emphasis was also placed on the ideological work of the policy-texts in representing, relating and identifying, and how the texts selected for analysis construct and sustain power relations ideologically. Equally important in the process of analysis, particular emphasis was placed on the values which are articulated in, or within these texts.

Thus, the purpose of the fine-grain linguistic/semiotic analysis of extracts selected from the ‘fCUBE’ policy documentations for this study was generally grounded in the following considerations:

- to demonstrate how bits of language potentially can contribute to the making and sustaining of meanings of complete texts;
- demonstrating the efficacy of textual properties of texts as sensitive indicators of socio-cultural processes;
- highlighting and exemplifying those linguistic/semiotic factors or processes—clause combinations; stress and intonation; figures of speech; semantic and syntactic moves, inter-sentential cohesion; moderating words or items; word order among others—which enable speakers/writers to exercise power within texts;

- exemplifying how linguistic/semiotic features of texts combine with inter-textual properties (mainly discourses, genres) to create and sustain power relations.

Specifically, the analysis at this level was aimed at showing how the semiotic, including linguistic properties of the 'fCUBE' policy-texts connect with what is happening socially in the interaction. (See documentary data analysis in Chapter 4, for exemplifications of the fine-grain linguistic/semiotic analysis of texts selected.)

The inter-discursive/ intertextual level of analysis focused mainly on identifying which genres and discourses are drawn on in the texts, and analyzing how these are worked together in the texts. That is, showing how the texts selectively draw upon orders of discourse—the particular configuration of conventionalized practices (genres, discourses narratives etc), which are available to text producers and interpreters in particular social circumstances. The intertextual analysis has drawn attention to the dependence of texts upon society and history in the form of the resources made available within the orders of discourse. It was aimed at mediating the connection between language and social context, and has facilitated more satisfactorily in bridging the gap between texts and contexts. Thus, the inter-discursive analysis was geared towards identifying and documenting multiple and competing discourses in the 'fCUBE' policy-texts, highlighting the marginalised and hybrid discourses as well as exposing explicitly any possible discursive shifts in the policy implementation process.

The use of this model seemed appropriate in that it provided a framework for a systematic analysis of the policy-documents gathered for interpretation. That is to say, it enabled the researcher to go beyond speculation to demonstrate how policy texts work in practice. Touching on the relevance of this approach to data analysis, Taylor (2004) herself comments that her model of the CDA is particularly appropriate for critical policy analysis because it allows a detailed investigation of the relationship of language to other social processes, and of how language works within power relations (p. 436).

Thus in a nutshell, these two approaches—a combination of narrative and interpretive technique, and CDA employed as part of the common-sense hypothetico-inductivist model—have assisted in achieving the research purpose in two ways. Firstly, the approach has enabled the researcher to engage in a systematic and realistic analysis and interpretation of the data generated. Secondly, it has also assisted immensely in theorizing and thereby contributing to knowledge about the policy implementation paradox, and specifically about the practical ways by which education policy, and indeed basic education provision and delivery could be improved in Ghana.

3.7. Chapter summary

The methodological approach employed in this study followed an interpretivist approach to research. It takes the implementation and institutionalization of the ‘fCUBE’ policy in Ghana as a ‘case’ and studies it in its real life context. In so doing it collects data from two main sources—elite interviews and documents study—for the purposes of analysis and interpretation. In the case of elite interviews, data generated from the interviews with the meso-level actors and implementers of the ‘fCUBE’ policy was analysed and interpreted using a combination of narrative and interpretive approaches. The narrative approach treated the interview data as a story, a situated account, a narrative and as an outcome of the application of the study’s conceptual framework to the meso-level actors’ stories and experience of events (Jephcote et al., 2004) whilst the interpretative approach allowed the researcher to ‘see and treat social actions and human activities as texts or as a collection of symbols expressing layers of meaning’ (Berg, 2004, p. 266).

Data from the ‘fCUBE’ policy documentation on the other hand, was subjected to Taylor’s (2004) version of the CDA approach which carries out analysis of texts at two analytical tiers—linguistics and interdiscursive tiers. The analysis at the linguistic tier looks at the linguistic and semiotic choices which have been made in the writing and layout of the ‘fCUBE’ policy-texts. The latter focuses mainly on identifying which genres and discourses are drawn on the policy texts, and analysing how these are worked together.

Given the overall aim of the study, this mixture of data gathering sources and instruments could be seen as potentially advantageous as it allowed for a thorough investigation of the official policy positions on the 'fCUBE' and to match that up with the interpretation of those positions by those involved in the actual mediation or recontextualization of the policy, bringing out the similarities and nuances in interpretation and articulation. Walford (1994) makes a case for this kind of approach. He states that 'documentary evidence [alone] cannot simply be understood at face value. The story behind the production of each document needs to be probed and analysed, and the contents need to be triangulated against data from other documents and other forms of evidence' (p. 229).

The next chapter presents the analysis of the documentary evidence gathered to answer the research questions.

CHAPTER 4: DOCUMENTARY DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Overview

This chapter analyses five selected extracts from four key documents relevant to this study—the Fourth Republican Constitution of Ghana; the Education Strategic Plan (ESP); the Programme for implementing the fCUBE; and the Government’s White Paper on the Education Reform Review Committee Report. The documents from which these extracts were taken constitute a ‘genre chain’, that is, chain of interactions, and are thus gathered and analysed to serve collectively as the framework and benchmark for the evaluation of the meso-level actors’ articulation of the purposes of the ‘fCUBE’ policy.

The justification for the selection of extracts for analysis in this study follows generally from the premise that as pieces of documentary evidence (part of the official policy documents), it is assumed that they have been ‘properly’ drafted, redrafted, debated and reflect the mediated position derived through discussion across the range of stakeholder groups (Kennedy, 2006, pp. 92–93). As such, they are viewed as suitable benchmarks for the evaluations in this study. Particularly, the rationale for the selection of the five texts/extracts from the four key documentations identified above was two fold. As cited earlier in Chapter 3, the decision resulted from the need to provide a ‘time-line’, expressing an overview and chronology of the major events regarding the ‘fCUBE’ policy formulation and implementation processes, as well as establishing of a benchmark with which to assess and validate the views of the interviewees. Thus the selected extracts were generally aimed at probing and explicating the philosophical, ideological and political discourses and developments that seemed to have informed and necessitated the formulation and implementation of the ‘fCUBE’ policy; what the strategies adopted as part of the implementation plan were/are and their impacts, as well as helping to trace and/or forecast the future direction of basic education in Ghana for the next couple of years. (See Chapter 3 for a detailed justification for the selection of documents vis-à-vis individual texts/extracts for analysis, and also Appendix 5 for full details of extracts selected for analysis.)

These pieces of documentary evidence were subjected to Taylor's (2004) version or approach to CDA which analyses text at two analytical tiers—the linguistic/semiotic and interdiscursive levels of analysis. Taylor's version of CDA was chosen because it allows a detailed investigation of the relationship of language to other social processes, and gives consideration to how language works within power relations. Its conceptualization at two analytical tiers allows the documentation of new textual formations in the policy texts; the possibilities for highlighting marginal discourses and 'silences' within texts; and the tracing of discursive shifts in discourse within the content and context of implementation. (See Chapter 3, for a detailed justification for the use of CDA as an approach to documentary data analysis.)

Whilst it is to be acknowledged that alternative readings may be supported by the texts extracted for analysis, for the purposes of answering the research questions posed in this study, the interpretations advanced in this section of the thesis are privileged as authentic readings of the 'fCUBE' policy purposes.

4.2. Extract one

Article 38, Sub-sections 1 and 2 of the Fourth Republican Constitution of Ghana (GOG, 1992).

This extract constitutes the centre-piece of the formulation and implementation of the fCUBE policy. It is the piece of legislation from which the fCUBE policy derives, and from which it had received its title. The extract constitutes part of a whole legal document—the 1992 Constitution—which ushered in what is popularly known in Ghana today as the 'Fourth Republic'. That is, the return to constitutional and multi-party democracy for the fourth time in the country's history.

Linguistic/semiotic analysis

This extract fits into two of Derewianka's (1990) three types of texts or reports. It qualifies as both 'informational' and 'procedural' text. Its 'informational' content is seen in the impersonal and formal manner in which the text is written. The 'procedural' nature is illustrated in the way that the text provides a vivid description of a major education restructuring, giving details of the procedures, time frame and

rationale. Although the entire extract appears to be written in a form typical of ‘clauses’ or provisions enshrined in legal documents, the two sub-sections appear to have different syntactic compositions. In the case of ‘sub-section 1’, the second clause is seen as simply qualifying the first as follows:

[The state shall provide educational facilities...]

To whom shall it make these facilities available?

[...to all its citizens].

However, in another sense, perhaps in the sense of a high-order analysis, ‘sub-section 1’ could be said to have a cause → effect structure typified by the use of two main clauses linked together by the conjunction ‘and’:

[The state shall provide educational facilities...] and [shall to the greatest extent feasibly make these facilities available to all its citizens].

(Article 38, Sub-section 1 of the 1992 Republican Constitution, GOG, 1992, 1992).

The causal element in this extract is manifested in the fact that the making of facilities available to all the citizens is predicated to the actual provision of educational facilities, suggesting that it is the provision which precipitates or has precipitated the availing of such facilities to the citizens.

The second section of the extract uses a single complex proposition with a constellation of prepositional phrases (PP) inserted in between ‘shall’—which in this context performs the functions of an auxiliary to the main verb and a future tense marker—and the main phrasal verb on the one hand, and after the noun phrase (NP) in objective place on the other hand. This representation is illustrated below:

NP1	aux/f.t.	PP1	PP2
[The Government][shall][within two years][after Parliament first meets]			
	PP3	Ph. V	NP2
[after coming into force of this constitution,][draw up][a programme]			
PP4		PP5	PP6
[for implementation][within the following ten years][for a free, compulsory, universal basic education].			

(Article 38, Sub-section 2 of the 1992 Republican Constitution, GOG, 1992).

From the analysis above, prepositional phrases (PPs) 1, 2 and 3 are inserted in between ‘shall’—an auxiliary and a future tense marker—and the phrasal verb ‘draw up’, which together constitute the main verb of the proposition. PPs 4, 5 and 6 on the other hand, are suffixed to the noun phrase ‘a programme’ and therefore by function and categorization are a part of the whole nominal phrase in objective place.

Whilst this style of writing genuinely is seen as a way of keeping what hitherto would have been more than one sentences brief, precise and as one proposition, its use in the above extract has another possible function. Four of the six PPs (namely PPs 1, 2, 3 and 5) relate to, or denote specific time-frame within which a ‘major’ action is to be carried out. They depict the chronological sequence of events leading to that action. In other words, the use of a constellation of these PPs in the second half of the extract, identify and explain the build-up to a major event that is to occur in the future. Specifically, the PPs in question appear to exemplify and explicate the kind of work that needs to be done before the programme for the free, compulsory, universal basic education takes off. PPs 4 and 6, unlike the others, perform a different function. They give the rationale for the action described by the predicate.

Thus, the constellation of PPs in the second half of the extract generally constitute what Ventola (1987, p. 3) describe as ‘goal-directed language events’. That is, they describe social encounters within which social processes unfold in stages in achieving the intended goals and purposes of texts.

Apart from the syntactic composition and difference between the two halves of the extract, it is also interesting to note that the extract as a whole has change as its central theme and employs declarative propositions and what Taylor (2004, p. 442) describes as ‘promotional genre’ in putting this message of change across. The declarative stance is achieved by the use of a combination of impersonal nouns—‘*the State*’ and ‘*the Government*’—and the timeless and simple present tenses—‘*provide*’, ‘*make*’ and ‘*draw up*’—which help to convey the intention and commitment of the State, its institutions and apparatus to restructuring the basic education system. On the contrary, the promotional character, as far as this analysis is concerned appears to have been exemplified by the policy genre which gives detailed guidelines and objectives of the new programme, and which is explicit in the extract:

The State shall provide educational facilities at all the levels and in all the regions and shall... make these facilities available to all the citizens.

The Government shall...after Parliament first meets after coming into force of this constitution draw up a programme for implementation...for a free, compulsory, universal basic education.

(Article 38, Sub-section 1 & 2 of the 1992 Republican Constitution, GOG, 1992).

However, in using the declarative/promotional strategy, the text apparently appears to have become unidirectional in terms of the detailed guidelines and instructions it seemed to have issued. In pursuit of its promotional agenda, it appears to have failed (either by design or without malice) to identify whose voice is being represented and who the specific addressees or audience (emphasis on second sub-section) are. That notwithstanding, the extract as a whole, qualifies as a suitable candidate for what Edward and Nicole (2001) describe as ‘persuasive text’. That is, a text which rather than being dialogical remains declarative and directional with the voice of the person(s) doing the talking and that of the addressee(s) remaining implicitly hidden for persuasive purposes. Its significance with regards to this extract is the fact that

whilst it conceals the voice(s) of the person(s) being represented, it also appears to have doubled as an obligation for those bodies whose responsibility it is to put the necessary modalities in place for the take off of the fCUBE programme. It equally appears as a beacon of hope to the citizenry, informing them of the changes in the educational sector that by law are bound to happen. As Yeatman (1990) for example puts it, the unidirectional and declarative structure assumed by propositions in texts are common features of policy documents where sources of power and authority are difficult to detect.

Similarly, there is a strong sense of urgency demanding quick response from the State, and its institutions and structures of governance. This urgency → response picture is manifested by the use of the lexical item ‘shall’ which, apart from its grammatical functions in the text as being a future tense marker and an auxiliary to the main verb, also, and in this context, seems to express both obligation and necessity:

The State [shall] provide educational facilities at all the levels...and [shall] to the greatest extent feasibly make these facilities available to all the citizens.

The Government [shall]...after Parliament first meets, after coming into force of this constitution, draw up a programme for implementation within the following ten years for free, compulsory, universal basic education.

(Article 38, Sub-section 1 & 2 of the 1992 Republican Constitution, GOG, 1992).

This sense of urgency, perhaps, is a response to the visible signs of the falling standards of education in Ghana in the 1980s which culminated in the formulation and implementation of the 1987 Education Reform Programme, leading to a major shake-up in the country’s education system of which the fCUBE is a formidable part. However, what this urgency → response theory, as exhibited in the extract, is unable to establish clearly is the direct linkage and relationship between the urgency itself

and the desired change—the fCUBE programme. The unidirectional and declarative stance adopted in the extract does not mention in explicit terms what issues have necessitated the change and also how the provision of a programme for a free, compulsory, universal basic education could be said to be the suitable remedy to those issues and problems.

Similarly, the urgency → response structure of the text appears to be mitigated by the phrase *'the greatest extent feasibly'*, an expression which features prominently in the first half of the extract. Whilst this expression is arguably seen to have mitigated and, or moderated to a considerable extent the kind of constitutional demand on the State and its institutions and structures of governance, the phrase itself, is seen as one of the features of most, if not all legal documents, and as such a strategy employed in this context to point out that the State and its apparatus cannot be single-handedly responsible for the provision of education to its citizens and can, as a result not be blamed for not having achieved the desired outcomes of the change envisioned. The expression is thus seen as a way of indicating that 'all things being equal', that is, when the economy is in good shape or depending on the resources available, the desired change is bound to happen.

Another expression which appears to mitigate and moderate the Government's intention of the provision and delivery of educational facilities to its citizens is: *'the State shall provide educational facilities'*, which features prominently in the first section of the extract. That is, reference to *'educational facilities'* in the above expression appears vague and nebulous. The text neither explains what it means by educational facilities nor does it give details about the procedures and strategies to be taken to ensure equity in the provision and delivery of such facilities. Typically, the text fails to say in explicit terms whether by saying educational facilities it meant classroom structures or teaching and learning materials, including other outdoor and recreational equipment, or all of the above. Also, it fails to say whether the term 'educational facilities could be restricted to physical resources or whether it could be extended to include human resources, that is, suitably trained teachers and other auxiliary staff.

In terms of vocabulary used, there are examples of political terms denoting political discourse: *'State'*, *'Government'*, *'Parliament'*, *'Constitution'*, *'Citizens'*: and which reveal the identities of those groups and institutions of State whose responsibility it is to work towards bringing about the desired change, and those who are to benefit from the change being advocated. Also explicit in the text are phrases such as *'all the levels'*, *'all the regions'*, *'all the citizens'*, and *'free, compulsory, universal basic education'* respectively which draw on the discourse of social justice and its related concepts of equity, inclusion, equality of opportunities or the equality of starting points. Having identified earlier that the extract implicitly is about educational change, the text is thus underpinned by what Gewirtz (2000, p. 140); Lynch and Lodge (2002, p. 7) Seddon (2003, p. 232) described as 'distributive justice', as the ultimate aim of the change being advocated. That is, the distribution of life chances, including goods and services to all citizens on equal basis.

Also visible in the text is the use of a figure of speech—personification—by which non-animate entities namely the *'State'*, *'Government'* and *'Parliament'* are given attributes, qualities and responsibilities as if they (the institutions) are human:

The *'State'* shall provide educational facilities...and...make these facilities available to all the citizens.

The *'Government'* shall within two years, after *'Parliament'* first meets, after coming into force of this constitution, draw up a programme for implementation...

(Article 38, Sub-section 1 & 2 of the 1992 Republican Constitution, GOG, 1992).

Given the urgency → response nature of the text and the fact that the desired change: the setting up and implementation of the fCUBE programme: was to be done in fulfilment of a constitutional mandate, the use of this figure of speech seemed justified in emphasizing the democratic processes that are to be engaged in, in

achieving this end. This therefore reinforces the alternative view of policy process—the democratic or participatory view—(Shulock, 2004)—by which policy, particularly educational policy is seen as a language for framing political discourse and thus encouraging the participation of stakeholders in the process of democratisation.

Interdiscursive analysis

As was indicated earlier in the textual analysis, the central theme of this extract is about ‘change’, indicating a change from existing educational conditions to a more dynamic and comprehensive one in which a ‘level playing field’, in terms of educational privileges are given to all the citizens to develop themselves:

The State shall...provide educational facilities at all the levels and in all the regions and shall...make these facilities available to all the citizens.

The Government shall...draw up a programme for implementation...for a free compulsory, universal basic education.

(Article 38, Sub-section 1 & 2 of the 1992 Republican Constitution, GOG, 1992).

In the process of putting this message of change and its modalities involved across, the text draws heavily on social democratic ideology, particularly the discourse of social justice and the related concepts of inclusion, equity and equality: ‘equality of starting points’. Reference to phrases such as: ‘*all the levels*’, ‘*all the regions*’, ‘*all the citizens*’ and ‘*free compulsory, universal basic education*’ point to the existence of such social democratic impulses and principles within the text. Trowler, (1998) refers to these impulses in educational ideological terms as ‘progressivism’ and reports that it rejects elitism and favours mass access in higher education. He goes on to argue that where there is a concern about social inequality, the role of education is to give what he describes as ‘step up’ to disadvantaged individuals and groups in the largest numbers possible, but not the idea of reconstructing society (p. 62). Lynch

and Lodge (2002) describe this social democratic tenet being referred to in this context, as the concept of redistribution—a concept that has gained pre-eminence in egalitarian theory and has strong roots in materialist and economically-based concepts of social justice. They argue that the redistributive perspective gives primacy to the concept of having material goods and services, or having opportunities to access, participate or succeed in a particular sphere (p. 7). However, explicit in the text, it is the weaker rather than the stronger model of distributive justice that has gained pre-eminence. The focus in the text has been on ‘equalising opportunities and/or resources rather than ‘equalising outcomes:

The State shall provide educational facilities at all the levels and in all the regions and shall...make these facilities available to all the citizens.

The Government shall...draw up a programme for implementation...for a free, compulsory, universal basic education.

(Article 38, Sub-section 1 & 2 of the 1992 Republican Constitution, GOG, 1992).

The phrases ‘*at all the levels*’, ‘*all the regions*’ and ‘*a programme for a free, compulsory, universal basic education*’ as highlighted in the above extract exemplify the equity intent, in terms of equalising opportunities as well as resources, that is, offering all the children equal opportunities to life chances.

Also implicit to the extract is what appears to be a decolonizing agenda. That is, the idea of using education as a weapon, a tool and a resource for unifying and disabusing the minds of the citizens regarding the past colonial histories, experiences and vestiges. Dei (2005) for example contends that schooling and education in Ghana have been approached in terms of contributing fundamentally to national development (p. 268). Quoting the words of Fanon (1963), he observed that the process of decolonization within the colonial context necessitated the unification of the people (through education) on national basis, using the strategic radical decision

to remove from them their heterogeneity. Thus, reference in the extract to the fact that basic education was/is to be provided for all Ghanaian children of school-going age by the State, implies or suggests invariably that this notion of 'national integration' is being called to question, particularly in this post-independence era. That is, education is being used or considered as an avenue through which the current generation could be equipped, empowered and (if necessary) 'revolutionarized' to contribute towards nation-building and thereby prevent the colonial vestiges from recurring in the future. However, owing to the emphasis on social justice and the related issues of equity, inclusion, equality among others in the text, this decolonizing agenda appears to have been competed with, suppressed, overshadowed and confined to the implicit level.

Evident in the extract also is arguably the underpinning ideologies and tenets of Socialism. The Socialist ideology with regards to education advocates for the use of the local and national state to achieve what Hill (2001, p.16) refers to as a 'socially just (defined as egalitarian) anti-discriminatory society'. The terminology used by Trowler (1998, p. 63) generally to capture this in educational ideological stance is 'social reconstructionism'. The Socialist ideological discourse shares common idealism and features with the social democratic position on education regarding personal development and social co-operation. However, the socialist discourse drawn upon in this context calls on the State to change the status quo by empowering the marginalised and the disadvantaged groups in the Ghanaian society through education in the interest of equity. The socialist ideology for education emphasizes more resources and state funding for education; a fully comprehensive schooling rather than selective education; an egalitarian redistribution of resources within and between educational institutions, including affirmative action for underachieving individuals and groups; an egalitarian and anti-elitist common curriculum for all pupils, among others things (Hill, 2001). These values are set-off in the text by reference to the State as the prime agent and stakeholder of change.

However, in reiterating the tenets of this 'leftist' ideology, there is a sudden shift in discourse from the creation of a welfare state, typified by the state intervention in

education to the discourse of politics—‘Government and Control’—, reinforcing the procedures and processes of law making and the role of the organs of Government (emphasis on Separation of Powers; Checks and Balances between the organs of Government). This change in discourse is made manifest in the text by the use of words such as ‘*Government*’, ‘*Parliament*’ and ‘*Constitution*’. Whilst arguably the inclusion of such words in the text seem to portray the democratic and constitutional processes that are to be engaged in, in bringing about the ‘desired’ change, the opposite might also be the case, that the practice mitigates or moderates to a considerable extent, the State’s intervention in educational matters to ensure equity, inclusion and equality in education by dictate. The reason for this, and as the text appears to suggest is that, before the State can intervene in such matters, the issues to be addressed should themselves fall within the confines of existing laws of the land, have to be debated by the law making body and should be given the consent and support by the ‘Government of the day’.

Similarly, in the last part of the second section of the extract, there appears again to be a shift from the discourse of ‘Government business’ or politics to/with the discourse of policy implementation. This shift/co-existence implicitly suggests that Government and its institutions and structures of governance seemed to have distanced themselves from the task of implementing the fCUBE programme being advocated:

The Government shall...draw up a programme for implementation within the following ten years for a free, compulsory, universal basic education.

(Article 38, Sub-section 2 of the 1992 Republican Constitution, GOG, 1992).

The veracity of this claim is made explicit by the fact that neither the Governments nor its institutions and structures of governance: ‘*Government*’, ‘*Parliament*’ and ‘*Constitution*’: respectively seemed to have identified themselves with the important task of implementing the fCUBE programme, suggesting that such a duty falls within the confines and under the jurisdiction of other body or bodies. This therefore

exemplifies the popular view held by most change management experts and writers- (Morris, 1998; Fullan, 2001; Everard and Morris, 2004) that policy makers or politicians see the task of policy making as their main preserve and pre-occupation and therefore do not bother themselves the least about the actual task of implementing the policies they have come out with, and the possible outcomes of such ventures.

Thus, the analysis of text in this section of the chapter suggests ‘change’ as its central theme. That is, a change from existing educational conditions to a more dynamic and comprehensive one in which a ‘level playing field’ in terms of educational privileges are offered to all Ghanaian children to develop their potentials to the fullest of their abilities and thereby contributing to national development. In pursuit of this change, the data suggests that the text draws heavily on socialist ideology (of the creation of a welfare society) as well as social democratic discourse of social justice and its related principles of equity, inclusion, equality of opportunities and of starting points as being the main drivers for the change being advocated. Similarly, the text also employs linguistic processes such as the use of declarative propositions, ‘mitigating lexical items’, a combination of both simple and complex clauses, urgency/response structure, figure of speech, particularly personification among others to achieve what the data suggests and describes as the ‘informational’ and ‘procedural’ intent (Derewianka, 1990) of texts or reports.

4.3. Extract two

The Programme for fCUBE: *The Programme for Free, Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) by the year 2005* (MOE, November, 1995).

The document from which this extract is taken is part of a series of documents published by the MOE in collaboration with GES on the fCUBE implementation and institutionalization processes. The document contains the rationale—purpose, goals and constraints of basic education—as well as the practical approaches and strategies which serve as the back-drop to the formulation of the fCUBE into a policy.

Linguistic/textual analysis

This extract bears the hallmark of both an informational and explanatory text. This classification of the extract is indeed characteristic of the dual functions—‘persuasive’ and ‘promotional’ functions—it sets out to perform. Its persuasive function is seen in the fact that it has to do with the fulfilment of effective and efficient change management practices and procedures. That is, the text sets out to reduce to the barest minimum, if not eradicate completely, the potential threats of resistance that the stakeholders on whom the change impinges are likely to advance towards the fCUBE. It does this by overtly appealing to the citizenry to accept the programme and get themselves actively involved in the implementation and institutionalization processes. The promotional intent of the text on the other hand, lies in the fact that it provides public information about the new policy direction the ‘Government of the day’ is taking and the possible benefits therein.

The structure of the text itself fits into the general → particular structural pattern (Hoey, 1983; Winter 1977; 1978) of text organisation in which a generalisation is followed by more specific statements or examples exemplifying the generalisation. This general → particular pattern is exhibited by the use of three main sections. The first section opens with a general claim about the role and functions of basic education and thus sets the stage for a preview → detail relation (Hoey, 1983) of the text in which the beginning of the text serves as a precursor to what is to be deliberated upon:

The Government of Ghana recognises basic education as the fundamental building block of the country. A participatory, literate citizenry is the foundation of democratic processes, economic growth and social well-being of a nation’s population. In recognition of this, the Government of Ghana is committed to providing free, quality education from Basic Stage (BS) 1 through 9 to all school-age children...

(The programme for ‘fCUBE’, MOE, November, 1995, p. 18).

Given the dual purpose which the text arguably sets out to perform, this exemplification falls in line with the 'persuasive' intent by which the extract aims at impressing on the populace to accept the change the Government is advancing.

The second and third sections of the extract appear arguably to fulfil the other half of the general→ particular structure. They provide specific and detailed information and explanation about the kind of education being referred to in the first section. They exhibit the promotional intent of the text and therefore have a different syntactic composition, compared with the first section. Specifically, these two sections present the goals and purpose of the fCUBE initiative respectively and are therefore seen as a way of selling the fCUBE policy ideas to Ghanaians. They both make use of a constellation of declarative propositions which reveal the 'voice' of the Government and therefore portray the strategy being used to get the message across, and more importantly, get the citizenry to take-up or buy into the Government initiative being advanced:

The long-term national goal to which fCUBE will contribute is an empowered citizenry effectively participating in the civil, social and economic life of the country...The central goal of the education system in Ghana is to ensure that all citizens are equipped with the fundamental knowledge and skills that will enable them to be full stakeholders in and beneficiaries of development

...the Government wishes to ensure that all graduates of the basic education system are prepared for further education and skills training. The expansion and reforms planned...are designed to equip future generations of Ghanaians with the fundamental knowledge and skills...

(The programme for 'fCUBE', MOE, November, 1995, p. 18).

As partly an informational text, the extract employs the simple present tense in putting the message of change across. This is exemplified in the text by the use of simple verbs such as '*recognises*', '*is*', '*contribute*' and '*wishes*'. Also featuring

prominently in the text, are a number of ‘passivized’ forms. These are explicated in propositions by the derivational forms of the verbs such as ‘*is committed*’; ‘*are designed*’ and are intended to portray the impersonal presentation of the text. Generally, these items belong to the same lexical category and are used to achieve the persuasive—promotional intent of the extract. For example, the use of the items ‘*recognises*’ and ‘*is committed*’, as they occur in the first section of the text seem purposefully and persuasively used to justify to the citizenry why the fCUBE initiative has come about at that point in time, whilst the other lexical items, namely ‘*will*’, ‘*is*’, ‘*wishes*’ and ‘*designed*’ appear to be employed to portray the intentions and projections of Government and are thus aimed at meeting the promotional intent of the text:

The Government of Ghana [recognises] basic education as the fundamental building block of the country...In recognition of this, the Government of Ghana is [committed] to...

The long-term goal to which the fCUBE [will] contribute is an empowered citizenry effectively participating in civic, social and economic life of the country...The central goal of the education system in Ghana [is] to ensure that all citizens are equipped with the fundamental knowledge and skills...

(The programme for ‘fCUBE’, MOE, November, 1995, p. 18).

Similarly, the use of the expressions, ‘the fundamental building block’, ‘the foundation’, ‘fundamental knowledge’, ‘skills training’ and ‘empowered citizenry’ seemed to have worked perfectly with the persuasive—promotional intent of the text. The expressions emphasize the importance of basic education and strongly make a case for the introduction of the fCUBE initiative as a means of building a literate, empowered and well informed citizenry.

Another ‘textual phenomenon’ which features prominently in the text is what is known and referred to in Linguistics terms as ‘nominalization’. This involve the

practice of changing of the word classes of lexical items, and are achieved in the text by changing verbs to nouns and adjectives, and nouns into adjectives. Whilst this practice is a frequent feature of informational texts, its use in the context of this analysis appears to be geared towards giving the text a marked formal style:

In [recognition] of this, the Government of Ghana is committed to providing free, quality education from Basic Stage (BS) 1 through 9 to all school-age children...

A [participatory], literate citizenry is the foundation of [democratic] processes, [economic] [growth] and social well-being of a nation's population.

The long-term goal to which fCUBE will contribute is an [empowered] citizenry effectively participating in the civic, social and economic life of the country.

(The programme for 'fCUBE', MOE, November, 1995, p. 18).

In the above illustrations, the verbs '*recognise*', '*grow*' have been nominalised into '*recognition*' and '*growth*' which are nouns, and so also are the verbs '*participate*' and '*empower*', which have been transformed to adjectives '*participatory*' and '*empowered*', describing their respective nouns they are associated with. The adjective '*democratic*' and '*economic*' on the other hand, are derived from the nouns '*democrat*' and '*economy*' respectively.

There is also an extensive use of figures of speech, notably personification and repetition in the text to portray and promote the 'promotional' and 'persuasive' agenda. Thus, the phrase '*the Government*' appears in each of the three sections of the extract and has been personified, that is given human attributes and qualities. Although it is arguably correct to say that the phrase 'the Government' as it appears in the text refers to/or consists of people and therefore is capable of being treated as humans, the point still remains that it is regarded as an institution and therefore in-

human, and being that means it does not possess the qualities of humans and can therefore not be said to exhibit the characteristics, traits and qualities of humans. Whilst it is apparently true that this phrase is repeated and personified in the text for the purpose of emphasizing the Government's commitment to seeing the fCUBE policy through, the same can be suggested that the use of this figure of speech is designed to seek the involvement and commitment of the citizenry, especially the stakeholders towards this cause:

... [the Government] recognises basic education as the fundamental building block of the country...In recognition of this, [the Government] of Ghana is committed to providing free, quality education...to all school-age children by the year 2005.

... [the Government] is committed to ensuring that all of its citizens participate in the political, social and economic life of the country...

... [the Government] wishes to ensure that all graduates of the basic education system are prepared for further education and skills training.

(The programme for 'fCUBE', MOE, November, 1995, p. 18).

Also present in the text is what is known and referred to in Linguistics as 'structural ambiguity'. Reference to the expression '*at minimum*' as it appears in the last section of the extract, seems to mitigate the real intent and purpose/goal of the fCUBE initiative. Although this expression obviously could be read as suggesting that there are greater possible benefits of the 'fCUBE' other than those identified, an alternative interpretation in this context is privileged. It is suggested in this context that the expression implies that equipping the citizens with fundamental knowledge and skills to further develop their talents and as a result play roles as informed, participatory citizens, among other things is subsidiary to the real or actual benefits to be derived from the fCUBE policy. Having said that, the text however does not

provide the alternative, additional or the ‘real’ qualities and traits that are to be acquired and exhibited by the graduates of the fCUBE programme:

...The expansion of reforms planned under the fCUBE are designed to equip future generations of Ghanaians with the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary...to develop further their talents through additional education or training and, [at minimum] to play a functional role in society as informed, participatory citizens, economic producers and to pursue self-determined paths to improve the quality of their lives.

(The programme for ‘fCUBE’, MOE, November, 1995, p. 18).

In terms of semiotic representation, the extract has two main features which warrant description. It has a title—‘THE PROGRAMME FOR fCUBE’—which is written in capitals and formatted using ‘Bold’. Underneath this heading are two sub-headings—‘Goals of the Initiative’ and ‘Purpose of the fCUBE Initiative’—which are numbered 5.1 and 5.2. Whilst the sub-headings and numbering employed by the text can be said to be user-friendly, it is suggested that their real intent here is to serve as a point of demarcation from the other components and strategies designed for the implementation of the fCUBE programme contained in this document and therefore reader-instructive.

Interdiscursive analysis

Implicit in the text is the discourse of change. That is the urgency for revamping basic education in Ghana to meet the demands and aspirations of the ‘modern’ times. This urgency for change in this context appears to be premised on the importance of education in general in building viable, economic and democratic state and therefore portrayed as the driver for change:

The Government of Ghana recognises basic education as the building block of the country. A participatory, literate citizenry is the foundation of democratic processes, economic growth and social well being of a nation’s population. In

recognition of this the Government of Ghana is committed to providing free, quality education...to all school-age children by the year 2005.

(The programme for 'fCUBE', MOE, November, 1995, p. 18).

In putting this message of change across, the text draws on social democratic ideas and principles of inclusion, equity and equality of opportunities as being the underlying motives as well as the means to achieving the desired change. Thus, by using justice and equity laden expressions such as, '*all school-age children*', '*all of its citizens*', '*all Ghanaians*', '*free, quality schooling*', the text seems to suggest that the socio-economic development of the country does not only lie in the hands of a few opportuned elites. Rather it seems to register the point that it is a collective responsibility of all Ghanaians, irrespective of their age, gender, religion, ethnicity, political affiliation or linguistic (dis)abilities, who are to be educated and empowered to make meaningful contributions towards its development:

A participatory, literate citizenry is the foundation of democratic processes, economic growth and social well being of a nation's population. In recognition of this, the Government of Ghana is committed to providing [free, quality education]...to all school-age children by the year 2005.

...The Government is committed to ensuring that [all of its citizens] participate in the political, social and economic life of the country...The central goal of the education system in Ghana is to ensure that [all citizens] are equipped with fundamental knowledge and skills that will enable them to be full stake-holders in and beneficiaries of development.

By requiring that [all Ghanaians] receive 9 years of free, quality schooling, the Government wishes to ensure that [all graduates] of the basic education system are prepared for further education and skills training.

(The programme for 'fCUBE', MOE, November, 1995, p. 18).

Visible also in the text is the neo-liberal discourse of economic change. In neo-liberalism, the state seeks to create, mainly through education, an enterprising and competitive individual entrepreneur as an agent of economic change. In the context of this analysis, basic education is portrayed in the extract as a means and/or a resource to acquiring knowledge and skills that inevitably will lead to achieving economic growth. The terminology used to capture the neo-liberal ideology in educational ideological term is 'enterprise' and it is concerned primarily with developing people in terms of transferable 'core skills'—communication; IT; literacy—to be good and efficient workers. The neo-liberal ideology and thinking behind this position is that by rolling back the state and allowing businesses to take over the provision of education, the individual will be trained in practical skills and knowledge that will in turn benefit the individual as well as the community and nation. However, the neo-liberal idea in the text is expressed alongside classical social democratic ideals of citizenship, social well-being and participation in democratic processes and as such appears to be suppressed and, or dominated by them:

A participatory, literate citizenry is the foundation of democratic processes, economic growth and social well being of a nation's population...

...The expansion and reforms planned under the fCUBE are designed to equip future generations of Ghanaians with the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary...to play a functional role in society as informed, participatory citizens, economic producers and to pursue self-determined paths to improve the quality of their lives.

(The programme for 'fCUBE', MOE, November, 1995, p. 18).

Also dominant in the text is the rhetoric of education as an essential tool for democratisation. Education is seen in this context as a very important means of empowering citizens to participate in the civil, social and economic life of the country. In other words, empowerment and effective participation in democratic

processes in this context are considered as benefits of educational change—the introduction of the fCUBE programme. The graduates of the basic education system are to be fully prepared and empowered to effectively participate in matters concerning the development of the country. However, this rhetoric of empowerment and democratisation through education becomes so dominant in the text to the extent that the real purpose of the fCUBE in giving equal opportunities to all Ghanaian children to participate in the educational process becomes competed with, dominated and completely hybridised by these classical social democratic discourses and ideals of citizenship, social well-being, democratic participation, empowerment and emancipation:

...A participatory, literate citizenry is the foundation of democratic processes, economic growth and social well being of a nation's population.

The long term national goal to which fCUBE will contribute is an empowered citizenry effectively participating in civil, social and economic life of the country. The Government is committed to ensuring that all of its citizens participate in the political, social and economic life of the country...

(The programme for 'fCUBE', MOE, November, 1995, p. 18).

In all these, there are however few 'silences' or omissions. The extract, either through design or genuine means misses out or fails to explain what it identifies in the text as 'fundamental knowledge and skills' and how this will certainly develop the talents of the individuals and also transform them to be 'stakeholders in, and beneficiaries of development'. Similarly, by saying explicitly that the Government wishes to ensure that all graduates of the basic school system are prepared for further education and skills training, the text appears not to have given sufficient information about what the 'further education and skills' being referred to is, who the providers are and also who bears the cost of all these. Whilst on the one hand, it could be argued that Governments readiness to provide all these is implicitly hidden in the way the text is constructed, it is also revealing to say that one suspects a hidden neo-

liberal and capitalist agenda, that is, the rolling back of the state and the introduction of the 'business agenda for schools and in schools' (Hill, 2001) which is gradually being introduced under the guises of economic change and a knowledge based economy.

The analysis in this section suggests that the text sets out to perform persuasive and promotional functions due to its informational and explanatory hallmarks. The analysis at the linguistic tier for instance, has shown that the general → particular structural pattern of the text has enabled it to make generalisations and to back these up with specific examples. In terms of style, the text makes use of linguistic processes namely: the use of: declarative/assertive propositions; simple present tense; passivized forms; nominalisations, personifications; repetitions and structural ambiguities to put its message of change across.

At the interdiscursive level, the text, mainly through the use of social justice, equity and inclusion expressions and labels, appears to have drawn extensively on the classical social democratic discourses of citizenship, social well-being, democratic participation, equality and equality of opportunities/starting points in putting across its message of change. However, in representing these ideals, neo-liberal discourse of economic change and the rhetoric of education as a means to globalisation and economic empowerment appear to have been expressed alongside these classical social democratic impulses. The analysis suggests considerable omissions and silences in the text resulting from the co-existence or struggle for dominance between these ideological/ philosophical discourses and positions. This, the analysis suggests, has led to the 'real' purpose of the 'fCUBE' in giving equal opportunities to all Ghanaian children to access education to become downplayed by the classical social democratic ideals of citizenship, democratic participation empowerment and social well-being.

4.4. Extract three

The Strategies for Implementing fCUBE: *The Programme for Free, Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) by the year 2005* (MOE, February, 1996).

This extract, like the previous one, is taken from a document which forms part of a series of documents published by the MOE in consultations with the GES on the implementation of the fCUBE programme. As an integral part of the document which immediately precedes the formal launching of the fCUBE implementation and institutionalization processes in April 1996, the extract focuses on a range of practical approaches and strategies which were/are to be adopted as part of an fCUBE implementation plan. The text constituting the extract itself addresses three main areas namely: improving quality of teaching and learning; management for efficiency; and access and participation.

Linguistic/textual analysis

This extract qualifies as a suitable candidate for what Winter (1977; 78) refers to as a 'procedural' text. Its procedural nature is exemplified by the fact that it provides the practical approaches and strategies for the implementation of the fCUBE programme. In executing the procedural function, the extract however takes on the problem → solution structural pattern or form. The problem, more specifically is identified as the poor performance of pupils in public schools whilst the solution rests with the promotional intent of the extract. That is, the view that the issue of poor performance could be resolved through the application of the practical strategies suggested by the MOE. The strategies that are being advanced by the extract, themselves revolve around three main components: improving the quality of teaching and learning; management for efficiency; and access and participation.

The beginning of the first component for example, makes use of three assertive propositions. The first picks on the concern of the citizens to the issue of poor performance of pupils in public schools. The second attributes the issue to poor teaching and learning, whilst the third identifies what the strategy of this component is intended to do. Interestingly, whilst the former is seen as having drawn on the feelings of the citizenry and thus hopes to solicit their sympathy and support towards

the Government's position on the issue, the latter two, seem to perform or fulfil a rather entrenched 'traditional/rational' problem-solving function of policy explicated in Chapter 2. The second identifies the root cause of the problem and based on that assessment the third provides a suitable remedy to the situation. These assertive propositions seemed to fit perfectly with the problem → solution structure of the text:

The issue of poor performance of pupils in public schools is of great concern to everyone. It is clear the situation is due to poor teaching and learning in schools. The strategy of this component then is to promote efficiency and effective teaching and learning at all the levels of basic education stages...

(Strategies for Implementing the 'fCUBE', MOE, February, 1996, p. 4).

In terms of vocabulary, the text appears highly impersonal, assertive/declarative and unidirectional. Although the 'voice(s)' of the speaker(s) remain(s) explicitly hidden, or in other words, not foregrounded, this arguably seems to work out perfectly with the promotional intent of the extract and helps to convey in unambiguous and unmitigated terms, the specific routines and guidelines to be followed. Also, the text generally utilises a number of phrases which suggests 'effective school management' as its main theme. Reference to the wording of the three components: *improving quality of teaching and learning*; *management for efficiency*; and *access and participation*: for instance, suggest as its main concern, the taking of remedial actions to combat the falling standards of education and thereby make the school system more efficiency and effectiveness oriented. Similarly, phrases such as 'efficient and effective teaching and learning'; efficiency and effectiveness of management performance' as they feature in the first and second components of the extract respectively seem to highlight 'school effectiveness' intent and rationale of the strategies:

...The strategy of this component then is to promote efficient and effective teaching and learning at all levels of the basic education stages...

The focus of this component is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of management reforms...

(Strategies for Implementing the 'fCUBE', MOE, February, 1996, pp. 4–5).

There appears also to be an extensive use of bullet points in the text. These are seen under each of the components constituting the entire strategy adopted for the implementation of the fCUBE programme. Whilst the use of bullet points is typical of official policy documents, its use in this way, in this context is suggested as having a dual purpose. It suggested that its use this way is intended to promote the 'user-friendliness' of the text by making it relatively easier for readers to differentiate one strategy from the other. Similarly, it also appears to have a 'reader-instructive' intent. That is, to issue specific instructions about the applicability of each of the strategies under the various components. Fairclough (2001a) remarks aptly that, 'bullet points when used often in this way in official documents, they may be seen as 'reader friendly', but they also tend to be more 'reader directive' than discursive text'.

However, rather than being strategies for implementing the fCUBE programme, the text further appears to be geared towards addressing the general constraints to the provision of good quality basic education in Ghana. That is, quite apart from the poor teaching and learning which takes centre stage in the problem → solution structure illuminated earlier, the text, especially the specific strategies under the various components appear to be directed towards other general constraints to basic education provision and delivery. While one finds this phenomenon interesting, a possible reason for it might be the playing of a 'blame-game' where the policy implementers, particularly the headteachers and teachers are singled out and made 'scape-goats' for under-performing. This is likely to be the case when one considers the fact that most of the strategies under each of the components are directed towards teachers and their pedagogies. These constraints are implied and conveyed by the strategies under the various components and include: poor teaching pedagogy; the inadequate access to educational facilities and services; lack of community interest in

education; weak management capacity; and the unsatisfactory financing arrangement for the education sector:

1. Improving Quality of Teaching and Learning

...The strategies of this component then are to promote efficient and effective teaching and learning...Specifically this component will:

- enhance specific teaching skills through pre-service and school-based in-service training of teachers;
- ensure adequate and timely supply of teaching and learning materials to all schools;
- improve teacher-community relationships.

2. Management for Efficiency Component

The focus of this component is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of management performance through:

- management reforms;
- discipline and accountability in schools.

3. Access and Participation

The access and participation component of fCUBE is:

- to expand infrastructural facilities and services to enhance access for all children of school going age;
- to ensure good quality teaching and learning by setting performance targets.

(Strategies for Implementing the 'fCUBE', MOE, February, 1996, pp. 4–5).

Interdiscursive analysis

Prominent in the extract is the discourse of educational change. That is, a change from the existing pattern of education to a new and more comprehensive form where quality, efficiency, effectiveness and access to educational services and facilities take centre stage. The quest for this sort of 'change' appears to have been manifested in the text by the wording of the three components around which the strategies revolve. That is, by labelling the various components themselves as such, suggest that the ultimate rationale for coming out with the strategies is to bring about a change in the education sector. Similarly, references to propositions which denote or portray 'school effectiveness agenda' in the text also bring to the fore this transformational intent:

An fCUBE implementation plan which adopts a range of strategies for achieving quality, efficiency and access to educational services' has been developed. These strategies revolve around three main components all geared towards the provision of full access to good quality basic education for all Ghanaian children...

(Strategies for Implementing the 'fCUBE', MOE, February, 1996, p. 4).

However in putting this message across, teachers and their pedagogies are identified and emphasized as the 'objects' of transformation rather than as 'subjects'. Thus, having identified poor teaching and learning as the main cause of the falling standards of education in public schools and in the basic sector, most of the strategies put forward for addressing the issue appear to be directed to teachers and their methodology. The interesting thing, of course is that, although pupils' learning practices and approaches forms part of the problem identified, not much remedial actions are seen as being directed to this aspect of the problem. Rather particular attention seems to be focussed on managerialist discourses, suggesting at least implicitly, a donor or investor driven agenda. That is the pressure on Government to conform to the status quo of bi-lateral and multi-lateral agencies funding the

implementation of the policy. (See Chapter 1 for details of bi-lateral and multi-national agencies funding the 'fCUBE' implementation.)

While obviously the rationale for this shift, as it is being suggested, appears to be bent towards satisfying the 'conditionalities' and whims of donor/investor agencies, a possible reason for the use of this strategy, as illustrated earlier in the linguistic tier of analysis might also be part of the 'blame-game'. To portray to the populace, particularly the stakeholders in education that the teachers and their pedagogies are identified as the major cause of the poor teaching and learning in schools. Alternatively, the rationale for this could also be a fulfilment of the stages in the systematic/traditional policy-making and implementation process (Everard et al., 2004) by which policy alternatives are presented for implementation based on the identification of a particular policy issue; the identification of policy objectives; the collection of alternatives; and the evaluation of the best alternative for implementation. This shift in focus from the general constraints to teachers and their pedagogies is illustrated in the first and second components of the extract:

1. Improving Quality of Teaching and Learning

The issue of poor performance of pupils in public schools is of great concern to everyone. It is clear that the situation is due to poor teaching and learning in schools. The strategy of this component then is to promote efficient and effective teaching and learning...Specifically, this component will:

- enhance specific teaching skills through pre-service and school-based in-service training of teachers;
- improve teacher morale and motivation through incentive programmes;
- improve teacher-community relationships.

2. Management for Efficiency

The focus of this component is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of management performance through:

- management reforms;
- discipline and accountability in schools;
- elimination of teacher absenteeism, lateness and misuse of instructional time.

(Strategies for Implementing the 'fCUBE', MOE, February, 1996, pp. 4–5).

Also evident in the text are social democratic discourses of equity, inclusion and equality of opportunities. In putting the strategies that will bring about the change across, the text draws extensively on social democratic and 'progressive' values. These values appear to have been used by the text to demonstrate both the ultimate benefits of the change being advocated, and the beneficiaries of that change. These social democratic ideals appear to have been manifested in the text by reference to the expressions; *'the provision of full access to quality basic education for all Ghanaian children'* and *'efficient and effective teaching and learning at all levels of basic education stages'*, which appear at the beginning of the extract. Similarly, these social democratic imports are also illuminated by the first three strategies of the third component:

3. Access and Participation

The access and participation component of the fCUBE is:

- to expand infrastructural facilities and services to enhance access for 'all Ghanaian children of school going age';
- to address issues of enrolment and retention for 'all children of school going age';
- to enhance equity in the provision of educational services and facilities for 'all with particular focus on girls, and the disadvantaged children'.

(Strategies for implementing the 'fCUBE', MOE, February, 1996, p. 5).

These provisions thus explicate the inclusion, equity and equality intents and benefits of the strategies. They seem to demonstrate that the change being advocated is for the

overall benefit of all the citizens of Ghana irrespective of their ethnicity, tribe, religion, gender, age, cultural practice among other things.

The text also appears to draw on the discourse of 'compensatory education' (Cosin 1986, p. 20) as one of the values to be upheld and, or a means to ensuring that equity is upheld in the provision and delivery of educational services. This issue of 'compensatory education', as it is suggested and/or explicated in the text entails discriminating positively, in terms of educational facilities, equipment, opportunities, changes and services in favour of the educationally underprivileged and underachievers. This is set off in the text by the reference to the expression '*with particular focus on girls and disadvantaged children*', which features prominently as the third strategy under the third and final component- access and participation:

Access and Participation

- to enhance equity in the provision of educational services and facilities for all with particular focus on girls and disadvantaged children.

(Strategies for implementing the 'fCUBE', MOE, February, 1996, p. 5).

In spite of the social democratic discourses and the urgency for change which are suggested to have been drawn upon and which appear to work out perfectly to explicate the problem → solution structure of the text, there appears to be a significant disjuncture and 'silence' between what the text sets out to do, and what the title of the extract suggests. Although the title of the extract suggests a comprehensive implementation plan, that is, strategies that are to be employed for the implementing the fCUBE programme, the extract appears to be geared towards addressing the general constraints to basic education provision. As a result of this disjuncture, no possible explanations seem to have been offered about how improvement in the quality of teaching and learning or management reforms could for example, make basic education in Ghana free, compulsory and universal. Similarly, by stating categorically under the 'access and participation component' that the component is intended to enhance equity in the provision of educational

services and facilities, the text is silent on how, in practical terms this will be done. It fails to point out ‘who’ does ‘what’ and how these activities under the various components could lead to the overall attainment of the fCUBE policy goals and objectives.

The analysis in this section suggests that the extract sets out to perform ‘procedural’ functions. That is, it is seen as setting out the practical approaches and strategies for the implementation of the ‘fCUBE’ policy. In pursuit of this procedural function, the linguistic analysis suggest that the text through the use of various linguistic processes such as the use of: assertive/declarative propositions; impersonal presentation; bullet points among others, takes on a problem → solution structural pattern and thus performs a more traditional/rational problem-solving function of policy.

The analysis at the interdiscursive tier portrays the presentation of social democratic discourses and those of compensatory education alongside each other. However, owing to what in part is suggested as the struggle for dominance when two or more discourses are put together co-existently, there appears to be a discursive shift from the ‘fCUBE’ implementation intent to general constraints to basic education in Ghana, particularly discourses about teachers and their instructional pedagogy. This, the analysis suggests leads to a disjuncture—silences and omissions—between what the text sets out to do, and what the title of the extract suggests.

4.5. Extract four

Mission Statement for Education: Education Strategic Plan (ESP. Volume 1, p. 7) 2003 to 2015 (MOE, May, 2003).

This text is an extract from the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) which is a part of a series of on-going strategic guidelines introduced by the President John Agyekum Kufour led NPP Government, to inform and assist the development of education in Ghana from 2003 to 2015. As the title implies, the extract appears to have been taken from an earlier educational document and attached to the ESP to serve as a point of reference and/or reminder of the national goals and aspirations towards which it (ESP) has been designed to contribute. Although the genre of the extract at face

value is informational, it equally adheres to, and expresses at the implicit level, the broad philosophical stance adopted by the MOE—the Government body that sees to all educational matters in the country. The extract is in three main parts. The first part identifies the mission statement for education whilst the second and third parts respectively address the goals for the education sector; and the values to abide by in addressing these goals.

Linguistic/textual analysis

As was indicated in the introduction to the analysis in this section of the chapter, the genre of the text is ostensibly informational. The text appears to give information on/or addresses three main issues—MOE's mission statement; goals for the MOE; and principles and values to abide by in the provision of these values. These ideas are exemplified by the use of paragraphs, particularly of the goals and values. These three areas represented thus form a task → strategy → control structure. The first part of the extract talks about the mission of the MOE and hence the task at hand. The second part—goals for the education sector—deals with the practical approaches and strategies to achieving the task, whilst the third and final part—values—goes further to identify the values to be upheld in the performance of these tasks. All three themes identified here are exemplified in the text by the opening lines of each paragraph:

The mission of the Ministry of Education is to provide relevant education to all Ghanaians...

In fulfilment of the Education Mission, the Ministry of Education will provide the following...

In providing these services, we will be guided by the following values...

(ESP, MOE, May, 2003, p. 7).

The extract uses impersonal rather than personal nouns, for example, '*the Ministry of Education*', '*all Ghanaians*' to generalise and keep to the impersonal and formal pattern of most informational texts. However, visible within the text, specifically under the sub-heading, '*the Mission Statement for Education*' is the use of the pronoun '*them*' in two instances, and as antecedents of the noun phrase '*all Ghanaians*' and thus emphasizing the beneficiaries of the 'relevant education' that the MOE is by law obliged to provide. Similarly there is a stylistic shift from the use of the impersonal noun phrase, '*the Ministry of Education*' as represented in the first two parts of the extract to the pronoun '*we*' as indicated in the third and final part of the text. The analysis suggests that this practice conforms to what Edward and Nicole, referred to by Taylor (2004, p. 440) as 'persuasive text' and can in this context be described as the process by which readers of a text are kept in suspense about the 'voice' or identities of the person(s) doing the talking until the very end of the text, for persuasive purposes. Its use here and in this particular case arguably has a secondary function. The shift is intended to give the awareness and assurance to the general public that the officials of the MOE are quite conversant with their mandated obligations and are committed to ensuring that these are carried out in a professional and competent manner:

The Mission of [the Ministry of Education] is to provide relevant education to all Ghanaians at all the levels to enable them to...

In fulfilment of... the Mission, [the Ministry of Education] will provide...

In providing these services, [we] will be guided by...

(ESP, MOE, May, 2003, p. 7).

In terms of vocabulary, the text appears quite assertive. It has for example touched on what it refers to as '*relevant education*' as the basis for achieving what Chitty (2004, p. 10) describes as 'the utilitarian function of education'. That is, the idea of schooling as essentially a means to socio-economic growth and national

development. The words *'enable'*, *'acquire'*, *'assist'* and *'promoted'* which feature prominently in the text seem to emphasize the kind of socio-economic and developmental change that is being sought. The criticism of this notion, as it is being represented in the text could be the fact that the text itself is unable to either document or explain the basis for the claim. It fails either by design or through genuine means to point out how acquiring what it describes as 'relevant education' could lead to, or enable young people to acquire skills that will assist them to become productive in socio-economic terms and therefore bring about national development:

The mission of the Ministry of Education is to provide relevant education to all Ghanaians at all levels to enable them to acquire skills... to promote socio-economic growth and national development.

(ESP, MOE, May, 2003, p. 7).

There is also a good use of figure of speech—personification—within the text to emphasize the kind of responsibility that rests on the shoulders of the MOE. The MOE is personified as having the qualities, attributes and characteristics of humans to provide the facilities, training and education that lead to personal and national growth and development. Whilst the use of this figure of speech is believed to be a genuine way of emphasizing the importance of the duties that the MOE is by law constituted and mandated to perform, its use in this context could also be said to serve as a strategy for soliciting the commitment and enthusiasm of the members of the MOE themselves to the task.

Similarly, there is the use of repetition of the noun phrase *'the Ministry of Education'* within the first two parts of the text. That is, quite apart from the third part of the text where the pronoun *'we'* was used, the two preceding parts make explicit use of the phrase *'the Ministry of Education'*, to refer to the Government body whose mandated duty it is to ensure that the purpose or mission of education is realised. As aptly echoed by Tannen (1989) repetition is a resource by which

conversationalists together create a discourse, a relationship and a world. It is the central linguistic meaning-making strategy, a limitless resource for individual creativity and interpersonal involvement (p. 75). Although it can be contested that representing the piece of information in the first two parts of the extract in another form without the use of such a phrase would have made it difficult to maintain the same meaning of the text, the repetition of the phrase '*the Ministry of Education*' could be said to be intended to emphasize the same impersonal purpose and meaning attached to the use of personification identified in the paragraph above:

The mission of [the Ministry of Education] is to provide relevant education to all Ghanaians...to enable them...to promote socio-economic growth and national development.

In fulfilment of the Education Mission, [the Ministry of Education] will provide...

(ESP, MOE, May, 2003, p. 7).

At the semiotic level of representation, the text is virtually eye catching. It is captured in two rectangular boxes—one small and the other one big—with the mission statements in the smaller box and the 'goals' and 'values' for education, both in the bigger one. In each of these boxes are headings which are 'italicised' and printed in 'bold. The text in the two rectangular boxes are written in italics, with the 'goals' and 'values' in the second (bigger) box formatted using alphabets and numerals respectively. Whilst the use of the alphabets and numeral, just like the use of bullets points in ordering items, are regular features of official policy documents and are regarded as 'user friendly'(Taylor, 2004, p. 442), they also perform another important function here. They tend to be more 'reader directive' than discursive text.

Also deserving comment is the title of the extract itself. Although it is evident from the title—*Mission Statement for Education*—that the apparent purpose of the text is to provide public information about the purpose and mission of education, it rather ends up being an obligation to the Government's sector responsible for education.

The claim is made manifest by the opening lines of each of the three paragraphs representing the three different themes addressed by the text, and which contain the lexical items 'is to', 'will' and 'will' depicting the commitment of the MOE towards basic education provision:

The Mission of the Ministry of Education [is to] provide relevant education to all Ghanaians...

In fulfilment of the Education Mission, the Ministry of Education [will] provide the following...

In providing these services, we [will] be guided by the following values...

(ESP, MOE, May, 2003, p. 7).

Interdiscursive analysis

Evident in the text is a combination of social democratic and neo-liberal imports and discourses on education which are interwoven and linked to the notion of socio-economic growth and national development:

...the Ministry of Education is to provide relevant education to all Ghanaians at all the levels to enable them to acquire skills that will assist them to develop their potential, to be productive, to facilitate poverty reduction and to promote socio-economic growth and national development.

(ESP, MOE, May, 2003, p. 7).

Reference to the phrase '*all Ghanaians at all the levels*' appears to register and consolidate the point that the mission or vision for education in Ghana, as evident in the above extract is an inclusive, equality and equity-driven one. The phrase does portray education as a public good, free at the point of entry, and as a right. It makes it clear that the 'relevant education' being referred to in this context is for the benefit

of every Ghanaian at any level of the educational ladder in every nook and cranny of the country irrespective of tribe, gender, ethnicity, linguistic abilities, age, religion, political affiliation among other things. In theoretical terms, this expression thus entails a formal commitment to the redistribution of social goods (in this case education) on a more equitable basis grounded in the economics of Keynesianism and the politics of corporatism and is underpinned by the social democratic consensus. These social democratic tenets become even more visible and explicit in letters (a) to (c) of the second section of the text, on the ‘goals for the education sector’:

In fulfilment of the Education Mission, the Ministry of Education will provide the following:

- (a) Facilities to ensure that all citizens, irrespective of age, gender, tribe, religion and political affiliation, are functionally literate and self reliant;
- (b) Basic education for all;
- (c) Opportunities for open education for all.

(ESP, MOE, May, 2003, p. 7).

However, in representing these ideals, the social democratic discourse appears to co-exist with neo-liberal discourse of ‘skills’ for the knowledge economy. The essence of the neo-liberal theory to the study of education policy is a criticism against the welfare state—Government intervention—based on a number of presumptions which are perceived and condemned as collectivist, socialist and economically misguided. The major tenets of neo-liberalism are: freedom from state interference (except where the state is promoting and defending private enterprise); the promotion of individualism, free enterprise inequality and hierarchy (Hill, 2001, p. 11). Related to this context, the neo-liberal discourse draws on the notion of ‘relevant education’ as being the means to economic reforms and change. It emphasizes how that ‘relevant education’ certainly would lead to the acquisition of skills by the citizenry to enable them to be able to reduce poverty, become productive and economically self reliant:

...the Ministry of Education is to provide relevant education to [all] Ghanaians...to enable [them] to acquire skills that will assist [them] to develop their potential, to be productive, to facilitate poverty reduction and to promote socio-economic growth and national development.

(ESP, MOE, May, 2003, p. 7)

Similarly, the use of the pronoun '*them*' (as indicated in the extract above) which are antecedents of '*all Ghanaians*', also seems to arguably reinforce the popular neo-liberal and capitalist notion that inequality between individuals and groups are natural features of society that cannot necessarily be overcome by socially remedial action by Government, but rather through the individuals' own initiatives maximised through privatisation and marketization. This neo-liberal ideology informing the text becomes apparently glaring in letters (d) and (e) of the section under the '*goals for the education sector*', where the facilities, structures and resources that are to be provided to facilitate the attainment of the socio-economic agenda are highlighted:

In fulfilment of the Education Mission, the Ministry of Education will provide the following...

(d) Education and training for skill development with emphasis on science, technology and creativity;

(e) Higher education for the development of middle and top-level manpower requirement.

(ESP, MOE, May, 2003, p. 7)

These provisions thus appear to emphasize the popular neo-liberal view of the purpose of education being essentially the preparation of the youth for 'the world of work' (Chitty, 2004, p. 10). The main criticism however rests in the 'unmitigated bleakness' of the assertion linking education to socio-economic growth and national development. The neo-liberal ideology, as it is represented in the text neither explains what it means by 'relevant education' and how different this is from the

general notion of education, nor does it explain how the facilities, resources and structures identified as having to be provided by the MOE could help attain the socio-economic growth and national development envisioned. This thus corroborate Taylor's (2004) claim that 'policy documents advocate one-way 'partnerships' to serve government purpose and interest' (p. 444).

Also visible from the text is the discursive shift in focus of what the title of the extract itself suggests and the issues being represented or addressed by the text. This discursive shift suggests a complete disjuncture and departure from what the vision or purpose of education in Ghana really is, to focus on the MOE and the task → strategy → control → structure illuminated earlier in the textual/linguistic analysis. Although it may be arguably correct for one to say that this broad philosophical stance adopted by the MOE and its agencies encapsulates the national goals—underpins the work of the MOE and its agencies—and may act as what the ESP itself refers to as 'a foundation for sectoral planning', the point still holds water that the inability of the body of the text to conform to its stated title is problematic. It suggests for instance, that the Ghanaian education sector doesn't have any specific clear-cut vision for education and therefore does emphasize Taylor's claim cited earlier that policy documents can advocate a one-way 'partnership' to serve the interest and purpose of the Government in power.

In a nutshell, the linguistic level analysis of text in this section suggests that the extract effectively utilises the task → strategy → control structural pattern to achieve informational rationale of text or reports. Similarly, being typically informational at face value, the text uses a number of linguistic processes—use of: different categories of nouns and pronouns; assertive propositions; personification; repetition—and semiotic representations such as geometrical drawings (rectangular boxes); formatted (bold and italics) headings and texts for 'special effects', that is, for emphasis and persuasive purposes.

The analysis at the interdiscursive tier suggests that both social democratic and neo-liberal discourses are subscribed to simultaneously and possibly rationally. However,

owing to what appears to be a struggle for dominance between these two discourses, the social democratic tenets appear to have been downplayed, overridden and arguably marginalised by neo-liberal ideology of skills for knowledge-based economy. Although this implicitly could be seen as revealing the Governments' ideological position on education, the analysis further suggests that the phenomenon consequently leads to a discursive shift between the title of the extract and what the texts actually sets out to achieve in practice.

4.6. Extract five

The Future Direction of Education in Ghana: *The White Paper on the Report of the Education Reform Review Committee (WPRERRC)* (GOG, 2005, pp. 9-10).

This extract is taken from the Government's White Paper on the Report of the Education Reform Review Committee findings. The document was published by the Government through the MOE in 2005 to officially endorse the findings and recommendations of the Education Reform Review Committee, which was set up in January 2002 to review education reforms in the country and had by October that same year, submitted its report to Government for action. The document thus, and as the title suggests, show the future direction of education in Ghana for the next couple of years.

Linguistic/textual analysis

This extract possesses and/or exhibits a hybrid genre and as such can conveniently be subsumed under both informational and explanatory classification of texts. Explicit in the text is a policy genre, interwoven with political and promotional elements. The impulses of policy genre present in the text is manifested in the fact that it appears to show or provide public information on the education policy direction, target and expectations of the education sector over the next couple of years. Additionally it seems to reveal Government's intention to restructure education for the purpose of building a knowledge-based economy where people are trained and empowered to take control of their lives and also participate in democratic processes:

...Ghana's new system of education, especially for the youth between age 12 and 19 should be reformed to support a nation aspiring to build a knowledge-based economy within the next generation.

...To this end, greater emphasis than hitherto needs to be, and will be placed on Technical, Agricultural, Vocational education, and on structured Apprenticeship training.

(WPRERRC, GOG, 2005, p. 10).

The political characteristic of the text on the other hand, rests on the fact that the text appears to reveal and explain the ideological and philosophical principles and tenets underpinning the Government's education policy. Government's interpretation of the Review Committee's philosophy on education suggests or exposes its (the Government of the NPP's) own ideological stance on education as being the desire to building a strong and viable knowledge-based economy where individuals will be enterprising and adaptable to the demands of a fast changing world:

Government endorses the recommendations of the Committee on the philosophy of Education in Ghana...As workers of a country aspiring to great economic ambitions they should be trained to become enterprising and adaptable to the demands of a fast changing world driven by modern science and technology.

Essentially, the education process should lead to improvement in the quality of life of all Ghanaians...and also raise their living standards to the levels that they can observe through the global interchange of images, information and ideas...

(WPRERRC, GOG, 2005, pp. 9-10).

The promotional impulse of the extract is displayed by what is suggested as the urgency → response structure. Visible within the text is a sense of urgency for the restructuring of education which demands a quick response. This urgency appears to have been set up by reference to the words '*should*' and '*needs*' which in this context, express both a sense of necessity to have the education system restructured, and an obligation on the part of Government to provide all Ghanaians with the kind of education that will enable them to live meaningful and worthwhile lives:

Government accepts that education [should] result in the formation of well balanced individuals with the requisite knowledge, skills, values and aptitudes...

As workers of a country aspiring to great economic ambitions, they [should] be trained to become enterprising and adaptable...

...To this end, greater emphasis than hitherto [needs] to be, and will be placed on Technical, Agricultural, Vocational education, and on structured Apprenticeship training.

(WPRERRC, GOG, 2005, pp. 9–10).

Similarly, the text in showing the policy direction of Government for the next few years also appears to make use of a couple of declarative/assertive propositions. Whilst this may be seen as a strategy for declaring Governments' intentions and ideology on educational provision, it could equally be argued that such declarative/assertive propositions seem more of a declaration to the public of the urgency for the restructuring of the educational system and hence a strategy employed to solicit the support and involvement of the masses in the process of change:

Government endorses the recommendations of the Committee on the philosophy of education in Ghana...As the workers of a country aspiring to

great economic ambitions they should be trained to become enterprising, and adaptable to the demands of a fast changing world...

(WPRERRC, GOG, 2005, p. 9)

There is also an interesting and effective use of various kinds of pronouns—personal (*they*); possessive (*their*); and reflexive (*themselves*)—in the text to support the promotional intent of the extract. The interesting thing however is that all these pronouns are antecedental to the noun phrases ‘*all Ghanaians*’, ‘*citizens*’, ‘*the workers of a country*’, ‘*the people*’, revealing the potential identity of those being addressed by the text and/or the beneficiaries of the new education reforms being advocated:

As the workers of a country...they should be trained to become enterprising and adaptable to demands of a fast-changing world driven by modern science and technology.

Essentially, the education process should lead to improvement in the quality of life of all Ghanaians by empowering themselves to overcome poverty, and also raise *their* living standards to the levels that *they* can observe through the global interchange of images, information and ideas...

(WPRERRC, GOG, 2005, pp. 9–10).

While this, as suggested earlier, has promotional intent, that is, to advertise the benefits of the education restructuring to the public, it could equally be argued to have a political agenda. It could be said to have revealed the Government’s political and ideological stance on education as being the business agenda for schools (Hatcher, 2000, 2001; Hill, 2001). This agenda aims at ensuring that schools produce compliant, ideologically indoctrinated, pro-capitalist, effective workers. That is to ensure that schooling and education engage in ideological and economic reproduction (Hill, 2001, p. 39).

Also present in the text is the use of both personification and repetition. The lexical item '*the Government*', in this context, is both personified, that is, given animate traits and characteristics, and repeated to present the argument for the policy line and direction taken by the Government. Thus, it is suggested that these figures of speech are used to emphasize Governments resolve to restructure the educational system to meet the demands, challenges and aspirations of modern times:

Government endorses the recommendations of the Committee on the philosophy of education in Ghana. Government accepts that education should result in the formation of well-balanced individuals with the requisite knowledge, skills, values, aptitudes and attitudes to become functional and productive citizens.

(WPRERRC, GOG, 2005, p. 9).

Also used effectively in the text is what is known and referred to in Systemic and Functional Linguistics as 'moderation word' to modify the general statement of intentions and unsubstantiated claims represented in the first paragraph of the text. That is, rather than supporting the generalised statements and unsupported assertions made in the previous paragraph, reference to the lexical item '*essentially*', as seen in the beginning of the second half of the extract appears to modify the whole rationale behind the basic education restructuring agenda. The lexical item thus pins the whole agenda down to the improvement in the quality of life of all Ghanaians. The use of the lexical item this way—as a moderating word—thus work out perfectly with the explanatory nature and character of the text. It does explicate the 'goal' towards which attainment the education process is expected to be geared and the processes leading to that goal.

Interdiscursive analysis

Dominant in this extract is neo-liberal ideology and discourse of knowledge economy. Education in this context is viewed and redefined in utilitarian terms (Hill, 2001; Chitty, 2004). It is described as a means to 'personal fulfilment'. It is expected

to lead to the creation of wealth and the empowerment of the individual to become enterprising to overcome poverty, raise their own living standards and adapt to the demands of a fast-changing world:

...As the workers of a country...they should be trained to become enterprising and adaptable to the demands of a fast-changing world driven by science and technology.

...education process should lead to improvement in the quality of life of all Ghanaians by empowering the people themselves to overcome poverty, and also to raise their living standards to the level that they can observe...

(WPRERRC, GOG, 2005, pp. 9–10).

Also featuring prominently in the extract is the rhetoric of globalisation. That is, the recent phenomenon of flows of capital (both physical and financial), people, information, culture among others, from and between countries which have been made possible by technological change, especially the growth of electronic forms of communication, and the development of world-wide economic intergration and its encouragement in recent decades by neo-liberal economic policies. King (2004, p. 48) refers to this concept as the ‘exchanges that transcend borders and which occur instantaneously and electronically’. Thus, in the extract, this issue of globalisation appears to have been portrayed as an inevitable global phenomenon which could be attained or enhanced through reforms and adjustments in education:

Essentially, the education process should lead to improvement in the quality of life of all Ghanaians and...also raise their living standards to the levels they can observe through the global interchange of images, information and ideas.

(WPRERRC, GOG, 2005, p. 10).

There appears also to be social democratic impulses present in the extract. Reference to expressions such as *all 'Ghanaians'* and *'empowering the people'* for example, appears to invoke social justice discourses of equity, inclusion, equality of outcomes by which a level playing field is offered to all the citizens to create wealth through their own efforts and as a result contribute towards the socio-economic and political transformation of the country. However, these social democratic ideals seem to have been premised on economic change—creation of wealth, reduction of poverty, raising living standards—and as such have become downplayed and suppressed, leading to its eventual domination, marginalisation and hybridisation by the neo-liberal discourse of building a knowledge-based economy. That is, the creation of a society in which citizens will strive on their intellectual capabilities, skills and competencies to make meaningful advancements and contributions for themselves and their nations. Hill (2001) for instance, contends that the neo-liberal idea of knowledge-based economy as it is being emphasized in this context, aims at producing an ideologically compliant but technically skilled workforce for capitalist enterprises:

...the education process should lead to improvement in the quality of life of 'all Ghanaians by empowering the people themselves' to overcome poverty, and also raise their living standards...They should also be equipped to create wealth through their own endeavours, the wealth that is needed for a radical socio-economic and political transformation of the country...

(WPRERRC, GOG, 2005, p. 10)

There are equally visible signs of 'unfilled gaps' and 'silences' within the text. For example, although it is established that the 'voice' being represented in the text is that of Government, no mention has been made of 'who' actually provides the educational services identified to the people. In other words, although Government is very clear on how education should be restructured—the citizens should be trained, equipped and empowered to take control of their own lives and as a result contribute directly to national development—it is unable to point out in explicit terms who

provides these services to the people for them to be able to meet the challenges. Similarly, by identifying that emphasis than hitherto needs to be placed on a particular subject on the school curriculum, Government again is unable, or fails, to say whether that emphasis should come from the Government itself or the other stakeholders, notably parents and students or businesses who benefit either directly or indirectly from the products of the school system:

...the education process should lead to...empowering the people themselves to overcome poverty, and also raise their living standards...They should be equipped to create...wealth that is needed for a radical socio-economic and political transformation of the country...emphasis than hitherto needs, and will be placed on Technical, Agricultural, Vocational education, and on structured Apprenticeship training.

(WPRERRC, GOG, 2005, p. 10)

Whilst in one sense government's role in all these could be said to be covert in the text, it is also revealing that this is one aspect of neo-liberal discourse on education. This arguably signifies the rolling back of the state's direct intervention and, or involvement in education, and the creation of common markets and its attendant consequences of competition, privatization and 'choice'. Seen in this light therefore, the extract seemed to have purchased a neo-liberal ticket for schools and in fact education in Ghana for the next couple of years that the President Kufour led NPP Government will be in power.

Furthermore, the analysis of text in this section of the chapter also suggests a discursive shift in discourse, from what is perceived as the Review Committee's position on the philosophy of education in Ghana, to the Government's own ideology and discourse on education provision and delivery. That is, whilst the extract makes it explicitly clear that the Review Committee's position on the purpose of education is the total development of the 'self', the Government in its own interpretation is seen as drawing on other discourses that reveal its philosophical and ideological stance as

far as education is concerned. The reference to expressions such as *'productive citizens'*; *'economic ambitions'*; *'knowledge-based economy'*; *'global interchange'* among others suggests that Government's own position and philosophy differs from that of the Committee. Such expressions suggest that Government's philosophy is on preparing the youth to enter the world of work (Dale, 1986; Chitty, 2004) and therefore a reinforcement of the business agenda (Hatcher, 2000; 2001; Hill, 2001) for schools.

In sum, the analysis of text in this section of the chapter explores the future direction of education in Ghana and through that reveals the current Government of Ghana's ideological policy position on and/or towards education. The analysis at the linguistic tier indicates the existence of a policy genre which is interwoven with political and promotional elements and combined with the various linguistic processes, namely the use of: different categories of pronouns; repetition; personification; moderating lexical items; urgency→ response structure; declarative propositions to achieve both informational and explanatory functions of texts

The interdiscursive analysis of the extract reveals a significant discursive shift in what is perceived to be the Education Review Committee's position on the philosophy of education in Ghana, to the current Government of the NPP's own neo-liberal stance underpinning its reforms in education. The NPP's neo-liberal stance on education is exhibited through its perceived view of education as a market commodity, wrapped in the rhetoric of globalisation and knowledge-based economy as well as its donor and or/investor driven agenda. The analysis indicates that the discursive shift is achieved through the suppression, domination and marginalisation of the classical social democratic impulses which are subscribed to, by neo-liberal and capitalist discourses of economic change and *'knowledge-based economy'*.

4.7. Key and sub-themes/discourses emerging from the data

In summary, the analysis of documents in this chapter of the thesis suggests that the extracts presented from the *'fCUBE'* documentation are underpinned principally by the notion of *'education for all'*. That is, the provision and delivery of education to

all Ghanaian citizens on equal basis or terms, and is thus consistent with the provisions of the international agreements (the 1948 and 1989 Declarations about the Rights of the Child; the EFA, 2000; the MDG etc) Ghana has participated in, and subscribed to. This theme appears to be achieved mainly in the documentation through social democratic and progressive ideals of social justice, equity, inclusion and equality of opportunities/starting points, which view education as a public good, free at the point of entry, and as a right. These values entail a formal commitment to the redistribution of social goods (in this case, education) on a more equitable basis grounded in the economics of Keynesianism the politics of corporatism (Hill, 2001) and is underpinned by social democratic consensus. Thus, the social democratic discourse present in the extracts selected for analysis eschews elitism. It aims at giving what Trowler (1998) describes as a 'step up' to the educationally disadvantaged and underprivileged people.

While the data endorses this progressive ideological position as the key theme in the 'fCUBE' documentation, it is however not the only theme that appears to have been subscribed to and represented implicitly by the text. For example, the analysis of data identifies a significant discursive shift in language and policy direction especially between what the policy title (and the title of the extracts selected for analysis) say and what the strategies developed to aid or guard implementation suggest. This discursive shift, the analysis suggests, is in part due to the struggle for dominance between the social democratic ideals and other sub-discourses or sub-themes subscribed to simultaneously and represented by, and in the text.

One of the sub-themes implicit in the data and which the analyses flag has to do with the discourse associated with the 'decolonizing agenda'. That is, the idea of education as a tool for fostering togetherness and national integration for the purposes of nation-building. At the centre of this nation-building agenda is the idea of equipping, empowering and raising the awareness of citizens through education so that they would be able to free themselves mentally from the colonial vestiges, practices, and experiences and to 'stand up' for themselves, their communities and country in times of need (Turner, 1971; McWilliam et al., 1975; Nwomonoh, 1998;

Dei, 2004, 2005). However, in the extracts selected for analysis, this decolonizing agenda appears to have been premised onto social justice and progressive ideals of inclusion, equity, equality and are suppressed, overshadowed and relegated to the background.

Another sub-theme which the 'fCUBE' documentation (particularly the first extract) has foregrounded relates to the 'leftist' or socialist discourse of social welfare. That is, the notion of the State as a principal agent and stakeholder in the creation of a welfare society. In the context of this study, the socialist ideological viewpoint shares common features, language and values with social democratic ideology on education. However, the difference between these two ideological discourses rests in the fact that whereas the social democratic ideological discourse on education is seen as having exhibited strong commitments to social justice issues, what is referred to in this context as the 'leftist' or socialist discourse on education appears to advocate for the use of local and national state to achieve what Hill (2001) describes as 'socially just (defined as egalitarian) anti-discriminatory society' (p. 16). In context, socialist discourse emphasizes among other things, more resource and state funding for education; a fully comprehensive schooling in place of selective education; an egalitarian redistribution of resources within and between educational institutions, including affirmative action for underachieving and underprivileged individuals and groups; an egalitarian and anti-elitist common curriculum for all. This is set off in the text by reference to the 'State', the 'Government' and other institutions and establishments of governance. However, these socialist tenets appear to have co-existed or represented alongside social democratic ideals explicated earlier and as such have arguably become marginalised by the latter.

Interestingly, the dominant social democratic ideals (and its embedded decolonizing agenda) together with the socialist undercurrents of state provision are suggested as being competed with and contradicted in context by the pressure on Government to compete in global economy. This is wrapped up in neo-liberal and capitalist discourse of 'skills for knowledge-based economy', which feature prominently in latter extracts. The neo-liberal ideology has as its basic principles, a belief in

competitive individualism, an ideological representation of a 'reduced' role for the state, and a maximization of the market (Olssen et al., 2004, p. 136). Theoretically, the neo-liberal ideology in context is a criticism against the intervention of the State and Government based on a number of presumptions which are perceived and condemned as collective, socialist and economically misguided. The terminology used by Trowler (1998, p. 64) to capture this discourse in educational ideological terms is 'enterprise education'. It is concerned primarily with developing people in terms of transferable core skills to be good, compliant, ideologically indoctrinated, pro-capitalist workers (Hill, 2001, p. 39).

The basic tenets of the ideological themes highlighted by the documentary data analysis are further summarised and illustrated in table 1 below.

Table 1: Contrasting ideological perspectives on education

Political ideology	Social democracy	Socialism	Neo-liberalism/economic rationalism
Educational ideological terminology	Progressivism	Social Reconstructionism	Enterprise
View of purpose of education	Personal and social development	Empowering marginalised groups and changing the status quo in the interest of equity	Increasing human capital
View of pupil/student	Entitlee	Change agent	Raw material
View of parents	Partners	Could be involved in pressing for change	Supporters, consumers
View of teachers and other stakeholders	Partners	Can either hinder or facilitate change	Some teachers are too anti-business. Industry and commerce should be partners
Role of Government	Partners	First among equal partners but usually repressive	Minimal
Appropriate curriculum	Student centred	Developing critical thinking and linking theory and action	Vocational/technical
Key principles	<p>a. There is a need for intervention by state into most aspects of social provision, including education.</p> <p>b. Without regulation social inequalities will become exacerbated and the disadvantaged will become relatively worse off.</p> <p>c. Encourages pluralistic decision-making with the involvement of all stakeholders.</p>	<p>a. State intervention is paramount to achieving a key goal of equality of opportunities.</p> <p>b. Favours an education system, the aim of which is the flourishing on the collective society, community and individual.</p> <p>c. Aims at fostering cultures within classrooms, schools and communities.</p>	<p>a. This is an individualistic or anti-collective ideology, It sees the individual pursuing hi/her own interests as the key to happiness.</p> <p>b. The free market should be left to its own devices with very minimum Government intervention.</p> <p>c. Attempts at social planning are doomed because of the complexities of society.</p>
Principles applied to education	<p>a. Education is an important means by which social inequality can be mitigated and made more meritocratic.</p> <p>b. Encourages and promotes local community involvement in education.</p>	<p>a. Encourages egalitarian redistribution of resources within and between schools including affirmative action for underachievers.</p> <p>b. Encourages increase in powers of education</p>	<p>a. Schools and individuals should compete with one another.</p> <p>b. Parents are consumers and should be given the information needed to make intelligent</p>

	c. Education leads to greater levels of social mobility based on merit, particularly intelligence and hard work.	authorities in the development of policies for equality of outcomes. c. Favours the creation of educational institutions as centres of critical debate.	choices. c. Diversity within the education system should be encouraged in order to provide extensive choice.
Key points	a. This ideology rejects elitism and favours mass access to higher education. b. The role of education is to give a 'step-up' to disadvantaged individuals and groups where there are concerns about social inequality. c. 'Student-centred' in the sense of valuing students' participation in planning, delivering, assessing and evaluating courses.	a. Views education as a force for creating an improved individual to address prevailing social norms and help change them for the better. b. Shares with progressivists, a preference for active, problem-solving pedagogy. c. Favours the use of local and national state to achieve a socially just anti discriminatory society.	a. Education is primarily concerned with developing people to be good and efficient workers. b. 'What will it help us to do' is the key question in deciding what should be taught. c. There is considerable emphasis on transferable 'core skills': communication, IT, literacy etc.

Adapted and revised from Trowler (1998, pp.55–67) and Hill (2001, pp. 7–28)

Thus, the adaptation and revision of both Trowler (1998) and Hill's (2001) ideas represented in the table above was purposefully carried out with the view to capturing, explaining and reiterating in explicit terms, the key principles and tenets of the ideological perspectives which are suggested by the documentary data analysis as discourses drawn upon in documenting the 'fCUBE' policy provisions and purposes.

In summary, it is important to reiterate that although the issue of struggle for dominance between the key and sub-themes/discourses and its resultant discursive shift which the documentary data analysis highlights is a contentious one, in terms of the readings privileged for the purpose of this study, this phenomenon has significant undertones. Apart from the disjuncture between policy provisions (particularly the title) and the strategies for implementation, the discursive shift also appears to have revealed the current Government's position and ideological perspective on educational reform.

4.8. Questions arising from the documentary analysis

There is reasonable evidence from the discussion in this part of the thesis which suggests that the 'fCUBE' policy is deeply rooted in classical social democratic values, in that there is a strong commitment to the principles of social justice and equity in the distribution of educational opportunities, facilities and services between all Ghanaian children. However, as the data further suggests, owing to what the analysis further subscribes to, or describes as the globalisation of capitalism in the late 80s and the early 90s, these social democratic tenets appear to have been competed with, downplayed, suppressed, dominated and marginalised by neo-liberal ideals of economic change. Whilst this discursive shift in policy discourse and ideology suggested by the data is in part important in the exploration of the 'broader' policy issue under investigation, it nonetheless raises a number of significant questions relevant to the exploration of the interview data and the subsequent discussion.

Particularly the analyses raise the following questions:

- To what extent is the view about commitment to social justice and equity, which the documentary data analysis highlights, subscribed to and explicated by the interviewees?
- How, or in what ways is the view about the discursive shift in discourses and ideologies, supported and explicated in the interview data?
- There is also a credible evidence from the documentary analysis to suggest significant omissions and departure or disjuncture between the policy title (and in fact, titles of extracts), in theory and what the strategies and approaches identified aim at achieving in practice. To what extent is this view explicated in the interview data and what reason could be advanced to explain this phenomenon?
- In what ways do the interviewees' interpretation of the 'fCUBE' policy provisions and their articulation of the achievements, problems and practical

suggestions unmask or indicate a genuine reflection of the policy components in the implementation process?

These questions are addressed collectively by chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 which explore the interview data on thematic basis.

4.9. Chapter summary

The major aim of this study is to explore the apparent policy implementation paradox in education using the fCUBE policy as a case in point and with a view to finding out the extent to which the free, compulsory and universal components of the fCUBE have been implemented and are reflected in the implementation process. In addressing this aim, this chapter analyses five key extracts from the fCUBE documentation using the CDA model epitomised and conceptualised from two analytical tiers (Taylor, 2004). Primarily, the linguistic tier of analysis burdens itself with the task of finding out the linguistic and semiotic choices made in the text and how these combine with the social context to produce meaning. The interdiscursive analysis of the extracts focuses on highlighting the discourses that have been drawn upon in the text and how these work out to sustain meaning.

The findings from the analysis of these texts indicate that in addition to some key new textual formations, such as the use of lexical items to mitigate and moderate the policy intents and provisions, there appears to be a significant discursive shift in ideological discourses underpinning the general rules and guidelines informing the provision of basic education in general, and the implementation of the fCUBE policy in particular. The analyses reveal that the fCUBE policy per se is seen as firmly rooted in social democratic values, although traces of decolonizing elements could be said to be embedded implicitly in these progressive ideals. This is indicative of the equity, inclusion and equality intents and responsibilities it invokes on the State, its apparatus and structures of governance to provide ‘quality’ education of some sort to all school-age children, and all Ghanaians for that matter. However, with the advent of the global neo-liberal ideology and discourse of ‘marketization’, ‘competition’, ‘choice’ and ‘privatisation’ and its resultant values of ‘knowledge-based economy’

and ‘the preparation of the youth to enter the world of work’, of the late 90s, these social democratic impulses appear to have become competed with, downplayed, suppressed, dominated, marginalised and hybridized, leading to their eventual overshadowing by the neo-liberal ideology and principles.

Given the overall aim of the study, the findings of the documentary analysis are illuminating. They are illuminating in the sense that they offer insightful explanation and, or a benchmark on the basis of which the meso-level actors’ and implementers’ interpretations and articulation of the fCUBE policy components as envisioned by the 1992 Republican Constitution are assessed and conclusions drawn. In discussing the efficacy of the CDA in explicating discourses drawn upon in policy texts, Taylor (2004) reiterates similar concerns. He states that ‘there is also an emphasis on CDA on the ideological work of the policy text in representing, relating and identifying and that how policy texts construct and sustain power relations ideologically is of particular interest in critical policy research’ (p. 437).

These issues are again returned to in chapter 9 where the findings of both the documentary and interview data analyses are pulled together and discussed. The next four chapters focus on the analysis and interpretation of views from the interview data.

CHAPTER 5: ARTICULATING AND INTERPRETING THE ‘fCUBE’ POLICY PROVISIONS—VIEWS FROM THE INTERVIEW DATA

5.1. Introduction

This and the following three chapters explore the data generated through interviews with the meso-level actors and implementers of policy in the Ghanaian educational system. The interview data exploration utilises a combination of both the narrative and interpretive approaches to data analysis. The justification for using this composite approach follows from the decision to narrate the interviewees’ experiences as a story while pausing intermittently to reflect upon what is being said, its interpretation and the implications therein. Thus, the interview data as a whole is structured as a story, a situated account, a narrative (Jephcote et al., 2004) and as an outcome of the application of the study’s conceptual framework to the meso-level actors’ stories and experience of events. This thus falls in line with Cookson’s (1994) suggestion to remain very close to the words of the respondents and with a minimum interpretation so as to understand their views before jumping to conclusions (p. 129).

The narrative accounts of the meso-level actors and implementers of education policy, who for the purpose of this study are taken as ‘elites’, are presented as they speak about the ‘fCUBE’ implementation process. The intention is to explicate how the ‘elites’, as individuals, groups, and more importantly education officials, who function as ‘mediators in the process of policy making and implementation’ (Jephcote and Davies, 2004, p. 549) articulate their understanding and interpretation of the components of ‘fCUBE’ policy, and their views about the entire process of implementation. For the purposes of clarity and in-depth discussion of these issues, the interviewees’ narrative accounts are presented and discussed on a thematic basis and as separate chapters. The themes along which the interview itself has been developed and organised, and the data presented and discussed, are derived as a result of a reflection on pieces of evidence in the ‘fCUBE’ policy documentation. So whilst this chapter focuses on the interviewees’ interpretation and articulation of the ‘fCUBE’ policy provisions and components as contained in the official policy documentation, Chapters 6 and 7 respectively present and explore their views of the successes or achievements, and the problems, pitfalls or general constraints of the

'fCUBE' over the years of its implementation. Chapter 8 explores the interviewees' views about the possible ways to improve practice.

Given that these four chapters immediately follow what is described in this context as the 'official policy position', that is, the reading of the 'fCUBE' policy which is privileged for the purposes of analysis in this study, the thematic presentations and explorations of the interview data is deemed crucial in pointing out and explicating the matches and mis-matches between what is being subscribed to in this thesis as the 'official interpretation of the policy provisions' and the actors' own perceptions, conceptualisations and interpretations of the 'fCUBE' provisions. Thus, the interviewees' narrative accounts are generally geared towards documenting and validating the similarities and dissonances between the 'fCUBE' policy intentions and provisions as contained in the policy documentation, and the policy outcomes in practice. This after all is the way discourses subscribed to, are perpetuated and made dominant in practice by the actors and mediators who re-contextualize policy.

So, these four chapters together with the preceding one on documentary data analysis provide an overview along which the matches and mis-matches between the 'official policy views' and the interviewees' own accounts of the 'fCUBE' implementation process are structured and explored.

5.2. The interviewees: overview of the selection process

Sixteen actors of policy who for the purposes of this study are identified as having 'elite' roles were initially selected using the convenience sampling technique, for opened-ended, semi-structured, individual interviews. However due to certain operational problems, much of which is fully explored in chapter 3, five of these sixteen individual interviews ended up being group discussions/interviews, whilst some of the interviewees initially selected were replaced by others through the use of 'snow ball' sampling technique. Whilst these changes in methodological design were initially thought of as potentially detrimental to the overall outcomes of the study, the opposite was rather the case. The interviewees selected through 'snow balling' proved equally efficient to the task, whilst the group discussions greatly enriched the

data, as they facilitated and made possible more than the responses and views envisaged to be collected.

The selection of actors at the meso-level of implementation was by virtue of their positions as mediators of the policy making and implementation processes. The selection of the various districts and regions from which interviewees were ‘purposefully’ selected, was intended to exemplify the diverse contexts within which the ‘fCUBE’ policy is implemented and how these impact on the process of implementation. (See ‘data collection—sources and instruments’ in chapter 3 for detailed justification for elite interviewing; sampling technique; selection, preparation and access to interviewees.) Pseudonyms were assigned to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents while at the same time ensuring the validity and reliability of data. (Refer to Appendix 3 for a list of pseudonyms assigned to interviewees and their corresponding transcript numbers.)

So, while the interviewees identified in this study as having ‘elite’ roles refer to the position of power held by the individuals in mediating and re-contextualizing policy, this does not necessarily mean that these actors enjoy total hegemony as far as their views are concerned. What it does signify is their capacity to influence discourse in terms of their narrative privilege. In this regard, Cookson’s (1994) explanation of the roles of the elites is worth noting. He explains that much of the power of elites is perpetuated through their control of educational discourse and that they create public conversation that sets legitimate boundaries of discourse (p. 116). Setting legitimate boundaries for discourse implies that they do not necessarily have total control over discourse. Therefore the elites’ positions and accounts contained in this study are not necessarily identifiable as fixed views to which all other stakeholders must subscribe.

5.3. Analysing the interview data thematically

The data collected through interviews with the meso-level actors of policy in the Ghanaian education system was analysed thematically. The thematic analysis involved coding the transcripts (coding in this context is used to mean re-arranging

the transcripts into thematic categories). In all, 14 codes/thematic categories, emerging from the interview schedule, were identified, namely:

1. Interviewees' conceptualisation of the 'fCUBE' provisions
2. Articulating and interpreting the policy components
3. Ideological underpinnings
4. Purpose of 'fCUBE'
5. Assumptions and contradictions
6. Contributions of 'fCUBE' towards basic education provision and delivery
7. Indicators of success
8. Challenges facing the process of implementation
9. Failures/setbacks of 'fCUBE'
10. Change management issues impacting on implementation process
11. Political interference in the implementation process
12. Socio-cultural and context specific issues affecting implementation process
13. The future
14. Suggestions and recommendations

Out of these thematic categories, emerged four major themes under which these categories are re-organised and merged. For the purposes of in-depth exploration and discussion of the issues that these categories highlight, each of the four themes is treated as a distinct chapter, namely:

- Chapter five – 'Articulating, interpreting and evaluating the 'fCUBE' policy components': merges and discusses thematic categories 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5;
- Chapter six – 'Successes/achievements of 'fCUBE': views from the interview data'; discusses thematic categories 6 and 7;
- Chapter seven – 'Setbacks/problems of the 'fCUBE' implementation process interviewees' accounts'; incorporates and discusses thematic categories 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12; and
- Chapter eight – 'Suggestions and recommendations to improve practice': discusses issues to do with thematic categories 13 and 14.

Re-organising the thematic categories into distinct chapters has allowed for the issues highlighted by each thematic category to be explored and discussed across the entire interview transcript and not limited to any specific questions.

It should however be noted that owing to the large number of interviewees (resulting from the decision to conduct both individual and group interview, which is fully justified in chapter 3), in reporting the findings of the interview data, the transcripts are not explored and reported individually. Rather, use is made of ‘selective reportage’. That is, reporting interviewees’ views selectively. Similarly, in presenting and discussing the findings, the thematic categories highlighted are not directly subsumed in the structural presentation of the chapters. They are incorporated into one another and discussed under the chapter titles respectively. The rationale for these stem from the need to ensure that only ‘interesting’ insights (on the basis of their personal views, contradictions and conformities) from the data are highlighted and explored, whilst at the same time avoiding excessive repetition and its associated monotony.

5.4. Chapter overview

This chapter presents and discusses the first section of the interview data drawing largely on the analysis of the documentary data in chapter 4, which explores the ideological tenets and underpinnings of the ‘fCUBE’ policy, and the discourses subscribed to in documenting and strategising towards meeting these policy intentions. The chapter opens up with an introduction to this, and the following three chapters on the interview data. This is followed by a brief account of the interviewee selection process and the method of sampling, and a brief description of how the data are analysed and discussed respectively. Thereafter comes the exploration of the interviewees’ interpretation and articulation of the ‘fCUBE’ policy purposes and components.

The exploration of the interviewees’ accounts in this chapter reveals that while a wide range of interpretations are assigned to the ‘fCUBE’ components, generally speaking, these arguments could usefully be structured or subsumed under three

main ideological themes—social democratic, socialist and neo-liberal ideological perspectives. The data further suggest that these ideological perspectives in context could be considered as contrasting in terms of the perspectives and principles they bring to bear on education. Both the social democratic and socialist ideologies appear to share common languages, goals and objectives and are set off in this particular context by the call on the state to intervene to address the injustices in the social system. However, as far as the study is concerned, the difference between these ideological perspectives illuminated in Chapter 4 is premised on the fact that whilst the former is seen as committed to the principle of social justice and the active collaboration between the school and community, the latter emphasises State provision and delivery of educational services. The neo-liberal ideological perspective on education views education as a market commodity and encourages stakeholders to take an active part in it through their own means, for the betterment of themselves, their communities and nation. (Refer to Chapter 4 for a detailed discussion of the theoretical differences between these ideological perspectives highlighted here.)

While the following three chapters collectively explore these issues further along the lines of different themes, structurally the approach adopted by these and the present chapter are quite similar. They all compare views across the interview data by making references to specific themes within the ‘fCUBE’ documentation, and in some cases the documentary analysis in Chapter 4. This is done with a view to giving comparative commentary on the positions privileged as the ‘official interpretation of the policy provisions’ in this study. The only point of divergence between this and the following three chapters however rests in the fact that whilst the former focuses mainly on the interviewees’ interpretation and articulation of the ‘fCUBE’ policy components, the latter three explore the interviewees’ experiences of events in totality. Structuring this chapter this way allows for the points of convergence between the documentary evidence (from the previous chapter) and the interviewees’ views to be highlighted, whilst at the same time taking note of the inconsistencies and contradictions in individuals’ and groups’ accounts. Undoubtedly, this is one way of explicating the point made earlier that identifying actors of policy as ‘elites’

in terms of their re-contextualizing roles neither means that their positions are those of ‘truth’ nor does it necessarily imply that they all would subscribe to similar educational and ideological views.

Although semi-structured in nature, the interview schedule was designed in a way that all the interviewees ended up answering the same set of questions. (An outline of the interview schedule can be found in Appendix 2.) However in this particular chapter, the interviewees were required specifically to articulate the ‘fCUBE’ policy purposes, goals and intentions based on their personal conceptualizations and understandings of the policy provisions vis-à-vis the process of implementation. The rationale behind this was to make sense of what the interviewees thought the purposes of the policy were; how they conceptualized and interpreted the policy components; whilst at the same time taking note of how these were likely or liable to impact on the implementation process. (See Chapter 3 for a more detailed justification for the decision to use semi-structured opened-ended interviews.) This, together with pieces of evidence from the following three chapters is then used to determine the extent to which the ‘fCUBE’ policy components have been implemented and are reflected in the process of implementation.

5.5. Exploring interviewees’ accounts

The interviewees’ understanding and interpretation of the ‘fCUBE’ policy components and provisions is central to this study because it is one of the key pillars on the basis of which the overall effectiveness of the ‘fCUBE’ policy would be assessed. For this reason, the discussion of the issues in this section is geared towards explicating how the ‘free’, ‘compulsory’, ‘universal’ and ‘basic education’ components of the ‘fCUBE’ policy are conceptualized and articulated by the meso-level actors and implementers selected from the Ghanaian educational system.

In narrating and discussing the comments of the interviewees, the ‘selective reportage’ (refer to Chapter 3 for rationale and justification) is used whilst the framework outlined in table 1, on pages 172-173 is used to interrogate the purpose of

the 'fCUBE' policy as well as the ideological discourses and undertones implicit in the interviewees' interpretation.

5.5.1. Interpreting the 'free' component of 'fCUBE'

The interviewees' perception, articulation and interpretation of the 'free' component of the 'fCUBE' policy is critical to the overall aim of this enquiry. This is particularly the case since the conceptualization and operationalization of this component to a larger extent gives meaning to/or determines the extent to which the other components, typically the 'compulsory' component of the 'fCUBE' policy, could be said to be reflected in the implementation and institutionalization processes. When asked what their personal understanding and interpretation of the 'free' component of the 'fCUBE' policy was, the interviewees expressed a general consensus pointing to the difficulty in conceptualizing and operationalizing the 'freeness' of basic education in Ghana. For example, Akpene (a Regional Director of Education) whose responsibilities among other things include; supervising and monitoring the District Directors of Education within the region; and a technical adviser to the Minister of the region in all educational matters noted:

Akpene: When it comes to 'free' education, first and foremost, the freeness is in the fact that children do not pay anybody to teach them. That is, they do not pay their teachers. So that aspect is free. They do not buy textbooks as at the moment, neither do they bring their own furniture or even are they forced to build schools. So it is free. But then...you know...most parents do not understand why they should those days be paying some of the levies for sporting activities, for cultural activities and for a few other activities, like the levies, which we fix with the approval of District Assemblies.

Akpene, well aware of the controversies surrounding the freeness of basic education in Ghana recently, spoke of, and limited the 'free' component of 'fCUBE' to non-payment of tuition, facilities and infrastructural user fees or charges. While this interpretation in context is acknowledged, the view seems to contrast sharply with

the 'dictionary' usage of the word 'free' in its absoluteness to mean or denote total freedom and, or exemption from the payment of money for the usage of a facility, in this case, the provision and delivery of basic education. Similarly, in a sense, her usage of the expressions '*so that aspect is free*', '*they do not buy textbooks as at the moment*' and '*most parents do not understand why they should those days be paying some of the levies...*', appears to set off, or reveal the debates and controversies into which the 'fCUBE' policy, particularly the 'free' aspect of basic education in Ghana is enmeshed in recent times. Seen in this light, the reference to such expressions can be seen as a firm refusal to engage in the debate about the complexities in operationalizing the 'free' aspect of the 'fCUBE' policy.

Unlike Akpene, Kwabla (an Assistant Director of Education in charge of monitoring in one of the regions) readily alluded to the complexities and obscurities that the 'free' component of 'fCUBE' is shrouded in. When asked to reflect on the freeness of 'fCUBE' and to comment on whether the levies that are imposed on parents and guardians could or did not constitute fees, he conceded that there has been some problem with the 'free' aspect of the policy. For him, if, in spite of the provisions made in the 1992 Republican Constitution of Ghana regarding the implementation of the 'fCUBE' policy, any citizen of Ghana has to pay anything, no matter how it is labelled, for his or her child or ward to be educated at the basic level of the Ghanaian educational system, then the very purpose of education being 'free' is defeated or flawed. His exact words are quoted below:

Kwabla: Mm, yea, thank you for that question. Admittedly, I think there has been quite a problem with the 'free' aspect of the policy. I think the authorities themselves have realised it and so even in writing it, they use the small letter 'f', for the free. And as you put it, if somebody should have to pay anything, no matter how it's called, then it defeats the concept of education being free.

Kwabla believes that basic education in Ghana has never been free before and after the 'fCUBE' policy formulation and implementation, until recently when the

'capitation grant concept' was introduced by Government to alleviate the financial difficulties and burdens on 'needy' parents and guardians:

Kwabila: ...the free aspect of education was only limited to the non-payment of tuition fees in the public schools. But other things like feeding the students, their cloths, paying for sports, culture, even supply of furniture, materials, you know, parents and guardians were actually faced with the payment for these and...other fees and levies. And this was becoming a problem. So recently, with effect from the 1st of September 2005, this concept of 'capitation grant' was brought in...

While the rationale for free education is not fully visible from the above accounts, implicitly, Kwabila's reference to the payment of 30 thousand cedis (which is less than £2) on behalf of each child yearly by the Government of Ghana suggests that the purpose of 'fCUBE' is to offer all Ghanaian children equal opportunity to educate themselves to the fullest of their abilities. This is consistent with the key principles of social democratic and socialist ideologies explicated in table 1 (pp. 172-173) regarding the intervention of the state into most aspects of social provision, particularly education, to achieve a socially just anti discriminatory society.

In another development, Enyonam (a Metropolitan Director of Education, and a member of a group interview/discussion) like many other interviewees reinforced Akpene's view. For her, basic education being free in Ghana meant neither that parents/guardians who wish to support their local schools with donations cannot do so, nor did it imply that parents and guardians cannot, or were not, obliged to take care of the basic and domestic educational needs of their children/wards. Rather, she explained that what it does mean is the fact that the Government was taking up greater percentage of the inputs (provision of infrastructural facilities, payment of teachers' salaries, provision of teaching and learning materials etc) into education and that parents/guardians were also expected to complement Government's efforts by meeting their childrens'/wards' domestic needs. However, when quizzed as to whether what parents and guardians pay as 'developmental levies' did not constitute

fees, she became very defensive. She argued that the ‘developmental levies’, as it is popularly known, could not be considered as ‘school fees’ for the reason that these fees or levies were not being used to pay the teachers for teaching the children, neither were they used to provide infrastructural facilities and teaching and learning materials for the schools. Rather, she emphasized that the ‘developmental levies’, as it were, were being used for ‘putting up re-runners’ and for organizing ‘extra-classes’ among other things. In defence of her position on the matter, she made interesting remarks:

Enyonam: ...we have brought our own children into the world and we have a responsibility to them. We can't just put everything on the Government, knowing our economic situation...So I think we can't just usher ourselves into a project that will be too much for us...As for the parents...they are saying that parents can help the schools if they feel there is the need. But then, it's even not compulsory...

Although Enyonam's remark is insightful as it brings to light the real economic challenges that beset the ‘fCUBE’ implementation process, in another sense, she seemed to have contradicted herself. Her response to the question of developmental levies could be viewed as contradictory to the ‘fCUBE’ policy intent, especially the ‘free’ intent. Again, her reference to the urgent need for parents to be directly responsible for the educational needs of their children suggests or could be interpreted to mean a case against the creation of a welfare society. That is, the rolling back of the state away from fulfilling its civil responsibilities towards its citizens, and a call for the establishment a kind of neo-liberal and knowledge based society where ideals such as individualism, consumerism, competition and privatization are entrenched. This is a possible indication of support for neo-liberal perspective on education (See Table 1, on pages 172-173 for the full view of this ideology on education.) However, her reference again to the payment of developmental levies as not being compulsory run parallel to, or contradicts her argument. Her reference to the payment of these fees and levies as being voluntary suggests that Government or the State still has, as its primary responsibility, the

provision and delivery of education to its citizens. This therefore appears to negate the neo-liberal and capitalist reading of her account, suggesting that her main emphasis is on parents and guardians taking up what could best be described as ‘private costs’ to education whilst Government bears the ‘public costs’.

Enyonam’s concerns were fully and vehemently endorsed by the majority of the interviewees who conceded to the issue of ‘private’ cost to education but went on to argue out the justification for asking parents/guardians to pay what they described as ‘developmental levies’. For example, in the following excerpt, the ‘voice’ of Kweku (a senior official of the National Headquarters of the GES) is presented as he explained his conception of free education in relation to, what to him, was the legal basis for the payment developmental levies:

Kweku: Yea, it is true that when we say that basic education is free it doesn't mean that Government has 100% responsibility...Parents also have a role to play. The parents role has to do with may be, preparing the child to go to school in terms of feeding the child, clothing the child and then getting the child basic needs like schoolbag, pen, pencil, eraser and exercise books for the child's education. Then when he gets into the school the rest is basically free. I think to the parent in the very deprived communities, yes, there has been some form of levies. The District Assemblies have the authority to impose levies for developmental activities and education is one of such areas where they have been imposing levies on the children and then automatically it comes on to the parents to pay...

While acknowledging that what actually constituted ‘free’ education is a bit blurring and controversial, other interviewees, particularly Senyo (an Assistant Director of Education in charge of monitoring and inspection in a regional directorate), Yayra (a District Director of Education), Ewoenam (an Assistant Director of Education in charge of supervision) and Elorm (a District Director of Education) in their respective interview sessions picked categorically on the

'capitation grant' as a remedy to the problem. They argued that Government has taken note of the misconceptions and confusions surrounding the 'free' aspect of 'fCUBE' and as a result has instituted the 'capitation grant' as a suitable remedy. They explained that the 'capitation grant' is actually a grant of thirty-thousand cedis per child per annum, paid by the Government to the schools on behalf of all Ghanaian children of school-going age to replace the levies that were imposed on their parents/guardians. According to them, this practice was informed by research which revealed the profound economic hardships that parents/guardians, especially the poverty stricken ones, in remote and, or deprived areas face in paying levies imposed on them hence the decision by the Government to pay these fees to offset the burden on these parents/guardians, who could not afford to pay these levies. This explanation is for instance explicated fully in Senyo and Yayra's words:

Senyo: ...hitherto it has been the policy of the Government to ask parents to pay some levies. But even that it is the PTA of the various schools which undertake this part of the assignment whereby the PTA meets and then they come out with the levies so that out of the levies they'll pay part to the District Assemblies and then the District Assemblies will use part of the money for rehabilitation of the school building and so forth and so on...

Yayra: Yes, presently there is no developmental levy for any school that I know of because Government has taken this up and is paying 30 thousand for every pupil right from KG to JSS 3, so all developmental levies are taken off. But as in a society and as a stakeholder, if you want things to go the way to please you and if you can support, Government does not debar parents or associations or groups from contributing to whatever Government is doing. So that one is there and it's voluntary.

However, when asked whether the payment of capitation grant could not exacerbate the already glaring inequalities between the urban and rural communities in terms of

the distribution or provision and delivery of educational facilities, Ewoenam and Elorm, unlike the others were on the affirming side. They conceded that while the practice could be seen as a genuine effort to offer a helping hand to the needy parents/guardians, when viewed critically, it could end up benefiting those children in the urban areas, neglecting those that the programme is intended to help. Their line of argument was that the programme could practically end up making the ‘wealthy’ schools (in terms of funds derived from the number of pupils) wealthier and the ‘sinking’ ones, in this same terms, more resource stricken. While Ewoenam and Elorm’s acceptance of this fact amounts to ‘soul searching’, the point still remains that their accounts show quite glaringly that the remedial action taken to combat the complexities surrounding the ‘free’ component is likely to worsen the already glaring disparities (Nudzor, 2004) between the rural and urban divide. The ensuing excerpt for instance presents Elorm conceding to the downside of the ‘capitation grant’:

Elorm: *Yea, we have identified this little flaw in the capitation arrangement.*

Yea, if a school has enough pupils, I mean, is well enrolled, it means it has enough money to run the school. In the same way if a school does not have enough children, it is handicapped. So we’re proposing to our heads in Accra that there should be some minimum level of money to each school. Then from that point on, the enrolment figures are used. So every school should attract some minimum...

Again, while the interviewees’ accounts, particularly those of Senyo, Kweku and Yayra appear as frantic efforts to weed out the misconceptions and misunderstandings surrounding the ‘free’ component of ‘fCUBE’, certain intricacies remain very implicit to their contribution. In the first place, the interviewees’ explanation of events, particularly the practice of paying ‘developmental levies’ appear to suggest that the practice is far from over. The continuous existence of the bodies—PTAs, DAs, SMCs—which hitherto charge or impose the ‘developmental levies’, coupled, with the explanation that parents/guardians are not being barred from making contributions towards educating their children/wards suggests that in

spite of the introduction of capitation grant, the practice is still going to continue unabated.

Similarly, there appears to be a point of contradiction in the interviewees' presentation as to whose responsibility it is to charge these levies and what specifically these levies are intended to be used for. That is, whilst Senyo is of the view that the 'developmental levies' were being imposed by the PTAs, Kweku and Akpene revealed that the levies were being charged by the schools with the approval of the DAs. In the same way, whilst one school of thought has it that the levies are to be used for rehabilitative purposes in the schools, the other is of the view that the levies are intended to be used to purchase materials which promote effective teaching and learning in schools. What these concerns generally portray therefore is the feeling that either the interviewees are themselves unaware of what the levies are to be used for or were wilfully bent on presenting 'official policy lines' and thereby refusing to engage in debate about the complexities of the 'freeness' of basic education in Ghana.

Generally, the issues raised so far are significant to the enquiry for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is evident from the interviewees' accounts why the 'free' component of the 'fCUBE' is interpreted and accentuated in a restricted sense to mean non-payment of tuition and infrastructural and facilities user-fees. The exploration of the interview data suggest that for economic reasons the 'free' component of 'fCUBE' is not operationalized as free in its 'absolute' or strictest terms. Perhaps the interviewees felt that if the components of 'fCUBE', typically, the 'free' aspect is accentuated to mean 'absolute freedom' and the exemption of citizens from contributing their quota to educating the country's future leaders, 'economic chaos' will ensue and Government will cease to exist. This, they feared may lead to an eventual disintegration of society. For this reason, the Ghanaian educators appeared to be drawn towards or resorted to the use of rhetoric as political weaponry to cling to official policy directives instead of engaging directly and quite frankly in meaningful debates and discourses about the complexities of basic education provision.

Similarly, although most of the interviewees appear to have made some pointed contribution as to why it is essential for well-to-do parents, guardians and citizens to make meaningful contributions towards education, they appear to have conflated their arguments perhaps with neo-liberal ideology and thinking on education. Their negation of the parents/guardians' perception and preference for the provision of basic education as a fundamental responsibility of Government, suggests and reinforces to a larger extent, the neo-liberal advocacy against dependency on the state. Again, their reference to the long-standing economic issues, as barriers to providing accessible education to Ghanaian children suggest two 'faces of the coin' to financing education, particularly in Ghana. The interviewees' accounts suggest that there are both private and public costs to education. The private cost involve those costs that parents and guardians have to incur—feeding, provision of school uniforms, provision of writing materials, and in some cases transportation to and from the institutions of learning—in preparing the children/ward for formal teaching and learning. The public costs have to do with the investment of Government—in the form of teachers' salaries, provision of school infrastructure, bearing the cost of training teachers and so on—towards education. Furthermore, the interviewees' accounts seem to indicate that whilst Government is seen as playing its part of the bargain, parents on the other hand seem to, or are inclined to shifting their responsibilities to Government.

Alternatively, the position outlined in the above paragraph could be read into differently. Arguably, the position outlined above appears to have aligned itself with, or seem to be in line with social democratic ideals which seek the involvement of stakeholders in the educational process. This follows from the premise that the position appears to register the view that whereas Government intervention is seen as necessary, parents are also encouraged to have a stake, or are partners in the educational process.

Kofi, an executive member of GNAT, illuminated all these concerns in his narrative account. He traced the history of the concept of 'free' and 'compulsory' education to Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's Accelerated Development Plan of 1951/52 under which

efforts were made to make education accessible to as many people as possible. He asserted that under the current dispensation, the difficulty of operationalizing the 'free' component has led to the modification of the 'free' component of 'fCUBE' to a small-letter 'f', signifying the commitment of Government to meeting some, and not all demands to basic education provision and delivery. For him, the capacity of parents to meet the private costs of education, whilst Government also provides its bit, through recruiting, training and retaining teachers to deliver, were the critical factors to the success of the 'fCUBE' implementation and institutionalization processes. In the following excerpt, Kofi accentuates the practical complications, limitations and complexities of the freeness of basic education in Ghana:

Kofi: *...If we talk about free education then we need to operationalize the concept 'free'. What component of education is free? Education has both private cost that the person who is being educated or those who offer to help him, in the form of parents have to provide. And here I'm talking for instance about feeding, uniforms, where the child has to walk a distance or there is provision for transportation, you have to do some buses, spend some money on that. And there is an opportunity cost to education. You decide to go for education and you do that at a cost otherwise you may be doing some other thing which perhaps at a very early age could be income earning. So, anybody who decides to participate in education at whatever level is incurring these costs among others.*

For Kofi, apart from the private cost of education, there are other public costs which are/or by legislation must be borne either directly or indirectly by the State:

Kofi: *Then the public also has to incur certain costs. For instance, the Education Act, Act 87 talks about the local authorities building, maintaining schools and things like that, so it means infrastructure has to come from the local authorities as far as basic schools are concerned. Then teachers salaries have to be borne by the state, then*

we have added another dimension of free textbooks and the capacity of those teachers must be built in order for them to respond to changing needs of the curriculum. So that also is a state responsibility. So the question of free?, yes, it is good that we fashion a beautiful policy like that but the objectives more and more are becoming elusive because you cannot divest that access to free education from the workings of the general economy...So that is the problem we have with running the fCUBE...

Thus, Kofi's excerpt presents an interesting overview and summary along which lines the dichotomy and complexities involved in providing free education, particularly in Ghana could be structured. The contribution suggests that inasmuch as there are private costs to education, we cannot claim to have a free system of education (Tomasevski, 2004; 2005), and hence the urgency for operationalizing the individual words and concepts making up the policy title in context.

The interview data discussed in this section allows for the consideration of how the 'free' component of 'fCUBE' is articulated and interpreted by the meso-level actors of policy. The interview data exploration appears to convey the message that although the 'free' component of 'fCUBE' could be said to be designed to offer all Ghanaian children the opportunity to have basic education, there are real controversies over what constitute free education, as there are both private and public costs to education. Whilst the interviewees' articulation and interpretation of the policy provisions is acknowledged in context, it may be contested that given their roles as intermediaries between the governmental and local levels, they may have presented a 'public relations account' of events. However, considering the counterbalancing arguments put up, it is suggested that perhaps a common ground is reached in the deliberations as to what constitutes 'free' education in Ghana. The arguments put forward so far reiterate Tomasevski's (2005) contention that 'to make education free, all direct, indirect and opportunity costs would have to be identified so as to be gradually eliminated through their substitution by public allocations' (p. 2).

5.5.2. Articulating the ‘compulsory’ component of ‘fCUBE’

The interviewees’ understanding and interpretation of the ‘compulsory’ component of ‘fCUBE’ appear to support the provision enshrined in the 1992 Republican Constitution which stipulates that basic education in Ghana is a right, not a privilege, and that all Ghanaian children of school-going age, that is, between the ages of 6–15 years, irrespective of economic condition, linguistic capabilities, political, religious and cultural affiliations, are required by law to be in school. In the excerpts below, Dzifa (an Assistant Director in charge of monitoring and supervision in one of the metropolis) and Kweku, in their respective individual interview sessions articulated the compulsory intent of ‘fCUBE’ clearly in the following words:

Dzifa: *...this policy is to make possible as many, if even hundred percent of school-going-children to be in school, because societies strive on education...Right, we’re saying that it’s compulsory because in a society, we have realised that there are situations where whatever you do people would not want to comply to policy so we’re thinking of, you know, backing it up with some legal document that would force parents as well as guardians to send every child of school-going age to school...*

Kweku: *...looking at the fCUBE as a policy or constitutional requirement, we are saying that in Ghana every child must have access to schooling and then it is compulsory for all parents also to enrol their children in school. I think the idea is that when a child is delivered, he is an asset to the family and then the community as well as the state. So as much as possible all these parties are coming together to make sure that every child born in Ghana or children who are of school-going age in Ghana go through school...So fCUBE is simply saying that children of school-going-age must be given access to go to school. It is compulsory, it is obligatory on the state and parents to make sure that the children go to school.*

Although the above interpretations clearly appear to reveal the compulsory intent of 'fCUBE', they equally seem to suggest that the purpose of basic education being compulsory is to ensure that all citizens of Ghana are educated and adequately empowered to contribute their quota to national development. This idea appears to have been explicated particularly in Kweku's contribution. His reference to the 'fCUBE' policy as a constitutional requirement, coupled with the notion of children being assets to the families, communities and country, appears to set off the discourse about education as a tool for national development (Turner, 1971; McWilliam et al., 1975; Nwomonoh, 1998; Dei, 2004, 2005). While this fits perfectly into the decolonizing agenda explicated in Chapter 4, the idea is again consistent with the socialist and social democratic ideology where the ultimate aim of education is the flourishing of the collective society, community and individuals through commitment to social justice and its related principles of equity, equality, and equality of opportunities among others.

However, it is interesting to note that while Kweku's interpretation appears to reveal the obligatory intent of the 'compulsory' component of 'fCUBE' quite explicitly, Dzifa's contribution gives a very different picture of the situation on the 'grounds'. His reference to the expression '*...we are thinking of, you know, backing it up with some legal document that would force parents...*' suggests that as of the time of the interview the 'compulsory' aspect of 'fCUBE' was not being enforced. This therefore presented a fine opportunity for another pertinent question on the interview schedule to be asked. When asked whether there has been any legal enactment by either Government or Parliament to enforce compliance with this constitutional order, and if so, what punishment was being meted out to the recalcitrant parents/guardians, the interviewees in their respective individual and group discussions expressed mixed responses. Dorvlo (an Assistant Director of Education responsible for co-ordinating the affairs of the district) and Yayra in their respective individual interviews opined that although there hasn't been any formal national law or provision to enforce this constitutional requirement, their offices, in collaboration with DAs had instituted some kind of local measures to enforce this constitutional requirement. They explained that as part of the decentralisation process, the DAs

were mandated to make and implement by-laws, and so with the support of the District Education Offices, by-laws were being made at the grassroots to ensure that parents and guardians are well informed and compelled to send their children/wards to school. Regarding offenders, Yayra pointed out that fines were being imposed on them to serve as deterrent to others:

Yayra: Well some areas they've put down a fee that if a child is seen loitering about at 'odd' times, you the parent will be charged. And when they are found, they get them and they get the monies from them...and then here in...(mentions the name of town) for example, they take the kids to Police Station and you the parents go to bail them and...it's all forms of getting monies from them. And in fact...when this 30 thousand thing started, you know, parents have seen that the Government is serious and, you know, we don't often hear kids going out and things like that.

While this is seen as a reasonable effort aimed at compelling parents/guardians to send their children/wards to school, it should be remembered that this is what was alleged to be happening in only two districts and which might not have necessarily represented the views of other interviewees pertaining to the situation in their respective areas of jurisdiction. This point is particularly reinforced by the fact that not all interviewees appeared to share the views of Dorvlo and Yayra. Torgbui (an Assistant Director in charge of Finance and administration), Kojo, (a senior official of the GES), Elorm, Akpene, Kweku and Senyo for example, expressed dissent and advance what appears to be counter reading and interpretation of the 'compulsory' component of 'fCUBE'. They argued that although in principle, previous legislations, particularly the 1961 and the 1987 Education Acts, which required all parents and guardians to ensure that all Ghanaian children of school-going age are in school, were still in existence, the practical enforcement of these laws was still lacking. This according to them was mainly due to the misconceptions and complexities surrounding the 'free' component of 'fCUBE'. For this group of interviewees, the implementation and institutionalization of 'fCUBE' is a process, and like any major policy processes, once the initial or an aspect of the process was

beset with problems means that the other components could not be fully operationalized.

However, when asked if this could not be taken to mean that in practice the compulsory component of 'fCUBE' was not being implemented to the latter, the interviewees could not provide any concrete answer. Instead, they appeared to adopt what could best be described as 'foot-dragging' attitude on the issue. Senyo, a member of a group discussion, rather than answering the question resorted to the use of rhetorical questions. He suggested a relationship or interconnection between the components of 'fCUBE', especially the 'free' and 'compulsory' components, and used this as an impetus to argue that once the 'capitation grant' was introduced to take care of the 'free' component, the 1987 Education Act which requires parents/guardians to send their children/wards to school, was going to be enforced to the latter. In the following excerpt, the voice of Senyo is presented as he spoke generally about the constraints in implementing the compulsory components of 'fCUBE':

Interviewer: So is the inter-connectedness between the 'free' and 'compulsory' components the reason why there is difficulty with enforcing the compulsory component of the policy?

Senyo: To some extent I'll say yes. But if there is no legislation to back this, and again if there are some schools which have no teachers, particularly in the rural areas, teachers are sent to these schools but because the places are not attractive they don't go and you expect the parents to send their children to school? When they send their children to school, and there are no teachers, who's going to teach them? So if the teachers are not there and you have enacted the law that whoever doesn't send his or her child to school will be sanctioned or whatever the case may be, and the teachers are not there then what do you think is going to happen? Is it the fault of the parents?...

Although Senyo's strategy of resorting to rhetorical questions could be interpreted as his unwillingness to get to the core of the issue of whether or not any legal framework has been put in place to enforce the compulsory intent of 'fCUBE', his response is helpful, at least for the purpose of getting an insight of the general picture. His strategy has helped enormously to unmask the real complexities involved in mandating basic education in Ghana. It has suggested for instance, that because the inputs to education cannot be said to be adequately taken care of, coupled with the fact that the poverty profiles of parents/guardians are far from being equal, it is absolutely impossible to make basic schooling in Ghana mandatory.

In another development, Mawunyo (an Assistant Director of a metropolis in charge of Administration, and member of a group discussion) disagreed completely with the earlier assertions. For him, neither the view that the 'compulsory' component of 'fCUBE' was being enforced at the grassroots, nor the assertion which implied that 'fCUBE' policy implementation and institutionalization was a process and is being implemented in stages could hold water. He problematized these views and wondered why the wording of the policy title, particularly the 'free' and 'compulsory' component could not be considered by the very people on whom the policy and its effects impinge most, as being nebulous and totally misleading. He offered a poignant rejection of the policy title, using the practical and day-to-day interpretation of the words making up the title to argue for a re-conceptualization and re-wording of the policy title. His illustration presents a critical and transformative perspective on the rhetoric of educational policy formulation, and the implementation paradox under investigation:

Mawunyo: I beg to differ a bit. Words mean a lot. If you tell me something is free for me and I realise I have to pay from behind for what you are saying is free, then you are misleading me. If you are telling me something is compulsory and there is no legality behind what I kick against, then still I am being misled. Again, if we want our policy, educational policies to be successful, then we must be extremely careful about the choice of words. If we feel we cannot implement these

policies to the letter of the words we have chosen, then let us explain them to the people.

Here, Mawunyo, although an official of the education system, appears critical of the very system he is part of. His words seem to be consistent with the policy paradox under investigation and thus echo what for the purpose of this study is being described as the post-modernist perspective on the policy paradox. That is, the view that the 'fCUBE' policy implementation strategies and outcomes in practice differ from the policy provisions and components in theory, mainly because 'the meaning of policy is taken for granted and a theoretical and epistemological dry rot is built into the analytical structures constructed' (Ball, 1994, p. 15), making it very difficult for policy intentions and provisions to be conceptualized and put in to practice.

Thus, the discussion in this section of the analysis considers how the 'compulsory' component of 'fCUBE' is conceptualized and articulated by the interviewees. The discussion is insightful in the sense that it appears to have presented both sides of the issue. That is, the question of enforcing the 1992 constitutional mandate, whilst taking into account the economic capacities of parents/guardians, vis-à-vis the financial capacity of Government to sustain the programme. The data seem to suggest that whilst the constitutional mandate compelling all children of school-going age to be in school appears to be there in blueprint, the enforcement seems to be plagued with economic and operational problems. The data show that perhaps those responsible for the enforcement or who want to enforce this order know that they may get to a dead end, probably if they are told by the parents for example, that they do not have the necessary wherewithal because they are either out of work or do not have jobs to be able to meet the private costs of their children's education. Similarly, the data appear to have indicated from the interviewees' accounts (particularly Senyo's contribution) that whereas the constitutional provision talks about 'free' and 'compulsory' 'basic education' with various policy documents supporting it, the Government itself finds it difficult to meet its side of the bargain. The commitment at least is there, but must be backed with adequate resources which do not seem to be forthcoming.

This difficulty in enforcing the compulsory aspect of 'fCUBE', thus reminds us of the problems that those who re-contextualize policies face in helping the stakeholders to conceptualise and act on policy. This difficulty, according to the data, has compelled the 'recontextualizers' of policy to resort to the use of rhetoric and the practice of disengagement in 'real' policy debates and discussions for the purpose of serving their own interests. For as Bernstein (1996, p. 118) reminds us, the meso-level actors of policy work as constructors of pedagogic discourse who delocate and relocate discourse, moving it from its original site to a pedagogic site, all with the aim of justifying their purpose.

5.5.3. Talking about the 'universality' of 'fCUBE'

The interpretation of the 'free' and 'compulsory' components of 'fCUBE' is crucial to the aim of the study, but so too is the 'universal' component, as this is vital to revealing the ideological discourses drawn upon in enacting the policy. This section explores the interviewees' articulation of what constitute the universal component of 'fCUBE' whilst taking note of the purpose of the policy and the ideological undercurrents inherent in the interviewees' accounts.

The analysis generally appears to endorse the suggestion that the post-colonial idea of education as a tool for developing a sense of togetherness for collective nation building was not lost on the minds of Ghanaian educators. This is explicated by the fact that on the one hand, the interviewees' interpretations in context, and in relation to the other components implicitly appeared to highlight the decolonizing agenda while on the other, they seem to generally set off ideological underpinnings which are consistent with social democratic ideals of social justice illuminated upon in Chapter 4, and again in Table1, on pages 172-173 respectively.

For example, when asked how he personally conceptualizes and would therefore interpret the 'universal' component of 'fCUBE', Elorm conceded to the glaring disparities and inequalities in education provision and delivery and goes on to stress that the 'universality' of 'fCUBE' is aimed at ensuring that no Ghanaian child of school-going age is discriminated against or is disadvantaged educationally because

of his/her religion, tribe, cultural practice, ethnicity, social status or parentage. This idea of offering Ghanaian children a level playing field in terms of access to education and services regarding education is expressed explicitly in the following lines:

Elorm: Yea, the universality is a goal...Yea, so we're going on with the process of ensuring that no child is disadvantaged because of his location or his beliefs or whatever...So right now there is a whole lot of things we're putting in place to ensure that wherever, however remote a child finds himself, the educational services to that child should not be diluted as it were. So when we are sending textbooks, we do not draw lines between urban-rural. In my district like this, when we are even distributing materials, I distribute them to the rural before I come to the urban centres to make sure that they get what they're getting...

In another interview session, Ewoenam appears to endorse Elorm's view in a sense. He interpreted the universality of 'fCUBE' as meaning equal access to educational facilities. However, in the end, he conflated the whole idea of equal access, particularly with the unfair distribution of state resources, especially between the urban and rural/deprived communities. When probed as to why he thought this was so, he alluded that inequity in general is a natural phenomenon or feature of society which to him, cannot be overcome by socially remedial action:

Ewoenam: ...really one serious aspect of the universal component of the programme is that, it is universal in the sense that it is open to all Ghanaians, irrespective of tribe, religious affiliation, political affiliation, sex etcetera. So that is the most important aspect of that universal component. Really, as I can say again, the universal aspect, when we turn it this way that the facilities must be enjoyed by all, really there is still that inequity in the distribution of materials especially when you talk of the rural and then the urban areas.

Although Ewoenam's contribution is seen as an endorsement of Elorm's view, certain fundamental contradictions seem to appear in the two accounts. Whilst Elorm seemed to have conceptualized the universality of 'fCUBE' as meaning equal access to educational facilities, Ewoenam seemed to restrict the concept to access to education by all Ghanaian children. More importantly, the latter's interpretation arguably seems to have gone further to problematize the former's conceptualisation. It appears to have pointed out the potential problem of inequity that one encounters when the universal component is interpreted to mean equal access to educational services.

Akpene, Agbeli (an Assistant Director responsible for Finance and Administration) and Worlali (a school Inspector in the area of Technical/Vocational Education) viewed things differently. In their respective interview sessions, they took the 'universal' component of 'fCUBE' to mean inclusive education. For them, the universality of 'fCUBE' rested in the fact that basic education in Ghana is opened to all children of school-going age, irrespective of geographical location, gender, (dis)abilities, economic conditions among others. These concerns are expressed in the following excerpts:

Akpene: ...I think the universal means that everybody, every school-going age child. That makes it universal. But then, right now we even have people who have passed the school-going-age taking advantage of the capitation grant to go back to school. So the universal is mainly about the fact that it encompasses everybody in Ghana...

Worlali: Well, universally, yes, because it's open so there is nothing like gender differences here and there, I mean all children of school-going age. This is the thing. They are open to...So I believe that area, yes, sufficient provision has been made. Again, even to the extent of the disabled, they all have access to what we call basic education...

Worlali's response, particularly his reference to the 'disabled' has necessitated another question which was addressed to Enam, the Co-ordinator of 'Special Schools' (that is, schools that take care of children with additional support needs) and member of his group discussion. Enam was asked how universal basic education in Ghana is to the disabled and the [mentally retarded]. His response is insightful:

Enam: *Yea, so far I think structures are being put in place. Hitherto there were impediments in the way of the...*

Interviewer: *(Interrupts) ...structures like?*

Enam: *Structures like ramps and then making the place accessible to the blind and then provision of equipment for the other disabilities, I mean, like the deaf and the dumb, yes. Then also if you look at training of teachers too, before a teacher will be handling the disabled he has to go under specialised training...all teachers who enter...Teacher Training Colleges and Universities are given a one-year course to run in Special Education. So...when they come out they are equipped... Also those teachers who are on the ground, we are giving them in-service training. This goes to help the teachers in the 'regular schools' so that we'll not separate the disabled from the, I mean, the 'normal'.*

Although the identification of all children of school-going age, can be said to have revealed the inclusive intent of the 'universal' component of 'fCUBE', Worlali and Enam's use of the words 'disabled', 'blind and deaf' respectively, suggest and/or restrict inclusive education in this context to teaching pupils/students with a range of abilities, and specifically integrating 'additional support needs' children into 'regular' classrooms. While in context, this view is acknowledged as it brings another perspective to bear on the conceptualization of the universal component of 'fCUBE', it is equally important to note that such a definition of inclusive education is limited as it falls short of the 'bigger picture'. Dei (2005) for example reminds us of the broad definition of inclusive education. He defines it as 'education that

responds to the concerns, aspirations and interests of a diverse body politic, and draws on the accumulated knowledge, creativity and resourcefulness of local people' (p. 268). For him, a school is inclusive to the extent that every student/pupil is able to identify and connect with his/her social environment, culture, population and history. Seen in this light, the version of 'inclusivity' referred to in this context is limited in scope as it appears to focus only on 'part' of the 'whole'.

In another development, members of a group discussion expressed divergent and contrasting views about their understanding and conceptualization of the 'universal component of 'fCUBE'. Whilst Mawunyo thought and interpreted the universality of 'fCUBE' to mean that all Ghanaian children are to '*enjoy some basic educational provisions and facilities*', Atta (an Assistant Director and a Public Relations Officer) for the same metropolis was of the view that the component basically encourages freedom of choice. Again, Elinam (a Metropolitan Director) and Dziedzorm (an Assistant Director in charge of Human Resource Development) both interpreted the universality of 'fCUBE' as meaning equity in terms of inputs into education. These contrasting and dissenting views are presented in the excerpts below:

Mawunyo: *Definitely, there are bound to be disparities in the rural area schools compared to say, the urban area schools. But generally, that is why...I prefer using the word 'basic'. Basically, there are certain things, minimum enjoyment everybody is going to go through. I have already explained. If we are going to think about that utopian type of situation where a child in Accra is going to enjoy the same amenities as a child in my holy village then that's not true.*

Interviewer: *Right. You want to say something PRO?*

Atta: *About the universal aspect, that is...no child should be restricted from may be, the school of his choice. So that even if you're a Muslim, you can attend E.P. school, if you're E.P, you can attend an Anglican school irrespective of your beliefs and yea, where you're coming from.*

Elinam: *And the universal, I think they're looking generally...they're having the same curriculum, all basic schools throughout, whether you're in Accra, whether you're in the village, you all have the same curriculum.*

Dziedzorm: *And then to add my bit, it's universal in that, the same calibre of teachers is given to all the schools in the cities and in the villages. So if all the teachers should perform their work well then we expect that the output from all the areas will be good.*

While these contradictions between and among interviewees appears interesting as they highlight the complexities involved in operationalizing the components of 'fCUBE', they equally go to suggest implicitly, a kind of tension between the views of the interviewees and the organization(s) they represent. This is particularly likely to be the case since most of them are employed either directly or indirectly by Government and are required to function in accordance with the dictates of the 'hands' that feed them.

On the whole, the interviewees' exploration and articulation of the 'universal' aspect of 'fCUBE' seem to have extended beyond giving just 'step-ups' to disadvantaged individuals to include the notion of social justice and its related principles of inclusion, equity, equality, fairness, and equality of opportunities/starting point. While this broad and differing interpretations explicated in the analysis clearly signifies the lack of precise conception of the 'universal' component of the 'fCUBE' policy, it equally seem to convey, in clear and uncertain terms, the feeling that no single interpretation of the universality of basic education in Ghana could be said to be dominant or enjoy total hegemony. Divergent and possibly contradictory conceptualization and interpretations based perhaps on individual's level of perception, orientation and context is possible. On the whole, the discussion in this section therefore reiterates the view that ambiguity can be a useful factor for policy makers and implementers who can rely on it to avoid being 'pinned' down on any particular interpretation of policy.

This thus appears to corroborate Ball's (1994) conception of policy as both a 'text' and 'discourse. He claims that there is 'ad hocery, negotiation and serendipity within the policy formulation (and implementation) process' and that 'policy texts are the cannibalised products of multiple (but circumscribed) influences and agendas', and as such, for any 'text, a plurality of readers must necessarily produce a plurality of readings' (p. 16). Jophcote and Davies (2004) make the contradictory readings of policy exhibited in this part of the narrative account clearer. They point that meso-level actors of policy are, or can be regarded as agents with recontextualizing functions, with the majority operating in the pedagogic recontextualizing field, brought under more state control and surveillance through the official recontextualizing field. However, they explain that the presence of the pedagogic recontextualizing field itself gives rise the possibility that its agents may have an independent effect on pedagogic discourse. For them, the more independent they are and remain, the more likely it is that their autonomy will generate struggle over regulative discourse and instructional practices (p. 550).

This section of the discussion explores the interviewees' conceptualization and articulation of the 'universal' component of 'fCUBE', and appears to paint a picture of tension and contradiction between and among interviewees. While in many respects this might well have to do with the interviewees not having been sufficiently informed about what the universality of 'fCUBE' entails (as Akpene for instance, has stated: '*interestingly enough, nobody even at the GES level, has tried to explain the universal aspect*'), it is equally possible that as officials responsible for negotiating national policy on behalf of other stakeholders, they only presented the 'facts' as they saw them. However, for the purposes of this study, the elite status accorded them may result in their articulated views to be privileged, as the discussions in Chapter 10 will later indicate.

5.5.4. Understanding the 'basic education' component of 'fCUBE'

The interviewees' views as to what constitute basic education in Ghana are as relevant to the study as the other components of the 'fCUBE' policy title. This is particularly the case since their working definition and conception of what

constitutes basic education will to a large extent set the boundary between the other levels of education, particularly the secondary and tertiary levels, and will help to determine the extent to which those who have been ear-marked to benefit from 'fCUBE' are getting what they deserve. For this reason, the central question in this section of the analysis was to determine what the interviewees considered as constituting basic education.

Whereas one would have thought that 'basic education' or the 'basic' component of the phrase included concepts that have to do with the curriculum or the quality/sophistication of education respectively, the sense made from the interviewees' accounts indicate that they focused rather on age and stage considerations. Their explorations point to the fact that basic education in the Ghanaian context is taken to mean the first nine years of education, which is currently being extended by the Government of the NPP to eleven years. These eleven years of initial education comprise two years Kindergarten; six years of Primary Schooling; and three years of JSS (now known as Junior High School).

With this working definition and, or framework therefore, the major question put to the interviewees was whether any provisions were made for drop-outs, especially for those who are above the 'school going-age' (that is, 6–15 years) to be attracted back to school and retained for effective teaching and learning. This question however attracted mixed and contradictory responses. One school of thought, represented by Ewoenam, Torgbui and Kojo was that the school drop-outs were not being barred from coming back to school if they so wished. They explained that those of them who wish to take advantage of current arrangements, particularly the introduction of the 'capitation grant' were being encouraged to do so without any hindrance whatsoever. In the ensuing extract, Kojo for instance, explains the 'basic education' component of 'fCUBE' and how the system works to support school drop-outs:

Kojo: ...every Ghanaian child is at liberty to enter school. I mean those who are 14 years and they want to be at school, I don't think that there is any barrier that would prevent them from being in school. And if a

child is, let say 14 years before he enters school, what is going to happen is that he may have accelerated promotion definitely. Even if he enters Class 1, because of the age difference, he will be able to coop up quickly and then actually continue with his education without any hindrance whatsoever.

While Kojo's contribution appears to reiterate the point that interested school drop-outs are not being barred from re-entering mainstream education, his mention of 'accelerated promotion' suggests an attempt by the educational authorities, and in fact, Government to seeing this issue addressed. This therefore appears to suggest that the 'basic education' component of 'fCUBE' has to do more with the notions of inclusion and universality of education rather than aspects of the concept 'basic'. This perception was endorsed by Dorvlo, Yayra, Dzifa, Elorm, Kweku, Enyonam and Senyo in their respective interviews. This group of interviewees argued that whilst the issue of the drop-out rate is alarming, Government has instituted appropriate measures to address this pertinent issue. Senyo for example, took the trouble to explain that through 'school enrolment drive' and its associated programmes, practical steps were being taken at the local and school levels to break the vicious cycle of school drop-out rate and its related issues of truancy:

Senyo: ...We have the Girl Education Unit and then we have SHEP, that is, School Health Education Programme. All these structures have been put in place so that those dropouts can be re-integrated into the mainstream of the school system. For instance, most girls who become pregnant are reinstated after giving birth to their children and then they come into the mainstream without any hindrance. Again, those in the rural areas where we have, let's say pupils who go to the farms to help their parents and then pupils who also go for fishing as a means of livelihood to support their parents, we also integrate them. That is why we have what we call the enrolment drive to sensitise the community. The enrolment drive is done at the district level and we have officers in

charge of all these structures so that they can integrate these ones into the school system.

In another interview session, Kweku explicated Senyo's point further by taking the issue to a much higher level. Firstly, he explored the rationale underlying the 'basic education' intent of 'fCUBE' as being both 'terminal' for those who for any reason cannot continue with their education, and 'continuing' for those who get to the pinnacle of the education system, that is the tertiary level:

Kweku: Yea, in fact, after the first 9 years of education, that's the basic education, our structure is in such a way that it is terminal and continuing. So it means that after the first 9 years the child who is not able to continue can terminate at the JSS 3 level and enter into the world, to may be, take up a vocation. So in actual fact, there are vocational schools in the system that are opened to such children to get enrolled so that they can learn the various trade skills and then fern for themselves or make a contribution towards their living and then to social development...

He then went on from there to touch on the problem of school drop-out and youth unemployment as very serious and identified the STEP (Skills Training and Employment Programme) as one of the practical steps being taken at the governmental level to redress the situation. The interesting thing, of course was his emphasis on Government's commitment to see the problem solved. However when asked specifically of the efficacy of these governmental programmes, he re-coiled into his shell with the explanation that he did not have much to say since such issues fall outside his jurisdiction and under another ministry:

Kweku: Well, in actual fact I cannot say anything further thing about the STEP programme since that is under another Ministry. I think I've also read about it and I know it's a way of trying to equip some of the youth who are not able to go to the higher levels of education with skills to also

participate in the society. So I cannot give you details about the STEP programme as at now.

While at face-value, Kweku's attitude, especially his being economical with words regarding some specific questions, constitutes a refusal to get into the depth of the issues, his comments with respect to basic education being terminal appears to be consistent with neo-liberal slogan of 'skills training for the 'world of work'. That is, the belief in turning out ideologically compliant and technically skilled workforce for capitalist enterprises. In neo-liberalism, as Olssen et al. (2004, p. 136) put it, the state seeks to create an individual that is an enterprising and competitive entrepreneur.

A third view about the 'basic education' intent of 'fCUBE', which is no different from the earlier conceptualization, was expressed by another group of interviewees. This group presented a poignant rejection of the view that something is being done about the plight of the disillusioned and disorientated youth of the country. That is, they dismissed outright, the claim that the 'out of school' children as well as the unemployed youth in Ghana were being helped by the authorities to take stock of their lives and make meaningful contributions to their country in return. In the ensuing excerpt, Elinam, a member of a group discussion is presented as he speaks generally about the constraints to implementing policies in the Ghanaian educational set up:

Elinam: (Interrupts)...thank you. You see, personally I feel there is a problem with implementation of educational systems in this country. It is not a matter of Junior Secondary School, High School or anything but it is the implementation. You see, with the fCUBE and the new educational reform of 1987, the idea was that at the end of the ninth year the child is supposed to at least have a basic knowledge in technical/vocational subjects, but when they were implementing you'll realise that somewhere along the line the whole thing came back to square one, because they are supposed to prepare these benches and other things. But they're not doing it. So it is the problem of implementation. There's

no, provision for 14 years children to come back to school. There is nothing like that. So you'll see a lot of them hanging around because they've not made any provisions for them.

Elinam clearly attributed the problem to the lack of proper implementation strategy and the short life-span of education policies in Ghana. He conceded that there was a problem with policy implementation in the country and that politics, to a large extent was responsible for this phenomenon. He lamented seriously about the fact that there was no national education policy to give direction and purpose to educational activities in the country. This to him accounted for why educational reforms and policies implemented in the country were short-lived since successive Governments for the purposes of political expediency, change education policies with impunity and for their own advantage:

Elinam: ...But our problem in this nation is the implementation. And it may interest you to know that in Ghana about 40 years now we don't have any national education policy. Any Government that comes, I mean, wants to change and look at the number of reforms that we have. So I think still we're having problems. We have not got there yet.

Thus, Elinam's remarks are particularly important as they appear to provide meaningful insights along which lines the discussions in this section of the data could be summarized. In a sense, it is inconceivable why and how he is seen here as eating his own words. That is, whilst Elinam, just like some of the other interviewees, is seen previously as strongly emphasizing the extent to which the components of 'fCUBE' are genuinely reflected in the implementation process, one is surprised to see him here, backing down on his own words. This as a result paints a very dismal picture of the authenticity of the interviewees' responses to the questions asked. However, taking his words here, and in relation to those of others into consideration, it becomes evident that whether parents/guardians are not being barred to enrol their children/wards back in school or the school drop-outs themselves have the freedom to choose to get back to school, adequate provisions cannot be said to have been

made to take account of those children who either through their own personal decisions or due to circumstances beyond their control are without formal education.

This section of the analysis allows for a consideration of what constitutes the ‘basic education’ component of ‘fCUBE’. The analysis suggests that the interviewees focused on issues of inclusion and universality of education rather than explicating what the concept ‘basic’ entails. While it is not suggested that their responses to the question of the interpretation of the component of ‘fCUBE’ were out of place, it appears the issue has to do more with the interviewees’ limited conception rather than how the interview items were framed. This is particularly relevant when one contextualizes Akpene’s comments made earlier on, in the analysis that: *‘interestingly enough, nobody even at the GES level, has tried to explain the...aspect’*. This notwithstanding, the explorations in the section as a whole is useful as it serves a complement to the issues explored in the other sections of the chapter.

5.6. Summary

The interview data discussed in this chapter allow for the consideration of the purposes of the ‘fCUBE’ policy, its ideological underpinnings and the range of possible ways that the policy components are interpreted and articulated by actors who for the purpose of this study are taken as ‘elites’. The analysis suggests that whilst the ‘fCUBE’ policy is seen as drawing largely on socialist and social democratic ideology of state intervention into education for the purposes of achieving a socially just anti discriminatory society, in articulating these provisions in context, the interviewees appear to have drifted towards neo-liberal ideology (particularly of anti-welfare society) in their interpretations and articulation of the policy components.

Additionally, the discussions seem to convey the message that affirming or accentuating the components of ‘fCUBE’ is inherently not problematic. The real challenges appear to lie pretty much in how these components are operationalized in context. The data, for instance supported this view by pointing out that there is a

'real' controversy over what constitute 'free' and 'compulsory' education, as there are both private and public costs to education. Likewise, there appears to be some blurring as to what the 'universal' component of 'fCUBE' entails since evidence about inequality and disparity in the provision and delivery of educational services, especially at the basic education level, abound in the interviewees' accounts.

Generally, the exploration of the interview accounts appears consistent with the conception of policy as both a 'text' and 'discourse' explored in the theoretical context of the study in chapter 2. Congruent with the conception of policy as 'text', the discussions portray the 'fCUBE' policy documentation, especially the texts/extracts selected for analysis, as the end-product of the contestations, struggles, compromises and dialogues involved in the policy formulation process. As 'discourse', the interview data analysis indicate the differing, and sometimes contradictory ways in which the meso-level actors of policy have conceptualized, articulated and interpreted the provisions in these extracts, taking in to consideration their diverse contexts, experiences and orientations, and by virtue of the power they wield or hold.

While this chapter serves more of a prologue to the analysis and discussion of the interview data, the next chapter goes beyond the interpretation and articulation of the 'fCUBE' policy components to explore the achievements and contributions of 'fCUBE' to basic education provision and delivery in Ghana. Given that the study purports to find out the extent to which the 'fCUBE' policy components are genuinely reflected in the implementation process, Chapter 6 serves as a useful complement to the interviewees' conceptualization and interpretations of the policy provisions.

CHAPTER 6: SUCCESSES/ACHIEVEMENTS OF ‘fCUBE’: VIEWS FROM THE INTERVIEWS:

6.1. Overview

This chapter presents and discusses the findings from the interview data focussing particularly on the second of the four themes—successes and achievements of the ‘fCUBE’ policy. It first outlines the objectives developed as part of the ‘fCUBE’ implementation strategy before going on to explore the interviewees’ views and accounts of events.

The rationale for outlining the ‘fCUBE’ policy objectives to the interviewees’ accounts is grounded in the need to fashion out a framework along which the discussion of the data is organised. Such a framework is necessary in pointing out and exemplifying the points of convergence and divergence of views between the interviewees themselves, and between the interviewees and the evidence enshrined in the ‘fCUBE’ policy documentation.

6.2. Strategies for implementing ‘fCUBE’

In order for the interviewees’ views on what they consider as the successes of the ‘fCUBE’ policy to be analysed in context, it is worth returning to the ‘fCUBE’ policy documentation to outline the objectives therein.

The evidence emanating from the ‘fCUBE’ policy documentation (particularly the document from which extract 3 in Appendix 5 is selected for documentary analysis) indicates that whilst a reasonable amount of measures and strategies were fashioned to guide the implementation process, most of these strategies were geared towards three main objectives, namely:

- improving the quality of teaching and learning;
- improving management efficiency; and
- improving access and participation of education.

Table 2 below summarizes the strategies under the three objectives outlined above:

Table 2: The objectives and strategies for implementing 'fCUBE'

Objectives	Strategies
To improve the quality of teaching and learning.	<p>Promoting efficient and effective teaching and learning at all the levels of the basic education stages through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancing specific teaching skills through pre-service and school-based in-service training of teachers; • improving teacher morale and motivation through incentive programmes; • promoting quality of learning and pupil/student performance through curriculum reviews and improving teacher-pupil instructional contact time; • ensuring adequate and timely supply of teaching and learning materials to all schools; and • improving teacher/community relationships.
To improve efficiency in management.	<p>Improving efficiency and effectiveness of management performance through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • management reforms; • discipline and accountability in schools; • increased enforcement of effective teaching and learning; • elimination of teacher absenteeism, lateness and misuse of instructional time; and • building of high morale of the pre-tertiary personnel.
To improve access and participation in education.	<p>Enhancing access and participation in education through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expanding infrastructural facilities and services to enhance access for all children of school-going age; • addressing issues of enrolment and retention for all children of school-going age; • enhancing equity in the provision of educational services and facilities for all with particular focus on girls, and the disadvantaged children; and • ensuring good quality teaching by setting performance targets.

(Strategies for Implementing the 'fCUBE', MOE, February, 1996, pp. 4–5).

Thus, the summary of the key objectives and strategies for implementing the 'fCUBE' policy outlined above provides a useful spectrum along which what the interviewees view as the successes or contributions of the 'fCUBE' policy might be structured. However, it is equally important to point out at this juncture, what in the context of this study, the documentary analysis in Chapter 4 describes as the apparent gap or disjuncture between the strategies contained in the table above and what the title of the 'fCUBE' policy itself suggests. This disjuncture is evidenced by the fact that the strategies and objectives outlined above appear to be geared towards the general constraints to education and says very little about how by adopting these strategies, basic education could be made 'free', 'compulsory' and 'universal' for all Ghanaian children. This issue is again highlighted and explored in this chapter and in subsequent ones on the interview data analysis.

6.3. Exploring the interviewees' accounts

This component of the narrative focuses on the successes, achievements and contributions that the 'fCUBE' has made, or is making towards improving basic education provision and delivery in Ghana. The analysis of the interviewees' accounts suggest that although the 'fCUBE' policy implementation process is reported to have been fraught with certain pertinent implementation problems, some modest gains could be said to have been made consistent with the three objectives outlined in table 2 above. This claim is substantiated by the fact that when asked to recount the successes 'fCUBE' policy implementation process has made over the years, most of the interviewees focused on identical issues, giving the indication that the policy has made significant contributions towards the attainment of the goals and objectives enshrined in the 'fCUBE' policy documentation.

For example, when asked to evaluate how successful the 'fCUBE' policy has been since its inception in 1996, Elorm, showing signs that he was fully aware of the controversies surrounding the conceptualization and operationalisation of the 'fCUBE' policy components, was adamant to use the words 'success' or

‘achievement’. Rather, he preferred to use the word ‘strides’, arguing that *‘success should be complete’*. For him, since the implementation of ‘fCUBE’ *‘is a process’*, it was expedient for him to talk about *‘strides and not successes or achievements’*, as one cannot be said to have *‘reached there yet’*. He identified four main areas where some significant gains have been made. These included: increase in access; raising stakeholder awareness; quality of teaching; and decentralisation:

Elorm: I wouldn't want to call successes but I would want to talk about strides that have been made...With the advent of fCUBE, many more schools have been built for children to get access to them, and communities and major stakeholders have had the necessary awareness to play their roles in the delivery of education. And this time some communities are challenging some aspects of delivery when they look at the results of their children and they think that they...So in terms of awareness of education in our communities, I think the strides are quite high...In terms of quality, I'll say that...our teachers are coming out as Diplomates. It's one sign that we'll want to raise the level of teaching in our schools...In management, yes, I think now devolution of authority from the centre to the grassroots is taking hold...

Clearly, Elorm's contribution encapsulates the three major areas—access to education; quality of teaching; and management efficiency—consistent with the objectives of ‘fCUBE’ outlined in Table 2. What is interesting however, is his refusal to use the words ‘successes and ‘achievements’. If the ‘fCUBE’ policy is believed to have made significant contributions in the above mentioned areas, why has he refused to acknowledge that? While in a sense it could be argued that Elorm was only being realistic about the progress of ‘fCUBE’, it appears, as his latter comments in answer to the question of the ‘problems and failures of ‘fCUBE’ have also confirmed that he was playing the ‘language game’. His latter comments showed that he was well aware of serious issues affecting the implementation process and therefore did not want to be drawn into any specifics at this stage, especially to paint a very dismal and contradictory picture of his own readings and interpretations of

'fCUBE' policy provisions. Perhaps his own views on the issue run contrary to those of the organisation he represented and therefore he did not want to be seen as offering a differing account of events. This is particularly likely to be the case as he is a Director of Education for a district and is expected to lead the organisation in accordance with the vision and dictates of the 'Government of the day'.

In another development, members of a group discussion, namely Afenyo (a Director of Education of one Metropolis) and his Assistant Directors, Kafui and Womor, talked about the achievements of 'fCUBE' directly in terms of the three main objectives. They argued that the introduction of the 'fCUBE' policy in 1996, contributed immensely towards basic education provision and delivery. This to them was evidenced in the fact that since its inception, access to basic education, had increased tremendously, teaching and learning in the schools had improved and so also was the community involvement and participation in education. The following excerpt presents Afenyo and Womor as they talk about the achievements of 'fCUBE' in the areas of 'access and participation':

Afenyo: ...Indeed the fCUBE has helped to expand facilities for education. We now have more of the children, school-going children actually in school. Very few are still hiding and we hope that within the shortest possible time, we'll get all of them to go to school. The rate of retention has also improved. I mean this time they come to school they don't dropout and aha!...

Womor: This time, I think the communities feel part of the system, I mean the educational process because they have been made to be aware that the schools are community owned so they should rather come out with all the support that they have to help the headteachers to run the schools effectively.

While the foregoing contributions clearly capture the 'fCUBE' policy objectives, Afenyo's reference to the fact that '*few of the children are still hiding*' go to explain

more clearly why Elorm was perhaps adamant to talk about successes and achievements. Although in a sense his mention of 'strides' could be seen and interpreted as movements towards success rather than success itself, examination of his views in the entire interview encounter suggest that perhaps he felt that since the implementation of the 'fCUBE' policy cannot be said to have achieved hundred percent success, it was more convenient for him to talk about strides or gains as opposed to successes and achievement.

Dzifa and Kweku in their respective interview sessions were much clearer and more explicit about the achievements of 'fCUBE', as they appeared to have taken the components/strategies one after the other and explored them. Taking the component of 'fCUBE' which aimed at improving teaching and learning in the schools as an example, they argued that the capacities of headteachers and teachers have been built. This to them has resulted in a tremendous improvement in teaching and learning in the schools. They claimed this had come about as a result of the prudent measures put in place by the authorities. These measures, according to them included: introducing whole school development programmes; instituting headteacher advisers; revising and reviewing the curriculum of Teacher Training Colleges; instituting pre-service and in-serving training programmes for teachers; introducing access and distant learning courses; introducing the District Teacher Support Teams (DTST) concept among others.

Regarding access and participation, they claimed that basic school intake had shot up dramatically within the few years of the introduction of 'fCUBE'. This, they attributed to the introduction and implementation of 'enrolment drive' concept and the introduction of other community-based associations such as PTAs, SMCs, DEOCs. They claimed the upsurge in school intake and retention was evident in the fact that before the inception of the 'fCUBE' policy, 30% of Ghanaian children of school-going age were said to have been outside the classroom, however with the mid-term stocktaking exercise in 1999, was observed that the number of primary schools had increased by 17.4% and school intake by 13.7%. They added that with

the ongoing decentralisation process, parents and community members were given the opportunity to participate fully in running their local schools.

Thus, while the gains highlighted above appear to refer directly to access and participation component of 'fCUBE' objectives/strategies for implementation, they equally seem to reiterate what in the context of this study is described as the democratic or participatory perspective on the policy implementation paradox explored in Chapter 2. All the structures identified as having being put in place appear to be geared towards seeking the commitment and enthusiasm of parents and community members and therefore performing an alternative democratic and or participatory function of policy as opposed to the traditional problem-solving one intended.

Concerning management for efficiency component of 'fCUBE', Dzifa and Kweku reiterated that management courses in Finance, Administration Accounting and Human Resource Management were being organised for teachers and headteachers consistently and as such they were 'up and doing'. In the following excerpts, Dzifa and Kweku are presented as they speak about the achievements of 'fCUBE' in relation to the policy objectives:

Dzifa: Well, I think we have three basic components and I will say that we have had a measure of success in all the three components...In fact, there have been instances where teachers have been trained. We developed what we call the Whole-school Development Programme and that took care of primary education...so through this, you'll realise that the capacity of our teachers have been built and we'll say that our teachers are doing well in the classroom as compared to the previous era...Then on management, in fact,...there has been some level of success in the management of the school especially with the introduction of the School Management Committees system...

Interviewer: *(Interrupts) ...so what you're saying is that headteachers are now able to plan their own budgets and manage the schools effectively?*

Dzifa: *Exactly...they have been trained to do this...and they follow their own plans and in the end they are able to evaluate their action plans...And then lastly we have access and participation component. In fact, you'll see that in a lot of schools, PTAs have now come to realise that the schools belong to them. You see, they have come to realise that they have to invest in their children...so attendance at PTA meetings in most of the schools have actually improved which was hitherto not the case...and with the access, the Government has actually put up a lot of schools...a lot of school facilities have been put and these are being accessed by the pupils and the teachers and the communities in the various parts of Ghana.*

Kweku: *...There have been some successes. Before the fCUBE was introduced, about 30% of children of school-going-age in Ghana were outside the classroom but at the mid-term evaluation, it was noted that...primary school enrolment had increased by 13.7%...Another objective of the fCUBE policy is to improve the quality of teaching and learning and I can assure you that...a lot of pre-service activities are in place...As at now, even graduates of the Teacher Training Colleges...are coming out as Diplomates in Basic Education...There are also a lot of in-service programmes for the teachers who are already in the field as far as teaching and learning is concerned. Then there are also Distant Learning Programmes organised by the various Teacher Training Institutions...*

Regarding management for efficiency component of 'fCUBE', Kweku reiterated that many different courses had been run for teachers to update their skills whilst DEOCs were formed to see to the planning and implementation of educational policies in schools in all the districts of Ghana. He also emphasized that as a result of the

initiation of the 'fCUBE' policy, the decentralisation of educational management was taking hold in all districts in Ghana. The following are his exact words:

Kweku: Then also, we have management for efficiency as another component for the fCUBE programme...a lot of courses have been run or are still being run in Finance, Administration and Human Resource so that these headteachers and educational administrators can improve upon their styles of running the schools. In the districts too, we have in place what we call District Education Oversight Committees...who sees to the planning and implementation of educational programmes...Besides this, there is a lot of work also going on to decentralise educational management into the districts. Until the fCUBE, there seemed to have been a lot of over centralisation at Headquarters and in the Regional Offices but the districts are now empowered to take decisions as far as educational development and then implementation is concerned...

While the foregoing insights are relevant to the overall outcome of the study as they appear to have suggested a range of issues that were perceived by the interviewees as successes or achievements of 'fCUBE', closer examination of the issues reveal certain 'unfilled gaps' and silences. This claim is anchored by the fact that the interviewees were not able to draw enough credible lines connecting what they perceived or considered as being the successes of 'fCUBE' and the intents and, or provisions encapsulated in the policy title. For example, although access to basic education is said to have increased as a result of the 'fCUBE' policy implementation, sufficient explanation was not provided as to how this had, and is still making basic education in Ghana 'free', 'compulsory' and 'universal'. In the same way, although the capacity of teachers is also cited as being improved and better enhanced, there is limited information as to how this impacted or still impacts positively on the distribution of educational facilities and services along the lines of equity and equality.

These concerns may have been taken into account by Kofi, when answering the question on the achievements the 'fCUBE' policy has made over the years. He was somewhat critical of the implementation process and refused to be drawn into debates about the achievements of 'fCUBE'. Rather, he makes general comments to the effect that the policy has re-ignited or 're-candled' stakeholders' awareness in education and that people, especially education managers, are becoming more and more cost conscious:

Kofi: *At least, I'll say...it...has re-candled the interest of Ghanaian in education...of course I don't have the figures on top of my head but if you study the enrolment figures since the educational reforms of 1987 of which the fCUBE is a, let's say the second stage, you'll recognise that consistently enrolment levels are increasing especially at basic education level and even in secondary level...I'll also say that people are becoming cost conscious especially education managers are becoming cost conscious in managing resources. They work with pupil/teacher ratios. They programme resources and they relate it to the number of students that are available...*

Although Kofi is only human and may have given such response because he possibly did not have figures off-hand, his reference to the phrase 'at least' in the excerpt above, coupled with his inability to give specific examples to illustrate his point arguably could be taken to mean that either he was not abreast with developments or he deliberately refused to 'dance to the tune' of government's music. However, taking into account the 'elite' position ascribed to him and the fact that he is an executive member of an independent body (the teachers union—GNAT), the latter suggestion is like to be the case. This is particularly striking when one contextualizes Kofi's responses to the questions posed in generality and in relation to the responses of other interviewees. He presented what could best be described as a 'stakeholder account' of events, where the issues raised are counter-balanced and neither portrays a public relations account of events nor 'anti-governmental' views.

6.4. Emerging issues

The discussion in this section focuses on the successes and achievements of the 'fCUBE' policy. The exploration of the interviewees' accounts indicates that significant gains appear to have been made consistent with the declared objectives espoused in the 'fCUBE' policy documentation. For example, more schools are reported to have been built, and pupils' enrolment is also said to have gone up, suggesting that access to basic education in Ghana has been facilitated. Similarly, school-community relation is also said to have improved and strengthened through the formation of school-community organisations such as PTAs, SMCs, DTSTs and DEOCs. Also teacher capacity is also cited as better enhanced through reforming and re-organization of teacher selection and training set-up and the initiation of programmes to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning in schools throughout the country.

In the area of school management, it is established that school authorities, mainly headteachers, are now better positioned, as compared to former times, to prepare their own school budgets and to see to the day-to-day administration of their schools. This according to the interviewees was achieved through management reforms and by instituting management training programmes for teachers and headteachers in schools.

Although these insights seem to capture the three main objectives espoused in the 'fCUBE' policy documentation, interestingly enough, there appears to emerge within the analysis, what the documentary data analysis in Chapter 4 has identified as the 'disjuncture' between the policy provisions and the strategies for implementing the 'fCUBE' policy. This disjuncture is explicated in the fact that there appears to be no direct or sufficient linkage between what the interviewees perceived as the successes of the policy, and the components or provisions encapsulated in the policy title. That is, the issue reminiscent of the fact that whilst according to the 'fCUBE' policy documentation, particularly the piece of evidence contained in the 1992 Republican Constitution which gave birth to the 'fCUBE' policy, the 'fCUBE' is supposed to be making basic education 'free', 'compulsory' and 'universal' for all Ghanaian

children, the objectives contained in the latter documentation, coupled with the interviewees' views appear to be geared towards the general constraints of education in Ghana.

While it is acknowledged that perhaps the problem might have lain in the assumption that greater adherence to the objectives outlined in the policy documentation will or would have resulted in the attainment of the policy goals and provisions, however, for the purposes of this study, the very existence of such a disjuncture is fascinating. It does for instance go to endorse the presence of an implementation gap, which the documentary analysis has described as a 'discursive shift' between the policy provisions and strategies for implementing the 'fCUBE' policy. While for the purposes of this study, this appears as an indication that the 'fCUBE' policy outcomes in theory were, are and would be different from the policy provisions in practice, this issue equally appears to point at and explicate the apparent policy paradox under investigation.

6.5. Summary

This chapter serves as a complement to the preceding chapter which explores the interviewees' understanding and conceptualization of the components of the 'fCUBE' policy. The chapter explores what the interviewees, who for the purpose of this study are taken as 'elites' considered as the successes and achievements of 'fCUBE' policy in their own local areas since its inception in 1996.

The analysis of the interviewees' accounts reveals that the 'fCUBE' implementation process has made some modest gains, especially in relation to the three main objectives outlined in the policy documentation (See extract 3 of Appendix 5, for the full text.) However, a closer examination of the issues, particularly in relation to the comments of some of the interviewees shows that in the midst of all these successes and achievements is a significant implementation gap or disjuncture between what the interviewees saw as successes, and what the policy aims at achieving. This is typified by the fact that, while the interviewees appear not to have been unanimous on issues, there seem to have been serious discrepancies between the policy

objectives as outlined in the policy documentation, and the policy components and provisions as encapsulated in the policy title.

In general, while it is clear from the chapter that the interviewees could not be said to be totally homogeneous with regards to their perceptions about the contribution of 'fCUBE' to basic education provision, it is suggested that the issue of the discursive shift or disjuncture in the implementation process is more of a discrepancy between the policy provisions as encapsulated in the policy title and the strategies for implementation than support for a particular position.

CHAPTER 7: SETBACKS/PROBLEMS OF THE 'fCUBE' IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS: INTERVIEWEES' PERSPECTIVES

7.1. Overview

This chapter explores the views of the interviewees regarding the setbacks and problems besetting the 'fCUBE' implementation process. For the purposes of cross-referencing and setting the interviewees accounts in the context of the relevant literature explored in Chapter 2, the conceptual perspectives on the policy implementation paradox are first outlined briefly before presenting and discussing findings from the data.

7.2. Relevant conceptual perspectives from the policy literature

At this point it is worth revisiting the discussion on the theoretical context of the study, in Chapter 2, to locate and illustrate the conceptual underpinnings and explanations that were advanced to explain what in the context of this study is referred to as the policy implementation paradox. The rationale for revisiting the conceptual underpinnings of the research problem, as indicated above is grounded in the need to set the interviewees' account in context, that is, using the three perspectives on the 'policy paradox' explored in Chapter 2 as implicit themes to look out for in the interview data. (See Chapter 2, for further comments on this.)

While education policy literature is littered with exemplifications as to why policy outcomes are most often different from the initial intentions and purposes envisaged by policy makers and actors, for the purposes of this study, three main perspectives, namely: change management; democratic or participatory; and post-modernist perspectives have been privileged to explain this policy milieu. (See Chapter 2 for the rationale for use of these three perspectives.)

The change management perspective registers the claim that policy provisions and initiatives are more often difficult to attain because effective change management strategies and practices are not put in place and pursued in policy implementation processes. For the proponents of this perspective, many attempts at implementing policies have failed due primarily to inadequate logistics; misunderstanding of the

implementation process, lack of education, communication and information; resistance to change; lack of motivation and commitment to implementation; lack of effective monitoring and evaluation; failure to meet the training and developmental needs of implementers among others.

The democratic or participatory perspective counter-criticises the basic assumption underlying the policy paradox itself. It posits an argument that it is not the case that policy outcomes are most often different from initial policy provisions, or that policy provisions are not being implemented to the latter. Rather, it views the emphasis on the rational or traditional approach to policy making and implementation, where policy is taken as a timely intervention to solving a pressing problem, as unduly limiting our understanding of the dynamics of the policy processes. For the proponents representing this school of thought, policy performs other equally important functions aside from the traditional or rational role. For example, policies are used as languages for framing political discourse and as a symbol of legitimate decision making processes that can increase support for governance processes in a society that values rationality (Shulock, 1999, p. 229).

A post-modernist perspective attributes the existence of the policy paradox to the limited and most often contradictory ways policies are conceptualised and defined such that a 'theoretical and epistemological dry rot is built into the analytical structures constructed' (Ball, 1994, p. 15), making it impossible for policy provisions to be put into action and outcomes attained. For post-modernists, for actors of policy to be able to get the best results out of policy, there is the need for them to conceptualize it as both 'text' and 'discourse'. Policy as 'text', according to post-modernists refers to the end-product of the contestations, struggles, negotiations, compromises and dialogues involved in making policies, whilst policy as 'discourse' implies the ways by which the ideas and propositions contained in the texts are expressed and how their interpretation constrains the 'intended' meanings of such texts.

Table 3 below summarizes the basic tenets of the three perspectives on the policy paradox outlined above.

Table 3: Conceptual perspectives on the policy paradox

Perspective	Conceptual explanation	Writers/Proponents	Remedy/Solution
Change management perspective	Claims policy implementation processes fail to yield results because change management strategies and practices are not put in place and effectively followed	Bennett et al. (1992); Newton et al. (1992); Fullan (2001); Huczynski et al. (2001); Everard et al. (2004)	Putting in place and following effective change management strategies and approaches
Democratic/participatory perspective	Offers a counter criticism of the policy paradox. It argues that it is not the case that policy outcomes are not been attained but rather that the problem lies with the way by which policy implementation is positioned to serve or perform traditional or rational purposes of policy	Fieldman et al. (1981); Smith (1984); Dunning (1993); Jones (1994); Shulock (1999)	Re-conceptualising and re-defining policy to reflect and take full accounts of alternative democratic and participatory roles
Post-modernist perspective	Attributes the existence of the policy paradox to the narrow and sometimes contradictory ways by which policy is conceptualized and defined	Codd (1988); Ball (1994); Corbitt (1997); Trowler (1998); Walford (2000); Olssen et al. (2004)	By conceptualising policy as 'text' and 'discourse'. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policy as 'text'— end product of policy process • Policy as 'discourse'— how the ideas in the text are interpreted

Thus, it is important to note that the three 'conceptual perspectives' outlined in the table above are not perspectives directly attributed to the interviewees. These refer to views of researchers and policy experts extracted from relevant literature explored in

Chapter 2, and which for the purposes of assisting in cross-referencing and setting the accounts in context are set as a prologue to the interviewees' explorations. The rationale was that by using these as implicit themes to look out for in the data, the researcher could go beyond speculations to ascertain, by giving possible reasons, whether or not their views are consistent with the perspectives advanced to explain and demystify the existence of the policy implementation paradox.

7.3. Exploring the interview data

The interviewees' articulation of the setbacks and problems facing the 'fCUBE' implementation process is equally crucial to this enquiry. This is because the views expressed are in part critical in determining the extent to which the components of 'fCUBE' could be said to be reflected in the implementation process, and specifically how the policy could be said to have impacted on the educational process and system at large.

In view of this, the principal task here was that of evaluating the entire 'fCUBE' policy implementation process. When asked generally to recount the setbacks, drawbacks and problems of the 'fCUBE' implementation and institutionalization process, the interviewees focused on diverse and wide ranging issues. For the purpose of clarity and in-depth commentary on the interviewees' accounts, the feedback from the interviewees is put under three main themes which appeared to have run through their explorations, namely: change management; political; and socio-cultural and context specific issues. These are taken one after the other and explored.

7.3.1. Change management issues

This theme encompasses all the issues that have to do with the formulation, initiation, implementation and successful adoption or institutionalization of policies, and is therefore consistent with the change management perspective on the policy paradox outlined above. For example, when asked to outline what they thought the issues facing the implementation of the 'fCUBE' policy were, Kwabla, Akpene and Ewoenam, took turns in their respective interviews to identify the inadequacy of

infrastructural facilities as one big problem the 'fCUBE' policy is faced with. They explained that with the introduction of the 'fCUBE' schools were now continually experiencing explosion in pupil numbers and that the current infrastructural facilities in place were woefully inadequate in bringing about effective teaching and learning. The following excerpts bring Kwabla and Akpene's views to the fore:

Kwabla: For example, according to the structure, it is the District Assemblies that are to provide infrastructure, classrooms, furniture and those things. But this is woefully inadequate. Some places, it is not done at all. So if you go particularly to the rural areas and you see the structures in which our schools are, it's a pity and it demoralises both the teachers and the students. So we don't have much productivity coming up from those places, hmm.

Akpene: I think some of the challenges...with the teaming number of pupils, infrastructure has never ever been enough. It's a big challenge...

Although the general impression here is that meeting the infrastructural needs of schools was a big challenge, these interviewees, especially Kwabla appears to have apportioned blames to Government, more than anything else. His reference to the organisational structure of education in Ghana in relation to the problem seems to suggest that the policy provisions were hardly being met because of the malfunctioning or ineffectiveness of a particular governmental body. While this view is acknowledged in context, what is interesting is the fact the interviewees appeared not to have taken any responsibility and/or blame for the situation or let alone mention it, despite the fact that their organisation was, and is still instrumental in negotiations regarding the policy and its implementation in schools.

In other interview sessions, this issue of 'positive self-presentation and negative other presentation' (Kennedy, 2006) highlighted earlier becomes even clearer. For example, Dorvlo in his interview encounter identified the issues of limited human resources and inadequate funding as being critical to the success of the 'fCUBE'

implementation process. The interesting thing, of course is not the way he articulated these concerns, but how he was able to take himself and his colleagues out of the equation and to blame things squarely on Government. He contextualized the issue by painting a clear picture of what is happening in his district:

Dorvlo: I believe I talked about 123 schools now operating in the district. Our greater challenge is manpower. We don't have teachers to man all these schools so there is a need that some of these schools would have to be merged so that we can have a full complement of teachers serving in the schools. It's a challenge.

Interviewer: Ok, is there any other challenge you'll want to share with me?

Dorvlo: Ok, grant has been a problem, funding. We have to monitor from the district level and GOG (Government of Ghana) grant is not forthcoming. So we find it difficult to go to the schools as we should go. Because when you implement a policy, you'll have to see how it's catching up in the field. So data collection has been a problem for some time now.

Dzifa endorsed Dorvlo's view. He explained that the lack of sufficient funds meant that the schools and districts who genuinely wanted to undertake developmental projects could not do so because of financial reasons. He went on to point out that even those who are bold enough to start are forced to abandon such projects because they did not get the necessary financial backing from central Government:

Dzifa: You know, these programmes need a lot of money to run and since we're running on a limited budget, what the school as well as the circuits and the sub-metros would want to do, since they are not getting a lot of financial backing, they are not able to do. So they do it up to a stage and then they leave it. Currently as I am speaking, we're faced with infrastructure problems, yes. We would be very happy if prompt

action is taken on schools that we have identified that have infrastructure problems as well as furniture problems...

Although these views clearly explicate the financial problems confronting the 'fCUBE' implementation process, implicitly the interviewees appeared to have laid the blame squarely at the door-step of government for failing to fulfil its constitutional duty. Again, while it is interesting how members of an organisation could criticise the body that they owe their existence to, it is suggested that perhaps their positions as District and Regional Directors and Assistant Directors of Education respectively might have distanced them from central government's control and given them the impetus to be able to criticise the 'powers that be'. This is more likely to be the case when one contextualizes Kweku's (a senior official of the National Headquarters of GES) comments. He puts all these issues identified together and labelled them as 'the problem of logistics'. For him, the issues of infrastructure, inadequate number of schools, the short supply of teachers and the attitude of the community members towards education remain the core issues at the heart of the 'fCUBE' implementation process:

Kweku: ...As I said, enrolment is going up and yet it looks like there isn't enough infrastructure to take care of that...Some classrooms are congested. The pupil/teacher ratio is so high. There are some classes where you'll get enrolment of more than 50, 60, some even 70 being handled by one teacher...This is not good enough for the provision of educational services. Teachers are not in adequate supply...Then the various communities also, most of them are apathetic as far as their contributions are concerned. You go to a community and some of them are not interested in school activities at all...

Clearly, as a senior official at the National Headquarters of GES, Kweku does not appear to have apportioned blame neither has he presented a positive picture of 'himself' at the expense of 'others'. Rather, he used a language which depicts collegiate responsibility: 'it looks like there isn't enough infrastructure'; 'the pupil

teacher ration is high', this is not good enough for the provision of educational services...' among others. By using passive propositions, Kweku appears to have neutralised the issues. So, while Kweku's choice of words and in fact, his entire account could be attributed to his personal style of presentation, it is also possible that he might have identified himself directly with central government, by virtue of his position at the National Headquarters and therefore saw it appropriate to present a general and well balanced view of the issues confronting the 'fCUBE' policy implementation process. What this reading of Kweku's account in relation to the other interviewees therefore suggests is the feeling that the farther one moves away from central government's control, the better positioned one is in criticising governmental actions and inactions.

One other concern raised in relation to the problems facing the 'fCUBE' policy implementation by majority of interviewees was highlighted by Aseye, a member of a group discussion. She touched on, and exemplified the lack of motivation for the education workforce, and teachers in particular, as one of the critical issues that needed to be looked at and addressed if the 'fCUBE' policy or programme was to make any meaningful impacts on the lives of the people:

Aseye: Yes, I think when we talk about motivation, people think about money but to me it isn't only money but something like accommodation. Teachers being accommodated within the locality where they teach can be a sort of motivation. Teachers being provided with means of transport to where they are teaching can be a sort of motivation. Teachers being given soft loans or to purchase certain items could be a sort of motivation and exchange programmes, to visit other countries to experience the way they also teach can be a sort of motivation.

While taken at face value, Aseye's view generally talks about ways of motivating teachers, it nonetheless raises serious concerns about the welfare for the teacher workforce, particularly those in rural and deprived areas. She appears to have made a strong case for the provision of basic human necessities in deprived areas for use by

the teachers who teach in these areas. This for her was important since the unavailability of such facilities did not encourage teachers to take up postings in the rural and deprived areas.

In her interview session, Akpene again, bemoaned the poor calibre of graduates coming out of the basic education system who she claimed could hardly read and write properly:

Akpene: ...now everybody is schooling and of course at the end of the day, most people do not seem to be literate enough because of the teaming numbers. So people look on the fCUBE as producing illiterate pupils... But then, I'll say that if you look at the syllabus and other things we do now a lot of these things are being packed on these children...In the past only three subjects, namely; Arithmetic, Reading and Writing, that was the basic, with a little Geography and History but now the children are bombarded with so much that is not everybody who can absorb everything...

While Akpene's view is interesting as it provides insight into school curricular issues, however, she appears to blame the poor performance of graduates of the basic education system in Ghana on two main factors. First, she appears to make the point that whereas the advent of 'fCUBE' meant almost every child was now in school, sadly enough, infrastructural facilities as well as human and financial resources were woefully inadequate in coping with increasing number of pupils in the basic education system. Second, she makes a case for 'back to basics' idealism, that is, subject teaching rather than what the Conservatives in the UK for example, refer to as 'the teaching of political slogans and campaign terminologies'. She blames the school curriculum for what she referred to as 'bombarding' the pupils with so many teaching subjects. This for her accounts for why, unlike the former days where people graduated from the 'Form Four (Middle Schools) and were able to read and write good English, the 'fCUBE' keeps producing 'semi-illiterates', who could neither read nor write properly.

Dzifa, Elorm and Kweku, in their respective interviews decried the wrong or defective conceptualization of the provisions and components of the 'fCUBE' policy by the stakeholders as one big challenge facing the 'fCUBE' implementation process. This for them stemmed from the fact that education about the policy did not go down well and so stakeholders still had certain prejudices and preconceived ideas about the policy and its operationalization in practice. This according to them was indicative of the way in which the various components of the policy were being read and interpreted by stakeholders, especially parents and community members. In the following excerpts, Dzifa, Elorm and Kweku are presented as they speak about the issues of conceptualization:

Dzifa: Well, in the first place, I'll say that...education or the awareness has not gone deep, aha! So it makes support that we need from the communities in some cases are not forthcoming, aha! I believe that if we're able to go deep down to explain the things to the people, you know, everybody in the community to understand, it will actually bring about some successes...

Elorm: Big, big, big issues in terms of challenges. I mean, you mention free, compulsory education and parents think no, we shouldn't pay anything at all toward the schooling of our children and therefore the very little contribution they can make to support the Central Government's quest to improve education is being withdrawn, and that is, you know, a setback...

Kweku: ...the way parents and some members of the community understand it is quite different from perhaps what it is intended. Their understanding is that everything as far as providing basic education is concerned is free, even to the extent that the school uniform that the child has to wear is a problem to some parents. They think that it should be provided. They think that the exercise books that the child will have to

use in school have to be provided by Government, the pencil, everything has to be provided...

While the issue of the lack of a 'dynamic' conceptualization of the 'fCUBE' policy provisions and components explored by the interviewees above appear to be consistent with the post-modernist perspective (that is, in terms of the limited conceptualization of the policy provisions) on the policy paradox, in this context, it is eminent that the issue has to do more with the issue of change management, that is, the lack of proper education, communication and information about the policy rather than the lack of conceptualizing policy as both 'text' and 'discourse'. The data suggest that the efforts that were, and are being made by the policy-makers, change agents and policy implementers were, or are not sufficient enough to help the stakeholders to receive, comprehend, conceptualize and get themselves involved in the strategies and process designed for implementing the policy. This in a sense thus corroborates Fullan's (2001) claim that government agencies over the years have been preoccupied with policy and programme initiation, and have until recently underestimated the problems and processes of implementation, placing them, and the local practitioners in entirely different worlds. Talking about the attended problem that this opens up, he notes that the difficulty in the relationship between external and internal groups are central to the problem and process of meaning. For him, not only is meaning hard to come by when two different worlds have limited interaction, but misinterpretation, attribution of motives, feelings of being misunderstood, and disillusionment on both sides are almost guaranteed (pp.85-87).

Everard et al. (2004) add to this by pointing out quite explicitly the role of education in change management processes. In their discussions about the necessary pre-conditions for a successful change initiative, they write:

Heads and senior staffs who want to implement change therefore have a sizeable educational task on their hands: they have to help everyone concerned to discover and conceptualise the true nature of change and how it impinges upon all...This attempt to help people to conceptualise change is like tilling the

ground before planting the seed; or to use another metaphor, it is like tuning the receiver to the carrier wave before the message of change is transmitted. It involves both helping people to understand change-any change- in abstract, and helping them to apprehend the nature of particular change being introduced. (p. 239).

Thus, the issues explored in this section of the narrative generally border on the kind of works, operational plans, strategies and measures which needed or should have been put in place collectively, to ensure successful implementation of the policy. The exploration of interviewee accounts appears to reinforce the notion that plans to introduce change in any institution should not be disjointed and isolated. This is because, it is the collective ensemble of contributions, strategies, measures and approaches of policy actors which make a difference in changing the attitudes of people (especially those on whom change initiatives impinge) to be receptive to new policy initiatives and innovations. This thus fits into Everard et al's. (2004) view about the change management processes, and in fact the task of implementing policies as being a process involving interaction, dialogue, feedback, modifying objectives, recycling plans, coping with mixed feelings and values, pragmatism, micropolitics, frustration, and muddle (p. 240).

7.3.2. Political dilemmas

Politically, the interviewees unanimously cited excessive interference and governmental control over both policy and educational process as one major problem the education sector as a whole, and the 'fCUBE' policy implementation in particular, was beset with. Interestingly, while the interviewees explained that by citing excessive control over educational process, they were by no means suggesting that government should relinquish its active role to other stakeholders, they however reiterated that the issue, which they believed was apparent in the frequent changes in the educational set up anytime there was a change of government, stemmed out of reasons of political expediency. That is, the parochial interests of the politicians to be associated and remembered with particular policies. This view is particularly explicit in Kofi's account:

Kofi: *I think that Ghana as part of the global village has every right to formulate policies to respond to the changing needs...But I also want to believe that there is also a certain view that any group of politicians who come, want...to be remembered and associated with a certain kind of policy and if that is the idea then I think that it is unfortunate...*

To a large extent, Kofi's account could be considered as a 'hit on the head of the nail', as it appears to have established why such acts of interference by government do take place. However, in another interview setting, Torgbui appears to have gone beyond Kofi's illustration to show the gravity of the issue. He stressed that although policies must be changed to meet prevailing conditions, the habitual practice of politicians throwing policies out, especially when they assume office, makes implementation task very difficult. He gave this example to drive home his point:

Torgbui: *...This one is my own personal observation, like when the 31st December Movement was there, they started with this kindergarten thing. So many kindergartens and nurseries were established all over the country, you see it? And then things were going on only for the new Government to come and then cancel the whole thing. The teachers that were training the children were all withdrawn from the schools so the system folded up. And now, we are going back to the same thing...If these schools were there, we only would need to improve on them, you see?...*

This issue was further explicated by Senyo and Enam in one of the group interviews. However, the difference between their individual accounts rested in the fact that, whilst Senyo arguably appears to have talked about the issue of political interference along the lines of the inconsistency it brings about in the educational system, Enam based his argument on the causal factor, that is, the non-existence of a national education policy in Ghana:

Senyo: *Yea, I have a problem with the policymakers. One policy will come when it is about to stabilise then another policy will also come. For instance...we had the Primary—6 years, Middle—4 years, Secondary—5 years, and Sixth form—2 years, University or Technical Institutions and so forth and so on. Then came the Junior Secondary School, Senior Secondary School and now they are even changing it to Junior High School, Senior High School. I'm not bothered about the name but the point is when the whole thing is beginning to stabilise then another thing comes in thereby destabilising the former one and the new thing is, you know, started all over again...*

Interviewer: *So what you are saying in effect is, change per se leads to temporary incompetence and for that matter care should be taken when we want to implement things. Is that correct?*

Senyo: *That's what I wanted to say because...you see, when this thing was started, this SSS concept, the teachers who were in the system agitated for four years because even as at that time there was a backlog of students who were vying for admission into the tertiary institutions. Now, when they, the students, came out they had to stay at home for a year thereby the three years which we were advocating, that they could have done it for four years still came back again to the same four years. You see, and now there is yet another policy which is going to change the system again. So there is some kind of instability...*

Enam: *Yea, I think what I see is there is no national direction, educational policy, and for that matter there is no direction, because if we have a national plan for education, any Government who comes in should follow such a plan. So it is time we think of what education could do and take us in future.*

While implicitly, the interviewees in general seem not to have bothered themselves so much about the changes, particularly the changes in names of education reforms

that these governmental interferences bring about. Rather, they appear to be concerned mainly with the resources that 'go down the drain' anytime these changes, which to them do not stand the taste of time, are effected. This for them was particularly mind boggling since the inception of most of those programmes, always meant that the old school syllabi, textbooks, teaching learning materials and other school related materials had to be discarded and new ones provided.

Thus, the interviewees' position regarding the actions of government appears to endorse strongly the issue of 'positive self-presentation and negative other presentation' illuminated earlier in the analysis, and helps to convey the message in one way or the other, that the education officials felt they were being sidelined in the performance of their professional duties. This suggestion was fully supported by Kwabla who cited the practice of side-stepping education professionals and experts from policy formulation and implementation processes by politicians as being responsible for the unsuccessful attempts at implementing educational policies in Ghana. For him, the processes of drawing up and implementing education policies could and would be more effective only if educationists were allowed and encouraged to be at the forefront of educational policy innovations and policy implementation processes:

Kwabla: ...Eh, the unfortunate thing is that whereas we have the experts, the professionals, at times, unfortunately when educational policies come up, these people who have the expertise are not put in the frontline. Unfortunately, it is rather the politicians, you know, who take up the policies and so very often they miss target because as I indicated earlier on, they are not professionals. So if the opportunity which is actually a right of the professionals would be allowed the professionals, we should think that drawing up policy statements would be more effective.

Bringing his expert/professional view to bear on the 'fCUBE' as a case in point, he singled out the interconnection between the 'free' and 'compulsory'

components as being the main 'bone of contention' around which the complexities and controversies surrounding the 'fCUBE' policy implementation evolve. He argued that as long as basic education remained partially free, or remained what could best be described as a 'cost-sharing venture', between parents/guardians on the one hand, and Government on the other, it was highly impossible to put legal framework in place to make the policy compulsory:

Kwabla: When we take the fCUBE as a case in point, you know, the two, the 'free' and 'compulsory' aspects are inter-related. As it's clearly seen, education is not totally free and because it is not totally free, it is not possible to make it compulsory. This is the inter-relation between the two. That is why it hasn't been possible to mandate, I mean, put the legal framework in place to ensure that the compulsory aspect is observed.

While this view clearly explicates the change management perspective on what is being referred to in this context as the policy implementation paradox, set within the context of this study the view is insightful for two reasons. In a sense, this view, set against the aim of the study, sheds interesting light on the complexities involved in conceptualizing and operationalizing the 'fCUBE' components. In another sense, his latter comment could be perceived as safeguarding the interest of the entire organisation (especially the meso-level implementers) of which he is part. That is, Kwabla's comment could be read as a sign of propelling his own personal image and profile, as well as those of the members of the organisation he represented, at the expense of other stakeholders, notably the government. Blasé, cited by Jephcote and Davies (2004) for instance reminds us about this attitude of meso-level actors of policy. He comments that 'as mediators in the process of policy-making and implementation meso-level actors work either individually or collectively and employ both formal or informal mechanisms to achieve their goals, motivated to use their power to influence and, or protect their own interests and by the real or perceived interests of those they serve' (p. 549).

An equally significant policy issue identified by interviewees as having adverse effects on the 'fCUBE' implementation process in particular, and educational process at large was the rational or stages approach to policy making. In response to the question of the setbacks and problems of the 'fCUBE' implementation process, majority of interviewees problematized the 'top-down' management style or approach to policy implementation whereby policies are formulated at the highest echelon of the policy process and then pushed down the line for implementation by people whose responsibility it is to see to it that the policies formulated are well implemented and institutionalized. For the interviewees, not only does this style fail to capture the dynamics of the implementation process, but more importantly, the approach is prone to problems since it neglects the very people on whom these policies impinge. They, on the basis of this advocated for a more open discussion between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches as an alternative strategy to policy implementation, where the people are made to mobilise themselves, formulate their own policies at the grassroots and then these policies are sent to the top only for consent. Dorvlo captured this view vividly in the following excerpt:

Dorvlo: Right down from the grassroots, the school community...should have a way of generating policy statements and proposals to feed into the district proposals also feeding into the regional and to the national proposals. That upward growth has not been the case. We have only been experiencing the downward trend which is not working well with us. So this time round, we want it to emanate from the grassroots to the national level.

Thus, this section of the analysis explores what the interviewees considered as the adverse effects of political or governmental influences on the 'fCUBE' policy implementation. Although the issues are grouped under 'political dilemma', it is however important to note that implicitly they appear to be consistent with the change management ideals as they seem to portray how the actions and inactions of people in 'authority' do impact on policy processes. The discussion seem to suggest that although the interviewees were primarily concerned with the instabilities that

frequent governmental interruptions bring into the education system, they equally and more importantly appear to have expressed the need for them to be allowed the necessary freedom to perform their professional duties.

7.3.3. Socio-cultural and contextual issues

The socio-cultural issues explored by the interviewees extended to include occupational, religious, economic and contextual practices and beliefs that impact on the 'fCUBE' implementation process. While it needs to be acknowledged that socio-cultural issues could impact both positively and negatively on policy processes, it is however interesting to note that during the interview sessions, all the interviewees, with the exception of Kofi, appeared to have focussed on the negative side of the issue. When asked to identify the socio-cultural issues impacting on the 'fCUBE' implementation process Kofi opined that there are both sides of the issue. The following were his exact words:

Kofi: When you talk about socio-cultural factors, they may impact positively or negatively. Positively, as I said earlier on, Ghanaians by their nature are interested in school education. For instance, when you take a place like the Volta Region, which may be as equally deprived as the Northern Region, people sell their best resources to see their children through school because they think that is a good enough investment for them as compared to those in the forest areas who may have other landed property, gold. They may go for 'gallamsey'...

While this account clearly exemplifies the values that the local people place on education as one positive impact on educational process in Ghana, Kofi's later comments about the negative side of the issue were insightful. He identified four main practices of the people as being the main issues impacting negatively on the 'fCUBE' policy. The practices include: 'gallamsey' (that is, the extraction of minerals such as gold, diamond, and bauxite through the use of artificial and crude means and implements); discrimination against girls; the 'trokosi' practice (offering

girls to serve in shrines for their entire lives to compensate or atone for the indebtedness of their close relations); and cattle/stock-rearing:

Kofi: The negative aspect of that is also that in certain environments where resources are a bit constrained the parents may do a choice of perhaps wanting to support more of the boys than the girls, where they have both sexes...Then also in certain small enclaves, of course that practice is being targeted now and remedied, the 'trokosi' system for instance, where people could go and, let me say that the girls are actually taken to serve in shrines to compensate for the indebtedness of their very close relations like parents or other extended members of the family...

...And then the third one...when I was talking about education, I said that the education has an opportunity cost. For instance, somebody who hails from the north and knows that at the age of six he can start tending some cattle...and perhaps as a goat-herd or sheep-herd and graduate into a cattle-herd and after a period of perhaps five, six, ten years, he can have a few herds of cattle...So people will prefer that they go to the traditional economic activities, which is stock-rearing and their own parents may even, sort of sensitise them to that sort of practice so that more and more, they'll abandon the modern sector and want to engage in this kind of economic activities. ...

Although the issues explored here by Kofi hardly need any comment, two issues remain very critical to his contribution. First, his views appear to have unmasked the poverty related issues constraining and hindering education provision and delivery in Ghana and other developing countries in Sub-saharan Africa. Second, the account touches on and exemplifies quite explicitly, some of the common traditional practices, customs and beliefs of the people which hinder effective implementation of reforms aimed at improving the educational system.

The first of these concerns was well accentuated by a majority of interviewees, particularly Dzifa, Atta, Kwabla, Dorvlo and Kojo. These interviewees cited the tendency of most parents and guardians to engage their children/wards in income generating (mostly their own occupational/ vocational) activities for the purpose of supporting the family economically, as one major economic problem the 'fCUBE' policy implementation process was plagued with. What is more interesting is the fact that, whilst this group of interviewees genuinely acknowledged abject poverty as being the root cause of the issue, they arguably failed in their deliberations to offer practical solutions to the problem. Rather, they argued that not only did the practice constitute a violation of the rights of such children, but significantly it jeopardises their future. This to them was true, considering the fact that such practices encourage absenteeism and its related problem of truancy in the children, depriving them from having formal education. The ensuing excerpts present Dzifa and Atta's comments on the issue:

Dzifa: Yea...In areas where you have markets, yea, the children are actually engaged in the markets. So that days that we know as market days normally our attendance in schools is very poor...And additionally, because of the economic condition of a lot of parents, you know, we turn to use children for economic purposes, which is very bad. Some children are used to sell for their parents, deep into the night...at least to bring about something to the family. These are things that are actually impacting negatively on the implementation of the fCUBE...

Atta: ...basically about 65% of the citizens are farmers so what normally happens is during the farming season, most of the children are withdrawn from the schools to engage or assist their parents in farming.... And then most of them go to the market, especially during market days to assist their parents to sell. So all these impact negatively on education...

Thus, apart from unmasking the poverty related issues the 'fCUBE' implementation process is entangled in, these views serve as a good example of a possible high opportunity cost of sending a child to school. The views thus go to suggest that there is no such thing as 'free' education.

Regarding the other concerns pertaining to traditional belief, customs and practices, Worlali, in one of the group discussions vividly explicated their impacts on the educational process as a whole and the 'fCUBE' policy implementation process in particular:

Worlali: Yes, you see, there is a mentality that girls are to grow and remain in the kitchen whilst boys have to...go out and bring something. So this mentality is still not eroded. So the idea is that, you go to some areas and if a parent has two kids, one boy, one girl, he will prefer to send the boy to school. Yea, that is one. Then again...recently we came from the Volta Region, from an exercise and believe it...a girl who was already in school had to drop out, and that I hear the father had committed something against the gods somewhere and the girl was to leave school and go and serve...

Interviewer: (Interrupts)...you mean the trokosi system?

Worlali: Exactly, exactly, a kind of it. They call it a name I've forgotten, a kind of it. So this girl incidentally when she saw us, she was around with the breast everything naked. You see, so...some of our traditions also have effects on policies, yea.

Apart from these social and customary issues, traditional festivities have also been identified by the interviewees as impacting negatively on the 'fCUBE' implementation process. Some of the traditional festivities identified included outdoorings, funerals and traditional marriage ceremonies. For example, in reaction to the question of the socio-cultural and context-specific issues and problems

impacting on the 'fCUBE' policy implementation Elorm, in his individual interview session identified funeral making as one major issue hindering effective implementation of the 'fCUBE' policy:

Elorm: *...Here in my area, most of the children come from settlements where they do funerals at specific times, ok? So when somebody dies they keep the funeral down and then they declare some two weeks for funerals. Now, when that happens, what it means is that the parents when going for a funeral, they go with their children. So, I mean, there is absenteeism for pretty two weeks. Children are not in school because their parents are going for a funeral and they follow their parents for funerals...*

Obviously, Elorm's concern from the above account appears implicitly not to be against traditional funeral making per se, but rather the practice whereby specific school-days are set aside for funeral ceremonies. While it is also not quite clear why parents and guardians do go to funerals with children as alleged, one issue which quickly comes to mind is perhaps the inability to get reliable people or relatives to leave the children with. Again, while it is evident that Elorm's account was not intended or aimed at suggesting that parents should not go to places with their children, what it does imply is that going to funerals with children, especially during school-days does seriously disrupt school activities since the children would have to be absent from school for the number of days that these functions are held.

Similarly, social issues which have to do with procreation have also been identified as having negative effect on the 'fCUBE' implementation process. Two of such issues—teenage pregnancy and early marriages—are those that Nutifafa and Ewoenam exemplified in their responses to the questions put to them in their respective individual interview sessions:

Nutifafa: *I think (a little pause) teenage pregnancy is also a problem to parents. Some of them neglect their girl children and then by the close*

of the eye, the girl child is pregnant so she has to drop out of school and then it becomes a problem. The girl is a child and has brought forth a child and the, the responsibility becomes double or triple for the parent to cater for.

Ewoenam: *...you know, the Ghanaian in most cases, I don't have figures to prove but one major thing that has been responsible is, you know, as the girls grow then...some of them are given to husbands especially, excuse me, the northern sector where we have that early marriage.*

Essentially, what these interviewees are seen here as saying is that in some parts of the country, particularly the rural areas, the enrolment of girls in schools is a matter of concern because many of them either get pregnant along the way or they are given into forced marriages and therefore drop out of school.

So, while it is evidenced that all the interviewees, with the exception of Kofi, are seen here as accentuating only how socio-cultural issues impact adversely on the 'fCUBE' policy process, it is to be acknowledged that this might not have been any fault of theirs, but rather how the interview was structured. This is rightly so when one considers the themes around which the interview questions evolved. According to the interview schedule, the interviewees were expected to first articulate and/or interpret the 'fCUBE' policy components and purposes, which is then to be followed by their views about the achievements and successes, before the problems and possible suggestions are to be explored respectively. Considering the fact that the interviewees in the previous stage of the interview process did talk about successes and achievements might have given them the feeling that the next topic or issue in series was for them to explore the issues they perceived as hindering effective implementation of the policy, and not to weigh both sides of issues. So, while the interviewees are seen as emphasizing on how socio-cultural issues have had adverse effects on the 'fCUBE' policy, it could be argued that perhaps they were doing so because they were not asked specifically to explore the other side of the 'coin'.

The interview data discussed in this section explores the impacts of socio-cultural and context specific issues on the 'fCUBE' policy implementation process. The data suggests that as a result of the way the interviews were structured the interviewees appeared to have focussed more on the adverse effects rather than presenting balanced views on issues. That notwithstanding, it is important to point out that although in many respects the issues explored, particularly the names of interviewees expressing identical views, are generally put together for the purposes of analysis, all these issues are context-specific as they relate to the specific socio-cultural, religious, ethnic and geographical context(s) within which the 'fCUBE' policy is being implemented in Ghana.

7.4. Convergence and divergence of views

The data presented above explores what the interviewees considered as the setbacks and problems facing the 'fCUBE' policy implementation process. The intention was to explore, categorize and determine the extent to which the interviewees' responses are consistent with the three perspectives on the policy paradox outlined in the theoretical context of the study in Chapter 2, which is again illuminated in the beginning of this chapter.

The analysis indicates that whilst the interviewees' accounts under the heading 'change management issues' appear to be congruent with the change management perspective, their explorations on the other issue (notably political and socio-cultural issues) do not readily display features, or capture the democratic/participatory and post-modernist perspectives on the policy paradox explicitly. Rather, the data seem to suggest that features of the democratic and post-modernist perspectives are implicitly embedded in some of the interviewees' accounts.

For example, the identification of the stakeholders' contradictory conceptualization of 'fCUBE' policy components by majority of the interviewees, while exploring the change management issues, appears to veer towards the post-modernist conception of policy as both 'text' and 'discourse'. This is evidenced in the fact that, on the one hand, the interviewees' presumption of the stakeholders' faulty or contradictory

conception of the 'fCUBE' policy components appears to concur with the view of policy making and implementation which stresses ad hocery, serendipity, muddle and negotiations (Ball, 1994, pp, 15–21) and seems to endorse the view that 'for any text, a plurality of readers must necessarily produce a plurality of readings' (Codd, 1988, p. 239). On the other hand, the interviewees' own readings of the 'fCUBE' policy provisions seem to support the effect of distributing 'voice'. That is, they appear to reinforce the view that only certain voices (in this context, the voice of those who recontextualize policy) in the implementation process can be heard as meaningful or authoritative (Ball, 1994, p. 23). Generally, these views arguably explicate the post-modernist claim that the policy paradox primarily exists because 'the meaning of policy is taken for granted and a theoretical and epistemological dry rot is built into the analytical structures constructed' (Ball, 1994, p. 15).

In the same way, the interviewees' identification of the strong ties existing between the schools and communities (particularly in the previous chapter) appears also to veer towards the democratic or participatory perspective on the policy paradox. The view seems to point out, though indirectly, that the 'fCUBE' is seen as encouraging the active participation of stakeholders in democratic and governance processes rather than performing traditional problem solving roles.

So, while the interviewees seem not to have explicitly captured the democratic and post-modernist perspectives in their accounts, it could be argued that perhaps they either were not aware of the existence of these perspectives, or that, to them, the democratic and postmodernist perspectives were not relevant. Similarly, the reason for this could also be the fact that perhaps they were not able to bring these perspectives to bear due to how the interview questions were framed. However, taking a critical look at the interview process in totality, it is more certain that the former situation was likely the case, given that for reliability purposes and for the purposes of ease in analysing the transcripts, most of the items on the interview schedule were repeated in various forms but the interviewees could still not come out conversely and explicitly on the democratic and post-modernist perspectives on what they considered as hindering the effective implementation of the 'fCUBE' policy.

Similarly, the fact that traces of both the democratic and postmodernist perspectives were implicit in the interviewees' accounts gives credence to the explanation that perhaps the issues has more to do with the lack of awareness of the interviewees, and not necessarily the irrelevance of these two perspectives.

7.5. Summary

This chapter focuses on the third of the complementary themes adopted to evaluate the 'fCUBE' policy components. The chapter goes beyond both the analysis of documentary evidence and interviewees' interpretations and articulations of the 'fCUBE' policy components to explore what the interviewees considered as the setbacks and challenges to the 'fCUBE' policy implementation and institutionalization processes. Given the general aim of the study, such a parameter is useful not only because it has gone beyond the interviewees' interpretation and articulation of the policy components and provisions, but because of its potential in helping to demonstrate, based on the interviewees' accounts, whether or not these components are truly reflected in the process of implementation.

For purposes of clarity and in-depth commentary on the interviewees' accounts, the discussion were organised under three sub-headings namely: change management; political; and socio-cultural and context specific issues. The analysis indicates that whilst the change management issues explored are consistent with the change management perspective on the policy paradox, the issues explored under the other two sub-headings (political and socio-cultural and context specific issues respectively) do not appear to have veered directly towards the democratic/participatory and post-modernist perspectives highlighted in the 'theoretical context of the study', in Chapter 2.

While this revelation is insightful, it is not suggested that the democratic and post-modernist perspectives are alien to the Ghanaian context neither does it imply that the absence of these perspectives is an indication that the 'fCUBE' policy components are reflected in the implementation process. In fact, the differing and sometimes contradictory views expressed both within and between interviewees,

coupled with the wide range of problems identified, reveal that although some modest gains appear to have been made by the introduction of the 'fCUBE' policy, the 'free', 'compulsory', 'universal' and 'basic education' components can hardly be said to be visibly reflected in the implementation process. Again, based on the differing accounts presented by the interviewees, it could also be argued that rather than being intrinsic content of texts, the that change management, democratic/participatory and post-modernist perspectives are alternative ways of reading texts.

The issues raised in this chapter, particularly the problems the interviewees identified as hindering effective implementation of the 'fCUBE' policy, are again drawn upon in the general discussion chapter (Chapter 9), which addresses the issues raised across the discussions in chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, in an attempt to answer the research questions.

CHAPTER 8: WAYS TO IMPROVE PRACTICE: INTERVIEWEES' SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. Overview

The structure of this chapter serves dual purposes. First and mainly, it presents and discusses the views of the interviewees on the last of the themes—‘suggestions and recommendations to improve practice’. Then it goes on to present briefly and in a summarized form, other general issues emanating from the entire interview data before closing up with a general summary to the four chapters (Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8) on the interviews with the meso-level actors of policy in the Ghanaian educational system.

Given that this is the last in series to the chapters on the interviews with policy actors at the meso-level of the Ghanaian education system, the chapter generally draws leverage on pertinent issues. Particularly, the chapter focuses on strategies, mechanisms, suggestions and recommendations to be taken to improve upon the way the ‘fCUBE’ policy is being implemented, especially the problems and issues alluded to by the interviewees in the previous chapters.

8.2. Exploring views from the interview data

The exploration of the interviewees’ perceptions of the achievements and setbacks of the ‘fCUBE’ policy is fundamental to the aim of the study, but so too is the consideration of their views about steps to be taken to improve practice, as these to a large extent would determine how, or the extent to which the current provisions could be said to be visibly reflected in the implementation process. For this reason, the central task here was for the interviewees to identify practical steps and suggestions that they felt could improve upon, or impact positively on the ‘fCUBE’ implementation process.

The exploration of the accounts indicates that the interviewees were advocating for a change from existing conditions and ways of implementing the ‘fCUBE’ policy. Specifically, the accounts portray the interviewees as agitating for a change in structures, guidelines, strategies, attitudes, practices and direction, indicating a shift

from the current conditions, to a more favourable atmosphere which supports and promotes effective implementation and institutionalization of the policy.

For example, during the interview sessions, many of the interviewees identified the ambiguity in the wording of the policy title as a major issue and called for a re-wording of the title. This group of interviewees argued that the current title, 'fCUBE', 'rings a bell' because it does not say in explicit terms what the various components making up the policy title constitute or entail in absolute terms. Using the relationship between the 'free' and 'compulsory' components of 'fCUBE' as an example, they argued that as long as there are, what they considered as 'private costs' to education, basic education could neither be free nor compulsory. This concern and agitation for change in wording of policy title is exemplified in the following excerpts by Kofi, Kwabla and Dorvlo in their respective individual interviews, and Senyo and Worlali in their group discussion:

Kofi: *Indeed. The World Bank that started funding fCUBE...didn't name it fCUBE. The World Bank named it 'Basic Education Improvement Project' and that is exactly what it was meant to do, looking at the shortcomings of the reforms of 1987 and trying to improve on some of the lapses...I think the title 'Basic Education Improvement Project or even Programme' is a better term for me than fCUBE because fCUBE rings a certain bell and when you ask what is free about it then they say tuition is free and so because tuition is free, it's free. But like I said tuition is not the only component of education. What about the private costs? ...So the question of free is really a contentious thing. I will be comfortable with the World Bank definition of Basic Education Improvement Project or Programme...*

Dorvlo: *Hmm, it also true that we can have a change of words but the understanding should be there that it has the free component so far as we are not paying for tuition and all those things...So it can be*

'Subsidised Compulsory Universal Basic Education'. Instead of the 'free', it can be subsidized.

Kwabla: I think so. Yea, yes, because even as at now, when we're talking about the capitation grant...we can still not say education is free because when you talk about education being free, what we mean is that, the child should just get up, go to school, come back, go and come until he finishes. But that's not the case. Still he has to be fed by the parents and guardians. So as a matter of fact, it is not free...and because...there are people who do not have...there is no way you can make it compulsory.

Senyo: Yes, I think we should remove the 'f', the free from it and simply say 'CUBE'—Compulsory, Universal Basic Education because the free there has some kind of misconception to some people. But if you say Compulsory Universal Basic Education then everyone is committed whether it's going to be free...that aspect is silent. So I think it should be 'CUBE'.

Interviewer: That's your personal opinion. What have you to add to that, sir?

Worlali: Eh, I'll share the same opinion with him. You see, because...alongside we have private schools and parents are paying fees there, and they are making sure their kids go through education so if the 'free' aspect is removed, it will help. It will not make any difference to me if it is removed because private schools are running alongside. So let's remove the 'free' and then keep the rest and then put in logistics, inputs and then...sanction those who will not send their wards to school...

While at face value these interviewees are seen as calling for a re-wording of the 'fCUBE' policy title, implicitly their comments suggest they have all taken entrenched views about which specific wording to go for. This is evidenced by the fact that they all hold differing views and could not decide on what specific title to

use to capture all the provisions or components of the policy. For example, in their respective individual interview sessions, Kofi is seen as suggesting the initial wording that the first and biggest financier of the programme—the World Bank—had initially given to the programme whilst Dorvlo suggests a replacement of the ‘free’ component with the word ‘subsidized’. Kwabla, on his part, appears as if he was still not sure on what name or wording to give to the policy. On the other hand, within the excerpt from the group interview illuminated above, Senyo and Worlali strongly recommended the removal of the ‘free’ component from ‘fCUBE’.

Again, while these recommendations appear to fall in line with one another in terms of change in wording of the policy title which the interviewees were advocating, Kofi’s contribution is particularly insightful, as it goes to point out the source and, or cause of the ‘disjuncture’ between the ‘fCUBE’ policy provisions and the strategies for implementation, which the earlier chapters of the analysis have highlighted. His identification of the World Bank as the initial financier of the ‘fCUBE’ policy suggests that the reason or source of the disjuncture is external. That is, the pressure on Government (due to the globalisation of capitalism) to compete in global economy. The contribution thus explicates quite clearly the discursive shift in both language and policy direction which is suggested by the documentary data analysis and which is fully supported and endorsed by the meso-level actors of policy interviewed.

So, while these comments replicate the controversies surrounding the ‘fCUBE’ implementation process, they equally and quite clearly appear to have indicated the issues of conceptualization, contextualization and operationalization of the ‘fCUBE’ policy components, coupled with the issue of private costs to education as being the main drivers for the change in wording of the policy title. Generally, the issues explicated by the interviewees are illuminating and revealing. They generally go to suggest for example, that although the current title appears to capture the initial ideas and purposes of the policy, the policy components could still not be said to be fully reflected in the process of implementation because of the ambiguities in the wording

of the policy title as well as the unfilled gaps and silences inherent in the strategies designed for implementation.

Another interesting suggestion emanating from the interviews was the need for technical/vocational education to be made a composite part of 'fCUBE' and fully strengthened. The interviewees (for example, Aseye, Kwabla, Elinam, Worlali and many others) who came up with this suggestion argued that although under the Education Reform Programme of 1987, of which the 'fCUBE' policy was a formidable part, technical and vocational schools were to be opened and adequately resourced to train students, especially those who were not academically inclined and therefore could not make it to SSS with practical and employable skills, unfortunately during the implementation process this provision was neglected. This for them was regrettable since the development of a country depended directly on vocational and technological advancements. This concern, which to a large extent appears consistent with King et al's (2004) ideas of role of the modern Universities, is explicit in Kwabla and Aseye's words:

Kwabla: Yea, we have the technical/vocational aspect. That is also very crucial to the development of this nation. Our history has it that...the sort of education we've had over the years is the academic one through which people were trained for 'white-collar jobs'. But that's run out now. It's now obsolete. Now it's technological and vocational development which is necessary for...the development of this country. And that has been catered for in the fCUBE...

Aseye: ...we said we want to develop the child's mind, the heart, that is the attitudinal aspect and then using the hand, that is the psycho-motor, but it looks like the practical aspect is lacking. So that too should be revisited and enforced. At the onset of the fCUBE programme or the educational programme as a whole,... we were promised that workshops would be set up in all the schools so that we'll have a lot of practical work because not everybody is academically inclined...

Clearly, while the interviewees, particularly those whose views are illustrated in the above excerpts appear to be agitating for the establishment of technical/vocational education as a fulfilment of the 1987 education reform programme, it is quite obvious that the intention was more access oriented. That is, expanding the educational system and thereby solving the perennial issues of school drop-outs and youth unemployment in the country as well as training those who are not academically inclined in practical and transferable skills.

Politically, the exploration of the data suggests that the interviewees have focussed on wide ranging issues. However, the common ground in all these is that they all appeared to have called, in one way or the other, for stability in education policy implementation practices and processes. For example, in one of the group discussions, Mawunyo, Elinam and Dziedzorm recommended the development of a national education policy to break the vicious cycle of changing educational policies as and when governments change:

Mawunyo: The only thing I want to add is that as much as possible I'll advice that our educational policies are devoid of politics, hmm. Because Governments come and go but policies that affect education are always...there. If Governments come to change educational policies, we go back to square one...

Elinam: Thank you. So in a nutshell, what I'm going to advocate is that, there should be a national educational policy which should stand for a period of time...yes so that they should stop you know, changing after every four years...From the time of independence up to this time, let us look at the number educational reforms or policies that have come out.

Dziedzorm: Oh, I think they've said it all. What I was also going to say was what Mr....(mentions the name of colleague) said, that the educational policies should be well planned and should be on very long term basis so that every Government goes that line so that we all are working

together to achieve a common goal, hmm...For example...the main policy objectives should be well planned and thought of and should be on long term basis.

Quite clearly, this group of interviewees do not appear to be against changes in the educational system per se. Rather, what they seem to be calling for is a well thought of, well planned, long standing and stable national education policy against which all successive government should lean in carrying out their democratic and civil obligations. Having said that however, the rhetorical question is how realistic is this, or is it going to be since change is seen mainly as an important channel through which political parties, especially those in power can operationalize their ideological beliefs and political agenda?

In an individual interview session, Elorm sounded a word of caution. He strongly advised against divisive tendencies and utterance of people, particularly political opponents as these do not augur well for the advancement of education in the country:

Elorm: Yea, one little thing that we should be careful of is, you know, sometimes in this our country we turn to put politics into a lot of very good ideas and we need to be very careful about that. fCUBE is a constitutional demand or mandate, yea. Any Government at all that is in power is supposed to be doing fCUBE, whether it's party A or party B or C. So in the implementation process if things are not even going the way people are perceiving them to go, I mean, there should be that objective contribution...even if there is a change of Government today, whichever Government comes would still be implementing fCUBE and would be doing it as it feels it, understands it and has the capacity to do...

While Elorm's view is insightful as it appears to touch on the constitutionality of the 'fCUBE' policy vis-à-vis the call for constructive criticisms and 'a hands-on'

approach towards the implementation process, it is not clear who his criticism is directed to. It is neither clear whether he misread the interviewer's line of questioning to be a criticism of the way government was implementing the 'fCUBE' policy and was responding to him for that matter, nor is it explicit whether he was referring to the attitudes of stakeholders in general. Nonetheless, what is important in the context of this study is not who, if either of the above, is a potential addressee, but why he has said what he said. Considering that fact that Elorm has worked at the National Headquarters of GES for a long time before being promoted recently to the post of a District Director, it is assumed that he might have taken particular notice of this problem while serving at the National Headquarters and wanted to use this forum as a platform to send his message across.

In yet another individual interview session, Kofi on his part identified the poor socio-economic living standards of the local people as one major problem confronting the implementation of educational reform programmes and policies in Ghana. He, on the basis of this recommended the opening of what he described as 'poverty profiles' to identify those parents and guardians who genuinely or really needed help to support their children's/wards' education:

Kofi: Ok...our districts should really start developing what we call poverty profiles so that genuinely those people who are poor to the extent that they cannot support their kids would be supported by the state. Because coming with an amorphous policy like the 30, 000.00 cedis for each child may not be the best. Somebody may need perhaps 10,000.00 cedis, another may need perhaps 20,000.00 so there should be poverty profiles which should really stratify the people in the various districts, of course with the support of the Department of Social Welfare so that they'll know the poorest of the poor.

Here, Kofi was acknowledging that the introduction of the 'capitation grant' was a step in the right direction, but was stressing that this could have been implemented in a better way. His argument was that, since a good number of 'well-to-do' parents

were providing their children's educational needs as a result of them being sensitised, the 'capitation grant' should have gone to the poorest of the poor. For him, this would have made a lot more difference than spreading the already scant resources on everyone. As he rightly pointed out, *'the typical Ghanaian culture is that where there is a free facility, like the students loans, even those who don't need it scramble for it and in effect when the thing is disbursed, it doesn't affect the right targets that it is intended to affect'*.

So, while Kofi was making a good point about how the introduction of 'capitation grant' could have been properly organised and implemented, his comments go to suggest that the 'fCUBE' policy components, particularly the 'free' component could still not be said to be fully reflected in the process of implementation in spite of the modest steps (especially, the introduction of capitation grant) being taken to curb the alleged issues of misconception of the policy provisions.

The other suggestions and recommendations by the interviewees pertain to change management practices. That is, the kind of practical implementation strategies or works that they felt needed to be done to improve the way the 'fCUBE' policy was being implemented. For example, in most of the group discussions as well as the individual interview sessions, the interviewees were unanimous about the fact that a more thorough education was needed to disseminate ideas about the policy to the stakeholders. This to them was necessary to root out the misconceptions about the policy and also to re-engage the stakeholders in issues concerning education provision and delivery. The ensuing excerpts from an individual interview and a group discussion respectively present a summary of the interviewees' views on educating the stakeholders:

Kweku: Yea, the first one is that some years back we embarked on a serious IEC—Information, Education and Communication—programme but because of cost, I think this thing has died out. I will suggest that we go back to do a lot of sensitisation on the fCUBE programme to ensure

that parents and the various communities understand their roles and responsibilities to be able to contribute towards the programme...

Worlali: *Well, I will say number one, we must step up education at the grassroots for parents to know that if we say free...I don't think there is anything 100% free in the world, yes. So I think education should be stepped up for parents to know the limit of the free we talk about and their responsibilities...*

Interviewer: *Ok, you sir?*

Enam: *I think we need a lot of education because if the concept is there and the people don't understand...you say send your child to school, may be the parent feel that after all...people are going...let me just send my child to school. But if the parent knows what the child is going to benefit from education, I think they'll all put their hands on deck...Yea, what I also like to add is that the stakeholders, the key players in the communities should put their hands and heads together to ensure that what the fCUBE is, is really achieved.*

The foregoing appear to suggest that the interviewees were of the view that the 'fCUBE' policy implementation process would have made more significant impacts had the stakeholders been adequately educated, sufficiently informed and well communicated to about the policy, and their roles and responsibilities as far as the implementation process was concerned. While this appears to conform to change management routines (in terms of the kind of work that needed to be done before implementation and institutionalization take hold), it has to be acknowledged that it is quite common for policy makers and implementers to suggest that people do not understand properly what they are trying to achieve or what the policy 'really' is and what the intentions are. Perhaps in this very context, they see the 'fCUBE' as not working the way it should in practice, or not producing the intended outcomes and were therefore playing the 'blame-game' here.

Similarly, majority of the interviewees called for a change in management reforms. That is, a change in the way the educational sector is organised and managed along hierarchical lines. This concern was captured in Ewoenam's words:

Ewoenam: *Well, as a matter of fact...there should be that bottom-up approach, aha! Meaning that...the stakeholders at the base must get involved, they must be tackled first and then be made to push the programme up. Yea, rather than that kind of...top-down approach...Practically, they'll have to...be made to mobilise themselves and then formulate strategies from the grassroots and then when it is sent up, over there, they only have to, I mean, refine it and than let it go through...This is not happening so we want it to happen, yes.*

Here, Ewoenam was strongly recommending a more open discussion between the 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches to education policy making and implementation. The basis of his argument seems to be that emphasis on the latter alone amounts to dictatorship while the blend of these two approaches is useful in eliciting the support, interest and enthusiasm of stakeholders in policy process. While this recommendation appears as a step in the right direction, it does have serious implications and ramifications for the purpose of this study. It does bring to the fore the view that the current management systems put in place cannot be said to fully support and encourage the 'fCUBE' implementation and institutionalization process.

In other developments, motivating the teacher work-force was identified as a suitable remedy to the myriad of problems facing the 'fCUBE' implementation process. Torgbui for example, was of the view that since teachers were the backbone of the educational process, motivating them sufficiently, either in cash or kind means strengthening and empowering them to be able to give out their best. He pointed out that the current situation where teachers are taken for granted is regrettable and could be advanced to explain why education policy implementation processes and strategies are more often unsuccessful and educational standards continue to fall. He captured these concerns in the following words:

Torgbui: *Hmm, if you take the teacher for instance, we are doing everything to get the child to school, we are doing everything to have the buildings in place, we are doing everything to get good management for the school but we haven't thought of the teacher. The one single person who'll be able to implement all these things, we haven't thought of him. What we need is teacher motivation and what motivates the teacher... If they are not thinking of at least improving the lot of the teacher, I don't think we are getting anywhere...if they don't do something to improve the lot of the teacher, especially in areas of accommodation, transportation, you see it, and other basic needs, then all the good things we have put on paper right now wouldn't yield anything, yes.*

Torgbui's contribution is insightful as it appears to touch on the importance of the teacher and the need for him/her to be kept highly motivated at all times, and in the execution of his/her professional duties. However, what is more intriguing as far as Torgbui's contribution is concerned, is the way he has been able to distance and dissociate himself, and possibly his colleagues from the task of motivating teachers. He achieved this through the change of pronouns (from 'we' to 'they') signifying the laying of the blame at the door-step of not the meso-level implementers, but rather the Government.

Torgbui was not the only interviewee to have recommended the motivation of the teaching workforce as a suitable strategy to seeing improvement in the way the 'fCUBE' policy was being implemented. Other interviewees, particularly Dorvlo, Dzifa, Kweku, Afenyo and kafui also made similar recommendations. In their group discussion, Afenyo and Kafui for example, took turns to speak about why, how, and the forms motivation of the teacher work-force could take:

Afenyo: *Thank you for this question...There must be real efforts to improve the working conditions of teachers because the success of the programme would largely depend upon the teacher. But in this country it looks like the teacher is taken for granted. When policies are planned for*

improving education, the teacher is taken for granted that, I mean, he is just to perform, yes. So there must be a concentration on teacher upgrading, teacher incentive so that teacher performance will improve, hmm.

Interviewer: *And what have you to add to that sir?*

Kafui: *That is what I've written down, this same thing that the Director was talking about. I said teacher motivation because I've realised that everything that is being done about this fCUBE is like the teacher is not considered. Because if you bring in all the textbooks, you bring in all the teaching and learning materials, you give the teacher all the training but the teacher is not motivated, the teacher is not satisfied with conditions of service, I think the programme even though will go on, the success expected wouldn't be achieved. So the teacher as the implementer must be considered...*

So, generally while these interviewees identified motivation as one of the areas needing a step up, what they were indeed stressing is the need for teachers' role in the implementation process to be recognised, and their conditions of service looked into and improved to serve as motivation for them also to do what is expected of them.

Going hand-in-hand with motivating the teacher workforce is also the call for teacher capacity to be enhanced. That is, the need for meeting the training and developmental needs of both 'pupil' and 'professional' teachers. This concern was explicated by Kojo and Womor, who in their respective individual interview and group discussion called for regular seminars, workshops and conferences to be organised for teachers so as to equip, update and re-orient them properly about how to perform their duties efficiently and effectively:

Kojo: *Yea, what I'll suggest is that as much as possible there should be education...I'm talking of the teachers. There should be regular workshops, seminars for teachers because they are implementing the programme so there is the need for them to be reoriented to enable them to perform their duties very effectively, aha!...*

Womor: *And 'pupil teachers'...they are still in the system, so I think they should also be considered. Like he said, workshops should be run for them to update their skills and knowledge because we can never neglect the 'pupil teachers'. They are sent into our rural areas where teachers refuse posting so they should not be left out.*

While one might, or might not take issue with the suggestion here that in addition to the teaching force not adequately motivated, they are also ill-resourced to effectively perform their duties, there is nonetheless a serious concern being raised here. The perception of the interviewees, particularly Womor's suggestion that 'pupil teachers' take up positions where trained and certificated teachers refuse posting, if it accurately reflects the situation on the ground, raises eyebrows. The suggestion seriously questions how a policy such as 'fCUBE' which is, or could be said to have been designed purposely to give a step up to disadvantaged children, in terms of its commitment to the principles of social justice, could be said to be operating especially in underprivileged communities under the auspices of untrained teachers (pupil teachers). What Womor's contribution thus clearly exhibit is an endorsement of the earlier suggestion that in spite of the numerous efforts to address educational inequalities, currently the 'fCUBE' policy provisions and components could not be said to be addressing these issues adequately.

In the context of this same discussion, Enyonam and Dziedzorm in particular, and in their respective group discussions called for what could best be described as 'counter-check' on the activities of teachers in particular and educational workers in general. They called for licensing or signing of performance contracts with teachers.

This for them was necessary to put an end to the practice of some unscrupulous teachers taking advantage of the system for their own personal gains:

Enyonam: *...Then we'll also realise that some people go to the training colleges as a stepping stone, so as soon as they come out and there is the opportunity for going somewhere to get another thing, they just move. So the attrition rate is very high. So I don't know if licensing or whatever thing would be appropriate, so that the teacher would have to remain...*

Dziedzorm: *(Interrupts)...can I come in? I think that the Government has now to tackle something seriously at the front of teachers. May be, the teachers would have to sign performance contracts to buttress the point that Mr...(mentions the name of colleague) has said. If the problem is tackled from the angle of the teachers...teachers are made to sign performance contract, if you don't perform then you leave and then if a teacher is performing, you make sure that the teacher's remuneration is to a level that is appreciable...So unless that aspect of the whole thing is done, we'll still have a lot of problems.*

While the recommendation for a counter-check on the activities of teachers is useful, what is particularly relevant here is the context of the comments. Enyonam, a newly promoted Director of Education of the district, was formerly in charge of Manpower Development, whilst Dziedzorm is an Assistant Director in charge of Human Resource Development of a district, and therefore were, or are constantly engaged with issues to do with welfare of teachers. As a result of this, they both appear to be well informed about the behaviour of a few 'bad nuts' among teachers and were therefore providing a sort of 'counter check' to ensure that the privileges teachers call for were not abused. So the comments here, while based on what seems to be a recommendation on how to retain trained and qualified teachers in the classroom, should be considered or interpreted within this context.

One other concern raised in relation to improving practice was highlighted by Elorm. He reported that the 'fCUBE' policy had made significant strides over the years of its introduction and implementation, but raised the concern that:

Elorm: *...for fCUBE to succeed I think we should, as a country, know where our desires are and be ready to pay for them. So we must do more in pumping more resources into education. I mean it is just not enough to talk about capitation. Yes, the children don't only need the 30 thousand a year to do all that they have to do in school and that's why may be the parents are complaining that we are putting so much responsibilities on them. So we as a country should put more resources in to education and then be able to monitor their use too...*

In effect, while Elorm was calling for more resources to be pumped into the 'fCUBE' implementation process and in fact, the educational system as a whole, he counter-balances his argument with the suggestion that this has to go hand-in-hand with effective monitoring and supervision. This for him was equally important as the actual provision of the funds, as in his own words: *'when you throw resources at people and you sit back and you don't go out there looking at how the resources are being used you'll be surprised at the day of accountability to only learn that the resources have been misapplied'*. So for him, following up on issues and monitoring how resources are being used are commitments Ghanaians should work towards as a country.

The concern regarding logistical support vis-à-vis monitoring was strongly endorsed in one of the group discussions by Elinam. However, unlike Elorm, who suggests for more resources to be ejected into financing education, he called for a complete overhauling of the supervisory mechanism in public schools. He compared supervision in public schools to private sector schools and drew the conclusion that because supervision in private schools is much more intensified, they are able to perform. He, on the basis of that advocated for a more intense supervision in public schools to check the lackadaisical attitudes of some of the teachers:

Elinam: *...I think supervision is the main thing we have to look at because when we compare the public schools to the private schools, you will realise that the supervision in the private schools is very intensive and you will realise that as a result of that supervision they are performing. Now, but in the public that perception is that after all I'm a trained teacher, whether I go to school or not I'll be paid. So they must put in some mechanism so that at least the supervision is intensified in the public schools.*

Here again, although Elinam appears to be making a good point about poor supervision in public schools, he appears, through the change of pronouns, to have dodged responsibility about how this practice could be remedied. His reference to the expression: *'So they must put in some mechanism so that at least the supervision is intensified in the public schools'*, suggests that he was shifting responsibility, certainly not to his colleagues, but perhaps to the educational authorities and definitely to Government. This thus features as an integral part of the 'positive self presentation and negative other presentation' strategy adopted by many of the interviewees in answering the questions put to them.

Thus, this chapter has explored the views of the interviewees regarding the steps they felt could be taken to bring about improvement in the 'fCUBE' policy implementation in particular, and the entire educational systems and process as a whole. The views expressed, although concerned essentially about the ways to improve practice, appear more of remedies to the problems alluded to in the previous chapter. As such, the analysis seems to paint a blurring picture of how fully reflected the 'fCUBE' policy provisions, particularly the components are in the implementation and institutionalization processes.

8.3. Chapter summary

This chapter explores the accounts of the interviewees regarding how the 'fCUBE' policy implementation process could be improved upon and made more viable in realisation of the policy aims and goals. Considering that the broader aim of the

study is to find out the extent to which the 'fCUBE' policy components have been implemented and are reflected in the process of implementation, the researcher is of the view that it would have been inadequate to limit analysis only to the ways in which the 'fCUBE' policy provisions are interpreted and the achievements and problems articulated by the interviewees. For this reason, this chapter goes beyond their interpretation of the policy provisions and articulation of the policy achievements and problems to focus on their recommendations and suggestions to improve practice. Thus, by allowing recommendations to be made, the analysis in this chapter has enabled the researcher to see beyond the previous chapters on the interview data to make appropriate inferences, inter-connections and mismatches in line with what was said earlier, particularly the readings privileged by the documentary data analysis in Chapter 4.

The analysis shows that the interviewees touched on wide ranging and sensitive issues, notably: change in wording of the policy title; adherence to effective change management practices; change of management reforms and practices; stability in educational policy implementation; non interference of Government in educational policy issues, poverty alleviation among others, and appear more as remedies to the problems alluded to in the previous chapter. Given that the analysis of the interviewees' accounts in the earlier chapters suggests that elite positions are not necessarily positions of truth, the authenticity of the views in this chapter could be called to question. Nonetheless, by adopting a post-modernist perspective, the views in this chapter are insightful, especially when considered in conjunction with the views in the previous three chapters, particularly those in Chapter 7. The elite roles that the interviewees play mean that regardless of intentions or consciousness, their words have a certain gravitas (Gubrium et al., 2003) by virtue of their position. Particularly, the consistency of the views in this chapter with those in the previous chapter portray, at least inherently that although, to use the expression of one of the interviewees, *'very great strides have been made'* in the 'fCUBE' policy implementation process, the policy components can hardly be seen as fully reflected in the implementation and institutionalization processes.

The next section of the chapter focuses on the general issues emerging from the interview data as a whole.

8.4. The dynamics of the interview process

While the points emanating from the four distinct chapters on the interviews with meso-level actors of policy in the Ghanaian education system could be said to represent a general picture of the major issues emerging from the analysis of the interview data, there are yet other interesting features arising from the data which help to shed some light, not on the perspectives on the policy paradox, but rather the interview process as a dynamic and communicative event.

One such interesting feature which is ostensibly exhibited by the interviewees in this, as well as the other chapters, is what the analysis highlights and describes as the ‘positive self presentation and negative other presentation’. This is evidenced by the fact that while answering the questions put to them, the majority of interviewees appear to have exhibited a tendency to propel themselves, by giving good accounts of themselves, whilst attributing or laying problems, pitfalls and shortcomings at the doorpost of other stakeholders, typically the Government. It is however to be acknowledged that whilst this is a major feature of the interview data, because the focus of the study is not on investigating individual interviewee’s behaviour(s) during the interview encounters, it has not been possible to say whether their thoughts or accounts are pre-meditated or not. Regardless of this fact, the interesting thing is how such behaviour is read into, at least for the purposes of generating insights to answer the research questions. So, while the analysis of the interview data, based on the trend which seems to have developed over the entire transcript, appears to suggest that the farther one moves away from central government control, the less reticent and less defensive one is likely to be of governmental actions and inactions, the elite roles that the interviewees play mean that their words equally have a certain gravitas. In context their accounts generally suggest that the ‘fCUBE’ policy components are not adequately reflected in the implementation and institutionalization processes.

Again, while it is to be acknowledged that some of the interview questions are quite contentious, what is particularly interesting is the skills with which most of the interviewees have answered these questions. For example, in reacting to the question of how reflected the 'fCUBE' policy components were in the implementation process, Kwabla, used expressions like *'I understand the question but it's a difficult one to answer'*; *'Hmm that one has many tentacles, but frankly speaking...'*; and *'That's also a mega question'*, not only to buy thinking time but also to make the interviewer aware that the questions were contentious and may require him to take contradictory positions, even against the very organisation he represented. Similarly, Kweku a senior official of the GES National Headquarters, in responding to a further probe on the same issues, opined, *'Well, in actual fact I cannot say anything further thing about the STEP programme since that is under another Ministry'*, indicating his reticence in subjecting the activities of his colleagues in other ministries to the litmus test.

While these are just two examples from the lot, the illustrations seem to endorse the suggestion highlighted earlier in the discussion that the closer one is to central government control, the more reticent and more defensive one is likely to be in presenting a public relations account of events. This is particularly evidenced in the interview data as Kwabla, by his words, appears to have taken a more entrenched, more cynical and critical stand, even against his own organisation, whilst Kweku appears to have styled himself in the interview as an official mouthpiece of government.

Again, this position or suggestion alluded to here appears to be explicated sufficiently by the neutral stance that Kofi seemed to have adopted in his interview session. As a member of an autonomous body—GNAT—he appears to have recognised his position during the process of the interview as such, and therefore seemed to have neither presented a public relations accounts of events, nor propelled himself and the organisation he represented. His neutrality is evidenced by the fact that, he appears to have offered a well thought of, well balanced and critical insights about his experience of events (See Transcript 11, in Appendix 4 for full version of

Kofi's comments.) So, while it could be argued that Kofi's ability to accentuate critical insights about the 'fCUBE' implementation process is as a result of his 'knowledgeability' and personal style of presentation, the same can be argued that this was as a result of his position as a high ranking member of an independent institution. While it is not suggested that Kofi's account is the 'Gospel truth', the position appears to endorse the previous suggestion in another way. That is, the view that the more freedom one enjoys as a result of membership of an independent body, the more empowered one is in presenting a more balance views of events.

So, although it follows from the analysis of the interviews with the meso-level implementers that elite positions are not necessarily positions of 'truth', the suggestion alluded to in this section of the chapter appears to mark a sharp contrast between the views of local level recontextualizers of policy and those at the echelon of the policy process, suggesting that having been accorded elite membership does not necessarily means, imply or guarantee homogeneity of views.

Regarding the tactics to deploy in interviewing the elite figures, four main techniques, namely: developing good ethical reputation; rule breaking; separation of interviewees from institutions they represent; and 'knowing how much to know': were utilised variously and sporadically in the interviews throughout (these are discussed in details in Chapter 3). However, of the four, two were more prominent in almost all the interviews. These are: 'knowing how much to know' and 'separation of interviewees from institutions they represent'. The former involves the interviewer making conscious decisions about how they appear to the interviewees in terms of their own subject knowledge, potentially pretending to know less than they do in order to get interviewees to articulate their own perception of events (Kennedy, 2006, p. 232). The latter has to do with the interviewer rejecting interviewees' accounts which are perceived as aiming to propel either him/herself or the institution s/he represents, by probing for more personalized opinions and views. Using these two techniques helped to potentially circumvent the formalised responses which otherwise might have been given by these people in responsible positions of the policy process in the Ghanaian educational system.

In general, the relative quality of the interview relationship seemed good, as the interviewees were relatively welcoming and made efforts to ensure that the interviews took place at the right place and atmosphere. Of particular interest is the way those interviewees who stood in for others as well as those who took part in the group discussions on their own volition took steps to ensure that the interviews took place against all odds, and their readiness to ensure that the information required was given. While this welcoming attitude needs commendation, it is important to acknowledge however that this was not always the case. In few cases, notably the interviews with Regional Directors of Education as well as Senior Officials of the GES National Headquarters, the entire process was made somewhat impersonal and demeaning. The said officials behaved in ways which sought to mark out clearly their higher status. For example, despite having previously agreed to be interviewed at a specific time, and for duration of at least forty-five minutes, some of these interviewees kept me waiting for hours whilst others constantly kept signalling and reiterating the message that the interviews were going beyond the agreed time-frame.

So, while interviewing (as a research instrument) is commonly viewed as a scientific instrument designed to extract knowledge from interviewees, the foregoing show quite clearly that rather, it is a dynamic communicative event as well as a site for knowledge construction.

8.5. General summary to chapters on interview data

The evidence from the interviews with the meso-level actors of policy in the Ghanaian educational system are presented thematically in four distinct chapters, that is, in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Chapter 5 explores the interview data along the first of the four themes developed for the analysis, discussion and presentation of the interview data evidence. The chapter focuses on the interviewees' perception, understanding, conception, articulation and interpretation of the 'fCUBE' policy provisions and components. Given the general aim of the study, the idea was to find out the extent to which their articulation and interpretation of the 'fCUBE' provisions are consistent or congruent with the

positions privileged as the official and authentic readings of the policy provisions from the analysis of the policy documentation in Chapter 4. The analysis shows that the views of the interviewees, have to a large extent, corroborated the evidence from the documentary data analysis. This is evidenced by the fact that their articulation and interpretation of the 'fCUBE' provisions appear to suggest that although they saw the 'fCUBE' policy as firmly rooted in social democratic values, due to what the analysis largely suggests as the globalisation of capitalism (that is, the pressure on governments to compete in global economy), they seem to have conflated these social democratic ideals with neo-liberal rhetoric of 'skills for knowledge based economy' and its concomitant discourse of 'training for the world of work'. Generally, the analysis in this chapter appears to convey the message that affirming or accentuating the 'fCUBE' policy provisions is inherently not problematic, but that the 'real' challenge lies in how these provisions are conceptualized and operationalized to suit one's own context.

Chapter 6 explores the second of the four themes for the interview data presentation regarding what the interviewees considered as the successes and achievements of the 'fCUBE' policy over the period of its initiation. The exploration of the interviewees' accounts indicates that although the 'fCUBE' policy implementation process is believed to have been fraught with pertinent issues, very significant strides can be said to have been made, particularly in the direction of the three main components or objectives designed to aid implementation. For example, more schools were reported to have been built, access to schools facilitated, school/community relations improved, teachers' capacity enhanced and school management improved through management reforms respectively (See Appendix 5, Extract 3 for a full version of this document.) While these are seen as significant gains or yardsticks on the basis of which the entire outcome of the policy could be assessed, the analysis however appears to open up or mark a significant discursive shift between these achievements and the policy goals as encapsulated in the policy title. This is evidenced by the fact that the data appeared to have been silent about how these successes and achievements could be said to have made, or could make Basic Education in Ghana 'free', 'compulsory', and 'universal' for all Ghanaian children.

The third theme designed for the discussion and presentation of the interview data is explored in Chapter 7. The chapter focuses on the problems and setbacks of the 'fCUBE' implementation process. The idea was to go beyond the interviewees' articulation and interpretation of the policy provisions to see how the implementation process was/is being impacted upon by sociological and contextual issues, since the researcher was of the opinion that it would have been inadequate to limit analysis only to their articulation and interpretation. For the purposes of cross-referencing and setting the interviewees accounts in the context of the relevant literature explored in Chapter 2, the conceptual perspectives on the policy implementation paradox were outlined first, before presenting and discussing findings from the data. Also, for the purpose of clarity and in-depth commentary on the interviewees' accounts, the feedback from the interviewees were put under three main themes namely: change management; political; and socio-cultural and context specific issues. The analysis indicates that apart from the exploration of the issues under the heading 'change management issues', which appears to be congruent with the change management perspective on the policy paradox, the other two sub-headings could not be said to have veered towards the democratic and post-modernist perspectives directly. In general, the chapter suggests that owing to the wide ranging and sometimes contradictory and differing issues alluded to by the interviewees as imparting negatively on the 'fCUBE' implementation process, it is hard to see how genuinely reflected the components were in the process of implementation.

The last of the four themes—ways to improve practice—designed to aid the reportage of the interview data evidence is explored in Chapter 8. The chapter analyses and discusses the practical approaches, strategies and steps that the interviewees felt should or could be taken to improve upon the way the 'fCUBE' policy was/is being implemented. The analysis shows that the interviewees touched on wide ranging and sensitive issues, notably: change in wording of the policy title; adherence to effective change management practices; change of management reforms and practices; stability in educational policy implementation; non interference of Government in educational policy issues, poverty alleviation among others. Given the consistency with which these issues appeared to have concurred with the

implementation problems identified in Chapter 7, and more importantly, the issues involved in conceptualizing and operationalizing the policy provisions in Chapter 5, the chapter appears to endorse the suggestion that the 'fCUBE' purposes and components cannot be said to be genuinely reflected in the processes of implementation and institutionalisation.

So, despite dissenting, and sometimes conflicting views from some of the interviewees, the pieces of evidence explicated in the above four chapters are credible and widespread enough to give one the impetus and, or grounds to draw one concrete conclusion. The evidence from these four chapters show that inasmuch as there is an opportunity cost to education (due practically to the existence of 'private cost of/to education), disparities and inequities in education provision and delivery, and above all, no legality to ensure that all children of school-going age are in school, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible to make basic education free, compulsory and universal.

The issues explicated in this, as well as the other chapters on the interview data are again drawn upon in the next chapter, where the overall findings of the study are pulled together, synthesized, summarized and discussed in relation to the research questions posed.

CHAPTER 9: DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

9.1. Outline

The evidence from both documentary and interview data analyses for this study is presented and discussed in the relevant chapters (that is, Chapter 4 for documentary data evidence, and Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 for interview data evidence respectively). This chapter discusses the main points and themes raised in, and across these chapters in response to the research questions posed, namely:

(i) What does a critical discourse analysis of the ‘fCUBE’ policy documentation suggest about the purposes of the ‘fCUBE’ policy?

(ii) In what ways are the fCUBE policy provisions and purposes perceived, conceptualized, articulated and interpreted by the meso-level implementers of policy in the Ghanaian educational system?

(iii) Where do the views presented in (i) and (ii) converge and diverge?

(iv) Given a conceptual framework which identifies educational policy as both ‘text’ and ‘discourse’, what can a theoretical analysis of the discussions in (i), (ii) and (iii) suggest about:

(a) the ‘fCUBE’ implementation process?

(b) the policy implementation paradox?

These questions are considered consecutively in this chapter; the overall implications of/from the discussion are then considered and explored in Chapter 10.

9.2. Purposes of ‘fCUBE’: critical discourse analysis of extracts from official policy documentation

A critical discourse analysis of the ‘fCUBE’ policy documentation, in Chapter 4 suggests that whereas there may have been other varied reasons and purposes of the initiation of the ‘fCUBE’ policy, the central theme around which all other issues revolve appears to be the notion of ‘education for all’ (MOE, 1996; 1998; 2004). That

is, the idea of revamping the Ghanaian educational system (especially Basic Education system) to take account of, and support its citizenry to develop their potential to the fullest of their abilities and thereby contribute their quota to the development and growth of themselves, their communities, societies and the nation at large. Thus, this in many respects concurs, or is consistent with the general principles, guidelines and provisions of the international agreements (1948 and 1989 United Nation's Conventions/Declarations about the Rights Child; the EFA, 2000; the MDG etc) Ghana has participated in, and subscribed to in recent years, which stipulate that children without exception have rights, including access to education.

In pursuit of this policy goal, the analysis at the linguistic/semiotic tier suggests that the extracts selected for analysis draw on linguistic/semiotic processes and properties namely the use of: figures of speech; nominalization, moderating/mitigating words; declarative assertive propositions; different structural patterns of texts; different functions/purposes of texts, bullet points; impersonal pronouns; among others to advertise the policy and also to elicit the support and co-operation of the citizenry towards the change being advocated. For example, in most of the extracts analysed (especially in Extracts 1, 2, 4 and 5), figures of speech, particularly personifications and repetitions are used predominantly to emphasize and/or reiterate official policy positions as well as to persuade and enlist the involvement, support and commitment of the citizenry towards the 'fCUBE' policy. Similarly, declarative/assertive propositions, achieved through the combination of impersonal and timeless simple present tense, are suggested as being drawn upon extensively (particularly in extracts 1, 3, 4 and 5), to convey the intention and commitment of the State and its institutions of governance towards the restructuring of the basic education system. Also, the analysis of Extracts 1, 2 and 5 points to the use of what is known in Linguistics as moderating lexical items to mitigate the basic education provision and delivery intent. Particularly, in the first half of Extract 1, reference to the expression '*the greatest extent feasibly*' is read into as moderating or mitigating the constitutional demand on the State to provide free, compulsory, universal basic education for its citizens. In fact, the expression is interpreted as suggesting that the State and its apparatus cannot be single-handedly responsible for the provision of

basic education to its citizens and can, as a result not be blamed for not having achieved the desired outcomes of the change envision. (See Chapter 4, for full details of the fine-grain linguistic/semiotic analyses of extracts selected.)

Generally, the linguistic/semiotic tier of analyses suggest that these and the other linguistic processes and properties exemplified in Chapter 4, may have been drawn upon arguably to demonstrate among other things, how bits of language contribute to the making of complete texts; the efficacy of textual properties of texts as sensitive indicators of socio-cultural processes; those factors which enable speakers/writers to exercise power; and how textual features of texts combine with inter-textual properties to create and sustain meaning within texts (Fairclough, 1992, 1995, 2001, 2003; Wodak, 2001; Taylor, 2004). (See Chapter 3 for full rationale for the fine-grain linguistic/semiotic analysis of extracts selected from the 'fCUBE' documentation.)

The interdiscursive tier of analysis suggests that the 'fCUBE' policy documentation draws extensively on social democratic and socialist ideological discourses and rhetoric in advertising and eliciting support from stakeholders. Whilst the social democratic and socialist ideologies seem to share common language, goals and values, the analysis in this thesis however suggests a fundamental difference between the two ideologies. The social democratic ideology is portrayed as deeply rooted in progressive ideals and achieved in the texts/extracts selected for analysis, through the use of discourses which demonstrate a strong commitment to social justice and equity, particularly regarding the creation of a 'level playing field' for 'all' to develop their potentials to the fullest of their abilities. These ideals are set off and, or achieved mainly in the first two extracts selected for analysis by the use of equity, inclusion and equality laden words and expressions such as: '*all the levels*', '*all the regions*', '*all the citizens*', '*free compulsory, universal basic education*', '*all school-age children*', '*all of its citizens*', '*all Ghanaians*', '*free, quality schooling*', among others. Generally, the progressive ideals identified by the documentary analysis reject elitism and encourages mass education (comprehensive education) and commitment to policies of equal opportunities, positive discrimination and

redistribution of resources within and between schools (Hill, 2001, p. 14; Gewirtz, 2000, p. 140; Lynch and Lodge, 2002, p. 7).

The socialist discourse drawn upon in the extracts selected for analysis in this context favours state intervention, notably in educational matters and the creation of welfare society through empowering marginalised, disadvantaged and underprivileged individuals and groups, as well as changing the status quo in the interest of equity. In addition, the socialist ideals appear to emphasize emancipatory and critical projects such as positive social change as well as personal and social development as opposed to economic improvement. The socialist major objectives include social/collective control of the economy; the egalitarian redistribution of wealth, income and power in favour of working people and their families; and more widespread equality, not of only opportunities but of also of outcome (Trowler, 1998; Hill, 2001).

Also implicit in these discourses is what the documentary data analysis identifies as a 'decolonizing agenda'. That is, the idea of using education as a weapon, a tool and a resource for unifying and disabusing the minds of the citizens of colonial histories, experiences and vestiges (Turner, 1971; McWilliam et al., 1975; Nwomonoh, 1998; Dei, 2004, 2005). Dei (2005, p. 272) exemplifies this anti-colonial undercurrent which the documentary analysis suggests as inherently posited in the 'fCUBE' policy documentation. He contends that the import of this nation building agenda has roots in anti-colonial thought, that is, the decolonizing movements of colonial states that fought for independence from European countries at the end of the Second World War. According to him, the idea stemmed from the revolutionary ideas of avowed nationalists such as Franz Fanon, Mohandas Gandhi, Albert Memmi, Aime Cesaire, Kwame Nkrumah, Che Guevara, among others, who sought political liberation for all colonised people and communities using the power of knowledge. He argues that following from this example, prominent anti-colonial African thinkers such as Kwame Nkrumah, Amilcar Cabral, Sekou Toure and Leopald Senghor, to mention a few, strategically evoked the goal of nation building as a necessary pre-condition for decolonization of the mind, the spirit and the state. He points out that based on this strategic development of the nation, schooling, and for that matter education in

Africa, and Ghana in particular, has proceeded to achieve the imperative of the notion of 'nation building'.

Dei's contention is endorsed by Turner (1971) and McWilliam et al. (1975). In their exploration of the historical development of education in Ghana, they point out how education was used, particularly in the post-colonial and post-independence eras by the anti-colonial thinkers to strategically evoke the goal of nation building. McWilliam et al. (1975) for instance, point out that nation building in the post colonial era in Ghana was viewed as, and meant to be a strategic initiative to harness the strength and unity of the nation as part of the ongoing, critical process of decolonization. (See Chapters 1 and 4 for details of this decolonizing argument.)

However, in the context of this study, the documentary analysis suggests that this decolonizing agenda is premised onto the social democratic and progressive ideological discourses and their commitment to issues of social justice, equity, equality, inclusion and the likes and so appears to be competed with, suppressed, overshadowed and confined to the implicit level.

In addition to the socialist and social democratic ideologies, which the documentary analysis suggests as explicitly drawn upon in advertising the purpose of 'fCUBE', there emerged within the extracts (especially the documentation that emerged after the formal initiation of the policy in 1996) for analysis, a new body of ideological discourse. That is, the neo-liberal discourse of 'skills for knowledge-based economy' wrapped up in the rhetoric of 'economic change' and 'skills for the world of work' (Hatcher, 2000, 2001; Hill, 2001; Chitty, 2004). (See the analysis of Extracts 2, 4 and 5 in Chapter 4 for further comments on this ideological discourse.) The documentary analysis describes this new discourse as the pressure on Government to compete in global economy—globalization. The terminology used to capture this idea in educational ideological terms according to Trowler (198) is 'enterprise', and it is concerned primarily with developing people in terms of transferable 'core skills'—communication; IT; literacy—to be good and efficient workers.

However, owing to what is suggested as the struggle for dominance between the neo-liberal ideological discourse, on the one hand, and the socialist and social democratic discourses on the other, there emerges again from within the entire body of extracts selected for analysis, a disjuncture and/or a discursive shift in policy direction and language. This disjuncture/discursive shift is evidenced by the fact that there appears to be no direct or sufficient linkage between the provisions encapsulated in the policy components and title, and the strategies developed to aid or drive the implementation process. The strategies designed to aid the implementation of the policy could for example, not explain how by improving the teaching and learning in the schools, basic education could become 'free', 'compulsory' and 'universal' for all Ghanaian children.

Although the documentary analysis suggests that perhaps the problem might have lain in the assumption that greater adherence to the strategies outlined in the policy documentation would result in the attainment of the policy goals (MOE, 1995; 1996), the emergence of the discursive shift itself does speak volumes about the implementation process. For instance, it sends out a clear signal of an implementation gap, that is, an indication that the policy outcomes in practice are bound to differ from the intended outcomes (Trowler, 1998; 2003).

So, while due principally to its call for state intervention into education to achieve a socially just anti discriminatory society, the 'fCUBE' policy is seen as deeply rooted in social democratic values, owing to what is suggested as the struggle for dominance between the ideological discourses drawn upon, there appears to be a discursive shift in policy direction and language of implementation. This discursive shift, which the analysis describes as the pressure of governments worldwide to compete in globalized economy (Tomasevski, 2004; 2005; 2006), is marked significantly by a move from the socialist and social democratic discourses towards a neo-liberal ideological discourse of 'skills for knowledge based economy' its concomitant values of 'training for the world of work' (Hill, 2001; Chitty, 2004).

9.3. Interpreting the ‘fCUBE’ purposes and provisions: interviewees’ accounts

The analysis of the interview data presented, particularly in Chapter 5, indicates that rather than articulating the ‘fCUBE’ policy purposes and intentions in clear and unmitigated language, the interviewees appear to have resorted to the interpretation of the policy components. In other words, their readings, interpretations and meanings appear to relate to the ‘free’, ‘compulsory’, ‘universal’ and ‘basic education’ components of the ‘fCUBE’ policy title rather than the policy purposes and intentions. While it is acknowledged that this might have been due to the way the interview schedule was designed and organised, this is not to say that the interviewees were homogeneous in their accounts. Indeed, in some cases differing, competing and sometimes contradictory readings and accounts appear to have been advanced (as the next section of the chapter will show) to justify the purpose of the ‘fCUBE’ policy. But generally, in their articulations of what the various components mean, imply or entail, a general consensus is seen as being reached about the underlying ideas and purposes inherent in the components of the ‘fCUBE’ policy title.

For example, while it was acknowledged that what constituted ‘free’ education is blurring, as there is in existence of what the interviewees described as both ‘public’ and ‘private’ cost to education, the central reading which appears to run through the interviewees’ accounts is the creation of a kind of a welfare state. That is, the creation by the state, of a level playing field in terms of educational services, facilities and privileges (mainly through the abolition of tuition fees, facility user-fees and all other forms of fees, as well as the provision of facilities equipment and facilities) for all Ghanaian children of school-going age, irrespective of tribe, religion, ethnicity, political affiliation, geographical location, linguistic repertoire, (dis)ability, to educate themselves to the best of their abilities. Thus, this idea about ‘free’ education is quite reminiscent with the notion of ‘education for all’, as it appears in many respects to draw on, and exhibit a combination of social democratic, socialist and liberal ideological impulses. However, the idea arguably concurs more with the socialist ideological parameters which the documentary analysis (in Chapter 4) suggests as one of the discourses drawn upon in advertising the purposes and

intent of the 'fCUBE' policy. The socialist ideology, in the context of this study favours state intervention (through the use of local and national state) into social services, particularly education, to achieve a socially just anti discriminatory society (Hill, 2001).

Similarly, it was clear that the interviewees' felt that adequate legal provisions did not appear to have been made to ensure all parents/guardians send their children/wards to school. However, the general impression gathered, pertaining to what the 'compulsory' component of 'fCUBE' meant or entailed was in a way related to the interpretation attached to the 'free' component. The interviewees generally tended to interpret the 'compulsory' components, as being a call on the State, particularly Government and its apparatus of governance to intervene in educational matters by compelling parents/guardians through sanctions to send their children/wards to school and thereby empowering marginalised groups in the process, and changing the status quo in the interest of equity.

Again, while varied interpretations appeared to have been assigned to the 'universal' component of the 'fCUBE' policy title, conceptually, the component could be said to be generally read into, and interpreted as having strong commitment to the principle of social justice. This is evidenced by the fact that most of the interviewees in their explorations tended to draw on equity, equality and inclusion laden expressions in articulating what the universality in 'fCUBE' really entailed. For example, in one of the group discussions, members of the group, namely; Mawunyo, Atta, Elinam and Dziedzorm expressed divergent views as to what the universal component of 'fCUBE' meant or stood for. Mawunyo thought the universality of 'fCUBE' meant all Ghanaian children are to *'enjoy some basic educational provisions and facilities'*, while Atta was of the view that the component basically encourages freedom of choice. Again, Elinam, and Dziedzorm both, in the same group discussion interpreted the universality of 'fCUBE' as meaning equity in terms of inputs into education, whereas in other individual interview sessions, Elorm articulated the universal component of 'fCUBE' as meaning equal access to educational facilities while Akpene, Agbeli and Worlali in their respective sessions interpreted 'universality' as

meaning inclusive education. That is, meaning everybody, including disabled, physically challenged and able-bodied children all having the right to ‘free’ and ‘compulsory’ basic education. (See Chapter 5 for details of interviewees’ articulation and interpretation of the universality of ‘fCUBE’.)

So, while varied explanations were advanced by the interviewees to explain the universality of ‘fCUBE’, the notion appears to be underpinned principally by the tenets of progressivism. This is, thus consistent with social democratic position which the documentary data analysis in Chapter 4 highlights, and which views the ultimate aim of education as that of the flourishing on the collective society, community and individuals through commitment to social justice and its related principles of equity, equality, and equality of opportunities among others.

Also, one would have thought that ‘basic education’ component of ‘fCUBE’ would embrace concepts that have to do with the curriculum or the quality and sophistication of education respectively (MOE, 2003; 2004). However, the sense made from the interviewees’ accounts indicate that they were either reiterating age considerations or perceived the component as drawing leverage on, or encapsulating other components (mainly the compulsory and universal components) of the policy title. Their explorations point to the fact that basic education in the Ghanaian context is taken to mean that schooling for the first nine years (which is currently being extended to eleven years) is a right, not a privilege for all Ghanaian children. Principally, their views appear to endorse the progressive readings the documentary analysis in Chapter 4 privileges that the provisions enshrined in article 38, Sub-section 1 and 2 of the 1992 Republican Constitution are to be adhered to in ensuring that no child of school-going age is deprived from gaining access to education due to sex, age, linguistic capabilities, gender, geographical location, religion, ethnicity among others.

Thus, the exploration of views from the interview data reveal that rather than articulating the purposes of the ‘fCUBE’ in clear and explicit terms, the interviewees inherently tended to use ideological positions, assumptions and discourses to convey

their perceptions and conception of the 'fCUBE' policy purposes and intentions. While it is acknowledged that this might not have been intentional, their accounts appear to focus, to a large extent, on progressive idealism which emphasize commitment to social justice and its related concepts of equity, inclusion, equality (of both opportunities and outcomes) as well as socialist impulses of welfare state. However, owing to what is suggested by the analysis as competing ideological discourses, the progressive ideals appear to emerge as the stronger discourse drawn upon by the interviewees and thereby supporting the view that the 'fCUBE' as a policy is deeply rooted in progressive ideological values.

9.4. Convergence and divergence of views between/among document and interview analyses

The interview data analysis shows that the interviewees' conception, articulation and interpretation of the 'fCUBE' policy provisions to a large extent corroborate the positions and readings the documentary analysis (in Chapter 4) privileges as being espoused or enshrined in the 'fCUBE' policy documentation. This follows from the fact that their accounts indicate quite implicitly that the anti-colonial, post independence idealism of education as a symbol, or tool for decolonizing the mind, the spirit and the state through fostering togetherness and nation building (Turner, 1971; McWilliam et al., 1975; Dei 2004, 2005) was not lost on the minds of the Ghanaian educators. This claim is to a large extent evidenced by the equity, citizenship, social justice, and welfarist readings, connotations and interpretations that the interviewees appear generally to have attached to the 'fCUBE' policy components and provisions.

However, as the previous section indicated, one of the points of divergence between the documentary evidence and the interviewees' accounts rests in the way the policy purposes and intentions were articulated. Whilst in the documentary source of evidence, the purpose of the policy appears to be set out quite clearly and overtly, the interviewees' articulation of these provisions and purposes seem to be embedded in the components of the policy title. While it is acknowledged that this might have been due to the way the interview questions were framed and therefore not contended

here that such an approach was wrong, it is suggested that conceptualizing the basic tenets of a policy this way could be problematic. This is due primarily to the fact that such an approach could end up bringing about a significant amount of blurring in purpose (in terms of the significance that stakeholders attach to the policy), especially when it is difficult to derive at consensus as to what these components really mean in practice.

Similarly, it is to be acknowledged that although the intention of interviewing elite figures at the meso-level of the Ghanaian educational system was far from duly obtaining homogeneity on the issue under investigation, the differing, conflicting and sometimes contradictory views advanced by the interviewees clearly indicates that they too might not have had a clearly defined and grounded conceptualizations about the purposes of 'fCUBE'. A case in point was their conceptualization and articulation of the 'free' component of 'fCUBE' vis-à-vis the issue of 'developmental levies/fees' that parents/guardians were being made to pay for educating their children/wards. In general, the conflicting and dissenting accounts of the interviewees regarding what constituted developmental levies/fees, what it is meant to be used for as well as who charges it, go to suggest that either they did not know what constituted free education or that they were wilfully bent on circumventing the course and purposes of the study. (See Chapter 5 for interviewees' accounts of what they perceived as 'free' education vis-à-vis the issue of developmental levies/fees.)

Furthermore, despite the availability of widespread evidence from both the 'fCUBE' policy documentation (GOG, 1992; MOE, 1995, 1996) and the interview data to support the suggestion that the 'fCUBE' policy is deeply rooted in social democratic ideals, the ways in which a significant number of the interviewees articulated the components of the 'fCUBE' policy title shows support for what the documentary data analysis describes as a discursive shift in policy direction and language. This is evidenced firstly by the fact that these interviewees appear to have expressed divergent views and have advanced what appears to be neo-liberal and anti-welfarist ideas to support their interpretations. For example, in the interview sessions, Enyonam and a number of other interviewees argued against the idea of the state

having to provide for both the 'public' and 'private' costs to education (defined in the context of the documentary analysis as the creation of a welfarist society) and demanded that individual parents/guardians should be made to cater for their children/wards' education. While in many respects, this could be suggested as conforming to social democratic principles of school-community involvement and participation in education, arguably the suggestion is seen as having neo-liberal undercurrents. The idea appears to portray education as a market commodity and hence encouraging parents (mainly through the rolling back of the state) to take advantage of this for their individualistic gains.

Besides this, the interviewees' exploration of the other themes along which the interview data are organised, particularly their accounts of the successes and achievements of 'fCUBE', is also revealing. The accounts show that although some modest gains could be said to have been made in the implementation process, such gains are not directly in line with the policy provisions as encapsulated in both the policy title and the policy documentation, notably section 38 of the 1992 Republican Constitution (GOG, 1992). While it has to be admitted that perhaps a host of factors might have been responsible for this disjuncture between the policy provisions, and the outcomes in practice, the interview data analysis, based on the interviewees' own accounts, boils this down mainly to the existence or emergence of a 'discursive shift' which is suggested by the documentary data analysis in the preceding chapter. Again, these mismatches are visible between the strategies designed to aid implementation of the policy, and the policy provision espoused typically in the Fourth Republican Constitution of 1992 whose brainchild is the 'fCUBE' policy. However, it is to be acknowledged that whereas the documentary data analysis points out this shift explicitly within the extracts selected for analysis, it is not quite clear whether the interviewees were aware of this discursive shift or it was a coincidence that their explorations appeared to be reiterating this suggestion.

Apart from these issues, there appear to be other points of convergence and divergence, not directly between the documentary evidence and how these pieces of evidence were interpreted by the meso-level implementers, but regarding other parts

of the thesis and the general issues emanating from the study. One such major issue worth mentioning concerns the issue surrounding the theoretical perspectives advanced to explain the existence of the implementation paradox in Chapter 2. Whereas the 'change management perspective' appears consistent with the issues the interviewees perceived as militating against the 'fCUBE' implementation and institutionalization processes, their accounts of the other issues classified respectively under 'political' and, socio-cultural and context specific issues' do not appear to veer directly towards the democratic and post-modernist perspectives illuminated upon in the theoretical context of the study in Chapter 2. While this is clearly a case of a mismatch between what the interviewees' positions are and what policy researchers on the issue have had to say, the issue could probably have arisen out the fact that the interviewees' views relate to other perspectives on the policy paradox which were not considered by the researcher in Chapter 2. Seen in this light, the issue of lack of explicit convergence towards the 'democratic' and 'post-modernist' perspectives might have lain more with the researcher's conceptualization and restriction of the issue under investigation to the three perspectives than it is to do with explicit divergence from conceptual perspectives outlined.

Another general issue emanating particularly from the analysis of the interview data, and which is well illuminated upon, is the revelation of the vitality of the interview as a dynamic communicative event. The fundamental rationale behind the decision to employ interviews in this study was the need to find out the similarities and mismatches between the assumptions and positions espoused in the 'fCUBE' policy documentation and the interviewees' conception and articulation of these provisions and how this is liable or likely to impact either positively or negatively on the implementation process. However, as it is illustrated in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8, the explorations of the interviewees' accounts adds another dimension to this purpose. The interview data exploration shows that whereas interviews are traditionally viewed as scientific instruments for producing factual data, the collaborative and interactive nature of the process results in the construction of knowledge. Whilst the intention here is not to propel the use of interviews at the expense of other research instruments, notably documentary evidence, its use in this study suggests that

although elites do wield a significant amount of power, and influence discourse due to the important positions they occupy (Gubrium et al., 2003), this does not necessarily follow that such positions are necessarily those of truth neither are their views homogeneous.

9.5. Policy as ‘text’ and ‘discourse’: a framework for conceptual understanding of policy processes

The analyses of data, using the composite theory conceptualization of policy as both ‘text’ and ‘discourse’ (Ball, 1994) as a framework in this study contributes to a conceptual understanding of both the ‘fCUBE’ policy implementation process and the policy paradox under investigation.

9.5.1. Suggestions about the ‘fCUBE’ policy implementation process

The theoretical discussion of the evidence in this study comes out with a number of key propositions or contributions about the ‘fCUBE’ policy implementation process.

Firstly, the findings presented in this thesis suggest that apart from it being a policy initiative in response to the Republic of Ghana’s Constitutional requirement, the implementation of the ‘fCUBE’ policy could equally be seen as falling in line with, and in fulfilment of a global education agenda. That is, the global campaign of/about education provision as a fundamental human right and as a resource to reducing and/or alleviating global poverty. The thrust of this proposition rests in the fact that fundamentally the ‘fCUBE’ policy is said to have been initiated as a result of the clarion call on the 1992 Republican Constitution of Ghana (GOG, 1992) to ensure that a programme of free, compulsory and universal basic education is provided for all Ghanaian children of school-going age for a ten year period. However, the emergence of new body of policy statements indicating Ghana’s participation in, and endorsement of international agreements (such as the 1989 United Nations Declaration about the Rights of the Child; the Beijing Conference on the Rights of Women; the EFA; the MDG etc) coupled with the interviewees’ accounts of the continued implementation of the policy, particularly after the ten year period mandated by the Constitution has elapsed, suggest that perhaps the ‘fCUBE’ policy

is a 'right-based' strategy (Tomasevski, 2004; 2005; 2006) for education provision and delivery, and is sanctioned by international/global law. This explanation thus fits into Tomasevski's (2006) claim for instance, that the provision of free and compulsory education for all the world's children forms the backbone of international human rights law.

Secondly, the evidence emanating from the study, particularly the interviewees' accounts and perceptions about the 'fCUBE' policy as a being a remedy to the falling educational standard (MOE, 1995; 1996; 1998 etc) could be seen as a reiteration of the traditional problem-solving role of policy (Trowler, 1998; 2003; Shulock, 1999). Particularly, the interviewees' contention that the 'fCUBE' policy is to ensure that all children of school-going age, particularly those who have dropped out of school, are brought back into mainstream education, presupposes that they view the policy in straightforward terms as a specification of principles, actions and routines (Trowler, 1998, p. 48) related to educational issues, which are to be followed to bring about desired goals. Whilst it is not being suggested that this view of the policy process in general and policy implementation in particular is faulty, the idea appears consistent with the views of those scholars (Jennings, 1977; Nakamura and Smallwood, 1980; Harman, 1984 and Gallagher, 1992) who understand and/or define policy as a position or stance developed in response to a problem, as opposed to a far more complex, dynamic and interactive process involving negotiations, contestations and struggles (Ball, 1994; Trowler, 1998; Ozga, 2000; Olssen, Codd, & O'Neil, 2004).

Similarly, the analysis of the interviewees' articulation of the 'fCUBE' policy provisions vis-à-vis the points of convergence and divergence between their accounts and the positions privileged as the authentic reading of the policy goals and purposes indicate that accentuating the 'fCUBE' policy provisions and components is not inherently problematic, but that the 'real' challenge lies in how these provisions are operationalized in context. Typically, the analyses endorse Tomasevski's (2004; 2005) argument that making education free, compulsory and universal requires increased and guaranteed public funding, for which there simply is no commitment from both governments and donor agencies as yet. This, thus reiterates the view that

the challenge in operationalizing the 'fCUBE' policy purposes and provisions is not due necessarily to the difficulty in identifying analytically what the policy is, and what it is intended to achieve. Rather, the suggestion is a proposition in support of Ball's (1994) argument that policies as processes are messy and that 'sometimes the effects of quibbling and dissensus (in the policy process) result in blurring of meaning within texts, and in public confusion and a dissemination of doubt' (p. 16).

Also, the general discussions of the pieces of evidence in the thesis reveal that some significant and modest gains are said to have been made in the areas of access and participation, quality of teaching and learning in basic schools, provision and delivery of school infrastructure, raising awareness of stakeholders towards education among others. However, these contributions appear to have been constrained by a number of factors. These factors include poor funding arrangement of the education sector, ambiguity in the wording of the policy title, unnecessary and excessive political interference, and socio-cultural, religious, customary and context-specific practices of the people among others.

Following from the first four suggestions, the analysis and discussion goes on to register a fifth and crucial proposition about the 'fCUBE' policy implementation process. That is, the view of a disjuncture or departure between the policy outcomes in practice and the provisions and intentions in theory. This disjuncture is evidenced by the fact that the analyses of both the 'fCUBE' documentary evidence and the interviewees' accounts point to a significant discursive shift in ideological discourses and positions drawn upon and, or subscribed to in documenting and exploring the underlying tenets of the policy respectively. This discursive shift is evidenced in both the documentary and interview data by a shift in policy direction and language of implementation, concurring significantly with Ball's (1994, p. 17) claim that policies shift and change their meaning in the arenas of politics and that purposes and intentions of policies are reworked and reoriented over time.

So, while in a way the 'fCUBE' policy is believed to have made, or is making a significant contribution to the provision and delivery of basic education in Ghana, the

difficulties in operationalizing the policy purposes and provisions in context, coupled with the disjuncture between the policy intentions and outcomes in practice go to paint a blurring picture of the process of implementation. The evidence from the study suggests that inasmuch as education cannot be free of opportunity costs due practically to the existence of 'private cost of/to education coupled with the fact that, no legality could be seen as being put in place to ensure that all children of school-going age are in school, it is highly impossible and impracticable to have 'free' and 'compulsory' education. Similarly, the evidence from this study indicates that because disparities and inequities still exist in education provision and delivery in Ghana coupled with the fact that what constitutes 'basic education' is itself blurring, the 'universal' and 'basic education' components of 'fCUBE' are eluding. Generally, the issues alluded to here go to point how extremely difficult it is to make education 'basic', 'free', 'compulsory' and 'universal' in a culturally and religiously diverse, economically impoverished and politically underrepresented society like Ghana.

9.5.2. Conceptual understanding of the policy paradox

Essentially, a theoretical analysis of data presented in this thesis indicate that what in the context of this study is described as the 'policy implementation paradox', particularly in education, is a common or natural policy phenomenon occurring most often, as a result of the changes that take place in the context of implementation over time. In other words, the study shows that the policy implementation comes about as a result of the moving discursive frames within which policy operates. Indeed, the evidence emanating from this study shows that the challenge of having to compete in a globalized economy owing principally to one of the greatest challenges of the 20th century, that is, globalisation of capitalism which occurred in countries worldwide, and particularly in Ghana in the late 80s and early 90s, has contributed immensely to a significant discursive shift in the 'fCUBE' policy direction as well as the language of implementation. This discursive shift is evidenced by the fact that although the 'fCUBE' policy is seen as deeply rooted in progressive ideological values, there emerged within the data sources, what the analysis identifies as a change/shift from social democratic and socialist discourses of welfare to those of neo-liberal and capitalist idealisms, revealing not only the external pressures to adapt to the status-

quo, but the Governments of Ghana's own philosophical and ideological stance (MOE, 2005) on education. Taking insights from the data generated, the study concludes that the resultant consequence of this discursive shift is the apparent mismatches and disjuncture between the policy intention, purposes and provisions in theory (as represented the 'fCUBE' policy documentation), and the outcomes as explored by the interviewees in practice.

So, while it is not clear whether those who formulated and documented the 'fCUBE' policy provisions, and especially the interviewees, who for the purposes of this study are classified as 'elites' are explicitly aware of this discursive shift or not, the point still remains that the evidence from this study is intriguing. The evidence emanating from the study suggests that the policy implementation paradox is a natural policy phenomenon, and that first of all, this has to be understood and acknowledged before making any attempt to bridge the gap between policy intentions, and the outcomes in practice. (See Chapter 10 sub-section 4 for implications and recommendations of the study.) The study further portends that for this policy phenomenon to be properly understood and conceptualized, it is useful to adopt a post-modernist approach on the issue. Such a post-modernist approach involves conceptualizing policy as both 'text' and 'action' (discourse), 'words' and 'deeds'. In other words, policy needs to be conceptualized 'as what is enacted as well as what is intended' (Ball, 1994, p. 10). Ball (1994, op cit) himself reiterates the need for this conception, describing it as replacing 'abstract parsimony' with 'localised complexity'. He goes on to emphasize that this involves 'relating analytically the ad hocery at the macro with the ad hocery of the micro without losing sight of the systemic bases and effects of ad hoc social actions: to look for the iteration embedded within chaos'.

It has to be emphasized however that while the need for understanding this policy phenomenon, at least for the purposes of this study, does rest heavily in the sociological and educational research idealism that 'the complexity and scope of policy analysis precludes the possibility of successful single theory explanations' (Ball, 1994, p. 14), it is not being suggested that the two other perspectives located in the policy literature, conceptualized and advanced to explain the existence of the

policy paradox in Chapter 2 are alien to the Ghanaian context. Indeed, the exploration of the data, particularly the interview data analysis, indicates that the ‘change management’ and democratic/participatory perspectives were extensively drawn upon either implicitly or explicitly by the interviewees in explaining and articulating their conceptions and experience of events. This therefore suggests or reiterates the point made earlier that rather than being intrinsic contents of texts, the three perspectives, namely: the change management, democratic and post-modernist perspectives are alternative ways of reading texts. So, while the findings of the study show how policy developments and processes are underpinned and influenced by educational and philosophical or political ideologies, it is to be acknowledged that perhaps this is as a result of the pre-eminence given to the post-modernist perspective as a framework for investigating and gaining an understanding of the policy issues in question.

9.6. Chapter summary

This chapter explores and discusses the evidence in this thesis in relation to the research questions posed. The discussion indicates that due to its commitments to social justice and related concepts of equity, equality, inclusion among others the ‘fCUBE’ policy is seen as deeply rooted in social democratic values, and is thus consistent perhaps with Article 2 of the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as the EFA and MDG declarations. Apart from the commitment to social democratic ideals, the discussion again reveals that on the premise of its consistency with previous educational policies, acts and enactments, particularly during the post-independence era, which sought to achieve the imperative of ‘nation building’, the ‘fCUBE’ policy could be said to have certain implicit decolonizing undercurrents.

Again, owing to the emergence of what the analyses of data identifies and describes as a ‘discursive shift’ in the process of implementation, there appears to be a departure or disjuncture between the policy outcomes in practice, and the policy intention, purposes and provisions as envisioned and encapsulated in the policy documentation. This discursive shift is marked respectively by a change in policy

direction (indicated by a shift from social democratic to neo-liberal ideology on education) and the language of implementation (discourse).

So, given that the study purports to use the 'fCUBE' policy as an exemplar to explore, gain and give insights into why policy outcomes in practice are most often different from policy intentions, the existence of the discursive shift is one strong evidence to conclude that the 'fCUBE' purposes, provisions and components cannot be said to be fully and adequately reflected in the implementation process. As the data, particularly the interview analyses show, the policy actors and implementers tended to adjust contexts to suit policy (rather than the other way round) owing to the difficulties and complexities they appear to have encountered in conceptualizing and operationalizing the 'fCUBE' policy provisions, intentions and purposes.

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSIONS

10.1. Outline

This chapter draws the study together. It begins with brief statements detailing the extent to which the stated study aim has been achieved and research questions answered. This is followed by a summary of the main contributions of the study to theory and practice. Thereafter, the key implications and recommendations are highlighted and clustered according to the three stakeholder groupings for which they have particular relevance. Finally, an outline of a number of issues identified as warranting further investigation are highlighted, before the concluding remarks.

10.2. The research aim vis-à-vis research questions

The major aim of this study is to explore the policy implementation paradox using the 'fCUBE' as a case in point and with a view to investigating the extent to which the 'free', 'compulsory', 'universal' and 'basic education' components are implemented and are reflected in the implementation and institutionalization processes. In pursuit of this aim, the study posed four questions. (See Chapters 3 and 9 for the research questions which drive the study.)

The first of these questions forms the praxis of the study since it is the positions privileged as the official or authentic reading of the policy purposes and intentions from the 'fCUBE' documentation which forms a yardstick or benchmark for the evaluation of the interviewees' accounts. The question is concerned with identifying the 'fCUBE' policy intentions, purposes and provisions, as well as the ideological discourses and viewpoints which underpin these policy provisions. While this question is addressed mainly in Chapter 4, (that is, as a benchmark for identifying the similarities and mis-matches between the documentary evidence and the interviewees' accounts), it is again drawn upon specifically in the 'discussion and summary' in Chapter 9, where the findings of the study are pulled together, synthesized and discussed in response to the research questions.

The response to the second question has not been straightforward. Taking the broader aim (which is outlined in Chapter 1) into consideration, the researcher is of the view

that it would have been inadequate to limit analysis to how the 'fCUBE' policy components are articulated and interpreted by the interviewees. For this reason, the interviewees' explorations extended beyond the articulation and interpretation of the 'fCUBE' policy provisions to include other themes emanating from the data, namely the successes and achievements of the policy; setbacks of the implementation process; and the suggestions to improve practice. Generally, although there emerge from the data widespread evidence to support the readings privileged by the documentary analysis in Chapter 5, the differing and sometimes contradictory accounts offered by the interviewees showed quite implicitly that they too might not have had a grounded understanding and conceptualization of the purposes of the policy. However, it also needs to be acknowledged that this might have been as a result of the fact that they were not asked directly to articulate the purposes of 'fCUBE', but rather their conceptions and interpretations of the various components of the policy.

Question 3 seeks to find out the points of convergence and divergence of the views presented. The question is addressed implicitly in the chapters on the interview data, that is, in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8. This question is also addressed specifically in Chapter 9, where the responses appeared to strongly corroborate the response to question 2. The responses indicate that although in a broader sense, the evidence which emanated from the interview data appeared to have concurred with the position privileged as the official reading of the 'fCUBE' policy documentation, the readings adduced by the interviewees showed that they too might have had a limited understanding of the 'fCUBE' policy purposes.

Finally, Question 4 seeks to find out about the suggestions emanating from the above discussions about both the 'fCUBE' implementation process and what in the context of this study is referred to as the 'policy implementation paradox'. These, together with the general implications and recommendations arising from the study, are discussed in Chapter 9 and again synthesized and discussed in the following two sections of this chapter.

10.3. Contributions of the study to theory and practice

The major contribution of this study to theoretical knowledge about policy processes derives from the fact that although the education policy literature is littered with examples of what in the context of this study is described as the ‘policy implementation paradox’, studies on the issue appear to be sporadic and focused mostly on the so called ‘advanced countries’. This study examines this issue in the first cycle system of education, particularly in the context of a low-income country—Ghana. The study has looked at the issue, not on its own right, but using another policy (fCUBE) as an exemplar to explore, gain and offer insights about the occurrence of this policy phenomenon. Firstly, the study was able to theorize the policy milieu, drawing largely on, and theorizing perspectives from different and disjointed policy sources to explain why the issue exists, and how the phenomenon could be better understood, if not unravelled. (Refer to ‘perspectives on the policy paradox in Chapter 2 for details.) Then, in a bid to find answers to the research questions posed, the study set data from both documentary and interview sources against Ball’s (1994) post-modernist composite theory conception of policy as ‘text’ and ‘discourse’, as a framework for analysis.

The findings of the study indicate that the ‘fCUBE’ policy outcomes in practice differ significantly from the intended purposes and visions owing to what the analysis of data identifies and describes as a ‘discursive shift’ in policy directions and language of implementation. This disjuncture between policy purposes in theory and outcomes in practice is evidenced by the fact that, the strategies developed to aid implementation of the policy largely appear to exhibit significant neo-liberal ideological and philosophy tenets on education, whereas the documentary data explored earlier (in Chapter 4) has identified the ‘fCUBE’ policy as deeply rooted in social democratic values.

Generally, the study theorizes the issue by pointing out that what is referred to in the context of this study as the ‘policy paradox’ is a common or natural policy implementation phenomenon occurring most often whenever changes (either internal or external) emerge in the context of implementation. In other words, this thesis

contends that the policy implementation paradox is an inevitable policy phenomenon occurring as a result of the moving discursive frames within which policies operate (Trowler, 1998). So, while it is acknowledged that perhaps the issue might have rested in the assumption that greater adherence to the policy structures and strategies put in place would lead to a possible attainment of the desired policy goals, the study portends that this policy phenomenon might have been fuelled or triggered by the global order of the time. That is, the pressure on Governments world wide during the late 80s and early 90s to compete in globalized economy, wrapped up in neo-liberal ideological discourses of 'knowledge economy' vis-à-vis the rhetoric of 'knowledge for the world of work' (Dale, 1986; Hatcher, 2000, 2001; Hill, 2001, Chitty, 2004).

While the study uses the 'fCUBE' policy in Ghana as a means of exploring and gaining conceptual understanding of the paradox in education policy implementation processes it is not the case that the policy issue has been trivialized or over emphasized. It is not suggested for instance that the discursive shift between the 'fCUBE' policy provisions and outcomes in practice is more visible because of the poor socio-economic conditions inherent in the Ghanaian education system. In fact, drawing on the work of Ball (1994); Trowler (1998) Walford (2000) and Hill (2001) among others, the study has highlighted the magnitude of the issue particularly in a context that appears to have received little attention. One of the strengths of the application of Ball's (1994) conception of policy as both 'text' and 'discourse' in this study for example, follows from the fact that such an approach has enabled interconnections to be made through the use of CDA, between the linguistic and semiotic features and discourses drawn upon in documenting the 'fCUBE' policy purposes and how these worked out to sustain meaning (Taylor, 2004).

So, while the theoretical framework employed in the study allows for the ideological and philosophical discourses and positions drawn upon or subscribed to in documenting the policy provisions to be singled out and interrogated, the evidence points to the fact that the interviewees have varying conceptions of these positions. In fact, the differing and sometimes contradictory readings advanced by the

interviewees to explain the 'fCUBE' policy purposes and intents go to reiterate the point made earlier. That is, the suggestion that perhaps the interviewees, who in the context of this study are considered as elites, too might not have had a grounded understanding and conceptualization of the policy provisions. While this is interesting, it does suggest a potential for extending the study further to examine the extent to which other policy activists, notably policy makers are explicitly aware of these ideological positions and their views about the discursive shift the study points to.

The main contribution of this study to professional practice rests in the way the interviewees articulated their views about the positions enshrined in the documents gathered for analysis as well as their perceptions and experiences of the implementation process. The evidence gathered indicate practical and professional implications that include the need for implementers to use the findings of the current study to reflect on how, or the extent to which their influences in society, due principally to the power they wield as recontextualizers of policy can or does have impacts on their practice. While the meso-level implementers, who for the purposes of this study are referred to as 'elites', are said to have or play recontextualizing roles, the present study questions the extent to which their practices impact on the 'fCUBE' policy implementation process. The findings of the study show that there is widespread evidence from the interviewees' accounts to support the claim of a discursive shift in policy direction and language of implementation, signifying a shift from progressive educational ideology towards a neo-liberal ideological stance and its discourses and rhetoric of enterprise. However, as it has been suggested earlier, the differing, conflicting and sometimes contradictory readings offered by the interviewees to articulate the 'fCUBE' policy intentions and provisions is a credible evidence to suggest that they too might have had a limited understanding and conceptualization of the policy purposes, aims and goals. This notwithstanding, their words or accounts do have significant gravitas (Gubrium et al. (2003), particularly for the purpose of this study. Their accounts indicate that the 'fCUBE' policy purposes, components and goals cannot be said to be fully reflected in the process of implementation.

Similarly, while their accounts appeared to concur with the change management theory, generally, their explorations seem to have fallen short or appear not to have veered directly towards the democratic and post-modernist perspectives outlined in Chapter 2. This however is not suggested as implying that the democratic and post-modernist perspectives are irrelevant to the Ghanaian context. Rather, the study suggests that perhaps the problem might have arisen due to the interviewees' limited and/or simplistic conception and reiteration of the problem-solving approach to policy as a thing, a document of some sort, containing a page or flips of pages detailing guidelines to solve a problem (Jennings, 1977; Nakamura et al., 1980; Harman, 1984; Gallagher, 1992), and therefore a feeling that the implementers were basically modifying contexts to suit policy instead of the other way round.

The findings of the study therefore have potential application to policy implementation as they suggest a re-conceptualization of policy, not as a thing, and/or a document, but a process involving contestations, negotiations and dialogue (Ball, 1994; Trowler, 1998; Ozga, 2000; Olssen, Codd, & O'Neil, 2004). Such a conception, the findings suggest, should have as its centre stage, the idea of policy as what is thought as well as what gets enacted. That is, an appreciation by the implementers of the fact that 'policies are enacted in moving discursive frames and that they 'shift and change their meanings in the arenas of politics' (Ball 1994, p. 17).

Overall, the essence of the study's contribution to theory and practice serves to demonstrate that 'there are real struggles over the interpretation and enactment of policy and that these are set within a moving discursive frame which articulates and constrains the possibilities and probabilities of interpretation and enactment' (Ball 1994, p. 23). While these sum up the general contribution of the study to theory and practice, it is important to add that the study does make specific contributions to current theoretical understanding. Specifically, it:

- Provides interesting insights into why policy outcomes are most often different from initial policy goals and intentions using the ‘fCUBE’ policy in Ghana as an exemplar;
- Conceptualizes and theorizes perspectives on the policy implementation paradox from different and disjointed policy sources;
- Identifies, explores and theorizes the perceptions and, or views of meso-level actors of policy, who for the purposes of this study are taken as ‘elites’, involved in recontextualizing and implementing policy in the Ghanaian setting;
- Utilizes and demonstrates how using the post-modernist composite theory approach as a framework for analysis allows, or can allow for ideological discourses underpinning social policy to be interrogated effectively;
- Demonstrates the efficacy of the use of CDA in social policy research;
- Explores the contested and muddy nature of policy implementation processes particularly in the Ghanaian setting, and places this within Western/European context;
- Exemplifies how the evidence in the study could serve to promote debate on ‘fCUBE’ in particular and Ghanaian education policy in general.

In addition, and on a personal level, this study impacts enormously on the researcher’s personal and professional development, in that he communicated the context as well as the preliminary ideas of the study in students’ conferences which led to the publishing of two papers on his preliminary ideas, one in a book form, and the other on a University website. Details of these conference presentations can be found in Appendix 6. It is intended therefore that further disseminations and publications, especially regarding the key findings and implications, will be made in the not too distant future, thereby unveiling the contributions of the study to theory and practice to a wider audience.

Regarding wider professional impact, the study had offered the researcher the professional and/or academic certification as well as core skills, abilities and competence to conduct research with minimal or no supervision in the future.

10.4. Implications and recommendations

Given that this study theorizes the policy implementation paradox as a phenomenon occurring as a result of the discursive shifts that take place as policy is enacted, implies that the issue is common or natural policy issue which cannot necessarily be overcome by remedial actions. However, this is not conceived and interpreted in the context of this study to mean that stakeholders in education should, or are being asked to stay put. In fact, apart from demonstrating the need for discursive shifts to be understood and acknowledged in context, the analyses of data (particularly the interview data) has resulted in the identification of key implications and recommendations which are clustered according to the three stakeholder groupings—policy makers (national policy authorities); implementers and the policy beneficiaries (community members)—for which they have particular relevance below. It is to be acknowledged however that since it is assumed that policy implications for policy makers do have a significant impact on re-contextualizers at the meso-level as well as the actual implementers, there is some overlaps in these three categories stated.

10.4.1. Implications for national policy authorities

The evidence presented and discussed in this thesis indicates essentially that what in the context of this study is described as the ‘policy implementation paradox’ is a common policy phenomenon occurring as a result of the real struggles over the interpretation and implementation of policy owing to the moving discursive frames within which policies operate. It is therefore suggested that in policy developments, policy activists, particularly those at the echelon of the policy process need not only to acknowledge this, but to work together towards identifying the major political and educational ideologies informing and underpinning such discursive shifts. This, the study suggests will make policies more meaningful and acceptable to the stakeholders on whom particular policies impinge directly.

Also, the evidence contained in this study points to the fact that apart from change management issues, the ‘fCUBE’ policy implementation process is impacted upon negatively by socio-cultural, religious and context-specific issues and that this perhaps is causing contexts to be adjusted to suit policy, instead of the other way

round. In terms of future policy developments, it is contended therefore that there is a need for greater consideration and priority to be given to the enactment of policies to meet the needs, aspirations and interests of the people on whom these policies impinge.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that education policy-making/formulation in Ghana adopts a traditional/rational model and is channelled through various stages or hierarchies (MOE, 1998). Consequently, the data suggest that the meso-level implementers felt they are being sidelined by policy authorities, typically by Government functionaries, owing to the excessive reliance on the 'top-down' management approach. While the exploration of the interview data portrays the meso-level implementers as advocating a 'bottom-up' approach as opposed to a 'top-down' management approach, however, it would be naive to suggest that this could be an antidote to the problems that the 'fCUBE' policy implementation is fraught with. Indeed, as each of these approaches is, or appears to be fraught with inherent criticisms, it is contended that there is a need for the policy authorities to strategize and create avenues for the appropriate relationship between these two management approaches in practice, as these could promote effective implementation of policies.

Again, whereas the 'fCUBE' policy documentation (GOG, 1992; MOE, 1995; 1996, 1998, 1999 etc) speak of the 'fCUBE' policy as a constitutional mandate, for the provision of a programme of free, compulsory, universal basic education for all Ghanaian children, the evidence which emanated from the study shows that the policy purposes, provisions and components are hardly being implemented and therefore cannot be said to be reflected visibly in the implementation and institutionalization processes. For example, the evidence from the study points to the fact that what constitute 'free education' is itself blurring as there are both public and private costs to education; no information on the costs of nominally free public education; and also no agreement on the meaning of 'free', and even less so, on the corresponding public responsibility to finance compulsory education. Whereas many reasons could be adduced to explain this, one major factor appears to be the lack of national (and even global) consensus that primary education should be public

responsibility, since this obviously would entail major changes in financing strategies, even with the donor agencies. In order to make the 'fCUBE' policy take hold, there is therefore the urgent need, among other things, for all direct, indirect and opportunity costs to be identified so as to be gradually eliminated through their substitution by public allocations. As Tomasevski (2005, p. 2) observes, this would require increased and guaranteed public spending, for which there simply is no commitment as yet.

Similarly, the findings indicate that paramount among the issues that the 'fCUBE' policy is fraught with currently, is the weak base of the national economy to support and sustain the programme. In particular, the study portends that Ghana's participation in, and subscription to international agreements (such as the EFA, MDG, Beijing Conference on the Rights of Women among others), coupled with the awareness being created in recent times about access to free education, as a fundamental human right, meant that Ghana has had to rely heavily on donor agencies, notably the World Bank and IMF, for funding in carrying out its constitutional responsibilities (MOE, 1995; 1996, 1999; 2000; 2004). Although the contributions from the donor agencies over the years have been invaluable, this study problematizes implicitly the issue of external funding for the programme on the grounds that such deals could be expensive as they are normally in accordance with the debt relief and lending policies of donor agencies. In this light, there is therefore the need for government to generate resources from within to sustain the programme. Whilst in this respect, one finds the initiation of 'cost-sharing', and particularly the establishment of 'GETFUND' (MOE, 2004), timely and welcoming, there is the need for the authorities to work around the clock to ensure the sustainability of these initiatives if the 'fCUBE' policy is to take hold.

Following from the above is the need for logistical support to be put in place to allow for effective implementation of policies. Indeed, the evidence discussed, especially in the interview data suggests that the 'fCUBE' implementation process is plagued significantly by change management issues. For example, infrastructural facilities are said to be woefully inadequate while schools lacked the funding required to organise

effective teaching and learning activities. Additionally, the educational sector as a whole is said to be experiencing a shortage of human resource while the personnel in post lack the necessary skills and competence to be able to carry out their duties as required of them. In view of this, it suggested that concerted efforts need to be made by those in the highest echelons of the policy process, particularly the Government, to provide logistical support for the schools to be able to combat these and other pertinent problems alluded to.

10.4.2. Concerns for policy implementers/mediators

In addition to the implications alluded to in the discussion under ‘contributions to theory and practice’, the evidence emanating from the study shows that the way the ‘fCUBE’ policy is being implemented could have serious ramifications for social justice. The evidence shows that ‘capitation grant’ of thirty thousand cedis (which is less than £2) per child, per year, is being paid to schools (MOE, 2003; 2005; Agbenyega, 2007) while schools in rural and deprived areas are being staffed, in most cases, by untrained and un-certificated teachers. While it is acknowledged in context that these arrangements appear to be the best available options or measures to addressing the issues of enrolment and attendance, these practices, particularly the payment of capitation grant to schools based on pupil numbers, could potentially exacerbate the already glaring inequity and injustices in educational provision and delivery, especially between rural and urban divides. The practice could end up making the ‘wealthy schools’, (in terms of funds derived from the number of pupils enrolled in the school) wealthier and the ‘poor and sinking’ ones, (mostly in rural and/or deprived areas) in this same terms, more resource stricken. There is therefore the urgent need for policy implementers to re-orient themselves appropriately towards developing theoretical frameworks and/or strategies which would be useful for practitioners—teachers and advisers—in implementing and improving social justice in schools.

Also, there is evidence from the study to suggest that whereas the interviewees identify ‘inclusivity’ as one of the pillars of the ‘fCUBE’ policy initiatives or goals, their articulation of this concept is restricted to ‘mainstreaming’; that is, teaching

children with/of mixed (dis)abilities and/or additional support needs. While it is to be acknowledged that mainstreaming forms a major part of inclusion (Hamill and Clark, 2005), the possibilities for pedagogy for educational reform and change involves policy implementers, and educators in general making concerted efforts towards gaining a wider, more diverse and much more dynamic definition and conceptualization of inclusion. Dei's (2005) conception is of particular relevance here. He defines inclusive education (inclusion) as education that responds to the concerns, aspirations and interests of a diverse body politic and draws on the accumulated knowledge, creativity and resourcefulness of local peoples (p. 268).

Similarly, the policy documentation (MOE, 1995; 1996; 1998; 1999; 2000; 2001) speaks of the 'fCUBE' policy as a response to a Constitutional demand informed by the 1951 Accelerated Development Plan and the Education Act of 1961, and as a result of Ghana's participation in, and endorsement of international agreements (such as the 1948 and 1989 un declarations about the Rights of Children, the EFA, the MDG etc). However, the evidence from the study, particularly the interviewees' articulation of the policy provisions appears to suggest that Ghanaian educators have proceeded with implementation of the policy in terms of the contributions it could make towards fulfilling a 'decolonizing agenda' (Turner, 1971; McWilliam et al., 1975; Nwomonoh, 1998; Dei, 2004, 2005). The 'fCUBE' policy implementation, and basic education in Ghana for that matter, seems to have approached in terms its potency in promoting and instilling in the citizenry the ideals of nation building, national integration, citizenship, 'sameness' among others. The argument here, of course is not the irrelevance of the decolonizing discourse, but the fact that the over-reliance on this 'nationhood' theme could potentially cause an approach to schooling and education that is 'blind' to the issues of ethnicity, class, gender, religion and culture to be adopted. There is therefore the need for Ghanaian educators, in their policy formulation and implementation pursuits or tasks, to acknowledge difference and diversity while, at the same time, highlighting commonalities even among peoples with conflicting interests. As Dei (2005) points out, such an approach could contribute substantially to both national integration and social reconstruction (p. 247).

Again, the accounts of the interviewees, who for the purposes of this study are deemed as meso-level elites indicate that in their articulations of the 'fCUBE' policy purposes in particular, and the implementation process as a whole, they appeared to have emphasized the traditional problem-solving intent or purposes of policy. Their emphasis on the 'fCUBE' policy as the remedy or intervention to the issues plaguing the country's basic education system unmasks their limited conception of policy as a thing, a product and/or policy-document of some sort, detailing the actions of government body or institutions aimed at securing particular outcomes (Jenning, 1977; Harman, 1984; Gallagher, 1992) as opposed to a far more complex and dynamic undertaking (Ozga, 2000). This therefore opens up the need for a more broader and dynamic conceptualization of policy to take account of, not just the specifications and routines to be followed in arriving at solutions to educational issues, but also to explicate the contestations, struggles, compromises, negotiations and dialogues that take place within the policy process (Ball, 1994; Trowler, 1998; 2003; Ozga, 2000).

Furthermore, with the recent increase in years (from 9 to 11), coupled with the reduction in number of subjects (from 9 to 6) to be taught in the basic education sector in Ghana by the current NPP Government (GOG, 2002; MOE, 2005), one would have thought that the interviewees' accounts would have been focused on the quality of education vis-à-vis the sophistication of the basic education curriculum. Rather, the evidence shows that they focused on age considerations, particularly, laying claims to the effect that the 'basic education' component of 'fCUBE' meant that schooling in Ghana for the first eleven years was/is supposed to be free, compulsory and universal. While it is possible that perhaps this might have been caused by the way the interviews were structured, the general demeanour of the interviewees points to the fact that either they did not have a grounded conceptualization of the 'fCUBE' policy purposes and intentions, or they were out of tune with the changes in the educational system. As mediators of policy, there is the need for them therefore to orient themselves properly to policy so as to able weed out the misconceptions that surface as policy gets implemented.

10.4.3. Propositions for beneficiaries of policy

The narrative voices of Ghanaian educational elites, who for the purposes of this study are taken as ‘elite’ show (particularly in Chapter 5) that although the ‘fCUBE’ policy implementation process appears to be fraught with implementation problems, some modest strides have equally been made in the areas of general provision and delivery of basic education. For example, more schools are said to have been built, access to schools facilitated, school/community relations improved, teachers’ capacity enhanced and school management improved through management reforms respectively. In the light of these, there needs to be a major attitudinal change on the part of parents and guardians in particular, and the citizenry in general, towards education if the policy intentions are to take hold. There needs to be what Dei (2005) refers to as an understanding of pursuing social justice, equity and inclusion in schools as a form of spirituality, a practice that is not forced but flows rather through the combined efforts, actions and thoughts of educators, students, parents and community members, and policy makers. In other words, there needs to be built as a matter of urgency, parent-teacher or community-educators partnerships to ensure that there is greater harmony and cooperation between the home and school as far as programmes initiated to improve social justice and its related concepts of equity, inclusion and equality in schools are concerned.

Also, the findings from this study indicate that ambiguity can be a useful tool or factor for policy makers or implementers who can rely on it to avoid being pinned down on any particular interpretation and/or reading of policy. As a check on this, the policy community needs to acknowledge this and take the necessary steps to acquire the necessary skills, abilities and competencies that would enable them to evaluate and speak against (if need be) any policies pertaining to education that are considered misguided, unjust and out of touch with the masses.

Additionally, the study has provided interesting insight into what for the purpose of this study is termed as the policy implementation paradox, through shedding light on some of the ideological, cultural, theoretical and institutional issues and practices that go to promote and support this implementation issue in practice. Also, through the

exploration of the 'fCUBE' documentation and the semi-structured interviews conducted with the meso-level implementers of policy in the Ghanaian educational system, the study has suggested possible and practical ways by which this policy milieu could be read into and understood, if not unravelled. There is therefore the need for commitment from stakeholders, particularly community members, towards the issues raised in this thesis. Particularly, there is the need for a demonstration of commitment to partaking in the measures that the Ghanaian education authorities might be forced to adopt to minimise the effects of this policy milieu on policy processes, as a result of dissemination of the research findings.

10.5. Areas warranting further inquiry

The major contribution of this study to current understanding of policy processes is an exemplification of the moving discursive frames within which policy implementation processes take place. While the evidence from the study is to a large extent widespread, it is however important to note that all the participants involved belong to one stakeholder grouping—meso-level actors of policy. There is therefore the need to interrogate other stakeholders, particularly policy makers and the actual implementers of policy at the school level, to determine whether or not their accounts corroborate the findings enlisted in this thesis.

Similarly, although the findings of the study are thoroughly grounded on the evidence from the data sources, it is not clear if the interviewees for instance were aware or conscious of their readings of the policy. One way of authenticating this would be to communicate or disseminate the findings with them to see how or the extent to which their reactions and views would impact on the overall outcomes and quality of this research.

It is also contended in the thesis that although the 'fCUBE' policy exhibits social democratic traits or tenets consistent for instance, with the 1989 United Nations Report on the Rights of the Child, inherently and/or implicitly, the policy appears to have a decolonizing agenda. Although it is acknowledged that interrogating this decolonizing agenda is not the focus of the study, it would be interesting to conduct a

further historical enquiry in to this area with a view to ascertaining this claim. Such an enquiry would particularly be relevant in determining the extent to which post-independence educational policies in Ghana have been, or are being informed and underpinned by pre-independence anti-colonial movements and developments in Ghana. Such an enquiry would also unmask the limitations and influences that the anti-colonial developments do place on current educational policies.

Finally, although the study has explored, gained and offered explanations as to why policy makers and implementers often end up pursuing agendas other than those intended initially for implementation, it should be remembered that this is done in the context of a low-income country. It would therefore be interesting to see how things play out in a different context, preferably in the context of a more advanced country. The importance of such an attempt would serve as a complement to studies conducted on the subject as well as an assessment of the efficacy of the methodological and analytical frameworks employed in the current study. This will also help in opening up further intellectual and theoretical debates on the subject.

10.6. Concluding remarks

The analysis reported in this thesis concerns a global policy phenomenon—the policy implementation paradox—and serves to illuminate the contested and muddy nature of policy implementation tasks and of the policy process as a whole. The evidence from the study indicates that just as policy making or formulation processes are fraught with struggles, confrontations, contestations, compromises and dialogues, so too are the processes of decoding the messages and meanings embedded in the representations enacted for implementation. Specifically, the study serves as a practical demonstration of the fact that policy provisions and intentions encapsulated in official policy documentations are open to diverse interpretations and re-interpretations depending on the experiences, contexts, motivations, skills, history and resources of recontextualizers and inadvertently, the implementers of policy—concurring with both Ball (1994) and Codd's (1988) respective claims that 'policy is both contested and changing' (p. 16), and that 'for any text a plurality of readers must necessarily produce a plurality of readings' (p. 239).

Regarding the particular policy used to exemplify this policy phenomenon, the analysis attributes the disjuncture between the 'fCUBE' policy outcomes in practice, and the provisions in theory to the fact that although there has been or there is a significant discursive shift both in policy direction and language of implementing the 'fCUBE' policy, evidenced by a shift from social democratic and progressive values towards the tenets of neo-liberal educational ideologies and discourses, the policy objectives, goals and intentions still remain the same. While it is argued that this undoubtedly has major implications and repercussions for theory and practice, what is emphasized unequivocally in this thesis is the old biblical teaching which stipulates that 'where your treasure is, there must your heart also be'. We seem to have moved on, arguably from a 'welfarist settlement' with its concomitant commitments to the issues of social justice equality and equitable distribution of goods, services and outcomes towards neo-liberal ideological thinking on education but our policies still have progressive and presumably socialist undertones. Whilst this, among other things, is attributed to the fast changing global order, this study problematizes this shift, particularly the lack of political goodwill to ensure that this is reflected visibly in policies, especially those exhibiting traits of the old political and/or ideological order.

While it is acknowledged that this shift in policy direction and language of implementation arguably has a global dimension—globalization of capitalism—and could possibly not be dealt with single-handedly by any one Government, particularly those of the 'third world', it is argued here that there is the urgent need for the involvement of personnel of the teaching profession in this political agenda. For as Kennedy (2006) puts it, 'if teachers, and indeed other stakeholders in education do not engage with this agenda, then education policy runs the risk of serving a global agenda at the expense of potentially more appropriate and diverse local solutions' (p. 260).

It also needs to be acknowledged and reiterated the final time that although this study theorizes the policy implementation paradox as a common or natural phenomenon occurring as a result of the discursive shifts that take place as policy is enacted, it

does not necessarily mean that stakeholders in education should or are being asked to stay put. Rather, what is being advocated unequivocally here is a call, essentially on policy actors at all levels to make concerted efforts, not only by showing their awareness and/or acknowledgement of this policy phenomenon, but equally demonstrating commitment to reducing the potential effects that these moving discursive shifts/frames have on policy processes.

Thus, the findings enlisted in this study have exemplified how discursive shifts within the contexts of policy implementation act as necessary precursors to the unpredictability of human behaviour in policy processes as well as unpredictabilities and disjunctures between policy outcomes in practice and intentions in theory. In particular, the evidence that has emanated from this study goes to confirm Ball (1994); Trowler (1998; 2003) and Walford's (2001) respective research claims that what in the context of this study is described as the policy implementation paradox results from the discursive shifts that occur (due principally to the turbulent nature of the contexts and environments within which policies are enacted) as policy gets enacted.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: ETHICAL PROCEDURES

1.1. Research ethics application

Department of Educational and Professional Studies

Ethical Approval Form

This form must be completed for each new proposed study or programme of research. Once approval has been awarded, continuing approval can be assumed for the same research procedures used by the applicant in further studies. Variations in procedures should be notified to the Departmental Ethics Committee.

DETAILS OF APPLICANT(S)

Name of Applicant: *Hope Pius Nudzor*

Position held by applicant (e.g. student, member of staff etc.): *Student.*

If applicant is a student, name of supervisor(s); *Dr. Ian Finlay and Dr. Aileen Kennedy.*

DETAILS OF RESEARCH PROJECT

Project Title: *Issues arising from the implementation of the 'fCUBE' policy in Ghana.*

Basic Aims of the Research:

1. To evaluate the 'free', 'compulsory' and 'universal' components of the 'fCUBE' policy to see the extent to which each of these components is genuinely reflected in the policy implementation process.

2. *To examine the extent to which the conception and articulation of the policy provisions encapsulated in the official policy documentation impacts on the process of implementation.*

Describe the participant population and means of recruitment:

The population for the study involves the senior-most officials of the Ghana Education Service (GES) - District Directors of Education, Regional Directors of Education and the National Executives of GES who are actively involved in the 'fCUBE' policy implementation process.

The participant recruitment will involve the use of 'elite' or 'theoretical' sampling technique where respondents are selected based on their knowledge, experience and perception of the events.

Will payments be made to participants other than to cover expenses or time involved? *NO.*

Please outline the procedures you will be using with the participants:

i) Face-to-face interview sessions will be held with each of the participants chosen for the study.

ii) The interview sessions will be held on dates and place/venues agreed upon by the participants.

Is there a risk of physical or psychological harm or discomfort?

No.

If YES please describe

What are the procedures for obtaining informed consent? (If involving children, in obtaining parental consent)

i) Formal permission to involve the participants in the study will be sought from the authorities of the Ghana Education Service.

ii) Informed consent will be sought from the participants themselves through writing.

iii) Follow-ups will be made to arrange for date, venue and time of the interviews at least two clear weeks before the commencement of the fieldwork.

Will you require access to information about participants from other parties?

NO.

If yes, please expand.

Are there any other ethical considerations?

In order to ensure that no harm is caused to the participants during the interview sessions, they will be properly debriefed and assured once again of their anonymity and confidentiality before the start of the interview sessions

Can you confirm that the proposal is in accord with the BERA code of conduct for educational research?

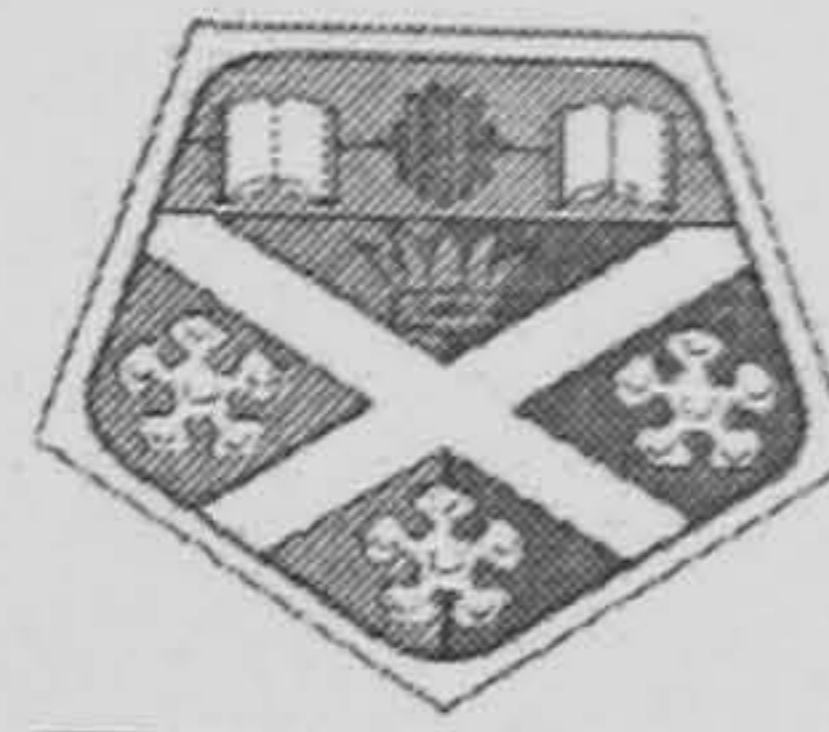
YES.

Approximate start date of fieldwork: *August, 2005.*

Signature of Applicant:

Signature of Supervisor if applicant is a student:

1.2. Ethics approval letter/document



UNIVERSITY OF
STRATHCLYDE

FACULTY OF EDUCATION
Jordanhill Campus

Notice of Departmental Ethics Committee Decision

Date: 8th June 2005
Applicant: Hope Pius Nudzor
Project Title: Issues arising from the implementation of the 'fCUBE' policy in Ghana

Approval Of Investigation

The Departmental Ethics Committee confirm ethics approval for the above investigation strictly within the terms as advised on the application.

When your investigation is completed we would welcome a short note indicating completion and advising of any ethical matters that may have arisen but which were not anticipated within your application.

The committee wish you success in your investigation.

For the Departmental Ethics Committee

David Wallace (Chair)

THE PLACE OF USEFUL LEARNING

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL
AND PROFESSIONAL STUDIES
Sir Henry Wood Building
76 Southbrae Drive
Glasgow G13 1PP
Tel: 0141 950 3365/3368
Fax: 0141-950 3367



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Mr Cli
Head o.

1.3. Permission to carry-out research: approval letter

FROM : GOLDEN STAR

FAX NO. : 233 21 660347

Jul. 29 2005 02:52PM P1

GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE

*In case of reply, the number
and date of this letter should
be quoted.*



HEADQUARTERS
Ministry Branch Post Office
P.O. Box M.45
Accra

EP.2765/V/85

July 29, 2005

Republic of Ghana

PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH INTERVIEW WITH OFFICIALS OF THE GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE

I write to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 22nd June 2005 on the above subject.

We wish to assure you that we will give you the necessary assistance that we can for your research.

Introductory letters to the various officials listed in your letter will be made available to you after our first meeting.

Hope to see you soon.

LEONARD T. TINGBANI
DIRECTOR
BASIC EDUCATION DIVISION
For: DIRECTOR-GENERAL

HOPE PIUS NUDZOR
UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL STUDIES DEPT.
CRAWFORD BUILDING, RM C113
JORDANHILL CAMPUS
76 SOUTHBRAE DRIVE
GLASGOW G13 IPP
SCOTLAND

1.4. Participant's letter of consent

University of Strathclyde
Faculty of Education
Educational and Professional Studies Dept.
Crawfurd Building. Rm. C113
Jordanhill Campus
76 Southbrae Drive
Glasgow G13 IPP
Scotland.
25th April, 2005.

The Director-General of Basic Schools
Ghana Education Service
Headquarters
P. O. Box M45
Accra- Ghana

Dear Sir/Madam,

CONSENT TO PARTAKE IN A RESEARCH INTERVIEW- HOPE PIUS NUDZOR

I am a teacher from Ghana who is currently pursuing a PhD in Educational Studies at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow-Scotland. As a purely research based course, I am required to carry out an independent research project and I have chosen to research on the implementation of the Free, Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) policy in Ghana.

The primary purpose of this study is to assess the extent to which the 'free', 'compulsory' and 'universal' components of the 'fCUBE' policy are genuinely reflected in the implementation process and based on that assessment to consider possible steps and measures that could be taken to improve the policy and the basic education system as a whole. The provisions enshrined in the 1992 Republican Constitution about the right of the Ghanaian child to 'Basic Education' will thus provide the focus, framework and benchmark for the study.

As an official of the Ghana Education Service who is actively involved in the implementation and institutionalisation process, I thought you would have the insights, knowledge and experience of the events that will be most valuable for this study. Explicit permission to approach you and other colleagues of yours for interviews to this effect in October this year has been granted to me by the Director-General of Education. A copy of the letter giving authorization is enclosed for your perusal.

The key themes to be investigated include:

1. Interpretation and evaluation of the 'fCUBE' policy components and provisions;
2. Successes, achievements and contributions of the 'fCUBE' policy to basic education provision;
3. Problems and issues confronting the implementation process;
4. Recommendations and suggestions to improve practice.

I can assure you that you will remain anonymous and your responses will be treated confidentially as there will be no identification of individuals, group(s) of individuals, school(s), district(s) and region(s) in my analysis and final report. I trust this assurance will enable you to answer the questions I shall put to you honestly and based on your knowledge, experience and perception of the events.

It is hoped that the final thesis will be of benefit to a range of stakeholders in Ghana and will provide some pointers to improve the 'fCUBE' policy and the quality of basic education in the country in general.

I hope you will feel able to support my request and I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Should you have any concerns, I can be contacted through the University's address above. Alternatively, I can be reached via e-mail at: hope.p.nudzor@strath.ac.uk

Yours faithfully

(HOPE PIUS NUDZOR)

Tel; (0044) 141-564-5658

1.5. A letter of introduction from researcher's supervisor

To whom it may concern.

22 June 2005

Dear Sir/Madam,

This letter is to confirm that Hope Pius Nudzor is a doctoral student at the University of Strathclyde. He is undertaking work that will be very important to policy makers in Ghana and more widely as he explores the processes of policy making and implementation. He is one of our best students and I would ask you to give him all the assistance that you can as he seeks to interview people for his research. I am sure that his work will be of benefit.

The University of Strathclyde is satisfied that Hope Nudzor's research approach meets its standards of ethical practice.

Thank you in advance for the help that you give to Hope Nudzor.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Ian Finlay

Senior Lecturer/Supervisor

1.6. A letter of introduction from Ghana Education Authority

GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE

*In case of reply, the number
and date of this letter should
be quoted.*



HEADQUARTERS
Ministry Branch Post Office
P.O. Box M.45
Accra

Ref. No. EP.2765/V/90

October 4, 2005

Republic of Ghana

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

I write to introduce to you Hope Pius Nudzor a student of University of Strathclyde Glasgow – Scotland.


Pius is carrying out research work on the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy in Ghana.

Permission is granted him to carry out research interviews with officials of the Ghana Education Service.

Please offer him the maximum support and co-operation.

Counting on your co-operation.

Thank you.


VICTORIA DONKOR (MRS)
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
BASIC EDUCATION DIVISION
For: DIRECTOR-GENERAL

THE REGIONAL DIRECTORS OF EDUCATION:

1. VOLTA REGION
2. GREATER ACCRA REGION
3. CENTRAL REGION
4. ASHANTI REGION
5. NORTHERN REGION

APPENDIX 2: INITIAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (OUTLINE)

Introduction:

My name is Hope Pius Nudzor. I am a Ghanaian and a teacher currently pursuing a PhD in Educational Studies at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow-Scotland. Thank you for being willing to take part in this interview. I can assure you once again that you will remain completely anonymous and that no records of this interview shall be kept with either your name or any traces of your professional identity on them. So please feel free and share your knowledge and experiences with me.

Questions:

1. As the Director-General of Basic Schools/National Coordinator of the 'fCUBE' policy/Regional/ District Director of Education/General Secretary of GNAT etc, can I first ask you to briefly tell me your professional duties or responsibilities? Probe for the relatedness of official's duties/responsibilities to:

- i) the 'fCUBE' policy;
- ii) the 'fCUBE' implementation process;
- iii) any other aspect of the educational process.

2. How would you interpret the 'fCUBE' policy provisions? Probe for the participant's perception, understanding and interpretation of the following components of the policy:

- i) Free: do parents pay development levies, PTA dues etc? If yes, could this not be taken as tuition fees? If not, why?
- ii) Compulsory: is it mandatory? Is there any legal framework to enforce compliance with policy directives?
- iii) Universal: is it equitable and relevant to societal needs? Or is driven by neo-liberal and capitalist ideology of preparing young people for work after school? If the later is the case, is this the role of education?

iv) Basic Education: what do we mean by Basic Education? Is this different from pre-primary (nursery/kindergarten) education? At what age do children enter the school system? What happens to drop-outs who are above the age of 14?

3. What do you consider as the successes of the 'fCUBE' policy/programme? (Probe for positive and concrete innovations and changes that have come about as a result of the implementation of the policy).

4. What in your personal view and opinion are the drawbacks/challenges of the 'fCUBE' policy and its implementation and institutionalisation process?

5. What do you consider as the socio-cultural, historic, political, economic and context-specific issues impacting on the 'fCUBE' policy? To what extent do these issues affect the 'fCUBE' policy implementation process?

6. Take respondents through the following list and ask them to point out the extent to which each of the items has impacted or still impacts either positively or negatively on the implementation process. (Prompt for response on which particular items did receive or are receiving more/less attention than the others).

i) Education, communication and dissemination of information about the policy to the stakeholders.

ii) Involvement of stakeholders in the formulation and implementation process;

iii) Funding for implementation;

iv) Training and meeting the developmental needs of the implementers-Headteachers and teachers;

v) Stakeholder/community support, cooperation and coordination towards implementation;

vi) Commitment, enthusiasm and motivation of the implementers;

vii) Monitoring and evaluation of the programme/policy.

7. In your opinion, which other issues or factors not identified in the list above impact positively on the 'fCUBE' implementation and institutionalisation process? (Probe for evidence to support claims).

8. Can you think of any other issues and factors which impacts negatively on the implementation process which have not been identified in the list in (7)? (Probe for evidence to support claim).

9. Some people, particularly parents see the 'fCUBE' policy implementation as a means of getting community members actively involved in the management of their community schools: others see it as a way of pushing more responsibilities on parents and guardians. How do you as an official of GES see the 'fCUBE' policy? (Probe for responses in relation to policy components, provisions and general aims).

10. Based on your experience, to what extent would you say the 'fCUBE' policy has achieved its declared aims and objectives? (Probe for reasons that suggest or point to the fact or otherwise that the 'free', compulsory' and 'universal' components of the policy are genuinely reflected in the implementation process).

11. If you are asked to identify three operational strategies of the 'fCUBE' policy that are commendable, what would these be and why?

12. What practical steps, pieces of advice and suggestions would you recommend to be taken in order to improve the 'fCUBE' policy and the way it is being implemented in schools throughout the country? (Probe for practical suggestions to improve the policy as well as reasons that suggest possible re-writing of policy provisions, aims and objectives and changing the wording of the policy title).

13. What are your personal views on educational policy formulation and implementation in Ghana? (Probe for comments on; the process of identifying potential policy issues that need to be addressed, actors and processes involved in the formulation and implementation process, the role of Government and politicians, power struggles and negotiations among the various policy actors, and the outcomes of policy initiatives- that is, whether policy intentions are arrived at or otherwise).

Conclusion:

Thank you very much for giving up your time to share your knowledge, thoughts, experience and expertise with me. Can I finally ask you if you think there are any aspects of your knowledge about the 'fCUBE' policy and its implementation process that have not been covered in this interview?

Thank you once again and bye!

APPENDIX 3: A LIST OF PSEUDONYMS ASSIGNED TO INTERVIEWEES AND THEIR CORRESPONDING TRANSCRIPT NUMBERS

1. Individual interviews:

PSEUDONYMS	TRANSCRIPT NUMBER
Kwabla	One
Ewoenam	Two
Dorvlo	Three
Yayra	Four
Akpene	Five
Dzifa	Six
Elorm	Seven
Torgbui	Eight
Kodzo	Nine
Kweku	Ten
Kofi	Eleven

2. Group interviews:

NUMBER OF OFFICIALS	RESPECTIVE PSEUDONYMS	TRANSCRIPT NUMBERS
Three	Enyonam, Aseye, Nutifafa	Twelve
Five	Dziedzorm, Elinam, Exornam, Mawunyo, Atta	Thirteen
Two	Agbeli, Sitsofe	Fourteen
Three	Afenyo, Kafui, Womor	Fifteen
Three	Senyo, Enam, Worlali	Sixteen

APPENDIX 4: A SAMPLE OF INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

4.1. Transcript 1 (individual interview)

I: My name is Hope Pius Nudzor. I'm a Ghanaian and a teacher. I'm currently pursuing PhD in Educational Studies at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland. Thank you very much for giving up your time to take part in this interview. I can assure you that you'll remain completely anonymous and no records of this interview will be kept with your name or professional identities on them. I hope this assurance will make you feel able to answer the questions to the best of your eh knowledge and ability. Thank you very much.

Kwabla: You're very much welcome.

I: As an official of the Ghana Education Service, may I start off by asking you to tell me some of your professional responsibilities? I mean what you do here?

Kwabla: Eh, largely it's monitoring. As a result of the decentralisation programme in the GES most of the work is now done at the district level. So we at the regional level, we monitor activities at the regional level. Hmm.

I: Thank you. That's correct. How would you link your responsibilities with the policy formulation and implementation at the basic level in Ghana? How would you link your responsibilities to educational policy implementation in Ghana?

Kwabla: The current policy happens to be the 'fCUBE' and it has got its various components. So during our monitoring activities, we actually sort of inspect and also advice on implementation. Well we also find out difficulties and problems and challenges and see how best we can cooperatively work towards resolving them.

I: Thank you very much. According to the 1992 Constitution from which the wording of the policy was derived, the fCUBE stands for the free, compulsory and universal basic education. How would you as an official of the Ghana Education Service, how do you understand and would therefore interpret these components of

the policy? The free, compulsory and universal components of the policy, how would you interpret them?

Kwabla: Simple interpretation is actually embedded in the words making up the policy. It should be free, and if it's free, then it makes it accessible to all. That is the universal aspect of it also coming in. And, education is a necessity, a right, not a privilege. So it should...I mean the compulsion comes in because if you take generality of the population, it's not everywhere that the understanding, you know, will come in. So making it compulsory which presupposes that may be there would even be a legal backing somewhere to sanction parents or guardians who would not send their wards to school. Because, as I said everybody, you know, must have a part in that right. That is what makes it compulsory. But then, this is limited to basic education, not secondary education which has different dimension. So by interpretation, as I said, the interpretation is what is embedded in the words making up the policy. But then, I'll quickly even add that there has been a problem with the free...

I: (Interrupts) I'll come to that, please hold on. Let me go the next thing. How, to what extent would you say that the policy is free? Let's go to, I mean, a remote, one of the remote areas of the Volta Region. For example, let's go to Kesenyemito in the Akatsi District, if a parent is there and he or she pays developmental levies for structures to be put up for the children to study under, would that not be taken as fees? And if that is so, to what extent can we say that the policy is free?

Kwabla: Mm, yea, thank you for that question. Admittedly I think there has been quite a problem with the free aspect of the policy. I think the authorities themselves have realised it and so even in writing it, they use the small letter for the free. And as you put it, if somebody should have to pay anything, no matter how it's called, then it defeats the concept of education being free. And it hasn't been free at all until recently when this 'capitation concept', that is, paying capitation grant to the schools...

I: (Interrupts) You said capitation. Could you explain what you mean by capitation grant? There is this noise all over the place about capitation grant so could you go a step further and tell me what you mean by capitation grant?

Kwabila: As I was trying to explain, the free aspect of education was only limited to the non-payment of tuition fees in the public schools. But other things like feeding the students, their cloths, paying for sports, culture eh infras... even supply of furniture, materials, you know, parents and guardians were actually faced with the payment for these and various this thing, other fees and levies. And this was becoming a problem, so recently, with effect from the 1st of September 2005, this concept of capitation grant was brought in whereby the Government of Ghana is paying 30 thousand cedis for each pupil or student in the basic schools. That is, from Kindergarten through primary school to the J.S.S. This is what we refer to as the capitation grant.

I: Don't you think this concept is going to benefit children in the urban areas rather than those in the remote areas? Let's say, for example, if you go to a remote area and there are about fifteen children in, in a class and then each of these children has been given, has gotten 30 thousand cedis each and do you think this 30 thousand cedis is enough to buy teaching/learning materials and still put up a structure for them to go under and study? Don't you think it's only meant to be enjoyed by those in the urban centres whilst those in the rural areas would be at a disadvantage?

Kwabila: Practically, it had rather turned out to be the reverse. It appears rather to favour those in the rural areas than those in the urban areas, for this reason that, you know, before even the capitation grant was brought in, some study was undertaken to actually take the range of fees and levies that were paid and the lowest rates were found in the rural areas whereas the highest ones...you won't believe it. There were even places where pupils were paying for toilet rolls, for brooms and things like that. So in some cases they were even paying 200 and over thousand cedis a term in public schools whereas in the rural areas, I think the

highest would be 5 thousand cedis, in some cases 10 thousand cedis, you know, thereabout. So with 30 thousand cedis now going to each person, it is rather advantageous to the rural communities, I mean the schools in the rural areas.

I: Well explained. Let's go to the other components of the fCUBE, the compulsory aspect. Is there any legal enactment or a law to enforce compliance with this policy? If not, I mean, to what extent can we say the policy is compulsory? If a parent refuses to send his or her ward or child to school, is there any legal enactment to punish this parent for doing so? For a child who ends up working on the farm or goes fishing instead of being in school, is there any legal, I mean, enactment or a law put in place to ensure that all parents send their children to school?

Kwabla: Yea, thank you. There hasn't been as far as I'm aware, any legal enactment to enforce the compulsory aspect of the policy and as a result it has never been compulsory. For various reasons, especially in the rural areas, even though the official GES levies amounted to, I think about 9 thousand cedis, the truth is that there are some parents, some guardians who cannot afford the 9 thousand. Apart from that, we also talk about cloths, you know, the student must go to school in uniforms, they must eat, they must buy materials and that...and poverty is so deep in some areas that they just simply cannot afford. Apart from that, there are some peculiar communities too, like the fishing areas, the cattle areas where the children are rather employed, you know, in fishing or looking after cattle. So going to school (laughs) is not their 'cup of tea' at all.

I: Alright. What about the universal aspect of the policy? Is it relevant to the societal needs or is driven by the capitalist or neo-liberal ideology of preparing the youth to enter the world of work? If so, I mean, how relevant is, is this policy, I mean to societal needs?

Kwabla: The universal component of the policy has this import that what happens in one part of the country should be the same thing happening in another. Whatever opportunities are there for students in one area should be the same...

I: (Interrupts) And do you think that, that is feasible? What happens in rural areas and what happens in urban areas, are they, I mean compatible? I mean do you think this is feasible?

Kwabla: Well, practically that is it. Where the public schools are concerned, it is. Except that as I mentioned earlier on, in the urban areas because parents and guardians, they are more capable, so they're able to you know, supplement the basic levies and so things get done more easily than, you know, in the rural areas. But by policy, the practice is the same in all basic schools except when you go to the...what do you call them? the private schools. Yea, but because they're private, they're actually in business so conditions are different there.

I: Now, the policy is actually meant for all children of school-going-age, that's about the age, ages of 6-14 or 15...

Kwabla: (Interrupts) Yea, 14 or 15.

I: OK. And so my next question is, have there been any provisions made for drop-outs who have actually attained the ages of 14, 15? Is there any possibility of them coming back to school? If no, I mean, are we leaving them to their fate? What have you to say about this?

Kwabla: Yea, I think that's a good question and unfortunately, no specific provisions have been made for such drop-outs. So what happens is that, when it happens like that after J.S.S. 3, that is, after the 9th year, those who don't make it, well, they actually become drop-outs and they have to start afresh. Either going in to a trade or whatever. A few of them also go back to re-write and some of them are able to

continue from there. Those that drop-out again also join the pool of the drop-outs, hmm.

I: Thank you. So now we move on to the next item on the schedule. What do you consider as the successes of the free, compulsory and universal basic education programme or policy? In your personal view, what do you consider to be the successes of the policy?

Kwabla: Mm, (a long pause) well...

I: (Interrupts) I mean, do we, do we see improvements in the way teaching is being done in our schools? The components, I mean, strategies of the policy say that they want management efficiency, they want quality of teaching and learning, they want participation in school management to increase. So do you see these things happening? That's what I'll like to know from you.

Kwabla: (Laughs briefly) I understand the question but it's a difficult one to answer. Eh, on paper, mostly, most of these things are well structured and they look very attractive. But frankly speaking, when it comes to implementation actually on the ground, I'm afraid there isn't much to write home about.

I: And so that brings me to the other side of the coin. What would you say are the drawbacks or setbacks of this policy?

Kwabla: For example, according to the structure, it is the District Assemblies that are to provide infrastructure, classrooms, furniture and those things but this is woefully inadequate. Some places, it is not done at all. So if you go particularly to the rural areas and you see the structures in which our schools are, it's a pity and it demoralises both the teachers and the students. So we don't have much productivity coming up from those places, hmm.

I: Thank you very much. What do you consider as the socio-cultural, economic and political, and let me say, context-specific issues impacting on the policy?

Kwabla: Yea, is it? Is it? (a little pause). I'm not very sure about the area, but I know there is...along the Volta Lake, this problem is there. During the day, you have the children busy in the field and so the GES actually formulated a programme where they allow the children to go fishing during the day, so in the evening they organise the school. We call it...there is a name for it. I don't remember, sort of night schools for the children when they return from fishing.

I: The farming areas and the market areas? Have you got any specific instances that you'll, you could cite?

Kwabla: I am aware that in the north, there is a similar thing organised for the cattle boys, hmm. So they also go to school in the night. But as for the farming areas, (hesitates) I'm not aware of any specific place where any specific arrangement has been made for such children.

I: Interesting. I have a couple of factors here, what I personally termed change management factors. These are factors that impact on innovations and change programmes that are being implemented. What I would like you to do now is to have a look at them and then try to grade them according to their importance. 1 for the most important, 2 for the next in line and in that order s we go through them and discuss. (A break).

(Interview resumes)...thank you very much for your grading. You indicated education, communication and dissemination of information about the policy as the number 1 factor of importance. Would you be able to explain why you think this is so?

Kwabla: Yea, this is a new policy and the involvement must actually be explained to the stakeholders. That is why information on the policy is crucial. It is what would actually bring out the understanding of the components and the involvement.

I: Thank you. And secondly, you graded involvement of the stakeholders above funding for implementation. Could you please explain why you think this should be high above funding?

Kwabla: Hmm, they are the people who actually are going to work. Even if funds are there but the people, you know, the stakeholders, the people who will actually implement, you know, are not ready to do it, I don't think the money can work on its own. That is why I think, you know, the, what is it? ...the involvement of stakeholders should be given a higher premium.

I: Thank you very much, and the last item you graded here is monitoring and evaluation of the policy. Will I be correct to say that you have given 7 to this, as the last item on the agenda here because you feel monitoring and evaluation is part of every step of the implementation process? Will I be correct to say that? That is, if you take education, communication and dissemination of information, at that stage you should be able to monitor and evaluate that stage of the process? Will I be correct in saying that?

Kwabla: Exactly that. As you go along, in fact monitoring is done at every stage. Every step that you conclude, you have to actually monitor to access and you know, evaluate to see whether, you know... I mean the objective at that level has been achieved before you move on to the next one. So it is finally, you know, when all stages have been passed that you do the overall monitoring. So grading that as 7 is the overall monitoring that you do at the end of it all. But as you pointed out correctly, all along the stages, monitoring is part of it.

I: Thank you very much. Is there any other factor that you think is very relevant and important in the management of change programmes that have not been identified

on the list? I mean factors which impact on change policies positively which have not been identified? Could you please say something on this? If not, are there any other factors which impact on change programmes negatively? So I'm giving you options here, positive and negative, that I've not actually identified on the list here.

Kwabla: I would want to say that the list here is quite exhaustive and all the crucial ingredients needed for implementation have been covered. As I said earlier on, may be as the stages are being run through, the monitoring and assessments are done. Well there might be peculiar cases you know, relevant to various places, the communities and their peculiar problems, but generally I think the run through is ok.

I: Thank you. Some people, particularly parents see the fCUBE policy as a means of getting the local people or the community actively involved in the management of schools, whilst on the other hand, some see it as a way of pushing more responsibility on the parents through, I mean, participation in PTAs, SMCs, DEOCs and things like that. In your personal view, how do you see the fCUBE policy?

Kwabla: Yea, it is actually the fCUBE policy which requires the involvement of all stakeholders, and when we talk about stakeholders, the community, you know, plays a very high role in that. Most of...in fact, we refer to our schools now as community based schools. So a lot of responsibility actually behoves on the communities. Participation, involvement, contribution, responsibilities, I mean in different forms. But unfortunately, here again we don't seem to be achieving this well enough, hmm.

I: You're answering my next question on the list even. So based on your experience, to what extent do you think the fCUBE programme or policy has actually achieved its declared aims and objectives?

Kwabla: Hmm, well, that one has (laughs a little) many tentacles but frankly speaking, there have been so many problems, difficulties and challenges here and there, faced by the stakeholders, particularly you know, the teachers. Even though they are capable...I mean if you go through the training course that they undertake in the Training Colleges, its very efficient and they go in to the field with a lot of zeal only for it to be watered down because of conditions they meet on the ground. And that is why as I stated earlier on, there is a lot of cry now about standards falling and education not actually meeting the records that are expected, yea.

I: Thank you. Well explained. If you are asked to identify 3 operational strategies of the fCUBE policy, what would these factors be and why would you say...

Kwabla: (Interrupts)...operational strategies?

I: Yea, operational strategies. Strategies that are been used in the implementation of the policy. What would these be and why?

Kwabla: Ok, one outstanding one is...you know, in our Ghanaian communities, girls' education was not paramount previously. This was identified and a lot of incentives were injected in to this area and we're glad to say that we have achieved a lot of improvements, yea, in this area. In fact, when you go to most of the places, the population is about par where the gender balance is concerned. This one is outstanding and as I said it was because particular attention was given it. In fact, a unit was even set at the national level, at the regional level and at the district levels, you know, and there were other bodies involved in supporting this materially and with funds. So they were able to get through and you know, its working. Then another one will be (a little pause) the development of staff. Yea, opportunities have been given particularly our teachers. For example, if you leave the Training College and you teach for 3 years, you're qualified to go back for further training with study leave with pay. This has been encouraging and the response has been very very good. Yea, so the training aspect, it has also been a remarkable one. Hmm, the third one, the third area where we have a lot of

difficulty is the area of supervision. Our Circuit Supervisors you know, have not been motivated well enough. You know, they are supposed to be going round...I think they're supposed to see every school twice in a term and then do intensive inspection for I think four or five schools in the circuit. So, this means they have to travel, you know, round a lot. Well the attempt was made sometime to get them motorbikes to make them mobile but that too got frustrated somewhere along the way. So there is still a good number of them now who are not mobile. Besides that, maintenance of the motorbikes that were given was also bedevilled with problems. They go out and come and their travel, transport and travel expenses, night, overnight allowances are not paid so they get discouraged and they sit put at the offices instead of being in the field to work.

I: So what pieces of advice, practical approaches would you recommend, I mean, to be taken to see improvements in the fCUBE policy as a whole?

Kwabla: I'll start from the point of motivation. I strongly believe that if you put a class of pupils under a tree, you know, or even a wretched shed but the teacher in charge is satisfied with the situation, he can perform and results would come. On the other hand, provide the best infrastructural and environmental, you know, services and accommodation or whatever, if the person, the driver of the wheel is dissatisfied you won't get the result.

I: (Interrupts) So that is one area you think, I mean, we should pay particular attention to. Is that right?

Kwabla: Exactly, exactly. As I said, we do a lot of monitoring and if you sit down and examine why our teachers are not performing, it's because they are not satisfied. I'm not talking about their salaries per se. You see, there are places, remote places that you would not think that there are any government officials working in, but you'll find a teacher there. Some of them even, the way... they have to cross rivers before they get there, and they are posted there and forgotten that their just there. So they also relax. So if the teacher would actually be made

satisfied, they're capable. As I said earlier on, their training is competent. They'll actually perform.

I: Thank you. Some of the impressions I've gathered from my interviews are that, some of the officials are saying either directly or indirectly that the wording of the policy should be looked at because it seems to be a bit vague or nebulous in the sense that even though the policy is said to be free, what is... what we mean by free is actually a problem. It's a relative term. Then there's no legal enactment put in place to enforce compliance with the compulsory aspect of the educational programme. So they are in a way suggesting for a re... I mean, a look at the wording and then trying to re-load it so it reflects what exactly is happening on the ground. Others are thinking that certain mechanisms should be put in place to make it more effective. So my question is what are your personal views about the way educational policies in Ghana are being formulated and implemented? What criteria do you think exist for picking up issues? You could agree with me that there are about a thousand and one issues there competing to register themselves on the policy agenda of policymakers, but what criteria is there to select issues and how are they debated upon before they become policies?

Kwabla: That's also a mega question. Eh, the unfortunate thing is that whereas we have the experts, the professionals, at times unfortunately when educational policies come up, these people who have the expertise are not put in the frontline. Unfortunately, it is rather the politicians, you know, who take up the policies and so very often they miss target because as I indicated earlier on, they are not professionals. So if the opportunity which is actually a right of the professionals would be allowed them, professionals, we should think that drawing up policy statements would be more effective. When we take the fCUBE as a case in point, you know, the two...the free aspect of it and the compulsory aspect of it are inter-related. As clearly seen, education is not totally free and because it is not totally free, it is not possible to make it compulsory. This is the inter-relation, you know, between the two. That is why it hasn't been possible to mandate... I mean to put the legal framework in place to ensure that the compulsory aspect is observed.

I: So would you concur to the view that, I mean, we need to seriously look at the wording of the policy and possibly change it?

Kwabila: I think so. Yea, yes, because even as at now when we're talking about the capitation grant and all, we can still not say education is free because when you talk about education being free, what we mean...well the child should just get up, go to school, come back, go and come until he finishes. But that's not the case. Still he has to be fed by the parents and guardians. So as a matter of fact, it is not free. It is not free and because it is not free, there are people who do not have so there is no way you can make it compulsory.

I: Well, well, well, thank you very much for sharing your expertise, knowledge and every thing with me. Can I finally ask whether there are other aspects of the fCUBE policy that I've not covered in my interview?

Kwabila: Yea, we have the technical/vocational aspect. That is also very crucial to the development of this nation. Our history has it that education started and by the sort of... I mean the sort of education we've had over the years is the academic one through which people were trained for 'white-colour jobs' but that is run out now. It's now obsolete. Now it's technological and vocational development which is necessary for the uplift of, you know, the development of this country. And that has been catered for in the fCUBE but here again, implementation has been a problem. Provision of equipment, materials and the... for example, all J.S.S. in the country were supposed to have workshops where the students would go and do practical work in vocational/technical, you know, skills. But you go around and see how many of the schools have these workshops? They are not there. So they have also remained on the books. When it comes to implementation, it is virtually nil.

I: So in effect, what you're saying is, even though this policy on paper is a laudable idea when it comes to the actual implementation it looks as if the various

components are not genuinely reflected in the implementation process. Is that a correct, I mean, comment to make?

Kwabla: (Laughs briefly) It is indeed. It is indeed. Hmm, when you look at the policy on paper, I mean, it's very beautiful, laudable but then, when you get to the grounds, there are too many difficulties to make it work.

I: Alright. Thank you very much and bye bye.

4.2. Transcript 11 (individual interview)

I: My name is Hope Pius Nudzor. I'm a Ghanaian and a teacher. I'm currently pursuing PhD in Educational Studies at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland. Thank you very much for taking time off your busy schedule to take part in this interview. I can assure you one again that you'll remain completely anonymous and no records of this interview will be kept with either your name or traces of your professional identity on them. I hope this assurance will make you feel able to answer the questions to the best of your ability. Thank you very much.

Kofi: Thank you too.

I: To begin with, as an executive member of the Ghana National Association of Teachers may I please ask you to tell me about some of your responsibilities here?

Kofi: I am Deputy General-Secretary responsible for educational and professional development of teachers so I work closely with the Teacher Education Division of the Ghana Education Service to review teacher training programmes in the country at pre-tertiary level especially. We sit in and determine the curriculum and we monitor the curriculum through various ways and we also sit at their awards. We are also or I am also closely connected with various in-service programmes and some of those programmes are initiated from our side here, sometimes with our own resources, other times we get support from some of our fraternal organisations like the Canadian Teachers Federation or the Danish Early-Childhood Teachers

Association. And currently we are working closely with these two fraternal bodies. With the Canadian Teachers Federation, we run long vacation in-service programmes in leadership and administration for School-Heads, Senior Secondary School Heads, Principals of Colleges, Basic School Heads and we also deepen the knowledge of teaching strategies of teachers in certain specific subjects like Mathematics, Technical Skills, Sciences, recently we have included French but we also look at the gender dimensions of these things, especially we know female teachers sometimes have a phobia for Mathematics and Science so we organise special classes for them in primary science or basic school science and we have a special teaching strategy adopted to their needs and interests and we want to encourage them to become interested in Science as a subject and also to assist in teaching Science. Because in reality they even do more Science than anybody else.

I: Thank you very much. How would you relate these responsibilities that you have spoken to me about to the general formulation and implementation of educational policy in Ghana? To be precise, how would you relate this briefly to the implementation and institutionalization of the fCUBE policy now in Ghana?

Kofi: You know, policymaking belongs to the politicians so there is a sector ministry which keeps on changing names. Currently it is the Ministry of Education and Sports. So essentially the policy is initiated from that end, there is an implementing agency, that is, the Ghana Education Service especially at pre-tertiary level which has to make sure that the policies workout in the classrooms. We are teachers professional association and trade union so at the policy formulation stage, sometimes when we have the courtesy to get invited to make inputs, we do. Other times, we invite ourselves or we compel the Ministry to invite us to share our views on some of the concerns that we feel are affecting our members in the classrooms. At other times where we have cited documents which we think...for instance, recently we had a white-paper on education reform review committee report, we felt that as a professional association for teachers, we must express our views on this. So we prepared those views and then make representations to the Ghana Education Service Council which is the governing body of the Ghana

Education Service and we do the same with the Minister and some of the top leaders of the Ghana Education Service. So, on a daily basis we are in contact with them. We may not necessarily agree with all that they say and they also don't see things from our point of view not necessarily but we share the concerns of our members and whenever we do that, we also have the interest of the larger society in view.

I: Thank you very much. Well said. Now, according to the 1992 Constitution from which the wording of the fCUBE programme was derived, the acronym fCUBE stands for free, compulsory, universal basic education. How would you as an executive member of the Ghana National Association of Teachers, how do you understand and therefore would interpret these purposes or provisions of the fCUBE policy?

Kofi: Eh mm, free, compulsory, universal basic education, initially it was a big 'F' in the acronym and then it became an italicized 'f' which was a small letter 'f'. The question of free, compulsory, universal basic education, that concept has been with us, I think even before...let's even talk of the Accelerated Development Era in 1951/52 when Ghana was at the verge of attaining self government and Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of blessed memory, the first Prime Minister and later on the President, became leader of Government business, he brought Accelerated Development Plan and in 1961 there was an Education Act which made it very compulsory for everybody to enrol his ward or son or child in school and if you fail to do that, you could be prosecuted. Of course, looking at the historical development of these policies one can hardly point a finger at anybody who was prosecuted for not sending his child to school because schooling is compulsory. And the question of free education, Nkrumah through his Accelerated Development Plan and later on free fee textbooks came, he brought in 1961/62, really, tried to make education accessible to as many people as possible. But whichever way we look at education, if we talk about free education then we need to operationalized the concept 'free'. What component of education is free? Education has both private cost that the person who is being educated or those who

offer to help him, in the form of parents have to provide and here I'm talking for instance about feeding, uniforms, where the child has to walk a distance or there is provision for transportation, you have to do some buses, spend some money on that and there is an opportunity cost to education. You decide to go for education and you do that at a cost otherwise you may be doing some other thing which perhaps at a very early age could be income earning. So, anybody who decides to participate in education at whatever level is incurring these costs among others. Then the public also has to incur certain costs. For instance, the Education Act, Act 87 talks about the local authorities building, maintaining schools and things like that, so it means infrastructure has to come from the local authorities as far as basic schools are concerned. Then teachers salaries have to be borne by the state, then we have added another dimension of free textbooks and the capacity of those teachers must be built in order for them to respond to changing needs of the curriculum. So that also is a state responsibility. So the question of free?, yes, it is good that we fashion a beautiful policy like that but the objectives more and more are becoming elusive because you cannot divest that access to free education from the workings of the general economy. And when you are talking about the workings of the general economy, you look at it at the micro level, looking at how the state really gets its revenue and the various competing demands on the state and also what portion has to go into education. Then you also have to look at the question of the economy being able to generate employment, which of course will bring incomes to parents and guardians who should actually be supporting the school system. So where the economy is really not in a very good shape and then you actually push a policy like this, it may work well sometimes with even donor support, but donor support is not sustainable and is always subject to the whims of the various donors many of who are in the G8 Group and even when you talk about multi-laterals like the World Bank that sometimes come to support our schools through the soft window of the IDA, they are still also not people you can depend on. You go to bilaterals like JICA who are also interested in education, there are interested in specific aspects, they may be interested in Mathematics and English (corrects himself), sorry Mathematics and Science, they may not be too much keen in supporting programmes in English. Perhaps the GTZ may be

interested in perhaps rehabilitating Teacher Training Colleges but they may not be too much concerned about the software, what goes into the curriculum of Teacher Training Colleges. So that is the problem we have with running the fCUBE. So essentially the capacity of parents to meet their side of the costs, the private costs to education, for me is a critical factor and also for the state to provide its bit for instance, recruiting teachers, training them and retaining them to deliver, that's a very big challenge as far as the fCUBE is concerned.

I: So in effect what you are saying is even though the policy is said to be free and compulsory, the compulsory aspect for example, there are no legal backing, legal enactment to enforce compliance with this constitutional requirement. And on the free aspect, even though on paper, in principle it is supposed to be free, there are other components that we need to look at. Is that what you're saying?

Kofi: Eh, I will not say that there is no legal backing. Of course Education Act 87 invoke...it's a new education law which is...but is still...at this stage it's a bill which is still being discussed. Tomorrow I'm going to organise a round table of my Sub-Committee on Education and Professional Development to discuss it. And just like the 1961 Education Act, specific sanctions are prescribed for parents who do not send their wards to school...

I: (Interrupts)...but is that the case at this particular juncture?

Kofi: But in reality...the reality is that the rule is there but the enforcement is what the problem is and perhaps those who want to enforce also know that...they try enforcement but they may get to a dead end because if the person says he hasn't got the capacity because he is either out of work, for instance, with structural adjustment programmes that started somewhere in this country in 1981/82, a lot of workers have been retrenched and when you also look at the liberalisation systems that the World Bank and others prescribe, it also means that we are now in a global village and we cannot impose tariff barriers so the question of free trade has actually been over-subscribed to and to the extent that some of our farmers who

perhaps formally grew rice and maize are no longer competitive in the local markets anymore for them, even poultry are not competitive for them to still want to even remain in those occupations. So they will not have the necessary wherewithal. And the other side of the story is that whereas the constitutional provision talks about free education with various policy documents supporting it, the Government itself finds it difficult to meet it side of the bargain. For instance, you recruit new teachers and sometimes for a whole year they have not been converted on their actual salaries. Thank God these days they are even on training allowances. In my day, we were not on training allowances. So they come from college on the training allowances and sometimes for 12 months, 18 months, they are on training allowance and yet their status have changed and that alone is enough de-motivator for many of the teachers and for those teachers, the few of them who attended private Teacher Training Colleges, because they were not on training allowances whilst they were training, they enter the system and it takes close to one year before they can get income and those are not motivating enough for any young-man to want to enter teaching and remain in teaching. So there are both sides of the thing, the question of enforcement and also the capacity of the parents, vis-à-vis the economic capacity of the Government to sustain this programme. The commitment at least is there but must be backed with a lot of resources which are not forthcoming.

I: Thank you. That brings me to the next item on the schedule here. What do you consider as the successes of the fCUBE programme or policy since its inception in 1996?

Kofi: At least, I'll say that at least it has re-candled...Ghanaian naturally are interested in school education but the fCUBE has re-candled the interest of Ghanaian in education. So...of course I don't have the figures on top of my head but if you study the enrolment figures since the educational reforms of 1987 of which the fCUBE is a, let's say the second stage, you'll recognise that consistently enrolment levels are increasing especially at basic education level and even in secondary level the enrolment levels are increasing. I'll also say that people are

becoming cost conscious especially education managers are becoming cost conscious in managing resources. They work with pupil/teacher ratios. They programme resources and they relate it to the number of students that are available and the education sector management system is also there at least to track, to develop data on...Even the teacher number, number of personnel and how they are deployed and occasionally you have reviews about people being over-staffed at certain points which make it necessary for them to be re-deployed to other areas where their services may be needed and so on. So this consciousness of people knowing that at least there is a cost to whatever we do, I think is a plus. But for me the challenges are...

I: (Interrupts)...that is what precisely what I'm coming up to. What in your personal view are the challenges, the setbacks or the drawbacks of this policy?

Kofi: Yea, the challenges are that, you see, because the work environment, let me even start from there, of many of our basic schools is not the best, many teachers are reluctant to accept postings to deprived areas where their services are most needed and we have a systems where we are working with between 24,000 and 35,000,00 untrained teachers some of whom do not have the capacity looking at the changing curriculum and yet because of teacher shortage they perform a role of what I'll best describe as custodial-care. At least they go to the schools and at least sit by the students and see them play and so on. That is not the best, I think that the question of teacher capacity must be enhanced and once that is done, measures have to be put in place to attract them and retain them on the job so that they don't look for other areas like the Banks even the commercial areas to take jobs that will be fast rewarding. And so teacher shortage is one. The infrastructure, the quality of infrastructure is another one. Then the logistics. Every now and then when the Ministers talk, you'll hear them talking about getting basic textbooks in Mathematics and English textbooks 1 to a pupil but that doesn't happen in many cases in the schools. The best you can get is, in the face of very large enrolments or steadily increasing enrolments the textbook situation doesn't improve commensurate with the increasing numbers of students in the schools. So you have

a situation where perhaps a class of, an over-bloated class of 83, which is possible because of the capitation grant which is coming, you may have about 20 or 15 English Readers and how best a teacher can apply those learning resources is best left to his good judgement. And so the question of logistics is critical. The question of infrastructure, good schools with good environments. And then also in those deprived communities, finding living accommodation for teachers so that they'll live with the communities, have their concerns and also work as agents of change in those communities is becoming less and less possible. Yea, so these are some of the concerns.

I: Ok, thank you. You mentioned capitation grant but we'll be coming to that later. The next question is what do you consider as the socio-cultural, economic, political and context-specific factors or issues impacting on the implementation of the fCUBE programme as we have in Ghana at the moment?

Kofi: When you talk about socio-cultural factors, they may impact positively or negatively. Positively, as I said earlier on, Ghanaians by their nature are interested in school education and for instance, when you take places like the Volta Region which may be as equally deprived as the Northern Region, people sell their best resources to see their children through school because they think that is a good enough investment for them as compared to those in the forest areas who may have other landed property; gold. They may go for 'gallamsey'. You know what gallamsey is and so on. So, more and more people are becoming appreciative of the need that their children must be educated. The negative aspect of that is also that in certain environments where resources are a bit constrained the parents may do a choice of perhaps wanting to support more of the boys than the girls, where they have both sexes and of course customs die hard, of course people are getting the awareness especially now that the top positions now are being occupied by women. So the awareness is coming but it takes some amount of time and efforts to really change peoples' orientations about female education. Then also in certain small enclaves, of course that practice is being targeted now and remedied, the trokosi system for instance, where people could go and, let me say that the girls are

actually taken to serve in shrines to compensate for the indebtedness of their very close relations like parents or other extended members of the family...

I: Is that still practiced?

Kofi: I will not say that completely it has been wiped out. There are certain NGOs and I'll say that in the previous Government and the current one certain policies are actually initiated to really reduce the practice. But I'll not say that completely, the practice has been eliminated. It may still be around under all kinds of guises, you may not know. So that is also a cultural thing which may not be... And then the third one, I'll also talk about... you know, when I was talking about education I said that the education has an opportunity cost. For instance, somebody who hails from the north and knows that at the age of six he can start tending some cattle...

I: (Interrupts)...the north of the country of the country you mean?

Kofi: Yea, the north of Ghana. And then he knows that he can tend some cattle and perhaps as a goat-herd or sheep-herd and graduate into a cattle-herd and after a period of perhaps five, six, ten years, he can have a few herds of cattle which are a status symbol and indeed an economic asset in that part of the country of course bride wealth when people want to transfer bride wealth to, I mean, in terms of marriage...

I: (Interrupts)...you mean bride price, the payment of bride price?

Kofi: Bride price, but I did a bit of Anthropology (smiles briefly) so we call it bride wealth in Anthropology. And going to school for nine years and coming out with virtually no qualification that will put you in the modern sector of the economy where you can be employed and get well compensated and engage in that kind of economic activity, stock-rearing and after nine years you have ten herds of cattle, who knows, one cow may cost about perhaps 3,000,000 cedis now. So if you do a rough estimate, it means that the counterpart of the JSS leaver has wealth which

perhaps is 3,000,000 time 10, which is about 30,000,000 at a very tender age of 15 or 18 as compared to his colleague who goes to school and perhaps may be able to speak a little bit of English but may not even have the right qualifications to even go to the next level of education which is Senior Secondary. So people will prefer that they go to the traditional economic activities, which is stock-rearing and their own parents may even, sort of sensitize them to that sort of practice so that more and more, they'll abandon the modern sector and want to engage in this kind of economic activities. So that could be a cultural practice which is a hindrance to education. But looking at the political atmosphere generally I think that it promotes education. I don't see any piece of legislation, any policy or even any overt Government declaration which seeks to discriminate against women for instance, or discriminates against any section of the community from having good education. I think that more and more the problem is an economic problem more and more than a political one so if you are able to address the economic imbalances in the system, I think that we can be forging ahead as a great nation as far as educational provision is concerned.

I: That's impressive. Now, I have a list of factors here, a list of factors which I personally call change management factors. What I'll like you to do now is, I'll give you the sheet, you go through them and then you try to rate them according to their importance. 1 for the most important, 2 for the next in line and in that order. So that's what we are going to do now and we'll do that at least a minute or two (interview breaks)...

(Interview resumes)...from the list, you indicated that education, communication and dissemination of information about the policy about the stakeholders as the number one. Why so?

Kofi: Eh mm, if you design a good policy and you don't share with the communities or the various stakeholders that the policy is meant to affect, then it's like a blueprint, it may best be in your head or it may be something valuable but people may not appreciate it. But when you share it with them and you enter into a

dialogue and that dialogue for me should not even be a one-shot activity. It should be a continuous dialogue trying to sensitize them about the need for a change, a change in direction and once they get that change internalised then they are equipped and they can take off. Yea, so that is the reason I selected that one first.

I: You also ranked involvement of stakeholders above funding for implementation. Would you be able to throw more light on that?

Kofi: Yea, for me involvement is very important. It is money that drives everything but when people are involved and they share the vision, some may even have the resources to support the system which for me is a good thing because I have always said that it is those who even spend extra or invest extra above the general level that even get better result in education. So the involvement is really for me, more crucial than the funding. Money drives things, yes, but the people must really be involved.

I: Alright. On the list, number 7 is monitoring and evaluation, will I be correct to say that you rated monitoring and evaluation as the last item on the list because you feel that at each stage of the change implementation something like monitoring and evaluation should be part of each of the stages? Will I be correct?

Kofi: In deed, that is my approach because when...I did a bit of educational planning for my Graduate Studies and I know that monitoring and evaluation is an on-going process and the practice of going through a whole operation before just starting monitoring and evaluation is not the best approach. It must be a continuous approach, a continuous process and when you're doing that and you think that part of the design is faulty or has a few hiccups, you can amend them as you go along. So for me I think it's an on-going process.

I: Thank you. In your opinion, which other issues or factors affect the implementation of change programmes positively which I have not indicated on the list? I mean do you know of or do you have any other factors or issues that

impact on policy implementation processes positively that I have not covered in this list I presented you with?

Kofi: Of course we've talked about participation which is the same as involvement. We've talked about commitment, talked about stakeholder support. Eh mm, I think leadership, effective leadership at both the national level and then leadership at implementing level and that implementing level can sip down to the school level where you're talking about headteachers or Circuit Supervisors and so on. When you have effective leadership then change can happen.

I: On the other extreme, can you think of any factor or issue that impacts negatively on change programmes that I have not identified?

Kofi: Eh mm, negatively I think that culture and religion could be a negative factor.

I: How, could you explain please?

Kofi: For instance, of course, I cannot give a direct example here but let me take the cow system of India for example, that one is even undergoing modification, where people are supposed to be born into specific stations in life, they don't believe in this question of social mobility through achievement. They think that your status has been ascribed to you by whatever forces brought you on this earth. So if you have that kind of belief and people hold-on to it firmly, then people will even not aspire to change their material conditions. They think that whatever is happening is what has been ordained to happen to them and they would not strive to change their lot. So I think that that is possible. Perhaps when you go to very extreme cases where people believe in certain forms of traditional religion, the die-hard, the hard-core believers perhaps you could get that kind of thinking. But I think that Ghana, ever since we had contact with formal education those forms of ideas have undergone some revision and more and more people are beginning to accommodate change, yea.

I: Thank you very much. We're coming back to the fCUBE specifically now. Some people, particularly parents see the fCUBE policy as a means of getting the local people actively involved in the management of their schools. Others see it as a way of pushing more responsibility on them the parents. What is your personal view about the fCUBE policy? What do you think about these two extremes?

Kofi: Of course those who hold those two views or opinions may have very good reasons for holding them. Some people have only interpreted community participation to mean when you need resources, go to the parents or the communities, levy them and then they will give you more resources to operate the schools. For me, I think that is a misguided approach to community participation. I think that community participation should actually go through all that we have discussed, sharing the policy with them, allowing them to make inputs, involving them in implementation, recognising them as important stakeholders and so on. And where community participation is done in a very balanced way I don't have a problem. But the other view that...then I think the other view thinks about getting involved or what?

I: Pushing more responsibilities through the involvement in PTAs, SMCs...

Kofi: (Interrupts)...eh, for me, pushing more responsibilities, the responsibilities have been properly demarcated when you look at the Education Act 87. Of course it's still the law invoked until the new one comes then perhaps it will replace it. Parents have a role to play in the education of their children. They cannot renege on that responsibility and think that when you talk of education you are only talking about the teachers and then the pupils isolated somewhere doing their own thing without their involvement. I think that parents even more and more, because we're training people, we are educating people for the Ghanaian environment, parents should even assume better responsibilities of even influencing the curriculum of the schools which they don't normally do. Even enlightened parents don't do that and I think the more responsibilities parents assume in terms of managing or operating schools, the more they even put checks on the excesses of

teachers and education managers who sometimes may be going out of their way. So I will think that parents should assume more responsibilities but those conventional responsibilities that the state must assume like provision of infrastructure, those should be provided by the state agencies. If it is paying teachers in public schools, the state must assume that role and that is where sometimes even as a union person I frown on things like levying people to give what they call motivation for teachers. For me it is a very innocuous concept and I'm not comfortable with that. The state must provide those ones but in terms of monitoring the schools, holding fora with teachers and so on, even assisting the schools in terms of those dimensions of the curriculum like Music and Dance where the community is resourceful enough, I think that parents must assume more and more responsibility because for all you know they may even be more capable than the teachers who are there, yea.

I: Thank you. Based on your experience, to what extent do you think the fCUBE policy has achieved its declared aims and objectives?

Kofi: I think I have talked about opening access. More and more pupils are going to schools. Of course some of them drop out. I don't also have the figures about the drop-out rate but at basic education level I don't think that it is so scaring. So more and more people are going to school, more of the feminine gender is also going to the schools and there are various interventions for girls' education even right now we even have Girls Education Officer in every District Education Offices to sensitize the parents. We are also talking about the education for the deprived and vulnerable like the physically challenged and so on and we are also talking about it and some support but not enough support, but some support or some recognition is forthcoming. We're talking about at least improved management practices. Now you can know that there are 'ghost-names' on the GES payroll because where you present a number which perhaps is way above the prescribed teacher-pupil ratio, you'll be questioned and you have to fall in line, so management, yes. Teachers are also becoming more and more accountable even through assessment methods. Now you talk about Continuous Assessment, in spite of all the abuses of

Continuous Assessment, at least I think that it makes the teachers accountable. Of course, some of them may overstretch it to replace testing with teaching or to replace teaching with testing. Yea, but I think that now more teachers know that they must do a certain number of work, the pupils must do a certain number of exercises and so on. And even this concept of community involvement and District Education Oversight Committees who have various stakeholders really involved in seeing to the running of schools, I think they are all positive dimensions to the fCUBE concept which we must laud.

I: Thank you. You mentioned drop-out rate, you know in Ghana school drop-out issue is an issue, it's very high. I just want to know whether under the fCUBE programme there is any provision for those kids who dropped out of school at the age of 14? Is there any provision for them to either come back to school or get them something to do? Do you have an answer to this?

Kofi: Eh, to get them back to school, I think the opportunities are there if only they come back and I am told that there are some people who are even parents now who have gone back to basic school. But the support of the state is what I'm not very sure about. But when you look at the white-paper on the Education Reform Review Committee Report, Government is even thinking about vocationalizing schooling. Getting at least one year apprenticeship for those who cannot go on with secondary education. that is, paying the bills that are necessary for these people for at least one year. So at least those wills are there but they have not started full scale implementation yet. Of course there are other projects like STEP, but STEP is an acronym I cannot say...

I: (Interrupts)...Skills Training and Employment Project.

Kofi: Yea, it's organised by, I think the Ministry of Manpower Development...

I: But that has been suspended, I read about it in the newspapers?

Kofi: Yea, I think it's the funding aspect that has been suspended. You know, after the training there is the promise that each graduant of the training centres will be given some money to set up himself. It could be as low as 500,000, 00 cedis to buy your tools as a mason or perhaps sowing machine to set yourself up and perhaps some people are abusing, I'm just speculating, abusing those funds and they have to really streamline it before they bring it back on course. I think I read somewhere that the Minister said that they have not abolished it. They have perhaps suspended it to correct a few things and then they'll come back.

I: Thank you. If you are asked to identify three operational strategies of the fCUBE policy, what would these be and why?

Kofi: Operational strategies?

I: I mean strategies that have been put in place to safeguard the implementation of the policy? I mean, the implementation and institutionalization of the policy, what would these be and why? Why would you recommend them?

Kofi: So it's like it is not an on-going strategy but strategies which should be put in place to make sure that fCUBE happens?

I: Rather, measures that have been put in place already.

Kofi: Ok, as for measures that have been put in place, building the capacity of teachers is on-going and even the meeting I came from, we are talking of even building the capacity of pupil teachers, those 24,000.00 untrained teachers I was talking about, so that at least they will have their capacity enhanced and they will be able to at least deliver better. So that is one of the strategies. We also have...of course, consistently Government is standing in on the stock of school buildings, the rate at which they are going may be a bit slow but they are doing that also. And the third one, of course every now and then we hear of management training and so on and they are also of course building the capacity of District Directors and so

on, so that their supervisory role will be enhanced and so on, so that they can monitor the schools and work with the institutions and the other structures on the ground, especially liaising with the District Assemblies and so on. So those are some of the things that are happening.

I: Thank you very much. Well said. What practical steps, pieces of advice and suggestions would you recommend to be put in place to enhance the effectiveness of the fCUBE programme?

Kofi: Ok, I will think that consistently education on the policy should be on-going. Then secondly, our districts should really start developing what we call poverty profiles so that genuinely those people who are poor to the extent that they cannot support their kids would be supported by the state because coming with an amorphous policy like the 30, 000.00 for each child may not be the best. Somebody may need perhaps 10,000.00, another may need perhaps 200,000.00 so there should be poverty profiles which should really stratify the people in the various districts, of course with the support of the Department of Social Welfare so that they'll know the poorest of the poor.

I: One will argue that this is just the beginning so the 30,000.00 capitation grant is a step in the right direction. How would you react to that?

Kofi: For me, I think that, yes, though a step in the right direction, I will think that it could have been implemented better because there are some parents and I will say that a good number of parents have been sensitized on providing for their children in terms of needs for school and so that amount should have gone to the poorest of the poor. That would have actually made a lot of difference in their lives instead of spreading the few resources on everybody. And you know the typical Ghanaian culture is that where there is a free facility, like the students loans, even those who don't need it scramble for it and in effect when the thing is disbursed, it doesn't affect the right targets that it is intended to affect.

I: There is this issue also of the fCUBE being universal, how would you react to this? Is it equitable? Is it relevant to societal needs or it's driven by the neo-liberal concept of preparing the school pupils to enter the world of work? How would you react to the universality of basic education in Ghana under the fCUBE programme?

Kofi: Of course, there have been studies, of course if I say that it is a World Bank study perhaps you may have to conclude that it is a neo-liberal orientation but there have been studies which say that where there is investment in basic education has a higher rate of return on the economy than perhaps even tertiary education. Of course, when you stratify the various levels, basic, secondary and tertiary, they say the highest rate of return come from the investment in basic education so they cited countries like the so called Asian Targets and so on which started by universalizing education. So yes, I'll say that basic literacy and numeracy is good but that could not be the terminal stage of education, from there then we could begin to identify peoples talents and develop them and really sensitise them so that they would release their creativity and it is those kinds of skills, those kinds of person who'll make a change on the economy not just people who have basic literacy or basic numeracy.

I: Thank you very much. The last question, what are your personal views about how educational policies in Ghana are being formulated and implemented?

Kofi: I think that Ghana as part of the global village has every right to formulate policies to respond to the changing needs and I think that of the many policies that we had in Ghana, the 1987 reforms was one good policy even though when it got to the implementation stage it run into difficulties. But for me, the question of those difficulties were naturally something that would come with a reform. But I also want to believe that there is also a certain view that any group of politicians who come want to really...want to be remembered and associated with a certain kind of policy and if that is the idea then I think that it is unfortunate. Because the 1987 reforms talking about 6:3:3 and then 3 or 4 or even 5 years tertiary education.

I think it's in line with many countries in the world and that problems we face were problems of resourcing our schools, finding the infrastructure, paying teachers well, building their capacity, building their professional capacities and then they'll deliver because even in the face of all these our own country-folks go to the US and the United Kingdom, Germany and so on and they excel, even in the face of resource constraints. So I thought that we could have just gone ahead, trying to perhaps improve upon the structure and then the initial policy. But now it looks like a lot of tinkering is taking place where some people want us to do things differently and whether they have the mandate of all Ghanaians or not, in terms of elections, I think in this particular one I doubt if we should go on and referendum to talk about the current policy which has been published in the white-paper, I think that the current Government may not have the total support. Yea, so I think that educational policies should really be formulated with a national interest and not a parochial interest.

I: Thank you very much. Thanks once again for giving up your time to share your knowledge, thoughts and experience with me. Can I finally ask whether there are any aspects of the fCUBE policy that you know of that have not been covered in this particular interview?

Kofi: You know, it's a very wide area and I cannot put my finger on anything. I think that in a large measure, we talked about...

I: (Interrupts)...what about changing the title of the policy because of the problems we have with the free aspect and then the compulsory aspect?, would you go in for such a recommendation that we should look for suitable wording of the policy?

Kofi: In deed. The World Bank that started funding fCUBE somewhere I think in 1996 or so didn't name fCUBE. The World Bank named it Basic Education Improvement Project and that is exactly what it was meant to do. Looking at the shortcomings of the reforms of 1987 and trying to improve on some of the lapses. But for political reasons the Government of the day, trusting the processes fCUBE.

of course, changing that name from Basic Education Improvement Project to fCUBE, for as long as they didn't mismanage whatever resources that came from the Bank didn't hurt the Bank in anyway so they were not disturbed. But I think the title Basic Education Improvement Project or even Programme is a better term for me than fCUBE because fCUBE rings a certain bell and when you ask what is free about it then they say tuition is free and so because tuition is free, it's free. But like I said tuition is not the only component of education. What about the private costs? If I don't send my child school but we go to the farm, we may roast some cassava or corn and eat which may not give me an extra cost and when I send my child to school at least I have to dress him in a particular way, I have to give him perhaps 5, 000.00 to buy his lunch from the school canteen and all that. So it puts a lot of economic burden on me. So the question of free is really a contentious thing. I will be comfortable with the World Bank definition of Basic Education Improvement Project or Programme.

I: Thank you very much. Bye bye.

Kofi: Bye.

4.3. Transcript 13 (Group interview)

I: Yea, my name is Hope Pius Nudzor. I'm a Ghanaian and a teacher. I'm currently pursuing PhD in Educational Studies at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland. Thank you all for taking time off your busy schedules to grant me this interview. I can assure you that you'll remain completely anonymous and no records of this interview will be kept with either your names or professional identities on them. I hope this assurance will make you feel able to answer the questions to the best of your abilities. Thank you very much.

Dziedzorm, Elinam, Exornam, Mawunyo and Atta: You're welcome.

I: May I start off by asking you to briefly tell me your professional responsibilities here? I'll start with you madam, please.

Dziedzorm: I'm the Assistant Director in charge of human resource development and management in this office, hmm.

Exornam: I'm Assistant Director of Basic Schools. I help Circuit Supervisors in the performance of their duties, I vet their reports and forward them to the Director.

Mawunyo: Assistant Director in-charge of administration.

Atta: I'm the PRO.

I: So what do you do basically?

Atta: Well, I coordinate affairs, that's as far as the directorate and the outside world is concerned.

I: Thank you very much. So how would you be able to relate these responsibilities you have spoken to me about to the implementation of educational policies within the directorate? Who'll like to respond? The various responsibilities you've spoken to me about, how would you relate these responsibilities to the implementation of educational policies, specifically the fCUBE policy within the district? May be I could go to the person responsible for basic schools. Relate your responsibilities to the implementation of the fCUBE policy?

Exornam: Well, when reading through the reports, when I see any weakness, may be, on the side of teachers, I report to the Director for... we give them support. Yes, so if there are any loopholes here and there, we try to patch them up, that is, to enhance teaching and learning.

I: Loopholes like? I mean would you be specific to give me an example of the loopholes you're talking about?

Exornam: Yes, there could be non-performance. Yes, people don't go to schools regularly, may be there are vacancies here and there, we try to solve those problems.

I: Would you like to add something to that?

Dziedzorm: Yes, one big aspect of my job is to post teachers and transfer teachers and then with this, I make sure that we have the right quality and calibre of teachers in the schools and that there're performing their jobs very well. Where for any reason a teacher is not capable, he's transferred to, may be, a lower level where he can perform better and then another teacher who qualifies is posted there, hmm.

I: Well said. Now to the PRO, how do you relate information coming from Central Government...how do you relate that to, I mean, coordinate that with issues and things happening within the district and with the stakeholders?

Atta: Thank you. In fact, this, we've done several times through the print media. We've had workshops for teachers who are stakeholders, the communities and then parents. In fact, there've been several workshops that we've organised to explain what the Government policy as far as fCUBE is concerned, yea.

I: Thank you very much. Now, according to the 1992 Constitution from which the wording of the fCUBE policy was derived, I understand the acronym fCUBE stands for the free, compulsory universal basic education. My question is, as officials of the Ghana Education Service, how do you understand and therefore would interpret these components and the purposes of the fCUBE policy? Who'll like to go first, please?

Atta: Yea, really when you take education in this country, we'll say that it's free in the sense that it's Government that pays teachers, Government builds most of the structures, provides textbooks for both teachers and pupils to use. In the past, what

parents do is to pay what is called levies. Yea, these Sports and Culture levies, and that of the District Assemblies which currently have been taken off the shoulders of parents, so basically we now say that education is free. Apart from the responsibilities which still lies with the parents to provide for their food and may be their school uniforms and may be exercise books. Yea, even with eh institution of NEPAD, that is, on pilot base, trying to feed pupils. Yes, we'll now say that education is basically free at the basic level.

I: Thank you. What about the compulsory aspect. I'll like us to run through it then I'll ask questions and then I'll collect your views on that. The compulsory aspect, who'll like to react to the compulsory aspect of the policy? How would you interpret it?

Exornam: Well, we have been told it is compulsory but I don't see how compulsory it is. There are children in the town loitering about, nothing happens to the parents. Nobody has been taken to court. Nobody has been prosecuted so I don't see the compulsion, yes.

I: That's good...

Dziedzorm: (Interrupts)...I think the compulsory aspect is what is left to be done forcefully, so that there should be laws stating that parents should take their children to school or they're prosecuted. Ehe!, so that aspect is yet to be really enforced, hmm.

Elinam: Well, I think that is what the Government is now...with the introduction of this capitation, it is now going to make it compulsory that they don't see the reason why a child should not be in school when they are no more going to pay any school fees. So I think it is now that that component of the compulsion is coming into force with the introduction of the capitation.

I: Well explained. I think I allowed you to let the cat out of the bag. I'll like to ask you PRO, please you said education could be said in Ghana, basic education could be said to be free. I'll like to know to what extent is it free? For a parent in the rural area who's been asked to pay levies, does that not constitute school fees? And when we use the term free, what do we mean? Is it absolute free or parents would still have to provide for things like pencils books and things like that, and if so, can we say basic education in Ghana is really free?

Atta: Yea, as my Assistant Director has already said, (mentions the name of her colleague) now with the inception of this capitation grant, nobody is paying anything again. So, that aspect has been taken care of. Yea, with the pencil and school uniform you've talked about, that is the responsibility of the parents. I don't think if you have a child, that's in my view, you have a child at least you must be responsible and being responsible is to take care of certain basic needs of the child. So yea, as far as I'm concerned, about 90% of what goes into education is borne by the Government as at now, so the 10% is nothing to talk about.

I: Don't you think it is now boils down to the level of perception of the individual? For a parent who has not been to school, if you mention the word free, don't you think that he would take it that everything with regards to education is free and for that matter they'll be feeling reluctant to provide certain things for their wards?

Dziedzorm: Though we tell them that...though they are aware that it's free. They are also aware that the schools belong to the communities. The schools belong to the parents and so the parents should work hand-in-hand with the Government to build the schools. This is where partnership comes in. The major part, like PRO has said is free, but if you have a child, at least you should feed the child to go to school and at least you should be able to provide the child's basic needs and then from the home when the child enters the classroom, Government takes over. So feeding the child and providing the basic needs, then when the child gets to the classroom. the Government takes over.

I: So you're saying the provision of exercise books pencils and so on are part of the basic needs you're...

Dziedzorm: (Interrupts)...yes, they're basic needs and even that, those basic needs, the Government provides some of them. Yes, but then we want to use...at the same time you should make parents feel responsible. So they provide part of the basic needs though the Government provides some of it. For example, when school re-opened, we went to schools and we had exercise books to give to some children, especially those coming into class1. We gave them exercise books, we gave them pencils, but that doesn't stop the parents from supplementing what the Government has provided.

I: That's good. Would you like to say a word?

Mawunyo: I don't think there is any country in the world in which education is totally free, no matter how advanced that country is. By talking of free education, we're only talking about the basic needs of the child in school. Parents as well as the Government would have to come together to provide these basic needs of the pupils. Therefore we cannot talk about total, I mean education being totally free in a developing country like Ghana.

I: Thank you very much. And so why are we using the word free? If we cannot have total, absolute free, why are we using the word free? Is in not misleading? Is it not vague? Is it not nebulous to say that basic education in Ghana is free?

Mawunyo: Yea, if you want to interpret the word free in it's essence, you'll say that it's a bit misleading but when you take into totality what you'll have to do to provide education for the child and what the parents have to supply, then we'll say to some level, we are supplying...we are giving free education.

Elinam: Yea, thank you. You see, let's look at the private school system in Ghana. Now, we are looking at it from that point of view. Now when we go to the private

schools, they are responsible for everything and the amount of money parents pay there is higher than the basic. Right now, the...nobody is paying fees for tuition that is why we are saying that the education is free. Now these levies and other things are part of it, I mean the parent should support the Government and apart from that, there is a policy that needy children are identified in the system, where the Government supplies them with their needs. Now there are some parents who can afford, so those policies are put in place so we can say that to a large extent, education is free in Ghana.

Dziedzorm: And then when we say education is free, it doesn't mean it doesn't involve any costs. It means it is free for everybody irrespective of religion, of class, of anything, it is free. That free there is the fact that everybody can go to the school. Everybody, there are no barriers.

I: Thank you very much. We'll leave this issue now and come back to it later in the interview. Let's go to the compulsory aspect, as one of you rightly pointed out, is there any legal framework or a law put in place to enforce compliance? I mean to punish or reprimand recalcitrant parents? And if not, can we say basic education in Ghana is mandatory? Who wants to...we say the fCUBE stands for free, compulsory, universal basic education, now I'm trying to find out whether there is any legal enactment or law put in place to deal with recalcitrant parents who in one way or the other are unable to send their wards to school? If no, to what extent can we say basic education in Ghana is compulsory?

Dziedzorm: I think that the thing has been...they are moving from stage to stage. People could say that it's because they don't have money to pay school fees that they are not sending their children to school and then you don't have any legal backing. Ehe!, that is why we are saying that with the introduction of the capitation grant, now the Government is going to say now I have provided the...you don't have to pay at all, so then what prevents you? So it is after the Government has played its role that I believe that the legal enactment is going to come.

Elinam: Yea, so even rightly the Minister said...one time that now with the capitation it means every child should go to school. There is no reason for any parent to keep the child in the home. So it means that the legal aspect is now coming as she said, it's in stages.

I: Ok, thank you very much. It's getting more and more interesting. And there is this noise about capitation grant as you rightly pointed out. What is it? What are the benefits and do you consider any side effects of this very thing that you're speaking about? Who'll like to...

Exornam: (Interrupts)...Eh, there is a serious confusion among the parents right now. There are some schools which want to levy the parents again and the parents are kicking against it. Because it is going to impede the development of the schools because they are aware that education is free, nobody is to pay anything. So when the schools appeal to the parents, most of them are not going to pay and in fact it's going to be something which would retard the development of the schools.

I: I believe this is one of the setbacks or the challenges of the capitation grant. But my question is, what is the capitation grant? What is it supposed to do? What are the benefits?

Elinam: You see, before I answer that question, you see, with the capitation grant, it looks as if sufficient education is not given. Yes, there is a problem with education. It looks as if the whole thing is being rushed now because if these things should be explained to the communities, one of the, this thing would be that they are not saying that parents should not pay. Do you understand? Parents should organise themselves but the payment should not affect any child for not going to school. But this education is not given, they just, you know...public announcement that with the capitation, no child should pay anything, even parents are interpreting it that everything is free. So now, what I think we should be doing now is that we should actually explain what the capitation grant is, what it is supposed to do and what the parents are supposed to do. For example, they can organise churches,

harvests and other things which should be used in helping the schools but they are not saying that parents should not pay, but now they are interpreting it because of lack of education, yea.

I: And so, what is capitation then? Anyone to explain to me what it means? Capitation grant, what is it? How much... it is money that is given to the schools? If so, how much is given to the schools?

Elinam: The capitation is supposed... you see, according to the Government, they have made an analysis. They've done a research, a statistics and they've realised that an amount of 30 thousand cedis will meet all the commitment of the school, so with this, we have the Culture levy, we have Sports levy and all those levies are now catered for. Now, so if the 30 thousand per child...9 thousand is going to be sent to the district and part of it would be sent to the region for the organisation of culture and other things which have been driving the children away. Then 21 thousand will remain in the school for developments of the school. Now, development in the sense that they are now taking them through what we call the SPIP, when they have to prepare...

Dziedzorm: (Interrupts)...can I come in for a point of correction? More than 21 thousand will be left in the school because, out of those 6 thousand for culture and the 3 thousand for Sports or whatever, part of that money will also remain in the school. So in all it is about 24 thousand which is going to remain in the school. Please can you continue?

Elinam: Yea, so that they'll use that money for the organisation. They prepare the SPIP. It's not just going to the school. They'll prepare what development they want and with the community, that is the SMC, the PTA, they'll come out with the types of development that they want and they'll access the money that is it, so that no child would be sent away because he has not paid Culture fee or any other fee.

I: Thank you very much. Don't you think in remote areas where we have about 15 kids to a class, 30 thousand times 15... would that be enough as you rightly pointed out that there is confusion now, I mean among the parents, some are saying that school is supposed to be free, they don't have to pay anything? Do you think that the 30 thousand times 15 kids would be enough to buy teaching/learning materials for the kids and yet again put up infrastructure for the kids to go under and study?

Atta: Well, really, it's not. It's not possible. It's woefully inadequate. That's why we said the communities, the parents, other stakeholders are...who should come in to assist. We have the parents and the PTAs, we have the churches, we have opinion leaders and then we have philanthropists, NGOs, yea, to support.

I: Madam wants to say something!

Elinam: The Government itself is aware that the 30, thousand even it's not enough to run our schools effectively, if we want first-class schools. That is why the Government stated specifically that the capitation grant does not mean that parents are washing their hands off school affairs. The schools belong to the communities and the communities that is, the stakeholders should play their part effectively.

I: Let's move on to the universal component of the policy. Does it mean that the children in the schools would enjoy the same types of amenities, facilities and equipment by those in the rural areas as compared to the urban ones or what meaning can we attach to the universal component of the policy?

Mawunyo: Definitely, there are bound to be disparities in the rural area schools compared to say, the urban area schools. But generally, that is why we...I prefer using the word 'basic'. Basically, there are certain things everybody, minimum enjoyment everybody is going to go through. I have already explained. If we are going to think about that utopian type of situation where a child in Accra is going to enjoy the same amenities as a child in my holy village, then that's not true.

I: Right. You want to say something PRO?

Atta: About the universal aspect, that is every...no child should be restricted from may be, the school of his choice. So that even if you're a Muslim, you can attend E.P. (Evangelical Presbyterian) school, if you're E.P, you can attend an Anglican school irrespective of your believes and yea, where you're coming from.

Elinam: And the universal, I think they're looking generally...they're having the same curriculum, all basic schools throughout, whether you're in Accra, whether you're in the village, you all have the same curriculum. Yea.

Dziedzorm: And then to add my bit, it's universal in that the same calibre of teachers are given to all the schools in the cities and in the villages. So if all the teachers should perform their work well then we expect that the output from all the areas will be good.

I: Alright, thank you very much. I understand the basic education component of the policy to mean the first nine years of schooling. I want to know whether there is any provision put in place for kids who have actually dropped out of school and have attained the ages of 14, 15, 16? Are there any provisions put in place to bring back these kids to the schools and to retain them in the schools? Who'll like to answer this one, please? I hope the question is clear enough.

Elinam: Come again...

I: I'm saying, I understand the basic education component of the policy to mean the first nine years of schooling. Now, I'll like to find out whether there are any laid down procedures or provisions to actually bring back children who have dropped out of school but have attained the ages of 14, 15, 16? I mean do we have any...

Elinam: (Interrupts)...thank you. You see, personally I feel there is a problem with implementation of educational systems in this country. It is not a matter of Junior

Secondary School, High School or anything but it is the implementation level. You see, the fCUBE...the new educational reform, the idea was that at the age of the ninth year the child is supposed to at least have a basic knowledge in, I mean, technical/vocational...but when they were implementing you'll realise that somewhere along the line the whole thing came back to square one because they are supposed to do this technical...they prepare these benches and other things but no they're not doing it. So it is the problem of implementation. There's no, this thing for 14 years children to come back. There is nothing like that. So you'll see a lot of them hanging around because they've not made any provisions for them. But if they were to implement it according to the new educational reform programme, I think by now we don't expect some of these leavers to be hanging around. But our problem in this nation is the implementation. And it may interest you to know that in Ghana about 40 years now we don't have any educational policy (corrects himself), national policy. Any Government that comes, I mean, wants to change and look at the number of reforms that we have. So I think still we're having problems. We have not got there yet.

I: Ok...

Dziedzorm: (Interrupts)...now the basic has been extended from nine years to eleven years to include eh Kindergarten. So now we have eleven years of basic education, hmm.

I: Thank you very much. Now I'll like to know as officials of the Ghana Education Service, I mean in this district, what do you consider as the successes of the fCUBE policy since its inception, I believe in 1996? What do you personally consider as the successes of the policy? Of the way the way the fCUBE is being implemented?

Exornam: One of the successes is that we have more children now in school than previously. More schools have been opened.

I: Who'll like to contribute again?

Atta: And you'll realise that our Training Colleges have been given another, how do I put it? a face-lift, yes. Now instead of Cert. "A", they are now awarding Diploma and you'll realise that a lot of them have been renovated and may be other facilities supplied so that they can meet the challenges.

I: Sir, what would you like to add?

Elinam: Yea, community participation. You'll realise that now the communities are aware that education...I mean they're part of the stakeholders so they are contributing to the education.

I: And what about management for efficiency, or management efficiency as one of the components of the fCUBE policy? Has there been any improvement in that area?

Exornam: Well, in that area, I'll say that for example, the whole municipality, formerly the whole municipality was being managed by about five Circuit Supervisors. Now, there are sixteen. For better management, the district has been split into smaller bits so that management will be more thorough.

I: You wanted to add some thing?

Atta: Oh, that's been said already.

I: Alright...

Dziedzorm: (Interrupts)...and then we have management workshops for...at the district levels for the Directors, the frontline ADs and the other workers and even for headteachers. NGOs and other agencies come in and then they complement the

efforts of the Government. So we have management trainings going on at various levels.

I: So in effect what you're saying is the headteachers are more capable now to plan their own budgets and things like that. Is that correct? Is that a fair comment to make?

Dziedzorm: Yes, at least it's better than it used to be. Since the Circuit Supervisors are being given training, we expect that they're handing over that training to the headteachers and so all things being equal they should be more knowledgeable than they used to be.

I: Thank you once again. Let's look at the other extreme. What would you consider as the challenges, the setbacks or drawbacks of the policy and the way it is being implemented?

Atta: When you talk about the challenges of implementation, you'll realise that at the close of the day, much depends on the teachers and really they have to be motivated especially those who are in very deprived areas. They need motivation to actually catch up with their friends who are...

I: (Interrupts)...what do you mean by motivation? Do you mean monetary rewards or what are you talking about? Specifically, what do you mean by motivation?

Atta: Yea, not monetary alone but providing places of accommodation, portable drinking water, access roads and health facilities at where they are. I think those facilities should be provided.

I: Thank you, any other contributions?

Dziedzorm: Like he has said, accommodation and access roads and light. All those very basic human necessities, aha! The lack of them in the rural areas is a big

obstacle in the way of the free, compulsory, universal basic education because teachers are finding...we're finding it difficult to get teachers to teach in certain rural areas where these facilities are lacking.

Elinam: And one of the challenges right now is the lack of commitment on the part of the teachers. You see, as somebody has rightly said, condition of service for teachers...you know, they are always complaining so they realised that there is no need for them to be committed to the work. So there are now pretending that they're teaching but in actual fact, they're not. No teaching is going on.

I: You mean all of them or some of them?

Elinam: Some of them, some of them.

I: Is there any other thing that you'll like to add?

Mawunyo: Yea, one policy from the Government should be, educational policies from the successive Government should be continuous rather than, you know, making changes whenever a new a Government sets in. If there are these changes limiting continuity, the effectiveness of the whole programme is, is questioned.

I: Ok, thank you very much. One other thing I forgot. If you're asked to identify three...

Dziedzorm: (Interrupts)...can I come in? One thing that...I think that there is...the Government has now to tackle something seriously at the front of the teachers. May be, the teachers would have to sign performance contracts to buttress the point that Mr (mentions the name of her colleague) ...If the problem is tackled from the angle of the teachers...teachers are made to sign performance contract, if you don't perform then you leave and then if a teacher is performing (corrects herself) signing the contract then you make sure that the teacher's remuneration is to a level that is appreciable. So if you reward the teacher appreciably then the

teacher also signs to perform appreciably. If he doesn't, then you take action. So unless that aspect of the whole thing is done, we'll still have a lot of problems.

I: Thank you very much. So what do you consider as the socio-cultural, economic and context-specific issues impacting on the way the policy is being implemented? I'm saying socio-cultural, economic and context-specific because I went to some parts of the country and they cited fishing, farming and 'galamsey' and things like that as issues impacting on the implementation of the implementation of the policy. Within your district here, what issues would you identify as impacting either positively or negatively on the implementation of the fCUBE?

Atta: You know, basically Ghana is...about 65% of the citizens are farmers so what normally happens is during the farming season, most of the children are withdrawn from the schools to engage or assist their parents in farming, more especially. And then most of them go to the market, especially during market days to assist their parents to sell. So all these impact negatively on...then weaving, those especially, where weaving is their, this thing. And then, those along the borders, yea, they engage in petty trading, this buying and selling, smuggling and other things. They make 'big' money so at the close of the day what they get may be is more than even what the teacher gets so they tend to engage in those things.

I: May be you could put me right, what you said, I think are things impacting negatively on the implementation process. Can we here identify any issues that impact positively on the way the fCUBE is been implemented? Can we here possibly think of any...

Mawunyo: (Interrupts)...yea, I think today, we have more girls...yea, we have more girls in school than we ever had because the government continuously keeps on hammering on this girl child education, so girls are no longer been so easily given in marriage at early stage. They have also been given all the opportunity to develop themselves as the boys, perhaps, I will even say more emphasis is now

been laid on girl child education than boy child education. So positively we're achieving something.

I: So what would you say is responsible for that? That change in attitude where the girl child is now educated, I mean to the extent that it is arguable to say that more attention is being paid to girls more than the boys?

Dziedzorm: Ok, apart from the fact that Government has some incentive package for girls, needy girls, ehe! a lot of sensitization goes on in the community. Parents are made aware of the need to help the girl child with the house chores or to lessen the chores that the girl child has to perform, so that it is now possible for the girl child to have some time to learn at home and this is enhancing their performance in the schools.

Elinam: And more also, I want to add that with the Government policy on STMA, the attitude of girls now with regards to learning of Science is now improving and you see girls now taking up professions that people thought it's only for men or for boys. It also has some positive influence on our education system, yea, Science and Maths.

I: Science and Maths, Ok, alright then. There's this impression that I've gathered from the interviews that I've conducted so far. That is, some of the parents, I mean, it has to do with parents, they see the fCUBE policy as a way of getting them the parents involved in the day-to-day administration of schools within their areas, I mean, districts and whatever. But at the same time, quite a few of them also think that the whole thing is about pushing more responsibilities on them, parents. What would you as officials say, I mean how do you as officials see the fCUBE policy and the way it is being implemented?

Elinam: Now, you see with that the Government has put in place some policies like involving, involving the communities by making these SMCs, school management boards to be responsible. So they are responsible for the schools in the

communities so that if there is any problem, they will have to...they are representing the education officials in their communities because they are part of the education. So I think now even though the parents are seeing that the responsibility is being pushed to them with this introduction of the SMC, it's trying to let the parents know that they are making them part of the system because if you are part of a system you will accept that system. So I think that is what the policy is, I mean, is helping to...

Dziedzorm: (Interrupts)...I don't think that the responsibility is being pushed on the parents. They are simply being made aware of their responsibilities. Some didn't know their responsibilities so it's...they are just being made aware of it and it's overwhelming for some of them so they think that the Government is pushing the burden on them.

Atta: Yes, madam has used the word awareness but I will say they are only reminding them because hitherto, you'll realise that most of our schools, the old schools we have in our various towns and villages were really put up by the people themselves but not may be, the Central Government. So they're only reminding us that yes, it's our responsibility to have our hand in education as our grandparents and whatnots did in the past. So it's not pushing responsibilities on them but actually reminding them of also assisting as it was formerly done.

Dziedzorm: Can I come in? I think that when I went to school, back in my days, my parents, from Class 1, my parents bought all my textbooks for me, my pencils so parents were aware of their responsibilities years ago and then were performing their responsibilities. I believe that your parents bought you books and then ehe! except that I don't know whether at that time, I can't remember whether we were paying fees. But along the line things changed and then parents changed. I don't know what happened so the schools were going down, down, down, down, hmm.

I: So based on your experiences, to what extent would you say the fCUBE policy has actually achieved its declared aims and objectives? Who'll like to go first? To

what extent would you say the declared aims and objectives of the policy have been achieved?

Atta: Well we can't talk so much about the achievement now. But one achievement is that people are increasingly being aware of the need to educate their children. The communities are more involved in the running of the schools. We went to some rural areas and the community leaders came out with praises or you know criticisms about our teachers, about our schools. This awareness alone is sufficient.

I: Is there any other thing that any of you would like to add to that? The awareness, he mentioned awareness.

Dziedzorm: Awareness and commitment. You'll find communities organising communal labour to help raise structures and then to provide accommodation for teachers. There is a town in...(mentions the name of town) area here where a whole township has been built for the teachers. So every teacher has accommodation there, so I think that it has gone along way...

Elinam: (Interrupts)...and also, it may interest you to know that now the communities are involved and to such extent that even they can come to the Directors to tell them that this teacher is not performing so they feel you know, he cannot handle their children. So I feel this is also a way out and then putting our teachers on the alert that I mean, the communities are now aware of what is happening in the schools because they come to schools day-in-day-out to find out what is happening and they even question their children on what the teachers are doing.

I: Thank you very much. Any improvements on the three components of the policy, three or four, decentralisation, management for efficiency, the quality of teaching and learning and then what's the last one, access? Would you be able to say that improvements have taken place in these areas? BECE exams, are there any improvement?

Elinam: Now, I think with access, you'll realise that more schools have been opened in the communities than formerly and more classrooms are being put in place. The Government is putting up structures, pavilions and some of the communities are also putting up, you know, structure. So now, we'll say that schools are in almost every village. You'll see the communities are forcing that schools should be opened you know, in a short distance. They want schools to be in those communities and that's even creating problems now, to get enough teachers to those communities because the amenities are not in these villages. So we are now saying, as officers that at least before a new school is opened, they should see to it that accommodation is there for teachers, at least where the teacher...so at least now for access, there are a lot of schools in almost every village.

Exornam: One area of improvement is the provision of furniture to the schools. There is a lot of improvement in that direction

I: You mean the dual-desks sort of thing?

Exornam: Yea, that is what I'm talking about.

I: Thank you very much. So what...

Elinam: (Interrupts)...you see, also you'll realise now that children can move from a typical villages to even Achimota, you know, to any schools in the country in the... after the BECE so that, those big, big school as are not limited only to...So you'll realise that this fCUBE thing has opened more avenue for the children to move from the rural areas to the urban areas. I think it is also one of the achievements.

I: Ok, thank you very much...

Mawunyo: (Interrupts)...well, I think during our days too it was the same thing. We were brought up in villages but we were able to compete with those from the urban areas. Let me just stop there.

Elinam: You see, along the line somewhere...formerly during the Common Entrance time, you can move from a village to Achimota but along the line somewhere, you know, there was that you know, blockage so that we were only limited to the urban areas but with the introduction of this educational reform, most especially the fCUBE, you see that children who perform well are now moving out from their villages to other districts, yea, I think that is because of this...

I: (Interrupts)...awareness and things like that. Ok, so what pieces of advices, suggestions and practical steps would you recommend to be taken to improve practice, to see improvement in the way the policy is being implemented?

Atta: Well, as already said by others, we...the change, if there should be any change at all, it should be gradual and then, that is, subsequent Governments should not just come in and then all of a sudden policies are changed. And then secondly, the necessary basic necessities especially for the teachers should be provided, at least if not all, it should be improved. And then thirdly, there should constant supply of teaching and learning materials because for the past three years, if I'm not mistaken no textbook was provided yea, but now I think they've started delivering. So these are some of the things I think should be put in place.

I: Any other?

Dziedzorm: I think that one thing that the Government really needs to sit down and work at if this policy should achieve its optimum success is to work on the attitude of teachers. The teachers' attitude to work is not (brief laugh) is not to the desired...

I: (Interrupts)...don't you think it is because they see the politicians as getting all the money when they are being given meagre sums of money to take home, I mean don't you think that is responsible for the attitude of the teachers?

Dziedzorm: Yea, I don't think that...there are so many loopholes in our system. It is not the politicians who take the monies, the public servants themselves who are able to siphon the monies, ehe! But I don't know. That is beside the point, but all the same, I think that the sacrifice that the Government is making for the teachers...the teachers should be made aware of it. For example, the study leave that the teachers are enjoying, it is not all areas that they are enjoying study leave, that is why people want to become teachers so that they can enjoy study leave and if you want to enjoy study leave, then money goes into funding that study leave, so you should be working at a reduced salary. So the Government should really package something to enable the student teacher see what she is benefiting and then what is expected of her. So if there is anything to be done, I think it should be done in the direction of the teacher because the teacher is the success of the programme. So whatever means the Government will use to make the teacher up and doing will determine whether the programme fails or succeeds, hmm.

Elinam: And to add to that, I think supervision is the main thing we have to look at because when we compare the public schools to the private schools, you will realise that the supervision in the private schools is very intensive and you will realise that as a result of that supervision they are performing. Now, but in the public that perception that after all I'm a trained teacher, whether I go to school or not I'll be paid so they must put in some mechanism so that at least the supervision is intensified in the public schools. If that is done, at least with some incentives to the teacher, I think we'll make a headway.

I: As you really pointed out, I mean, the very beginning, don't you think some of these things are because we don't have any national education policy? And we don't have performance targets even in the schools? What have you to say about that?

Atta: You see, as we told you, we've had a lot of workshops and the...even the district itself has set targets for itself, but you see, as madam said, it's may be, the attitude to work. Let me tell you frankly we have a lot of teachers who have been to the University and are even teaching in our basic schools, do you understand? but you see, when you compare, when they compare themselves, what they are taking now to their colleagues who are working in other departments...may be you leave University with a friend and he is working with Electricity, before you realise he is riding in a car and you have to, you have been posted to a village, do you understand? these are some of the things we have to look out and then with that I think...well if even you're in the village and you're taking something that you can live on, do you understand?, I think things would improve.

Elinam: Let me add to this. You see, the condition of service...for example, a teacher who was teaching in a Secondary School, few months ago he decided to leave and he is now working with the Bank. Last when his wife was sick and she was taking to hospital, eight hundred thousand bill was just paid at the table there. But we are paid twenty-five thousand medical bill a year, a teacher! You see, so when you look at this, I think the...something must be done I mean about the condition of service. You can imagine, when middle school leavers ran to Nigeria, they were teaching in secondary schools. A Ghanaian teacher given just a little push will be able to perform. So I think some thing must be done in that direction.

Mawunyo: It all boils down to the fact that the Ghanaian teacher is one of the worst treated worker in Ghana. If you entered any secondary school, any school and asked the pupils or students how many of them would want to be teachers when they grew, you'll be very lucky if you had even one hand shot up. What I'm saying is that there is...a lot needs to be done to uplift the image of the teacher. In the colonial days, communities accepted teachers, somebody would volunteer to provide free accommodation, in fact, it would even be a great pride to somebody to be called the friend of a teacher. But today, right from the Government to the lay man in the street, the teacher is nothing. So if we want our policies, national, regional or whatever you termed it, to succeed, then the image of the teacher must

be uplifted. Then the calibre of students who enter into our Training Colleges. I have a big question, because given two options, a student qualifies for the University and he is admitted, another student with the same aggregate or qualification qualifies for the Training College, the fellow who qualifies for the Training College will never go. So we only have people who are disappointed, who cannot make it anywhere else, joining the teaching profession, and unless this is improved, I mean this is looked at and improved, we'll always have these low calibre of students for our Training Colleges who'll in turn train our future leaders and we'll come to square zero.

I: Ok, thank you very much for your concerns. Another impression I've gathered, I mean people I've interviewed, some of them are agitating for a change in wording of the policy because of whatever we've spoken about, the confusion with the free aspect of the policy, the compulsory aspect of it. Some of them are saying that we as a people should go back to the drawing board and look at the wording of the policy and try to look out for suitable words to reflect what is exactly happening on the ground. Some of them are saying we should kick the 'free' aspect away and make it 'compulsory universal basic education'. Their argument is that because education is not free, there wouldn't be any means by which Government could make it compulsory. Some of them are also agitating, as I said that we should look for suitable words to replace it. So my question is, do you share these concerns? If no, what are your personal concerns about the wording?

Elinam: (Interrupts)...personally, I'm not struggling with words. Words wouldn't change anything. You see, it is the implementation. You see the concept, and how it is implemented. That is the most important thing. You see, so changing the words, whether free or not, as at now, we've been able to prove that at least to a large extent education is free, and even with the...the government has seen that the 'f' you know, in the wording...now they have are coming out to say that with the implementation of the capitation, they don't see why a child should not go to school, they don't see what is preventing a parent for not sending his child to school. So I think even though, as you said some schools may have a population of

fifteen. 15 times 30 would not be able to do anything, yea, but still the parent, the community should find a way of supporting...but the Government is saying that nobody should pay, whether it is meagre, whether the population is not enough and the fee is meagre is not the concern.

I: Ok. So in effect what you're saying is that it doesn't, it's not with the words. It has to do with implementation. Can I hear any other views on this?

Dziedzorm: I think that there shouldn't be any misdirected attention at words. We waste too much time battling with words instead of seeing to the implementation of things so if we have any efforts and any money at all, it should be geared towards the implementation to make sure that we achieve what we want.

I: And so the question is how do you implement without using words? How do you implement the policy without using the words that make up the policy?

Dziedzorm: The words are not causing any harm at all...

Mawunyo: I beg to differ a bit. Words mean a lot. If you tell me something is free for me and I realise I have to pay from behind for what you are saying is free for me then you are misleading me. If you are telling me something is compulsory and there is no legality behind what I kick against, then still I am being misled. Again, if we want our policy, educational policies to be successful, then we must be extremely careful about the choice of words. If we feel we cannot implement these policies to the latter of the words we have chosen, then let us explain them to the people. This is what...to this level it is free, from this level to this level it is free. Compulsory!, if you do this and you do that or you don't do this then you have to face the law. Unless this is done we cannot...

Elinam: (Interrupts)...thank you very much. In fact, you're now coming back to my point. We shouldn't battle with words. Words mean a lot but if words are there and proper education is given, for example, when they introduced this fCUBE, if the

lay man should understand what we mean by the free, to what extent, if that education was given I don't think we'll have a problem. So I am saying that it is the implementation. In the implementation, you must educate the public on what you mean by those words, but the words per se have nothing to do with education. Yea, that is my point of view.

Dziedzorm: Can I come also say something? If the Director were...I have heard him on several occasions, my Director explained the word 'free' and he has, he never explained it in monetary terms. He said 'free' means it if free for everybody. That's what he keeps saying, that free doesn't mean that you don't have to pay for...it's free for everybody. That 'free' there, it's free for everybody, Christian, Muslim, boy, girl, that's how he explains it. So from the discussion that is going on here it is just clear that may be, we all don't even understand, yes. We all don't even understand what those...ehe! What the acronym means. May be some explanation of it to the understanding of everybody would be necessary.

Elinam: That's the Government policy, what the Government means by that acronym. What it actually mean by free, compulsory and other things should be explained to the public.

I: Ok, thank you very much. Is there any other thing? I'll go to the last but one question. That is we've discussed, we've said a lot, so what are your personal views about the way educational policies are being formulated and implemented in Ghana? Any comments about...

Atta: Well, I think with the implementation...I'll dwell on implementation, I think we have to actually sit down and prioritise, yea, so that we look at the most needed facilities. Like somebody has talked on supervision, what goes into supervision? Here we are, we have only two vehicles. Director is away, he is using one, then we have only one, may be for distribution of school items. So if the AD Supervision or somebody wants to visit the schools, how does he or she go? So we have to actually prioritise and then may be try to cut down on the number of workshops we

attend and then put the scarce resources into may be other areas, providing some basic facilities for use in the school then for those who are actually to see to the implementation.

I: That's well said.

Mawunyo: The only I want to add is that as much as possible I'll advice that our educational policies are devoid of politics, hmm. Because Governments come and go but policies affect education are always there. If Governments come to change educational policies, we go back to square one. Again, our population, parents must know that if we are going to use all our resources in educating our children other things, we're going, the nation is going to lack other things and therefore this family planning thing must be intensified. Finally, I'll advice that more education, we have said much on education, more education on the part of parents and, and everybody else about education must be carried out so that we know if I have two children and somebody else has three or at most four, we'll be able to educate them rather than having, especially at our funeral rites, Ok, mentioning so many numbers of children as somebody has left behind and the whole nation claps for such a fellow.

Elinam: Thank you. So in a nutshell, what I'm going to advocate is there should be a national educational policy which should stand for a period of time...

Dziedzorm: (Interrupts)...long period of time.

Elinam: (Concords)...yes so that they should stop you know, changing after every four years, a new educational reform, after every four years. From the time of independence up to this time, let us look at the number educational reforms or policies that have come out.

Exornam: Well I was going to talk about the implementation aspect. My colleague has talked about may be the supervision aspect of the fCUBE programme. Look at

our Circuit Supervisors, almost all of them are walking. How do you walk? How do you inspect your schools thoroughly when you are on foot? You have distance between the various villages, how many places can you visit in a term when you're walking? You don't even have a motorbike. That thing must be looked at.

Dziedzorm: Oh, I think they've said it all. What I was also going to say was what Mr. (mentions the name of her colleague) said that the educational policies should be well planned and should be on very long term basis so that every Government goes that line so that we all are working together to achieve a common goal, hmm. May be, as for education it's not static. For example, with the introduction of computers things will change but those would be minor, minor changes but the main policy objectives should be well planned and thought of and should be on long term basis.

I: Finally, I'll like to thank you all for coming I mean giving up your time to attend this interview. May I finally ask if you have other aspects, knowledge of other aspect of the fCUBE that I haven't covered in this interview? If you have you could just draw my attention and say whatever you want to say. In the absence of that then I'll like to thank you once again and say, thank you very much and bye bye.

Dziedzorm, Elinam, Exornam, Mawunyo, Atta: It's a pleasure.

APPENDIX 5: EXTRACTS FROM THE 'fCUBE' POLICY DOCUMENTATION FOR ANALYSIS

Extract one:

Chapter 6, Article 38, Section 1 and 2 of the 1992 Constitution of the Fourth Republic of Ghana (GOG, 1992).

(i) The State shall provide educational facilities at all the levels and in all the regions of Ghana and shall to the greatest extent feasibly make those facilities available to all citizens.

(ii) The Government shall, within two years after Parliament first meets after coming into force of this Constitution, draw up a programme for implementation within the following ten years, for the provision of free, compulsory and universal basic education.

Extract two:

5. THE PROGRAMME FOR fCUBE: *The Programme for Free Compulsory, Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) by the year 2005* (Ministry of Education, November 1995, p. 18).

The Government of Ghana recognises basic education as the fundamental building block of the country. A participatory, literate citizenry is the foundation of democratic processes, economic growth and social well-being of a nation's population. In recognition of this, the Government of Ghana is committed to providing free, quality education from Basic Stage (BS) 1 through 9 to all school-age children by the year 2005.

5.1 Goal of the Initiative

The long-term goal to which fCUBE will contribute is an empowered citizenry effectively participating in the civic, social and economic life of the country. The

Government is committed to ensuring that all of its citizens participate in the political, social and economic life of the country, regardless of the geographic region in which they live, their gender, religion or ethnicity. The central goal of the education system in Ghana is to ensure that all citizens are equipped with the fundamental knowledge and skills that will enable them to be full stake-holders in and beneficiaries of development.

5.2 Purpose of the fCUBE Initiative

By requiring that all Ghanaians receive 9 years of free, quality schooling, the Government wishes to ensure that all graduates of the basic education system are prepared for further education and skills training. The expansion and reforms planned under fCUBE are designed to equip future generations of Ghanaians with the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary, including literacy and numeracy in selected Ghanaian languages, to develop further their talents through additional education or training and, at minimum, play a functional role in society as informed, participatory citizens, economic producers and to pursue self-determined paths to improve the quality of their lives.

Extract three:

The Strategies for Implementing fCUBE: *The Programme for Free Compulsory, Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) by the year 2005* (Ministry of Education, February, 1996, pp. 4-5).

An fCUBE implementation plan which adopts a range of strategies for achieving quality, efficiency and access to educational services has been developed. The strategies revolve around three main components all geared towards the provision of full access to good quality basic education for all Ghanaian children. These components are as follows:

1. Improving Quality of Teaching and Learning

The issue of poor performance of pupils in public schools is of great concern to everyone. It is clear that the situation is due to poor teaching and learning in schools. The strategy of this component then is to promote efficient and effective teaching and learning at all levels of the basic education stages. Specifically this component will:

- enhance specific teaching skills through pre-service and school-based in-service training of teachers;
- improve teacher morale and motivation through incentive programmes;
- promote quality of learning and pupil/student performance through curriculum review and improve teacher-pupil instructional contact time;
- ensure adequate and timely supply of teaching and learning materials to all schools;
- improve teacher-community relations.

2. Management for Efficiency Component

The focus of this component is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of management performance through:

- management reforms;
- discipline and accountability in schools;
- increased enforcement of effective teaching and learning;
- elimination of teacher absenteeism, lateness and misuse of instructional time;
- building of high morale of pre-tertiary personnel.

3. Access and Participation

The access and participation component of fCUBE is:

- to expand infrastructural facilities and services to enhance access for all children of school-going age;
- to address issues of enrolment and retention for all children of school-going age;
- to enhance equity in the provision of educational services and facilities for all with particular focus on girls, and disadvantaged children;

- to ensure good quality teaching and learning by setting performance targets.

Extract four:

Mission Statement for Education: Education Strategic Plan (ESP. Volume 1, p. 7) 2003 to 2015 (Ministry of Education, May, 2003).

Mission Statement for Education: The mission of the Ministry of Education is to provide relevant education to all Ghanaians at all levels to enable them to acquire skills that will assist them to develop their potential, to be productive, to facilitate poverty reduction and to promote socio-economic growth and national development.

Goals for the Education sector: In fulfilment of the Education Mission, the Ministry of Education will provide the following:

- a) Facilities to ensure that all citizens, irrespective of age, gender, tribe, religion and political affiliation, are functionally literate and self-reliant;
- b) Basic education for all;
- c) Opportunities for open education for all;
- d) Education and training for skill development with emphasis on science, technology
and creativity;
- e) Higher education for the development of middle and top-level manpower requirements.

In providing these services we will be guided by the following values:

- (1) Quality education, (2) Efficient management of resources,
- (3) Accountability and transparency, (4) Equity.

Extract five:

Government's White Paper on the Report of the Education Reform Review Committee (GOG, 2005, pp. 9-10).

The Future Direction of Education in Ghana:

Government endorses the recommendations of the Committee on the philosophy of education in Ghana. Government accepts that education should result in the formation of well-balanced individual with requisite knowledge, skills, values, aptitudes to become functional and productive citizens. As the workers of a country aspiring to great economic ambitions they should be trained to become enterprising, and adaptable to the demands of a fast-changing world driven by modern science and technology. Ghana's new system of education, especially for the youth between age 12 and 19, should be reformed to support a nation aspiring to build a knowledge-based economy within the next generation.

Essentially, the education process should lead to improvement in the quality of life of all Ghanaians by empowering the people themselves to overcome poverty, and also raise their living standards to the level that they can observe through the global interchange of images, information and ideas. They should be equipped to create, through their own endeavours, the wealth that is needed for a radical socio-economic and political transformation of this country. To this end, greater emphasis than hitherto needs to be, and will be placed on Technical, Agricultural, Vocational education, and on structured Apprenticeship training.

APPENDIX 6: CONFERENCE PARTICIPATIONS, PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO THIS THESIS

i. Research Students Conference–2006, University of Birmingham, England

- Presented a paper on the preliminary ideas of my on-going dissertation entitled “The ‘fCUBE’ policy in Ghana, Reality or Rhetoric?: An interpretive and a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspective”. 1 July, 2006. (Conference proceedings are published as a Book entitled “Researching Education: Different Ways of Knowing and Doing”.)

ii. CASS Postgraduate Conference, University of Aberdeen, Scotland

- Presented a paper entitled “Exploring the apparent policy implementation paradox: A case of the ‘fCUBE’ in Ghana”. 28–29 June, 2006. (This is published on Google web page. Google ‘**NUDZOR**’ to have access to article.)

iii. ‘Being and Becoming Research Active’ Seminar, Strathclyde University

- Presented a paper on the findings of the study conducted at MSc level to fellow postgraduate students on the topic “The Implementation of the ‘fCUBE’ Policy in Ghana”. 21 March, 2006.

iv. BERA-RCBN Methodology Master Class, Oxford Brooks University, England

- Participated actively and contributed to discussions and parallel and plenary sessions. 25 November, 2004.