ASANTE TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP AND THE PROCESS OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

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This dissertation entitled

ASANTE TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP AND THE PROCESS OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

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Abstract

This study lies at the intersection of contemporary research on leadership and concerns for the performance of recent African leaders and theme of participation. It utilizes qualitative approaches to examine the issue of leadership and stakeholder participation in the role of Asante traditional leadership and the process of educational change in Ghana during the last quarter of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries and the representations that such participation holds for the rest of the country and Africa in the quest for relevant education systems, leadership functions and expectations of stakeholders.

The call of the Asantehene (King of Asante), Otumfuo Osei Tutu II at his installation that improved and quality formal education should be a criterion of assessment for his reign; the subsequent establishment of the Otumfuo Education Fund and Offinsoman Education Trust Fund provided the background to formulate the study.

Individual and focus group in-depth recorded interviews, life stories of participants, documents and text examination from primary official and secondary sources in the field constituted the mode for structuring the study.

The results were revealing in the heights of expectation placed on Asante traditional leaders, the mobilization of external and local fiscal, manpower and material
resources, networking possibilities and the reach of societal philosophies to catalyze the change agendas while reinventing their ages old legitimacies in a modern state.

The involvement of Asante and other traditional leaders in the process of education change as role models, conflict mediators, gender advocates, agents of development, grantors of land, benefactors and providers of governance services in the schooling process from the local to the national levels were the norms of expectations and not the exceptions in these complementary but increasingly diverse and important roles. The reality beyond perception of traditional leaders’ interest in their citizens’ educational advancement- participation in governance, additions to school infrastructure, provision of incentive packages to both students and educators, stimulates education in their domains.

Approved: William Stephen Howard

Professor of Communication
To the glory of God:

Dedicated in memory of my parents, James Kwabena Owusu-Kwarteng and Agnes Afua Konadu Owusu-Kwarteng; sister, Agnes Adow Pinamang Owusu-Kwarteng; and to the future of the children of Maase-Offinso, a treasured part, of the Ghanaian and African entity.
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Chapter One

Asante Traditional Leadership and the Process of Educational Change

Background of the study

When the King of Asante, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, declared upon his elevation to the Golden Stool in 1999 that formal education would be a criterion on which any assessment of his reign should be made, the door was opened for a critical examination of the role of traditional leadership in Ghana’s K-12 education system. The statement pointedly marked the full-scale mobilization, involvement and utilization of the stature of traditional Asante leadership structures to influence and effect a transformation in, and resolution of the deterioration of schooling in Asante. And it also marked a transformation of the institution of chieftaincy and the guidance it provides. This study will focus on the core of Asanteman Kingdom, the Ashanti Region.

Sergiovanni (1984) perceives “The object of leadership as the stirring of consciousness, interpretation and enhancement of meanings, the articulation of key cultural strands and the linking of organizational members to them.” Howard (2001) extends the definition of leadership to include the act of restoring community in an African context. According to Mohammad (1998), “...leaders provide the consciousness that precede individual and or group consciousness.”

Freire (1970, 1981), Achebe (1989) Meier (1995) among others, have asserted that the dynamic role of formal education in the transformation of societies cannot be disputed. The cultural strands, the restoration of community, the consciousness, and the dynamics of transformation embedded in the monarch’s call underlies a need to critically
interrogate dimensions of this vision as it impacts K-12 education specifically in Asante, and also in the general Ghanaian context.

The institution of an Otumfuo Education Trust Fund and the inauguration of its board of trustees in 2000, in pursue of this vision provide added impetus for the current research. A realization of the intent of this mission undoubtedly resides to a great extent on the ownership of the declaration by the tiers of paramount, divisional, sub-divisional chiefs (amanhene and ahenefo) and queen mothers (ahemaa), who constitute the traditional leadership strata together with their council of elders (npaninfo), followers and communities (amamfo) in the various divisions and subdivisions of Ashanti.

Entrée into this community of leaders and followers provided a wealth of information to facilitate an understanding of ownership in the process of formal education in Asante communities. My roles in Asante and Ghana as a traditional leader, and a senior public education administrator and analyst assured access to the multiple sites, of untapped archival sources and the interrogation of key issues from the perspectives of an insider. Official permission from relevant authorities to conduct research and research methods such as “snowballing” also ensured entry.

It needs to be noted that Asante and Ghanaian traditional leadership systems predated and survived the country’s colonial experience. They have similarly exhibited their tenacious resilience by surviving both military and civil changes in the post independent governments. This attribute of resilience has endowed the institution with an aura beyond the constitutional guarantees provided by Articles 270-276 of Ghana’s 1992 constitution. The institution of chieftaincy has carved for itself a niche of unparalleled influence in Ghanaian society. This is the symbolism that the King is utilizing to confront
the challenges of K-12 education and advocate an improved system of schooling (Yankah, 1995, 1998; Wiredu, 1996; Rathbone 2000, Nana Otuo Siriboe II, 2002).

Alexander and Salmon (1995); Arnove (1999); Mazurek, et al, (2000) affirm the fact that every school system has multiple stakeholders. The King’s approach adds credence to this viewpoint. It also raises certain concerns about Ghana’s K-12 school system that needs exploration in order to enable a critical understanding of traditional leadership, educational and development issues in Asanteman and the rest of Ghana.

**Statement of the problem significance.**

A consortium of multilateral, bilateral and local Ghanaian resources extensively funded Ghana’s K-12 education system in the reforms that started in 1987 (Osei Tutu, 2000; Agyeman, 1996; Nugent, 1995; Adu Boahen, 1992; Antwi, 1992; Glewwe and Twum-Baah, 1991). An immediate reaction to the pledge by the king and the institution of the trust fund, less than two decades after the inception of the education reforms of 1987, raises a number of issues. A perceptible lack of achieving set educational goals, the annual graduation of a cadre of “illiterate junior and high school alumnae” and a visionless and floundering school system are among the concerns that are noted by the researcher.

These concerns raise the overarching question of how traditional leadership is mobilized to restore community interest and control over educating the young. An examination of the critical issues that traditional leadership utilizes by its dynamic involvement in reviving schooling and the education process also opens up the operation of the centuries old institution in a modern era for a critical study. The focused area of education, accepted universally as a human right (UNDP, 2000), provides the vehicle for
such an exploration. Subsumed within the overarching question are issues that also touch on the following concerns that span leadership, the education and development of the Asante child and the quest for an improved quality of life and future for the community. These issues frame the following questions:

1. What did Ghana’s education restructuring policy of 1987 set out to achieve?
2. How did the outcomes of its implementation impact specifically Asante and the totality of Ghanaian society?
3. What roles did Asante, and by extension Ghanaian traditional leadership structures, play in the formation and implementation of the reforms?
4. Which roles would traditional leaders, together with other stakeholders fill as “owners” of the process of formal education as the country embarked on a review of the 1987 education reform?

An immediate reaction is the suggestion that the research questions lend itself to a qualitative design. However, Charles Reichardt and Thomas Cook (1979) aptly note, “…even the most introspective and subjective oriented investigators cannot help but count heads or use quantitative concepts as bigger than or less than” (p. 23). This implies that the research for this work necessitated a combination of qualitative and quantitative paradigms to ensure a comparatively valid outcome. To get a clearer understanding and a firm grip on the issues that are raised by the questions that have been posed in the preceding paragraph, an interview protocol was developed and is attached as Appendix “F”, after an extensive review of the literature presented in chapters two and three of the dissertation.
argue that an educational enterprise that does not reinvent or reform itself over time attains an atrophied and irrelevant status. Any such reinvention, they additionally contend, should factor in the role of the stakeholders in the system. These set out succinctly some of the rationales for this dissertation.

Article 25 (1) of Ghana’s Fourth Republican Constitution (2000) mandate a state funded compulsory nine years basic education for every child. The reality of graduating 200,000 plus students annually from grades 9 and 12, and the fact that just about a third of these graduates proceed to the next tier portend within it a variety of problems. The implementation of two decades of economic structural adjustment programs; with its attendant shrinking of the job market in the country, adds to the challenges of the school system (Yeboah, 1990; Antwi, 1992; Nugent 1995; Linesman 1996). Traditional leaders and other stakeholders in Asante and Ghanaian society struggle with these issues and in the process question the relevance of the current school system to their society as they seek solutions that would improve the lives of their citizens and followers (Amoa-Ampah, 2002; Anamua-Mensah, 2002; Appiah, 2002).

Increased stakeholder participation envisions a probable increase and diversification in sources of funding for education. This in turn translates into an enlarged and shared responsibility, and ownership of the process of schooling by stakeholders that ultimately transform into a lessening of the burden of financing education on the national budget. These underlying assumptions needed to be placed on the table for discussion in a milieu where school finance and leadership roles concerning who bears which and what portion of such funding is always a thorny issue. A lucid prescription would certainly
assist policy formulators in Ghana and elsewhere as they debate and devise policies to facilitate the education of the youth.

**Overview of the literature.**

The literature review for this work appears in both chapters two and three. The first section details a critical examination and analysis of existing literature on the various issues that are discussed in the dissertation in chapter two. An innovative aspect is the addition to chapter three of a section subtitled, “Some underlying theories and methodological literature review” that extensively reviews the literature on the methodology employed in the field. It also develops some theories that guided the field research. This approach in my view avoids too extensive a review of the literature in one chapter and allows for a better flow of the dissertation.

**Limitation and delimitation of the study.**

Traditional leaders exercise sizable authority, power, and influence in Ghanaian life. The extent of their influence in national life is such that an effort to seriously assess their collective role in the narrow confines of education and educational revival may be presumed to limit the range of influence of this institution. The essential necessity of the process of education, and the leadership that infuses and directs attainment of its goals for a qualitative improvement in human life dictates the need for this study to unravel the role of traditional leaders in this important sphere of human endeavor. Additionally, the lens of education provides an opportunity to study some aspects of the many dimensions of the institution as it works to resolve specific issues.

An immediate and anticipated reaction that this study may evoke is the focus on the role of traditional leadership in Asanteman as the domain of this study, when
chieftaincy is a national and regional phenomenon in Ghana and other parts of West Africa. While this may be a genuine concern and also while it is an accepted fact that these traditional leaders play equally significant roles in the lives of their citizens, issues of time constrains, limited funds, and the possibility of an expanded study losing direction and focus were factored into the decision to limit the terrain of the research.

Additionally, an opportunity to utilize my extensive set of contacts as “a three-tier insider to tell the stories of other insiders” would have been lost in an expanded study, and dilute the validity and effectiveness of the work that was undertaken in the field.

Certainly, the insertion of researcher bias, the limited number of co-researchers, and an inability to test the research protocol’s reliability ahead of the research are all issues that I am aware of. However, concerns raised by these limitations were addressed in the research in order to minimize their threat to both the validity and reliability of the research findings. For example, the varied voices of co-researchers were used in the presentation of the conversations and discoveries that were made.

**Educational importance.**

As answers are sought to the myriad issues and challenges concerning schooling and education in Ghana, there is a need to critically review and analyze the multiple roles and contributions of various stakeholders in the education enterprise, the totality of their contribution and the channeling of these inputs to weave an effective social fabric.

Traditional leaders have been in most instances positive partners in the spread of formal education in Ghana. They most often evolved from a stance of resistors to sponsors of western education. The need to ascertain the validity or falseness of this
perception in the specific instance of Asante traditional leadership has yet to be undertaken; this work investigates a path to fill the void in research. Additionally, the literature on the specific contribution of Asante traditional leadership to this transformative process in the last twenty-five and possibly hundred years has not been adequately undertaken. This study will also add to our growing knowledge of the education milieu in Asante specifically and Ghana generally.

Ultimately, it is anticipated that the findings and recommendations of this study will be added to the basket of educational and community leadership options on the table to benefit the people of Asante and Ghana. Other educational systems, especially in Africa may also access it and learn about the dynamics of traditional leaders and leadership systems to advance the course of formal education in their specific communities and countries.

**Definition of terms.**

Please see Appendix “C” for a definition of terms.
**Chapter Two**

**Literature Review**

**Introduction**

Education is a tool for the empowerment of individuals, the society and or societies to which they belong and a channel for social mobilization of citizens for effective participation in the milieu in which they operate and live in (Chambers, 1994; 1997; Freire 1970, 1981; Rogers, 1995). In the current information age, this truism is made more imperative by the global connectedness that has been forged by the internet and other tools and agents of globalization, and the realization that a substantial number of people in developing countries lack access to basic education or the financial means to access education, let alone an opportunity to participate in the information global world.

An awareness of the fact that an educated citizenry may enable participation in this global discourse, effectively facilitate the development of Asante, and address the gross underdevelopment of and limited access to educational possibilities by a sizable majority of citizens and residents of Asanteman underlined the declaration by the new King of Asante, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, on his elevation to the Golden Stool in 1999. He stated that the advancement of formal education would be a criterion on which any assessment of his reign should be made.

The declaration by the Otumfuo opens the door for a critical interrogation of the role of traditional leadership in Ghana’s K-12 education system. It additionally opens a niche for the analytical examination of the issues of traditional power and authority, in the context of the modern nation state of Ghana.
In this chapter, the focus will be on a review of the literature on the issues evoked by the challenges and dynamics of education, leadership, power and authority in the Asante and Ghanaian environment.

The chapter is organized along the following themes:

1. Social fabric of Asante and Ghana
2. Definitions and analysis of some leadership concepts
3. The K-12 school system in Ghana and Asante
4. The rationale of school reform in Ghana
5. Gender, traditional leadership and education
6. Stakeholders in policy formation and education
7. Interrogation of issues of power and authority

**Social fabric of Asante and Ghana.**

The social fabric of Ghana presents a number of insights. Ghana attained independence from British colonial rule, after a hundred plus years of domination, on March 6, 1957. She declared her republican status on July 1, 1960 but remained within the Commonwealth of Nations, an association that groups Britain and her former colonies, an indication of still being tied to the apron strings of the “mother country and or former colonial power.” Ghana is also a member of or founding member of a number of international organizations including the United Nations (UN), the new African Union (AU) that has replaced the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), (Berry, 1995; McFarland, 1995; CIA, 2002).
Ghana covers a land space of approximately 238,533 square kilometers. Her gross domestic product is estimated at $7.5 billion dollars a year (UNDP, 2000; CIA, 2002; Ghana Government Statistician, 2002). The country’s population is estimated at 18.6 million people; the growth rate is 1.87%; the birth rate is 29.81 births per 1000; infant mortality rate is 57.43 deaths per 1000 live births. Life expectancy is fifty-six years for males and fifty-nine for females (UNDP, 2000; CIA, 2002; Ghana Government Statistician, 2002). The literacy rate is 60% with 70% for males and 51% for females. The real GDP per capita is $1,640. Ghana ranks 133 out of 174 countries on the UNDP’s human development index, placing her among the least developed third world countries, (UNDP, 2000; CIA, 2002; Ghana Government Statistician, 2002).

The statistical figures above offer both gleams of hope and despair. The birth and fertility rates for instance, are high and a larger percentage of the population, close to sixty five percent are dependent on the minority for sustenance. The area covered by Asanteman, with the Ashanti Region as its core follows the indices outlined above. Please see Appendix “B 1, B2 & B 3”, for the locations under discussion.

It needs to be noted that some traditional groups in six of Ghana’s ten regions, the Brong Ahafo, Central, Eastern, Northern, Volta, and Western Regions, have centuries long and close ethnic ties with the Asante of Ashanti Region. The year 2000 Country Population and Housing Census Report revealed that almost twenty percent of Ghana’s approximately eighteen million residents are located within the region’s boundaries, ranking the Ashanti Region as the most populated in the country (Ghana Government Statistician, 2002).
There are forty-six ethnic groups within the country and a multiplicity of religious beliefs. According to the Ghana Government Statistician (2000) the dominant religious groupings are traditional worshippers, Christians and Muslims. The Akan ethnic groups, to which the Asante and Asanteman belong, and which is the focus of this study, comprise over forty-eight percent of the population, followed by the Moshi-Dagomba, the Ewe and the Ga. English is the official language for the conduct of government business and the medium of instruction from the kindergarten to graduate school. But the unofficial language for commerce and business is Twi, one of the languages of the Akan ethnic group.

Definitions and analysis of some leadership concepts.

The idea of leadership as an act of restoring hope in a community, (Howard 2001), can easily fit into the continuum of descriptors, that have been used to describe this real and vital essence, but difficult to conceptualize feature of human organizations and existence. When located in the context of postcolonial Africa, the conceptualization becomes a bit murky. The distortions were heightened as emergent leaders struggled to define exact status and roles for traditional and ethnic leadership systems (Mamdani, 1996; Rathbone, 2000; Berry, 2001). This is in view of the divergent approaches and characterizations post-colonial African leaders sought to approach and define their leadership styles in a cold war dominated bipolar world, in the immediate post independent years, as compared to the current unipolar, but highly connected emerging global village (Arhin, 1993; Hagan, 1993; Mazuri, 2001; Howard, 2001).

The issue of defining leadership in the context of “traditional authority”, a system that has predated and survived colonial conquest, domination and newly emergent state
systems in post 1957 Africa capped by South Africa’s independence in 1994, is made even more complex by virtue of the fact that the normal attributes and characteristics which western leadership scholars agree on does not usually extend to the realm of African and in this specific context, Asante traditional leadership structures. But as Busia (1951); Kyerematen (1964); Allman (1993); Wilks, (1993); Mamdani, (1996); Rathbone (2000); Berry (2001); and others have averred in the particular instance of Asante, this is the system under which a substantial majority of Asante, Ghanaian and other Africans live with, responds to and that significantly impact their lives in divergent manners.

It is within the western and eastern perception and paradigms that attempts would be made to define some basic concepts about leadership in this study. However, the caveat needs to be sounded that while there may be some universal consensus, at the same time, there are distinct differences as to who and what constitutes a leader or leadership systems in different cultures. A further extension would make clear the fact that the process through which a person is pronounced and or acclaimed as a leader may also differ in any two cultures.

In the Akan and Asante context, the title “Opanin” or ”Nana” translate as an elder or leader. “Barima”, “Okogyeasuo”, “Osabarima” or the other titles accorded chiefs, who are normally considered as ethnic leaders are additionally explained as the leader or head of a group. However, traditional leadership or headship is usually lineage specific, and or descent tied. And unless one originates from a particular lineage and is a member of an actual clan or descends from a clearly defined line, the possibility of being nominated to lead a group is extremely remote. The exception to this criterion is the recent innovation of creating honorary stools and or titles to enlarge the pool of leaders
and recruit additional expertise to advance the modern needs of various groups and communities. The immediate past Asantehene, Otumfuo Opoku Ware II initiated this trend, when he created the Nkosuo stool (development division), and added it to the leadership positions in the Asante Kingdom.

Burns (1978) contends that “The act of leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth”. Burns undoubtedly draws this observation based on his perception of real world politics and the players in the lead roles over the past century. Rost (1991) opines that the very methods that scholars in the field of leadership studies utilize in their approaches to the field clouds and confuses a meaningful rendition of the subject, let alone an understanding by a student.

The clouds and mystique around leadership as a discipline of study has been intensified by Stodgill’s (1974) observation that,

Decades of research on leadership has produced a bewilderling mass of findings… it is difficult to know what, if anything, has been convincingly demonstrated by replicated research. The endless accumulation of empirical data has not produced an integrated understanding of leadership (p. vii).

Bennis’s (1959) comment similarly compounds the mystique adherents of this area of study have to negotiate in order to perceive an understanding of this unique human phenomenon:

Of all the hazy and confounding areas of social psychology, leadership theory undoubtedly contends for top. Probably more has been written and less is known about leadership than any other topic in behavioral science (p.259).

In spite of the above observations, however, leadership is still an essential and exciting field of study, for a number of reasons, among which one can count the feats positively impacting leaders have on their followers with whom they interact and on the cultures and situations within which they operate. The symbol of Mandela, acting as a
beacon of hope and restoration of community for Africans, and indeed, other racial
groups in the end quarter of the twentieth century before the demise of apartheid readily
comes to mind, Mandela, (1994); Sampson, (2000). The euphoria of Kwame Nkrumah
leading Ghana’s struggle for independence, and then stimulating, and nurturing similar
achievements in other African countries similarly come to mind, Nkrumah, (1957; 1965).

While leadership takes place in a variety of situations and through many
processes, I will at times have to borrow from other professions, especially the political
and civil landscapes in Africa and other developing environments to meaningfully argue
some dimensions of Asante traditional leadership. The simple reason underlining this
approach is the fact that a number of African’s post independent political leaders
originated from traditional systems or utilized traditional symbols to confer added
legitimacy to their roles. Presidents Nelson Mandela, Kwame Nkrumah, Sekou Toure,
Jomo Kenyatta, Felix Houphouet-Boigny and Kamuzu Banda readily come to mind as
examples in support of this argument. Additionally, one should not lose sight of the fact
that President Mandela renounced contention for a traditional role, to focus on the larger
struggle against apartheid in South Africa; the others were consistently seen with the
whisk of various animal hairs as a traditional symbol of authority Mandela (1994);
Nkrumah (1957).

Hagan (1993) defines leadership style as a leader’s manner and method of acting,
in seeking and entrenching his influence and power with individuals and groups,
especially if this manner is considered elegant and in accord with the fashions of the
peoples and the customs of the time. This descriptor trails in its latter section aspects of
situational leadership, on which Hersey, Blanchard and Natemeyer (1979) have
propounded extensively. Hagan (1993) additionally notes the fact that leaders stir a consciousness in their followers of a cultural identity and infusion of group pride (p. 1-25). Muhammad (1998) iterates the observation “…that leaders provide the consciousness that precede individual and group consciousness (p. iv). Sergiovanni (1984) perceives “The object of leadership as the stirring of human consciousness, interpretation and enhancement of meanings, the articulation of key cultural strands, and the linking of organizational members to them” (p.9).

Mazuri (2001) illustrates African leadership in types and categories, and does not offer any succinct definition, but his approach nonetheless offers a closer understanding of leadership as it has been practiced in Africa in the past fifty years. He categorizes leadership according to eight pillars that aligns closely with traditional leadership systems.

While not the standard measure of leadership, Bennis’ (1959) criterion of the transformational power of the leader found in his or her vision, capacity to communicate this vision meaningfully and convincingly; fortitude comprised of persistence, consistency, and focus; and empowerment defined as the leader’s ability to tap and harness the energy and commitment of others on behalf of the organization, may suffice to an extent for the purposes of this dissertation.

While there may not be an agreed definition or consensus to leadership and who qualifies as a leader, scholars generally are in agreement of the fact that political leaders like Kwame Nkrumah, Gamal Nasser, Nelson Mandela, Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi; advocates like the recently deceased Esther Afua Ocloo of Ghana and Women’s World Banking, and Ogoni rights advocate, the late Ken Saro-Wiwa of Nigeria, and the
United Nation’s Secretary General, Kofi Annan, are either legends who strode through the sands of time or exemplars of living leaders who ought to be models for the rest of the world.

According to Milkell & Skinner (1989); Wilks (1993); Adu Boahene (1997) and other scholars, Asante similarly revere the memory of Nana Yaa Asantewaa, the Queenmother of Ejisu, who commanded the last resistance army to encroaching British forces into Asante in 1900. A common link about these personalities is the fact that while their impact is or was decisive in their various dominions, the visions that they developed, the situations that they confronted or currently challenges them, their approaches to the attainment of visions and group goals were and or are different.

The differences of approach and the lack of unanimity of standards in assessing leaders and the leadership styles that they espouse leads to a sort of paralysis in this field of study (Bennis, 1959; Stodgil, 1974). This assertion is being made in view of the fact that in a specific African situation, it is currently just not cogent to ascribe the same status to both Presidents Mandela and Mugabe, nor place them on the same pedestal and call both leaders. Though both of them bear the same title, it would demean the stature of the former and assign to the latter a designation he has forfeited in my view, a direct result of his desperate efforts to hang onto power, and in the process impoverish and push his country to the brink of civil war.

Yeboah Daaku, 1976; Adu Boahen 1990; Wilks, 1993 argue that transposed to the context of Asante traditional leadership, which is the subject of this dissertation, the Asante readily agree to the fact that the founding kings of the kingdom, Kings Osei Tutu I and Opoku Ware I, were transformational leaders. They assert that Asante would
forever be grateful to them, for the basic rationale of forging their union, leading them out of bondage to Denkyira, consolidating Asante administrative structures, and establishing a sense of group identity for them.

If the history were fast forwarded to contemporary times, one would similarly be inclined to describe the three twentieth century Asante Kings, Otumfuo Agyeman Prempe I (1888-1931), Otumfuo Osei Agyeman Prempe II (1931 –1970), and Otumfuo Opoku Ware II (1970-1999) who transitioned their kingdom through colonial subjugation, restoration of the Asanteman Confederacy, the turbulent political era of the immediate pre and post independent periods and the relatively stable post 1966 Ghana as transformational leaders (Berry, 2001; Allman & Tashjian, 2000; Rathbone, 2000; Wilks, 1993). To this group may be added the present incumbent Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, for their collective endeavors and leadership in transforming Asante as the waste land of Ghanaian education and formal schooling system at the dawn of the twentieth century, to the visionary and cutting edge diffusion of education endowments and trusts currently spreading through the country (Gyasi, 2002; Amoa-Ampah, 2002).

Burns’ (1978) seminal work, Leadership, alludes to the fact that, "Transforming leadership while more complex is more potent. The transforming leader recognizes and exploits an existing need or demand of a potential follower. But beyond that … looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower. … Transforming leaders can be categorized as intellectual leaders, leaders of reform or revolution and heroes or ideologues. Transactional political leaders are classified as opinion leaders, bargainers or bureaucrats, party leaders and executive leaders (p.4)."

In the same study, Burns compared and contrasted the interactions transactional and transformational leaders undergo with their followers in the modern political domain and posited that,
The relations of most leaders and followers are transactional—leaders approach followers with an eye to exchanging one thing for another: jobs for votes, or subsidies for campaign contributions. Such transactions comprise the bulk of the relationships among leaders and followers, especially in groups, legislatures and parties. The transforming leader recognizes and exploits an existing need or demand of a potential follower. But beyond that the transforming leader looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower. The result of transforming leadership is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents (p.4).

Burns certainly was basing his perceptions on western leadership practices but these observations in my view can to a large extent be transposed to describe certain patterns of leadership that have been practiced and continue to exist in Asante. Bass (1981) opined that at the base of Burns’ deduction, one discerns the shadows of Maslow’s (1954) hierarchy of need. This view captures some but certainly not the totality of the interplay of motives and styles that is discerned in the evolution of Asante traditional leadership and its drive to center education at the core of Asante development since the belated inception of formal education in the domain of Asanteman in the early 1900s.

This quest has again manifested itself in the declaration of Otumfuo Osei Tutu II referred to earlier and the institution of the Otumfuo Education Fund (OEF) at the dawn of the twenty-first century. It bears noting that the first western schools, “the castle schools” were opened and operated along Ghana’s shores in the sixteenth century, and the first schools in Asante were only opened after her defeat by the British at the end of the Yaa Asantewaa War in 1900 (Graham. 1971; McWilliams & Kwamena-Poh 1975; Adu Boahen, 1996). One observes a lapse of over four hundred years between the commencement of western formal schooling in Ghana’s coastal regions and its inception in the forest belt of Asante and the northern portions of the country.
Rost (1991) offers some counter points to both critique and buttress Burns’ ideas of transformational leadership. He hypothesizes that,

… real transformation involves active people, engaging in influence relationships based on persuasion, intending real changes to happen, and insisting that those changes reflect their mutual purposes (p.122).

He additionally explains the fact that a definition of leadership that states only active people are able to do leadership and a definition that insists the followers—as well as the leaders—be active is a concept of leadership that engenders transformation. His view is that ordinary human processes rarely transform passive people.

The etymology of the group name “Asante”, as explained to Busia (1951) by Otumfuo Osei Agyeman Prempeh II (1931-1970) below, in diverse ways explains the complex approach to leadership that has served this ethnic group through the centuries. It has also united and propelled the leadership and people of Asante as they confront the challenge of formal education and its revival less than a century after its inception in Asante. According to Busia (1951),

… when the King of Denkyira heard of the union of five nations under Osei Tutu, he said he was certain that it had been formed for the purpose of making war on him Osa-nti: Osa-war; nti-because of. … this etymology indicates that the Asante have always thought of themselves as warlike, and of Asante national unity as connected with war. Traditional history, support the view that the aim of Osei Tutu and his successors was not the acquisition of land, but the formation of a strong army (p. 52).

The Asante are a subset of the Akan ethnic group. Their social belief similarly explains the types of leadership that the group has evolved and that is currently envisioning a revival through the portals of formal schooling. It is a cardinal Akan truism that any group’s claim to fame or excellence, especially in a struggle for freedom and
independence, is premised on the bedrock of subjugation and or deprivation and subsequently an awareness and consciousness to be free. The Otumfuo’s explanation to Busia (1951) underlines this fact. This sounds and resonates with Freire’s (1970, 1981) exposition that a yearning for freedom underlies the breaking of the cloak of unconsciousness towards consciousness and freedom in the oppressed of the world.

Some Akan and Asante writers additionally argue the viewpoint that if the desire and or cause to be free does not exist among a people, a leader visualize in vain, since his or her people will not share in whatever vision or mission is being pursued to assure freedom and liberation (Antubam, 1963; Sarpong, 1974; Wiredu, 1990; Gyekye, 2000). This belief is expressively portrayed by one of the carved finials of the linguists staff (kyeme poma) used on ceremonial occasions at the courts of Asante chiefs and kings, se odehye akua akoa dwane. This literally translates as “when the royal does not fight or lead in the charge, his followers run and hide.” It demands that leaders lead by example and deeds.

The linguist (okyeme) is a court official, spokesperson and counselor of an Akan chief or king or queen mother through whom he communicates with his audience at public and ceremonial functions. The okyeme is paradoxically referred to as the chief or king’s first wife (Aheneyerepanin), by virtue of the fact that he could enter the leader’s bedroom at any hour to consult and counsel with his chief. Their official finials are a treasure trove of Asante and Akan philosophy, civilization, history, and culture. It could denote the matriclan, communicate a proverb and convey at the same time some honorable deed of that dynasty. Their functions and roles at court are significant symbols

Sergiovanni’s (1984) observations on the role of symbols in the western construct of leadership to an extent resonate and explain this important office in the Akan leadership structure and facilitate in my view a near synthesis of leadership in the two cultures,

Studies of leadership give too much attention to the instrumental and behavioral aspects and not enough to the symbolic and cultural... Symbols evoke and bring to the forefront one’s history. Meanings are raised to one’s consciousness and through these meanings one is able to link on to some aspects of his or her world. But evoked meanings from any given object are never quite the same for everyone and thus need to be tied together into persistent cultural strands which define the organization’s mission and activities (p. 112).

Ricoerur (1974) had a decade earlier anticipated Sergiovanni’s observation when he wrote that,

…we must not think behind the symbols, but starting from symbols, according to symbols, that their substance is indestructible, that they constitute the revealing substrata of speech which lives among men. In short, the symbol gives rise to the thought (p. 299).

Ricoerur and Sergiovanni’s discourse on the use of symbols for the expression of leadership finds a broad resonance in the practices of Asante traditional leadership and its devolution of roles and responsibilities to the multitude of followers whose total contribution evolves towards their particular leaders. These could be as diverse in their roles as sculptors and goldsmiths who craft various paraphernalia of office and in the process added to the color and pomp of leadership; the musicians of the orchestra of seven elephant tusk horn blowers Ntahara or Mmenson, the fontomfrom or drum ensemble and nseniefo or bards who herald the procession of chiefs and kings, and other
participants in the leadership dynamics of Asante. It could also be any of the myriad offices that comprise a particular traditional leadership setting in a locality (Antubam, 1963; Kyeremateng, 1964; Adjaye, 1996).

Succinctly, the Asante hypothesize that leadership is a community process, originating from within the community, for the mutual benefit and advancement of the community and not the specific act of the individual, who symbolizes and towards whom the community gravitate; concisely and literally “one man does not constitute a chiefdom” (Wiredu, 1990; Gyekye, 2000; Busia, 1951; Adjaye, 1996).

**Interrogation of issues of power and authority in Asante leadership system.**

Leadership is in most instances intertwined with power and authority. Power is often times translated as a leader’s influence potential. That is the resource that enables a leader to induce compliance or influence followers, (Weber, 1947; Hersey & Blanchard, 1977, Burns, 1978, Bass, 1981). The certainty of control and command are implied in the descriptions of power. Allison (1971), pithily viewed power as an elusive blend of bargaining advantages, skills and will in using advantage. Weber (1947) succinctly revealed the controlling nature of power when he observed “… the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his will despite resistance.” An analysis of the Asante leadership system revealed within it the seven characteristic power bases that French and Raven (1959) classified on the leaders’ behavior continuum- reward, referent, legitimate, information, expert, connection and coercion.

The process of investiture or enstoolment in Asante and Ghanaian terminology (Ghana Government Printer, 1992) conferred legitimacy on a chief, queen or king.
Asante and other Akan leaders and chiefs use stools as a symbol of power; and the memories of ancestors are preserved in the throne or stool rooms of various chiefly lineages with the specially blackened stools, which are kept in these secured and secluded rooms, that are opened only for the festive forty-two days Akwesidea and Awakudae and other such designated occasions (Busia, 1951; Antubam, 1963; Sarpong 1974; 1991). A leader’s stature and decorum in the face of ever evolving leadership situations determines if he or she attains referent, expert and or information status. The achievements of Otumfuo Osei Tutu I, Otumfuo Opoku Ware I in the early years and Otumfuo Osei Agyeman Prempah II in the twentieth century attest to their illustrious memory in Asante legends. My personal interaction with the late paramount chief of the Offinso Traditional Area, Nana Wiafe Akenten II (1946-1993), between 1991 and 1993, revealed him to be a transformational leader. At the stage that we did interact, he was within the domain of referent, information and expert axis on the power continuum that French and Raven (1959) delineate. This personal observation is collaborated by the information provided by two of my co-researchers in chapter four of this work.

Authority is generally acknowledged as having a narrower scope than power. Weber (1947) defines authority as

… the probability that certain specific commands and or all commands from a given source will be obeyed by a group of persons. … authority does not include every mode of exercising power or influence over others; a certain degree of voluntary compliance is associated with legitimate commands. While legitimate authority create and control organizations and thus control legitimately the power of office, and position, they are one of many contenders for other forms of power in organizations.

Authority and authoritarianism should not be understood in the same context because they have different connotations. The latter depicts undertones of coercive
power, which is most times excessive and brutal. Some examples from recent political history would suffice for the purpose of this discourse. The rule of Joseph Stalin in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, of Adolf Hitler in the Third Reich of Germany, of Idi Amin in Uganda in the 1970s and of Sanni Abacha in Nigeria in the 1990s, vividly depicts the tenets and style of authoritarianism (Burns, 1978; Keneule Saro-Wiwa, 1995; Mamdani, 1996). Adjei (1993) and Yidana (2002) in their works depict Jerry Rawlings among the latter group in Ghana’s recent history. However, Yankah (1986) holds a contrary viewpoint. Authority exists when a common set of beliefs or norms exist in a society or organization and legitimizes the use of power as right and proper.

The Asante and Akan generally frown on the illegal use of power and authority. This is manifested by the destoolment of leaders who do not heed the counsel of their council of elders or traditional councils, in the case of divisional, sub-divisional and paramount chiefs and the Asanteman Council in the specific case of the Otumfuo (Busia, 1951; Kyeremanten, 1964; Sarpong, 1991; Rathbone, 2000; Berry, 2001; Daanana, 2003). Decision-making and the proclamations of such decisions are arrived at through a consensus process; this is usually attained through processes of deliberative and exhaustive debates at the courts of leaders and during communal meetings.

Weber (1947) conceptualizes and outlines three types of authority: charismatic, traditional and legal. Charismatic authority conveys undertones of a unique leader. Tucker (1995) in his analysis of charisma notes the fact that,

Sociopolitical movements are a characteristic, though not invariable and exclusive, habitat of what, following the usage of Max Weber, is called charismatic leadership. A charismatic leader …is one who arouses fervent loyalty and devotion, even worship, among the followers. Why leaders of movements for change would often be the objects of such loyalty and enthusiasm is understandable: the leader by virtue of personal attributes combined with the
diagnosis of the situation as wrong but remediable and the formula for remedying it, embodies in the minds of distressed followers the promise of salvation from distress, a way out of the impasse that confronts them and the society. In short, a charismatic leader is one perceived by the followers as a savior, a messiah (p.94).

Nadler and Tushman (1990) refers to a special quality that enables the leader to mobilize and sustain activity within an organization through specific personal action combined with perceived personal characteristics, in portray of the charismatic leader (pp. 77-97). Normally, traits of charismatic leadership are associated with religious leaders in the mold of Jesus Christ, the Prophet Mohammad, the Mahdi of Sudan, Sultan Uthman dan Fodio of Sokoto and other such figures. An analysis of the role of the Asante priest and constitutional advisor, Okomfo Anokye, places him in the category of charismatic leaders (Yeboah Daaku, 1976; Adu Boahene 1990; Wilks 1993).

With the exception of Okomfo Anokye, though Asante kings and chiefs perform religious assignments as a responsibility of office, one does not usually hear or read of Asante leaders in the category of charismatic leaders. Oral sources have grown faint with time and recount only their great exploits. But a review with time may place the incumbent Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, as typifying this mold, and of generating waves of a charismatic nature with his incisive policy direction in education, health, employment and other areas of concerns for the citizens of Asanteman (Freiku, 2001; Gyasi, 2002).

Traditional authority, like the type I exercise in Offinso-Maase as a chief is rooted on and in the belief in the sanctity of the status and position dating back centuries. It is an ascribed position, the role of acting as a link between the ancestors and founders of the village, the current inhabitants and those yet to be born, by the religious role of pouring
libation and leading in the celebration of *Akwesidae* ensures the conferment of such status on any occupant of a stool in Offinso-Maase or any Asante village or community. In such a role, a leader exercises formal authority. When extended to the realm of modern bureaucracy, the assumption of certain offices in either the public sector, for example headship of a school or in the private sector as a chief executive of a corporation, confers the trappings of functional authority on a person.

Legal authority is based on enacted laws and can be changed by formally correct procedure (Weber, 1947). It is astonishing and paradoxical to note that the nadir of chieftaincy in Asante specifically and Ghana generally was achieved after independence and not during the era of British colonial rule. This was realized through the utilization of the legal authority conferred on the government of the first republic to curtail the perceived entrenched opposition of chiefs to the first post independent government under the leadership of President Nkrumah. Additionally, the conferment of the power to recognize chiefs by executive fiat gave the government the excessive right to interfere in various traditional leadership issues and abuse this power in the process (Wilks 1993; Rathbone, 2000; Mazuri, 2001; Arhin, 2003). Rathbone (2001) expresses surprise at the tenacious and resilient ability of the institution to survive the attacks mounted against it in that era. Traditional leadership has subsequently responded to prevent similar attacks reoccurring by ensuring the entrenchment of appropriate constitutional provisions in the three post 1966 constitutions of Ghana (Nana Otuo Siribor, 2002, Oral Communication).

The discourse on issues of power and authority in this dissertation would be incomplete without reference to the current position of chiefs and traditional leadership systems as enacted and entrenched in the country’s constitution. It should be noted that
Ghana is counted among a few other countries around the world whose traditional, pre-colonial leadership structures still enjoys and retains societal respect of its authority, power and also statutory recognition. The Fourth Republican constitution of Ghana devotes Articles 270 – 277 to the institution of chieftaincy and its entrenchment in Ghanaian society. This fact underlines the unique and important position and role of chiefs in Ghanaian society. In fact Article 270(1 & 2) explicitly states,

The institution of chieftaincy, together with its traditional councils as established by customary law and usages is hereby guaranteed. Parliament shall have no power to enact any law which (a) confers on any person or authority the right to accord or withdraw recognition to or from a chief for any purpose whatsoever; or (b) in any way detracts or derogates from the honor and dignity of the institution of chieftaincy (Ghana Government Printer, 1992).

Other sections of Articles 270-277 expound on the role of the institution in national life by the establishment of various Traditional Councils in the localities, Regional Houses of Chiefs in the ten regions and a National House of Chiefs. An observation that one can make on the constitutional provisions of Article 270-277 is the fact that these are a direct contrast to the legislative assaults that were mounted on traditional leadership in the first republic (Arhin, 1993 and 2003; Ninsin 1993; Rathbone, 2001).

Certainly, one can argue that the institution, especially as it exists in Asante and other Akan areas of Ghana is a direct beneficiary of its transformational role in fostering the spread of formal education, a participatory role the current Otumfuo has revived and energized with the declaration that was made at his enstoolment in 1999. The infusion of educated professionals and personalities into positions of traditional leadership and their impact will be discussed in another section of this dissertation.
The K-12 school system in Ghana and Asante.

The paralysis that has somehow encrusted efforts to describe and define leadership has similarly clouded the horizons of formal education in Ghana for the past two decades, if not since the independent era. The much touted education reform that Ghana has sunk millions of externally funded dollars plus billions of locally generated cedis into since 1987 is gradually turning out to be an albatross for the country in the view of Professor Anamua-Mensah, the Principal of University College of Winneba, one of Ghana’s five public universities. According to him,

“The system seem to be creating a group of disillusioned citizens, the majority of whom remain unemployed or became street children, while others would learn to became armed robbers” (Anamua-Mensah 2002).

Anamua-Mensah’s lament is induced by the armies of both junior and senior secondary school graduates who are turned out by the K-12 school system each year with no prospect of advancing to the next tier of the education level, and or finding employment in a shrinking structurally adjusted economy. These young ones end up walking the streets of cities, towns and villages, selling dog chains, sliced sugar cane, water in sachets, toilet rolls etc and eking out subsistence living in the informal employment sector. The observation again highlights the issue of the relevance of Ghana’s education system to the world of work and the training that is given to the consumers of the various philosophies driving education in the country. It should be explained that under Ghana’s system, the constitution mandates nine years of compulsory education. Both grades’ nine and twelve are terminal levels (Ghana Government Printer 1992; Antwi, 1992; Nugent 1995).
Between 1992 and 2000, 376,000 grade twelve graduates plus an additional 1,416,000 grade nine graduates, who could not advance their schooling are assumed to be roaming the streets (Anamua-Mensah, 2002). A national exercise to register unemployed persons initiated by the government in 2001 enrolled over one million, three hundred thousand people, the majority of them products of the junior secondary schools, (Network Herald, 2002). If nothing at all, this in my view translates into a wasting of potential national human resources, and it also closes the door to the possibilities a little more training would enable these valuable human resources to contribute in terms of national growth and development. This leads one to query and reiterate as Chambers (1997) did, whose reality counts? Were the stakeholders and beneficiaries of the purported reforms active participants in framing the changes in the then prevailing era of a culture of silence (Freire, 1981; Adu Boahen, 1992; Howard, 2001).

The frightening description of the prevailing outcome of the 1987 school reform by Anamua-Mensah (2002) is similarly echoed by McWilliams and Kwamena-Poh (1975) in their account of the reasons underlying the 1925 Guggisberg school reforms, and the 1951 and 1960 accelerated and fee free education programs of Kwame Nkrumah. Akilipah Sawyer (1987) the then Vice Chancellor, University of Ghana had cautioned a rush into the implementation of a new education policy that,

... involves a repudiation of the vision enshrined in Ghana’s first Seven Year Development Plan that saw state expenditure on education as a social investment whose return would be the creation of well educated, skilled and productive manpower to meet Ghana’s needs. Rejection of this policy implies a denial of the capacity of even a reformed educational system to achieve these objectives.... and wondered if the government intended to discourage the children of a majority of Ghanaians from attending secondary schools and universities since they could not afford to pay fees.
Antwi (1992) believes that perceptions of a need to shift emphasis from a grammar to a technical orientation was one of the reasons that underpinned the 1974 Dzobor Report and education proposal, “The major characteristics of the report was the emphasis that was placed on vocational, practical and technical subjects throughout the entire pre-university course”. But the real issue is the fact that an objective Ghanaian parent, anxious and desirous for the child’s participation in modernity and the potential social mobility education confers would most likely echo the prayer of the Sudanese grandmother for her grandchild *In sha’ Allah, t’itwazif* (“God willing you’ll become a bureaucrat”), Howard (2001). This is in spite of the fact that the type and method of centrally planned education that is being offered this child is conceptually inadequate, defective in delivery and a dead end for the majority of its participants.

The search for an equitable education system and the philosophical underpinning of this enterprise is traceable to the various constitutions that Ghana has practiced since her independence from British colonial rule in 1957 according to Nugent, 1996; Antwi, 1992; Arhin, 1993; Ministry of Education, 1996. The current *Constitution of the Republic of Ghana 1992* lays the foundation and vision for education in Article 25(1):

> All persons shall have the right to equal educational opportunities and facilities and with a view to achieving the full realization of that right:
> 1. Basic education shall be free, compulsory and available to all.
> 2. Secondary education in its different forms including technical and vocational education shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means and in particular, by the progressive introduction of free education.
> 3. Higher education in its different forms, including technical and vocational education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular, by progressive introduction of free education.
> 4. Functional literacy shall be encouraged or intensified as far as possible.
> 5. The development of a system of schools with adequate facilities at all levels shall be actively pursued.
Haizel (1993) and Antwi (1993), however, point to the fact that the tenets espoused in these provisions to a large extent reflect the thinking of Ghana’s first head of state, Kwame Nkrumah. They aver that as Leader of Government Business in 1951 and head of state from 1960-1966, he had advocated the program of an “Accelerated Development Plan for Education” and the fee free compulsory primary school scheme.

Adu Boahen, (1992, 1975); Agyeman, (1996); McWilliams and Kwamena-Poh, (1975) posit that the philosophical underpinnings for freedom, education, and liberty in post independent Ghana are directly attributable to Joseph Boakye Danquah, the philosopher, lawyer and doyen of Ghana politics and other Ghanaian patriots like Mensah Sarbah, Kobina Sakyi, Caseley Hayford etc who formulated these principles and rights.

However, the point that is not in dispute is the fact that the advent of the first castle school sounded the death knell of traditional education systems as practiced in the country and the inauguration of western schooling for Ghanaians. Additionally, the philosophies and imprints of Ghanaian thinkers like John Mensah Sarbah, the first Ghanaian lawyer called to a British bar in the eighteenth century, Kobina Sakyi, play write and educator, K. A Busia, sociologist, author and later a prime minister and others contributed to the foundations of the country’s educational philosophy (Austin, 1964; Apter, 1972; Mamdani, 1996; Kyei, 2001).

Another philosophical trait that is identifiable in the Ghanaian education sub system is the influence of the Black Diaspora, especially those who espoused Pan African ideologies. The perceptible orientation of the Black philosophies of William E. B. Dubois, George Padmore, Marcus Garvey etc are seen in the tilt towards a focus in the
curriculum of Pan Africanism, the African Personality, and continuous expansion by
successive governments of the reach and spread of formal education to all parts of the
country (Armah, 1965; Antwi, 1992; Olisanwuche Esedebe, 1994; Molefi Asante, 1995).

Currently, secondary level education is easily accessible in every district,
compared to the situation, as it existed before the inception of the 1987 school reform.
The drive to make quality and equitable secondary education accessible underlies the
present government’s policy of developing at least a model secondary school in each
district in Ghana. The influence of another Black thinker, Booker T. Washington is seen
in the introduction of technical and trades oriented courses like bricklaying, agriculture,
carpentry and joinery etc, into the secondary technical school curriculum. Both Dubois
and Padmore were personal and close advisors to President Nkrumah; the former has a
center for black renaissance and the latter an African research library named after them in
Ghana (Adu, 1986; Antwi 1992; Haizel, 1993; Sutherland & Meyer, 2000; Kuffour,
2003).

Beginning with the 1986-87 school year, a new educational system, the Junior
Secondary School (JSS), was introduced on a national scale, as the beginning of a total
remolding of the prevailing school system. The innovation had been under experimental
implementation since 1969, after years of national debate, initiated by the political elite
and not from educational administrators (Antwi, 11992). This political impetus was in
conformity with the observation by Bray (1999) that,

The underlying motives for the centralization and decentralization of the control
of education are commonly political but may also be administrative, or a
combination of both…politically motivated reforms aim to strengthen the power
of the dominant group or to spread power to other groups, … administratively
motivated reforms aim to facilitate the operation of bureaucracies… origins of
education reforms lies in wider political or administrative changes rather than in the specifics of the education sector.

Political expediency and not educational or other stakeholder leadership including that of traditional leaders has over the years directed school and education reforms in Ghana. At different times the system currently operating was known as either continuation or experimental schools. As against the old system inherited at independence, that featured seventeen years maximum of pre-university education, the JSS concept together with its senior secondary school (SSS) component entails twelve years of pre-university education or fourteen year when the two-year pre-school or kindergarten is added. A student is expected to spend nine years in basic school, comprising six years primary and three years middle/junior high school and three more years at a senior secondary or technical school (MOE, 1996). Pre-school or kindergarten is not compulsory, but is normally attended for two years.

The changes undoubtedly reflect a decline in British influence and the ascent of American dominance since the former system operated along British models and the present system is a near wholesale transfer of the American school model. It needs to be noted that Ghana is but one of a number of African countries including Nigeria, Kenya, Benin, and Mali, that have opted to mirror their school systems on the American model but without the appropriate local tax base to support the change. According to Antwi (1992) and Nugent (1995) the macro dimensions of the change were achieved but numerous micro problems still persist within individual school circuits, district administrations and even at the national level within units and divisions of ministries; thus adding fuel to the demands for a review and the need to also analyze the role of
traditional leadership in this dynamic process. In their views specific micro issues at the national level snowballs into multifaceted macro problems at the circuit and district levels. While the arguments of Antwi (1992) and Nugent (1995) may be valid, it augments in my view to the truism that any educational enterprise that does not reinvent itself over time attains an atrophied and irrelevant status.

The Fourth Republic Constitution (1992) as already indicated guarantees nine years of basic education, thus each point after the JSS or SSS is terminal. The need to cut cost in line with the International Monetary Fund and World Bank prescriptions, the number of years of pre-university schooling, and the purported change from a grammar base to employable skills acquisition partly explains the reform. Technical, teacher training college, nursing, polytechnic or university education is the next step for completion of formal education, depending on a combination of one’s academic performance and the financial support, mostly private, that a student is able to muster (Adu, 1986; Berry, 1995; MOE, 1996; MOF, 2001).

Enrollment figures for public primary schools in 1998 was 2,172,209 and for junior secondary schools, 766,901 (GES, 1999). There were 12,130 primary schools, 5,450 junior secondary schools, 22 technical schools and 503 senior secondary schools spread among the ten regions of the country by 1996 in the public system. In addition, by 2000, there were in the public system five universities, ten polytechnics, one in each region, thirty-eight teachers training colleges, and a number of diploma (associate degree) awarding institutions in diverse professions such as forestry, agriculture, teaching, nursing, accounting et al. The private sector currently operates five universities, one teacher training college, and some secondary and technical schools. The GES estimated
enrollment of students in private primary and junior secondary schools for 1998 of 264,662 and 80,583 students respectively, gives a fair indication of the number of private basic schools in the country (GES, 1999; 2000; NCTE, 1999).

A net and immediate effect of the reform is thus the reduction in the number of years of pre-tertiary from seventeen to twelve years. There is also the consequent reduction of the total number of years of schooling before the attainment of a first degree from twenty one to sixteen years. This translates into an immediate net gain in savings on the cost of education for both the government and parents.

But the real, stalking and critical issue is what impact does the current curriculum have on the products that pass through the present school system? A muted issue that is overlooked in the school reform debate is the shrinking economic base of the country with its consequent lack of employment placement in both the formal and informal sectors of the national economy.

The lament of Professor Anamua-Mensah (2002) that was alluded to at the beginning of this section is a real and threatening situation that requires the involvement of traditional leaders resolve. The participation of traditional leaders in issues that were traditionally out of their realm is evidence of reinvention of their roles and their expansion into varied areas of concerns, including formal education for their citizens.

The rationale of school reform in Ghana.

A number of theories and concepts underpin the school reform trend in Ghana. The basic foundations are the various constitutions – 1957, 1960, 1968, 1979 and 1992 that the country has operated under since the inception of independence (Antwi, 1992;
Nugent, 1996). As averred earlier, the 1979 Third Republic Constitution had similar provisions within it with perhaps the most striking being Article 10 (2) that stated,

The Government shall within two years after the coming into force of this constitution draw up a program for implementation within the following ten years for free, compulsory and universal primary education.

Antwi, (1992) and Haizel, (1993) points to the fact that the tenets espoused in these provisions to a large extent reflect the thinking of Ghana’s first post-colonial leader, Kwame Nkrumah. As the Leader of Government Business in the first internal self-government of 1951, he had initiated and instituted the Accelerated Development Plan for Education. It had the expressed aim of “…providing as soon as possible a six year primary course for all children at public expense. The ultimate aim was the wide extension of universal schooling within a measurable period of time (Haizel, 1993, p. 57).

Antwi, (1993) supports this contention and sees an extension of this earlier policy in the Education Act of 1961, in Ghana’s first republic under Nkrumah. This act established a fee free, compulsory primary and middle school education program for all children in Ghana. For secondary education, only boarding and lodging fees were collected and all tuition payment was waived and absolved by government in the public system. Textbooks, as in the primary and middle schools were supplied free to all students. Additionally in this era, the Ghana Education Trust (GET), established in 1958 with funds provided by the Ghana Cocoa Marketing Board, built a number of secondary schools, technical schools and teacher training colleges in the country. The GET in addition offered boarding and lodging scholarships to a substantial number of students to attend secondary schools. Students from the Northern Regions, the most deprived in terms of the provision of social facilities were furthermore given extra monetary
allowance as enticement in the bargain (Graham, 1975; Aseidu-Akrofi, 1982; Antwi, 1992).

A carry over from this “golden age of educational funding” is reflected in my view in the recent effort after extensive debate in parliament to establish the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund). The GETFund is ceded $2\frac{1}{2}$ % of value added tax revenue that is collected nationally to fund education at all levels in addition to normal provisions in the annual budget (Ghana Government Printer, 2000, 2002). The Minister of Finance in the 2001 budget presentation to parliament indicated that the Board of Trustees of the fund had been inaugurated.

The GETFund is expected to disburse in excess of 200 billion cedis annually, the equivalent of 50 million dollars, within the next five years to supplement central government funding of education (Osarfo-Marfo, 2001). The Ghana Hansard of June 20, 2002, however, reported that out of the expected inflow of “290.9 billion cedis base grant, sixty percent (174 billion) has been allocated to tertiary and forty percent (117.9 billion) to second cycle and primary education” (Ghana Government Printer, 2002).

The mode of allocation of funds from this supplementary source met with the strong displeasure of the very members of parliament who approved it as captured in the comments of the Deputy Speaker of Parliament and chairman of the whole that was reported in the Hansard, June 20, 2002:

A significant number of Honorable Members present at the meeting expressed some dissatisfaction with the Trustees’ proposed formula for the distribution of the funds for the year 2002 and sought that they be further convinced by the Trustees and the Minister for Education. Specifically, some Members were of the strong opinion that the block votes for the various levels of education do not show how the specific factors stipulated in sections 8 (3) of Act 581, namely “the study of mathematics; science and technology; the advancement of female education; the reduction in the high level of illiteracy in historically disadvantaged areas; and
the promotion of computer, vocational and technical training” have been addressed by the proposed formula (c. 1233 & 1234).

The central funding of education in Ghana is in stark contrast to the sizable local funding of education in the United States, but similar to the Greek and Japanese systems where central governments bear the greater proportion of educational cost (Alexander & Salmon, 1995; Mazurek, K, et al, 2000). Glewwe, & Twum-Baah, (1991) have observed that the inadequacy of central government and parental funding of education necessitates an urgent need for complementary funding. The Otumfuo Education Fund (OEF), the Offinsoman Education Trust Fund (OETF) and similar such initiatives by other traditional leaders are thus found to be filling a persisting void and in the process reinventing the relevancy and authority of traditional Asante leadership.

A Ministry of Education Report (1977) explicitly denotes the following among other factors as the reasons militating changes called for in the new structure and content of education:

1. To reform the structure and content of general education so as to make it not only employment orientated, but also to imbue the youth with a sense of self-reliance and national pride.
2. To make the education system positively more responsive to the manpower needs of the country as determined by the National Manpower Board.
3. To strike the “right mix” between education as a consumer good and education as an investment in “human capital”.
4. Correct current imbalance and disparity in the distribution of educational facilities in the country.
5. To ensure that both private and public sectors follow one structure and content of education.
6. To raise the quality of teachers and teaching in educational institutions (MOE, 1977)

The above in brief are some of the policies that underpin the Ghanaian efforts to set an educational agenda for the country. This indicates in undisputable terms the fact that at least in Ghana, the drive toward school reforms are in the most instances dictated
by the constitution and the political disposition of the ruling government and not the
dictates of stakeholders including traditional leaders.

But an essential factor that can also be advanced is the willingness of chiefs to be
lead advocates and participants for the establishment of schools in their localities by the
multiple roles they play in initiating and or implementing school building movements and
in funding formal schooling. It should also not be forgotten that education in Ghana
started as private endeavors in the European castles and forts, and was adopted by locals
together with their chiefs and has since seen the active involvement of traditional leaders
in its expansion and reach (Graham, 1971; McWilliams & Kwamena-Poh, 1975; Adu Boahen, 1996).

**Asante traditional leadership and the development of education in Asanteman.**

An eminent Ghanaian sociologist, a former Prime Minister, and a royal of the
Wenchi stool, Professor Kofi Abrefa Busia (1968) asserted, “Men are educated in and for
a given society. It is this that sets the task of an education system”. According to
Antubam (1964); Kyeremanten (1964); Busia (1968) and Yankah (1995; 1998), the
Akans of Ghana believe in the fact that knowledge is a liberator, and that liberating
knowledge is attained through insightful understanding of situations and relations
between things and also between human interactions. The end result of such interaction is
insightful, free and creative individuals. But at the same time they also admit that
knowledge acquisition is a life long process that must a have practical bearing on the
conduct of life. Furthermore, an individual must exhibit a predisposition towards the
acquisition of knowledge before the process can be initiated. The tenets of this belief
have subsequently been captured as a core creed of the United Nations’ declaration of education as a fundamental human right.

In a similar vein, an African American civil rights activist and leader, Malcolm X (El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz) in a 1965 radio interview made an astute and still valid observation about the fact that, “Education is first…Education is the first step towards solving any problem that exists anywhere on this earth which involves people who are oppressed” (Muhammad, 2000). The issue of education being a fundamental human right and thus a first in any human development endeavor has since been endorsed and incorporated in the United Nations Organization’s list of basic human rights of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26,

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children (UNDP, 2000).

This is undoubtedly a testimony to El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz’s visionary insights as a transformational leader, whose lone voice had decades down the road been accepted by the world body. The selflessness of this leader is evoked by the fact that his own formal education had been terminated in the eighth grade partly as a result of racist counseling by a teacher, who instead of helping to nurture his ambition of training as a lawyer advised him to pursue a career as a carpenter, (Haley & Malcolm X, 1964). The
loss of that young African American youth to the legal profession ultimately translated into a larger gain for American and world society of one of the most eloquent orators produced in the civil rights era of the 1950s and 1960s.

In spite of the liturgy of cultural and traditionally transforming leadership of the Asantes that have been outlined as part of their history, one need not lose sight of the reality that it is still encased in a southern country, and in a world dominated by northern interests. It is thus in this context that the tenets of Akan and Malcolm X’s conceptualization of the role of education would be partially applied in an analysis of the impact and direction of western formal education in this area of Ghana and the role of chiefs as agents of change in this transformation.

The history of western formal education in the area covered by Asante provides another tale of fascinating, inspiring and dynamic transformational leadership and its impact on the followers in whose interest, leaders operate. McWilliams & Kwamena-Poh (1987); Antwi, (1992); Wilks (1993); Allman, & Tashjian, (2000) attest to the fact that in spite of the introduction of western education into Ghana in the 1500s, it was not till 1831 that the eighth Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Yaw (1824-34), as part of the Peace Treaty of 1831 between Asante, the Fante and their British allies, sanctioned the placement of two persons, Princes Owusu Nkwatabisa and Owusu Ansah in a school at Cape Coast. They were supposedly guests of the President of the British Trading Council, Captain George MacLean, but in reality they were hostages to ensure Asante’s compliance with the terms of the treaty. But by 1839, the reigning Asantehene, Otumfuo Kwaku Dua I (1838-1867) was demanding the return of the two princes who had been sent to Britain to further their education (Graham, 1971; Adjaye, 1996). The drama involved in the education of the two
The twentieth century began with no school, missionary, private or colonial government funded in Asante. Paradoxically, it needed the defeat of the final effort to liberate her from the growing clutches of British imperialism and colonialism in 1900, and the entrenching of a British protectorate after 1901 that one notices a perceptible growth in the rapid introduction of western formal education system. According to McWilliams & Kwamena-Poh (1975) and Graham (1971), by 1914 a sizable number of schools had been established with the Basel Missionaries topping the list with fourteen schools. And in 1926, the first teachers’ training college, Wesley College was established in Tafo, near the capital Kumasi (Allman & Tashjian 2000).

Busia (1952, 1968), Antwi (1992), Arhin (1985) and Kyei (2001) testify to the fact that chiefs in the interior of Ghana, especially in Asante had an initial distrust and disdain of western formal education in the early decades of the twentieth century. It was viewed as an instrument of colonial oppression and thus was resisted with all manner of subterfuges. It required the return from exile in the Seychelles of the Asantehene, Otumfuo Agyeman Prempeh I in 1924 to initiate a perceptible change in the attitude of the leadership towards formal education. By the dawn of Ghana’s independence in 1957, Asante traditional leadership and their followers had been wholly converted and been convinced of the need for western formal education, in the then evolving bipolar world, (Antwi 1992; Allman & Tashjian 2000).
The change from resistors to sponsors of western education gained momentum during the reigns of Otumfu Osei Agyeman Prempeh II (1931-1970) and Otumfu Opoku Ware II (1970-1998). According to Busia (1968), “Men are educated in and for a given society. It is this that sets the task of an education system”. Asante traditional leadership felt a need for eyes and ears in the embryonic but growing colonial environment. Thus the need to be active participants necessitated the change summarized by Busia (1968). Acting on this dictum and possibly in anticipation of Freire (1970) and Chambers (1997), Asante leadership embarked on active stakeholder participatory roles in facilitating the spread of schools and access to education by their followers and for the citizens of their traditional areas.

Overwhelmed and flooded by the encroaching and unrelenting realities of colonialism and imperialism, Asante chiefs opted to transform their ascribed role as guardians of their societies to that of transformational change agents by fostering the growth and spread of western education. The methods and modes of impact of this decision were diverse. But prominent among these was the noted change in attitude and perception from one of hostility to embrace and sponsorship of schooling (Busia, 1968; Arhin, 1993; Allman, & Tashjian, 2000; Rathbone, 2000). A direct and immediate outcome of this change were land grants, free of any charges to both missionaries and the government for the building of schools at all levels. However, private school operators had to pay for school land. Communities were levied and at times loans were contracted to facilitate the building of schools. The lived experience of the sixty-six years old “stool server” of Offinso, Opanin Kwaku Addea, with fifty-five years of service at the court to four chiefs is pertinent here:
Formerly, the colonial government would offer only counterpart funding in the building of schools. This was at the rate of sixteen shillings to the pound. So Nana Wiafe Akenten II and his traditional council used to impose levies of one British pound on the citizens to fund school projects. The people whose names I mentioned earlier as contributing substantial sums of their own to secure the grants for the schools… fostering the roots of education in Offinso included Op. Akwesi Addai of Kokote, Op. Kojo Krah of Asamankoma, Mr. Victor Amponsah later Nana Kokro Sampa II of Maase, Mr. Coffie of Old Town father of Dr. Addai Boateng, Op. Yaw Fobi of Akomadan, Op. Kwame Dwemena (Methodist) of Nkenkasue, Mr. Owusu of Amowin, Mr. Wiafe Annor of Asamankoma, Op. Owusu-Kwarteng of Maase, Nana Kojo Nimo of Maase, and Mr. P. K Achempong of Maase (Oral communication, September 2002).

Sweat equity was also invested by way of communal labor organized by chiefs to involve citizens. Such participation engendered community ownership and thus interest in the schools. Additionally, they acted as agents of diffusion of innovation, a process symbolized by their ownership, authority and control over the traditional medium of communication, the *gong-gong or dawuro* that was used to summon communities to village or town meetings and convey important information (Freire, 1981; Chambers, 1994; Rogers, 1995, Adjaye, 1996).

The perception of public and community good, which precipitated the mobilization of their communities in school development resonate in a large measure with the argument of Alexander and Salmon (1995) about the development of public schools in the United States. They observed that,

The common school followed the idea of community as opposed to that of “predatory self interest” and the elevation of self over the interests of the state. The public school’s philosophical foundation is found in no less early authority than Aristotle in his *Politics*, in which each citizen is pledged in allegiance to the state to place the interests and common good of all above those of self and separate interests. Aristotle maintained that a natural impulse of man, a “political animal” is to increase individual pleasure and reduce pain by the elevation of the condition of the entire community. The state has a natural priority over the household and the whole over the individual among us. For the whole must be prior to the part (Alexander & Salmon, 1995, p. 6).
My predecessors as Maasehene, Nana Yaw Donkor (1920- 43), Nana Kwadwo Nimo I (1943-1958), Nana Kwabena Wiafe I (1958-1979), Nana Kokro Sampa II (1979-1991), within the past eighty years, together with the then paramount chiefs of Offinso, Nana Kwabena Opoku, Nana Wiafe Ababio, and Nana Wiafe Akenten II (1946-93), like most Asante leaders invoked all the methods outlined above and pragmatically ensured the establishment of a basic school, nursing and midwifery training schools in partnership with the Roman Catholic church in the village of Maase-Offinso. This was in addition to the establishment of a teachers' training college, four secondary schools, two vocational schools and a number of basic schools in other villages within the traditional area in conjunction with other chiefs, to cite just one example of transformational leadership with which I am thoroughly familiar from a traditional locality.

The Offinso-Maase school has since 1994 been undergoing rehabilitation and expansion as a result of an active partnership between the incumbent Maasehene, the elders, people of Offinso-Masse and the school’s PTA on one hand and her “development partners” including USAID, the Ghana government through the District Assemblies Common Fund, Office of the Member of Parliament for Offinso South Constituency, the Development Office of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Kumasi, and other sponsors and supporters, some of whom have ties with Athens, OH. The expansion has resulted in the addition of a new block each to the primary and junior secondary schools and the construction of a new kindergarten block. An observable import of the collaboration in Offinso-Maase is the active and expanded stakeholders’ participation that mirrors the prevailing reality in some Asante localities and to an extent the national scene.
Again beginning in the early 1930s through the war years up till the immediate post independent years, the Asanteman Council, acting as a conscientized stakeholder and active participator (Busia, 1951; Appiah, 1990; Allman & Tashjian, 2000; Kyei, 2001), in anticipation of Freire, (1970, 1981), set the pace for other traditional leaders in the country to emulate with the funding of various bursary schemes to educate the sons and daughters of Asante in Ghana and some western countries to acquire both professional and advance education. The bursary scheme gave Asante her first cohort of technocrats in the 1940’s and 1950’s. The fifteenth Asantehene, Otumfu Opoku Ware was a partial beneficiary of these schemes; that enabled him to undertake his law program in one of the inns of London. This was after an initial career as surveyor, who on behalf of his uncle and predecessor demarcated land grants for school projects in the environs of Kumasi (Adu Boahen, 1975; Appiah, 1990; Allman & Tashjian, 2000; Kyei, 2001).

The first post independent government of Kwame Nkrumah, in its drive to align the country on a socialist axis and under the delusion of curtailing centers of rival power; legislated these initiatives out of existence and into the fold of the central government’s Scholarship Secretariat, and the Cocoa Marketing Board scholarship schemes (Adu Boahen 1975, 1990; Arhin, 1993; Rathbone, 2000). However, in an interesting coincidence, almost forty-two years after these bursary schemes were legislated out of existence, a reigning Asantehene reinvented them in 1999 with the establishment of the Otumfu Education Fund (OEF), and the Ghana government has followed closely by inaugurating the new Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund) in 2001. The primary focus of the GETFund is to supplement mainline budgetary funding for education and is
ceded two and half percent of the national value added tax (Osafo Marfo, 2001; Banahene, 2001).

In a more localized milieu, proceedings of the 1997 Offinsoman Congress, initiated at the instance of the Offinsohene, Nana Wiafe Akenten III and the Offinso Traditional Council, resulted in the establishment of the Offinsoman Education Trust Fund in 2002 (OETF). Portions of the trust’s preamble attest to the role, status and expectations of formal and specifically girl’s education in the Offinso traditional area,

Realizing the value of education, the Chiefs and people of Offinso Traditional Area have since the 1930’s invested much in education…What is even more serious and depressing is that female education is receiving very little attention due to several factors, particularly lack of parental support and in some cases due to abject poverty…The most significant plan of action arising from the decisions at the congress has been the establishment of the Offinso Education Trust Fund to offer financial assistance to brilliant but needy female students at the senior secondary/technical school level. It is envisaged to extend the financial assistance to male students at the second cycle and eventually to both male and female students at the tertiary level (The constitution of Offinsoman Education Trust Fund, 2002, p.1)

Working in concert with their subjects and citizens, and both colonial and post independent governments of Ghana as active participants and transformational leaders, the efforts of Asante traditional leaders yielded positive outcomes that translated to position Asante at the close of the twenty century as the area with the largest infrastructure spread of education in the Ghana, though not necessarily the best or better equipped schools. According to the Ministry of Education (1999), Ashanti Region, the core of Asante traditional leadership has one public university, two other public university colleges campuses, one public polytechnic, five out of thirty six diploma awarding teachers’ training colleges, the largest numbers of both secondary and basic schools in the country and the highest enrollment figures for attendees at all levels of
education. This is in sharp contrast to the portrait of Asante as the educational wasteland of Ghana at the dawn of the twentieth century.

However, it should be noted that the central location of Asante in Ghana in addition to other economic and social factors draws diverse peoples from other regions of Ghana and neighboring countries to these schools. It is worth noting that the fifteenth Asantehene, Otumfuo Opoku Ware II, who initially trained and practiced as a land surveyor before his call to the bar, actively participated in the demarcation of land grant school sites, including that of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi (Nana Wiafe Akenten III, Oral communication, August 18, 2002).

An immediate and observable impact of the spread of western education in the past eighty years is seen in the spectrum of professions represented, and levels of education acquired by the current corps of Asante traditional leadership. A brief mention of some would suffice for the purpose of this dissertation. The immediate past Asantehene, Otumfuo Opoku Ware II was a lawyer, diplomat and surveyor. The current occupant of the Golden Stool, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, is an accountant and human resource professional. The occupant of the Silver Stool of Manpong, Dasebre Osei Bonsu II, second in commend at the Asanteman Council is a lawyer and recently retired as the Registrar of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana’s second oldest university. Two members of the Asanteman Council, Nana (Dr.) Krobea Asante Kotoko, Omanhene of Asokore and a lawyer and the former Ghana Government Chief Statistician, Dasebre (Dr.) Oti Boateng, Omanhene of New Juaben, are currently serving on the United Nations Law of the Sea and Audit Commissions respectively. Nana Otuo Siribor, Omanhene of Old Juaben, a co-researcher for this work, is an electrical
engineer, an industrialist, a farmer and a member of the Council of State, the statutory advisory council to the President of Ghana. There are additional outstanding representations from the engineering, medical, education, science, public service, business and other professions serving in the Asanteman Council and other traditional councils within Asante.

The notable issue of interest is the fact that these and other leaders in different strata of Asante leadership are all beneficiaries of the post 1920’s change in attitude and direction of Asante’s initial stance of resistance and opposition against western education. It is also worth noting that there is an even wider spread of professions, expertise and education among the general populace of Asante, but that of the traditional leaders is being cited to indicate the extent of transformation within a period of less than a hundred years and the caliber of some people in the pool of traditional leadership.

A direct contrast to traditional leaders who utilize their professional and educational connections and networks to advance the interest of their citizens and foster the sustainable development of their localities are those who exploit such ascribe positions and the aura it confers on them for personal profit and advantage. These may assume a variety of forms that include excessive exploitation of the natural resources entrusted to their care and protection, abuse of power and authority reposed in them together with their councils, multi sale of the same land, and a myriad of other infractions that may plainly border on the criminal (Busia, 1951; Rathbone, 2000; Berry, 2001).

The current upsurge and interest in education that is being facilitated needs to be insulated against this corps of traditional leaders. Article 275 of the 1992 constitution and various traditional mores and norms offers certain levels of protections against such
leaders, “A person shall not be qualified as a chief if he has been convicted of high treason, high crime or for an offence involving the security of the state, fraud, dishonesty or moral turpitude” (Government Printer, 1992). Usually when such processes are invoked, traditional leaders, who are found wanting are destooled, deposed or compelled to abdicate. In fact, accusations and substantiation of malfeasances are among the spate of charges that underlines most destoolment charges that are preferred against chiefs and resultant abdications (Busia, 1951; Yankah, 1995, 1998; Rathbone, 2000; Berry, 2001).

Another significant import of the establishment of schools is the opportunity to commemorate past leaders, heroines and heroes of Asante by naming schools after them. In the process, names of past heroes like Yaa Asantewaa, Konadu Yaidum, Yaa Akyaa, Osei Tutu, Opoku Ware, Agyeman Prempeh, Dwamena Akenten, Tweneboah Kodua, Wiafe Akenten and others are constantly held forth as examples young people should strive to emulate.

The reigning incumbent, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, has actually gone a step further as a stakeholder and participant in Ghana’s educational enterprise and incorporated a multi million cedi Otumfuo Education Fund (OEF) with a constituted board of trustees with the following objectives:

a. The advancement of education for the benefit of the people of Asanteman in particular and Ghanaians in general by, inter alia, providing:
   i. Financial aid and or material assistance to bright but needy pupils and students.
   ii. Incentive packages for teachers and other educational workers who provide outstanding service.

b. The carrying out of development projects which advance education and which in the opinion of the Board of Trustees shall be beneficial to the people of Asanteman in particular and Ghanaians in general, including:
i. Provision, renovation, or rehabilitation of school buildings, structures and facilities.
ii. Supply of school equipment, education materials or teaching aids.
iii. Employment of teachers, tutors, lectures or other resource persons.
iv. Investment in projects that promote education in Asanteman
v. Provision of any other assistance consistent with the objects of this Trust Deed, (p. 4-5).

Again the point of interest in the trail blazing visionary sage of the current incumbent is the snowballing effect of the establishment of similar foundations and trusts by both Akan and other ethnicities and stakeholders in education in Ghana to foster the education of their citizens. Ohio University in recognition of the transformational leadership dimensions of this initiative signed a memorandum of understanding, establishing an Otumfuo Fellowship in its African Studies Program on November 24th, 2000 with the Otumfuo. Additionally, the reigning Otumfuo has explicitly stated that any future assessment of his era should count education among its core parameters. However, in my view, all children need to be facilitated, thus the Otumfuo and the trustees of OEF should review the clause that stipulates financial aid and or material assistance to bright but needy pupils and students. All children are precious and as such should not be tracked and stigmatized that early in life.

It is an epic transformation to realize that four centuries after its establishment, the liberating war machine that was nurtured by King Osei Tutu I and groomed by Otumfuo Opoku Ware I, after several episodes of reinvention of vision to confront and combat the challenges of various moments in its history, is at the dawn of a new century challenged with totally new issues that center on education and human resource advancement. Developing group vision to enable Asante claim and play her proper role in the unfolding
world order is the responsibility of both her traditional leadership and individual citizens. In the exercise and discharge of that vision, her leadership has decided to stake group advancement on education. As an Akan proverb proclaims, “Unless the head drops, it will never stop learning.”

It is equally significant that education is placed first in the priorities that Asanteman envisages would make for her sustained human resource development. Otumfu Osei Tutu II has visualized leading his kingdom through knowledge acquired through formal education. The tier of *amanhene, ahenefo, ahemaa and amamfo* has similarly bought into this vision and in diverse ways are working at it. The example of the Offinsoman Education Trust Fund and the discussions with both the Kokofuhene and Juabenahene in the next chapter affirms participation and ownership in this process. This is the vision for Asante that is to be attained during this century. Perhaps it is as well to recall the etymology of the group name *Osa–nti* that was conferred by the Denkyirahene on realization that he had disturbed the quills of the porcupine, one of the symbols of Asante union, and had thus disturbed a hornet’s nest (Busia, 1951, 1968; Allman, 1993). The mobilization for a war of liberation at the dawn of the twenty-first century is this time round, a struggle to emancipate Asante from “mental slavery” and the depths and mire of ignorance as the late Bob Marley echoed in one of his songs, “Redemption Song”, in his album “Uprising” in the late 1970s.

**Gender, traditional leadership and education.**

Women traditional leaders, *ahemaa* or queen mothers, play prominent roles in the traditional leadership structures of Asante and other Akan groups. It has been noted that women comprise close to fifty-two percent of Ghana’s population (UNDP, 2000); Ghana
Government Statistician (20001); and that there is a growing trend of female students outnumbering male students in urban coeducational K-12 schools (GES, 2000). The above facts, in addition to the need to center and focus women related issues in national policy formation underlines and necessitate an analysis of women’s roles in this dissertation. The underlying import of naming the first girls school established in 1903 in Kumasi initially as the Government Girls School and later in 1912 effecting a name change to Yaa Akyiaa Girls School, after an Asantehemaa additionally reinforces this position (Mainoo, 2003).

The Akans are organized into two eight matrilineal and patrilineal clans to which each person belongs. According to Busia (1951); Agyeman –Duah (1960) and Adu Boahen (1966), the eight matriclans (Abusua) groups are Ekuana, Bretuo, Asona, Oyoko, Aduana, Agona, Asakyiri and Aseenee. The Akan belief that a mother’s blood forms the human person additionally is related to the prohibition of matriclan intermarrying.

Membership in these matriclans confers rights of inheritance since the Akans as a group inherits matrilineal. It is in these lineages that traditional leadership and the principal stools of the Akans including the Asante reside.

The patrilineal groupings from which a person sources his or her soul (Akra or Okra) according to Akan beliefs are Busumuru, Bosompra, Bosommram, Bosomtwe, Poakwa, Nkatia, Afram and Abankwaade. Male descent stools (Barimadwa or mammadwa) can also be located in these realms. For example, the Batama Kontri Stool of Kumasi and the Anone Kontri Stool of Offinso are stools to which ascent is delineated through the male line (Busia, 1951; Sarpong 1974; 1991; Wiredu, 1996; Gyekye, 2000; Nana Wiafe Akenten II, 2002, oral communication). But the proviso should be noted that
such stools go only to the sons who have acquired and inherited the relevant skills from their fathers. Additionally, no clearly stated rights exist to stake one’s claim to such a stool unless the overlord or paramount chief was predisposed to acquiesce in the appointment (Busia, 1951; Arhin, 1983; Wilks, 1993; Nana Wiafe Akenten II, 2002, oral communication).

Akan genealogy through the matriclans was noted previously. Queen mothers, aside of having own courts are also members of the courts of kings and chiefs. The queen mothers’ multiple role include keeping the genealogies of lineage, counselors of last resort to kings and chiefs and nominating successors to the male stool when vacant. Additionally, they act as regents during interregnums or absences coupled with their normal role as leaders of the women folk. In exceptional instances, they acted as war leaders to spur their male followers to the cause of their kingdom. The classic example of such a leader was the Queen Mother of Edweso, Nana Yaa Asantewaa. She mobilized the Asante against the British 1900 in what is known in Asante folklore and Ghanaian history as the “Yaa Asantewaa War”, (Meyerowitz, 1952; Busia, 1952; Mikell & Skinner 1989; Arhin, 1983; Adu Boahene, 1990). They have additionally described the duality of the Asante royal political leadership as one of “complementary roles between the ohene and ohemaa”. But a certainty of this duality is the fact that one cannot in any way underestimate the value of power and authority these varied roles conferred on queenmothers in the Asante and by extension the Akan political set up.

It should be noted and explained that though the lineage designated for occupation of the Golden Stool is the Oyoko clan, leadership and authority in Asante is not confined to this clan alone. Asantes’ adhere to the belief and trace the fact that “Kingship
(leadership) originates from *Odomankoma Oboade* (The Creator)”. He did not specify kingship or chief-ship among only one of the eight clans. Most often the founder of a settlement or village delineated the leadership and headship of that settlement in his or her lineage, (Busia, 1952; Field, 1970; Mikell, 1997). For each village, town, or paramount state (*Oman*), the groups with the designated line of ascent to the throne or stool were known as *Adehyee* or royals. Thus all the eight clans have major stools and kingships delineated within them. For example, the Bretuo Clan established the Silver Stool of Manpong, and in the absence of the Asantehene, the Manponghene presides over the Asante Kingdom until a successor is enthroned. He is also a lead war general, Nifa of Asante, (Busia 1951).

The stool of the founding person occupies a paramount place in the stool room as the senior stool around which that of his or her successors were aligned. These were blackened with soot and other ingredients before placement in the revered place, the stool-room. It is the stool on which successors were gently placed three times during the private rites of enstoolment or investiture. In the specific installation of the Asantehene, these rites take place in an older suburb of Kumasi called Pampaso (Enstoolment Planning Committee of Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, 1999). This explains the literal phrase, “He sits on the stool of his ancestors”, to indicate the sanctification and infusion of the powers and spirit of the ancestors into such a candidate. Antubam (1963), argues that the stool in Akan belief symbolizes *Omankeraa*, the soul of society; that serves as the link between citizens, leaders and the departed elders and yet to be born.

The process of being nominated and elected as a chief or king has laid down procedures attached to it. The “*Nkwankwa*” or youth will request the *Gyaasehene* (Chief
of the Household Cabinet) for a chief when a vacancy occurs. The request will be discussed with member chiefs of that traditional council, and then a formal request is made to the Queen mother for a successor. The Queen mother nominally acting alone, but certainly after secret consultations with elders in her lineage would nominate a candidate for approval by the chief’s council, now referred to as “Kingmakers” (Busia, 1951; Antubam, 1963; Arhin, 1978, 1993; Wilks, 1993; Rathbone, 2000). Arhin (1978) details the fact that the queen mother may be the chief’s mother, mother’s sister, a uterine sister, a mother’s sister’s daughter, or a sister’s daughter. She has three options to nominate a successor after which if all of her choices are rejected, the kingmakers could then proceed to make a choice out of the lineage.

The acceptance of a token thanksgiving fee and drinks sealed the process of election and opened the way for the public swearing of oaths of fidelity and pledges of service by the new chief to his elders followed in turn by those of his council of elders to him. A period of confinement and tutoring the new chief in the finer aspects of traditions and customs then followed. Kwame Arhin (1978) concisely describes the process of election and enstoolment as follows; “A chief is made by his people and should rule with their advice and consent and if he does not he is subject to be deposed”. The symbiotic coupling and sense of mutual interdependence implied in the relations between the chief and his people are aptly captured by Arhin’s description.

Acting through the current occupant or in his absence a regent, the people communed and connected with their ancestors especially during the nine festive Akwasidea and the nine minor Wukudea celebrated and observed through the year by Asante. These are forty-two days cycles that fall in six weeks intervals on Sundays and
Wednesdays that are especially dedicated to “Oyanme” (God) and the remembrance and veneration of good ancestors. In the performance of this role, the spiritual and priestly functions and leadership of the chief is brought to the fore. The stool is the Akan and Asante equivalent of a European throne.

From the moment a King (Otumfuo), Chief (Ohene/ Omanhene) or Queen mother (Ohenmaa) is enthroned or enstooled, it is assumed that his or her person becomes sacred. This is further emphasized by taboos; for instance such a person may not strike anyone nor be struck by another person, lest the ancestors bring a misfortune upon the ethnic group. Additionally, such persons must never walk barefooted, his or her buttocks should not touch the ground or a mishap may occur in the community. Other taboos that are personal and made known to occupants of stools remind leaders and the people that the positions they occupy are sacred positions. They are the occupants of the stool of the ancestors or “sit on the stool of the ancestors” (Busia, 1952; Antubam, 1961; Sarpong, 1991).

According to Gyasi (2002), in the current endeavor to revive and center education as a focal point of Asante human development policy, the Asantehemaa (Queenmother of Asante), Nana Afua Kobi Serwaa Ampem is reported to have indicated to the King,

… in promoting education, he was not doing anything new since his predecessors had established scholarships for the Asante since the inception of formal education within the kingdom.

This is undoubtedly meant to reinforce the leadership role of the king and ensure a more ardent pursuit of the policy of utilizing education as an avenue to ensure the development of Asante human resource base in collaboration with the Asanteman
Council. But a salient point is that it is only a queenmother who would dare in such a
critical and direct manner to spur the king to strive for higher heights.

The observation of Dr. Aggrey that if you educate a woman, you educate a nation
has been yet to be disproved in its’ multiple applications and is still valid in any
discussion of education and women in Asante, Ghana and any other part of the world.
The African American writer, bell hooks (1989) resonated similar sentiments when she
posed in connection with the education of African Americans that

Education is a political issue for exploited and oppressed people. The history of
slavery in the United States shows that black people regard education… book
learning, reading and writing, as a political necessity. The struggle to resist white
supremacy and racist attacks informed black attitudes towards education. Without
the capacity to read and write to think critically and analytically, the liberated
slave would remain forever bound, and dependent on the will of the oppressor. No
aspect of black liberation struggle in the United States has been as charged with
revolutionary fervor as the effort to gain education at all levels.

In the same pool of opinion as bell hooks and Dr. Aggry is the Brazilian
philosopher, proponent of transformational, critical and liberation education, Paulo
Freier, who observed that

… every human being, no matter how ignorant or submerged in the culture of
silence is capable of looking critically at the world in a dialogical encounter with
others… provided with the proper tools (education) for such an encounter, the
individual can gradually perceive his or her personal and social reality and deal
with it critically

A Danish political scientist’s astute observation about the role of women in
politics, and its impact on policy formation and decision-making can be extended to
cover the situation of women and education in Asante. Drudge Dahlerup of the
University of Aarhus aptly commented at a lecture that,
Don’t expect us to make much difference as long as we are a few women in politics. It takes a critical mass of women to make fundamental changes in politics… But the many women in Scandinavian countries have to some extent changed peoples’ attitude towards women leaders, have changed the political discourse somewhat, have placed women’s issues on the agenda and have to some extent changed the political culture.

In whatever field, traditional leadership, education, politics, etc of human endeavor, the need for the voices of women cannot be discounted. Aubrey (2001) acknowledges that Dr. Edward Mahama, leader of Ghana’s People National Convention, has identified changing husbands’ attitudes as a prerequisite to any development on the political front for women’s participation. This change in attitude, it is further noted should start with education. Yeboah (1997) made similar findings in her dissertation *Precious Beads Multiply*, regarding the need to advance the education of girls to facilitate an improved quality of life in later years. A basic resolution to the myriad of issues that confront women in their later life, she concluded could be assets if they had had at least basic schooling. Such schooling, she additionally deduced contributes to improvement in child and family health, especially to a decrease in infant mortality. The UNDP (2000) *Human Development Report* makes similar recommendations to national governments, and non-governmental organizations in the developing and poor areas of the developed world.

These are the crux of the issues challenging women’s education in Asante and the rest of Ghana. Asante and Ghanaian women are by constitutional provisions equal with men, but the fact that a greater majority of women than men drop out of school, and also have a higher illiteracy rate opens them to all manner of exploitation, that sometimes boarders on servitude. Women in Asante and Ghana like their counterparts in other parts
of the world need formal education in addition to their indigenous wisdom to empower themselves and facilitate more meaningful participation in the processes of decision-making and an equitable share of power and authority in the country. But the *Annual Reports of the GES* for both 1998 and 1999, indicts a high proportion of girls either not enrolled in school or dropping out of school as a direct result of a myriad of domestic, cultural and societal reasons. Mohamed (1996) observed a similar trend of high girls drop out in Ghana but not in Botswana.

These are the real issues confronted by Asante traditional leadership that needs addressing; and effect attitude changes in the general populace that would be more accommodating and facilitate the education of the girl child. While the list of potential beneficiaries has been cast wide by the trust deed of the OEF, a noticeable omission in the list of beneficiaries is specific targeting and focus on the girl-child, who is often marginalized and easily falls through the gaps society creates.

GES (1999 & 2000), in an echo and throw back to an MOE (1990) annual report acknowledged the decreased number of girls progressing from basic through high school and acquiring tertiary education. Such a situation prompted Nana Hagan (1995), a Ghanaian female women’s rights advocate, lawyer and consultant to make the incisive observation that,

*Women are strategic human resources, and one of the most crucial tools for their efficiency and effectiveness is education … the pivot around which the family revolves. They instill values of society in the young and old alike … a society that fails or neglects to educate its girls and women create its own demise.*

This brief analysis indicates that while there are fiscal and infrastructure challenges that impede girls’ education in Asante and Ghana, there also exists systemic
and ingrained attitudes that necessitates a dramatic change in societal attitudes and values to enable a real attack on the issue of girl and women’s education in Asante and Ghana. The major question one is urged to pose is that, is the Otumfu, in concert with the Asanteman Council, other traditional leaders and official policy makers in a position to carry this fight? This is one of the questions that are answered by the data analysis in the next chapters.

A bright spot in the literature review was the revelation that an innovative Science, Technology and Math Clinic (STMC) for girls that was inaugurated in 1987 in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat and UNESCO has thrived and been decentralized to the regional and district levels (GES 1999). The researcher had an opportunity to participate in the opening ceremony as a speaker at the September, 2002 Offinso District STMC held at Dwenena Akenten Secondary School, Offinso. The STMC was established to engender girls’ interest in science and math, by interacting with female and other role models in science and technology based professions (FAWE, 1995). The success story of the STMC has subsequently led to the participation of girls from Nigeria, Gambia, Namibia, Bostwana, Tanzania and Kenya. In the process, one notices a regeneration of the Pan African policy of Ghana’s first postcolonial government.

Tekyiwaa Manuh (1997); Mikell (1997); Allman & Tashjian, (2000) have all noted the fact that women utilized their indigenous knowledge and potential to negotiate themselves out of some of the constricting bounds imposed by colonialism in Ghana. Some post-independent Ghanaian women including Asantes have been both trailblazers and models of societal stature solely because of their merit attainments in chosen professions, and thus the big question is can traditional leadership facilitate the growth of
more of such women like the Abena Dolphynes’ and Lydia Oseis”? The former is a women’s rights advocate, a professor emeritus of linguistics, pro-vice chancellor, University of Ghana and presently chair of the Ghana Education Service Council and the letter is the current Deputy Director General of Ghana Education Service. Additionally, they both serve as trustees of the Otumfu o Education Fund, a position attained solely on their meritorious professional performances.

A gleam of hope is provided by a personal experience. In answer to a question from her brother doubting her capability on an issue, my youngest daughter replied that he should in no way question her ability to do anything that she sets her mind to undertake. The “I can do attitude”, implied in her answer is the streak of light and hope that traditional leaders should focus on in the effort to promote the education of the girl child and facilitate it as a focal point of traditional and national policies. This element is reinforced by the placement of three girls schools among the top five in the 2003 senior secondary terminal exams and six girls schools crowding out all others except one boy’s school in the top ten (Daily Graphic, January 12, 2004). As the female General Secretary of the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) framed it, “…girls education is also an avenue that would facilitate the reinvention of the relevance of traditional leaders in Asante and Ghanaian society.” (GNAT, General Secretary, Oral communication, October 2002).

**Stakeholders, policy formation, education and Asante traditional leadership.**

Change is inevitable and the fact that change is the only constant in life, is a dictum that has live down the ages; and leads to the discourse on the current review of K-12 education, the stakeholders and actors who affect and impact the process in Ghana as
part of the analysis of the intersect of traditional leadership and the process of education change and revival in Asante. This analysis also explicitly explains the effort to reinvent the relevance of the centuries old Asante leadership system through the medium of active participation in the educational discourse in a modern state.

Education policy, similar to other policy sub government systems is not static but susceptible to advances, ideas, pressures, personalities etc. Formal schooling or education is a common bonding factor in Asante and Ghana. People within and outside the corridors of power and government extensively debate policy agendas in the education sub system. This is in view of the fact that formal K-12 schooling is carried out in every village, town, city and district in the country. Analyzed in the context of the claim of the then Minister of Finance (1997) that a third of every cedi of Ghana government expenditure was spent in the education sector, heightened interest in this policy sector is to be expected, not least from chiefs and other leaders of public opinion. My last work position in Ghana before starting my doctoral program was in policy analysis, formation and advisory, as the deputy secretary of the Ghana Education Service Council, the statutory K-12 advisory council to Ghana’s Minister of Education and the government of Ghana. This role partly explains my keen interest in the education sub governmental policy system in any analysis of traditional leadership and education revival in Asante.

The fascination with the actors and stakeholders in Ghana’s K-12 education milieu partly originates from the fact that a major infusion of donor assistance under International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank direction, guided, effected and wrought fundamental changes in the system and at the same time introduced a plethora of additional external actors into the sector alongside local actors and stakeholders. The
extensive intrusion was a phenomenon that did not exist prior to the initiation of the 1987 school reform. Before that era, foreign actors had been limited to the role of providing classroom personnel, for example the Peace Corps from America; Canadian Volunteers Service Organization; British Overseas Development Volunteers; and contract science teachers from India. The Peace Corps service was actually inaugurated in Ghana in 1961, providing probably a near perfect intersect of two national policies, with no misapprehension on both sides at that period (McWilliams, & Kwamena-Poh, 1975; Antwi 1992; Adu-Boahen, 1992, 1996).

John Kingdon’s three-stream conceptualization of the policy-setting environment is particularly instructive in the stakeholder analysis of actors in Ghana’s K-12 education system. Kingdon (1993) advanced the point of view that separate streams of problems, policies and politics intersect and converge to open a window of opportunity for the resolution of issues and situations at certain times on the political landscape and then closes up or diminish. He utilizes the Cohen-March-Oslen model of organized anarchies to contend that solutions or proposals may be developed independent of problems. These are than tacked onto pertinent problems as riders or as solutions to emerging or identified issues. They may however bear no relations, but the window of opportunity that opens up has to be utilized. This phenomenon is noted to have been utilized with the introduction of the IMF and World Bank structural adjustment program into Ghana on the back of education reform (Gyan-Appenteng, 1991; Gyimah-Boadi, 1994).

Significantly note-worthy is the fact that the above World Bank and IMF prescription for the economic recovery of Ghana and other African countries have in a similar vein been advanced as a solution to Asian and Latin American countries
economic implosions, and each time is yet to work. The net result at least in the specific case of Ghana is a sinking of the country into the status of a highly indebted poor country (Ayee, 1998; Nugent, 1995; Gyimah-Boadi, 1994, Osarfo Marfo, 2001).

Cromer et al (1994) attest to the fact that every school has its stakeholders who attempt to exert all manner of influence either in their favor or tilted in a certain direction in espousing their own agenda. Grimble et al (1996) analysis of stakeholders seeks to identify the key actors in a system and assess their respective interest in that system. It embraces all those who affect, and are affected by the policies, decisions and actions of the system. They can be individuals, communities, social groups, interest groups or institutions of any size, aggregation or level of society. Anderson (2000) further divides the group of participants and actors who endeavor to affect the policy formation process into two, the official policy-makers and the unofficial participants. The inclinations and perceptions of these actors determine to a large extent the thrust and attainment of the goals of the process that are set in motion by such enactments.

Chelf (1981) and Anderson (2001) describe official policy makers as those who have legal authority to engage in the formation of public policy. These include members of the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. They are further divided into primary and supplementary policy makers. The latter, most often bureaucrats, are inevitably dependent on the former for their authority to formulate policy since they exist on ceded power to perform the myriad functions they undertake. However, the clear-cut distinction Chelf (1981) and Anderson (2001) make does not always operate in the Ghanaian situation.
This is in view of the fact that the period of the formation and implementation of the 1987 school reform policy coincided with the period of rule of the military government of the Provisional National Defense Council (1981-1992), during which era the distinction between the executive and legislative arms of government were at best blurred. Similar military interregnums with the same traits had occurred in the period 1966-1969 and 1971-1979 (Adu Bohene, 1975, 1992; Appiah, 1990; Ayee, 1994; CIA, 2000). Previous education policy formation eras did occur under civilian governments but than the caveat of strong proactive executive centered participation in the process also need to be mentioned (Graham, 1971; McWilliams & Kwamena-Poh, 1975; Antwi, 1992; Ayee, 1994; Rathbone, 2000). In the particular instance of Ghana, the additional argument can be advanced that the ruling coalition’s influence in policy formation tends to be disproportionately inserted into whatever policies are crafted for implementation. This is in spite of the general perception in democracies that policy formation is the outcome of compromises struck out of competing ideas (Lindblom, 1968; Haass, 1999; Anderson, 2000; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992).

Anderson (2000) describes the mass of interest groups, political parties, think tanks, the media and individual citizens etc, who operate within the policy realm but do not have legal power to decide policy as unofficial participants in the process. Chelf (1981) notes that,

… these participants are classified as unofficial, not because they are any less significant or lack influence, but because they do not usually possess any constitutional or statutory authority to make legally binding policy decisions... these unofficial participants play a particularly important role in the expression and advocacy of policy demands, the presentation of alternatives, and the pulling together of competing elements into working coalitions on particular policy issues (p.36-37).
Traditional leaders, as both individuals and as a collective fall within the group of unofficial participants in the education policy formulation milieu in Ghana. But in their professional and private capacities, they may be very active participants in the process of policy formation and or implementation. Sight need not be lost of the fact that the realm of policy formation determines who gets what, how much, and when that allocation is made. It is therefore significant that Asante and other traditional leaders should have a fair representation in this realm. Additionally, participation in the policy formation realm even in an unofficial capacity reinforces the perception of reinventing the relevance of the institution of traditional leadership.

A survey of the education and other policy sub governmental systems in Ghana and other Sub-Saharan African countries show that multilateral and bilateral international bodies and non-governmental organization are a third arm and axis of the policy paradigm in these countries. Smith (1998) indicates that about 30,000-35,000 nonprofit development organizations including a considerable number in the education field operate in developing countries. Added to these are a sizable number of other bilateral and multilateral organizations in the same area of operation. Ghana has resident teams from the World Bank, IMF, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), United States Peace Corps, British Department of Foreign and International Development (DFID), German Technical Agency (GTZ), Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and others actively involved as actors and partners in the education field (Ayee, 1998; GESC, 1999; GES, 2000).

The resident nongovernmental organizations include Care International, World Vision International, Adventist Relief Organizations (ADRA), Save the Children, and
others similarly engaged in the education and other fields. These multilateral and bilateral international bodies have in some cases totally different policy agendas from that of their host nations. They sometimes stretch their roles as partners to serve uncomplimentary and self-fulfilling agendas (Maren, 1997; Aubrey, 1997, 2002). A specific example of this scenario is the efforts of some USAID officials to foist a different curriculum, Linkages in Learning Sequence (LLS), other than the national curriculum on the primary schools in Ghana since 1998 (Quansah, 2000). Such efforts to meddle in strictly internal policy agendas raise the basic issue of the country’s sovereignty and the specter of neo colonialism.

The fear of neo colonialism is a reality that President Kwame Nkrumah (1965) dwelt on extensively in his work *Neo colonialism: The last stage of imperialism*. Though this book was published at the height of the cold war era, when the African continent was caught between the east and west, the scenarios of subjugation that are depicted in the book are the very situations Ghana and other African countries find themselves living through currently as a result of structural adjustments, economic recovery programs, programs of action to mitigate the social cost of adjustment (PAMSCAD) etc, progressing to highly indebted poor country status (HIPIC). Political independence is increasingly turning out to be just flag independence, with donor (foreign) advisors chairing ministries of education, finance and economic planning actively engaged in enacting internal policies as a direct outcome of implementing structural adjustment policies, formulated by the IMF and the World Bank. The IMF and the World Bank are also found to be dictating implementation of structural adjustment and highly indebted poor country policies with a primary focus on cost cutting, cost sharing in the education
and other social services, loan recovery and prompt payment of scheduled interests (Amuzu, 1998; Boateng, 1998; Sutherland & Meyer, 2000; Aubrey, 2002). In the process, some local actors are distanced from the process of policy formulation, distortions in policy goals do occur, and policies without ownership by local communities, a direct outcome of non-participation are pursued. This is a sad commentary on the current state of events, and at the same time a somewhat gloomy assessment of the outcomes and expectation of the immediate post independent cadre of leaders. It is however the prevailing reality, that any analysis of policy cannot avoid, and with which African traditional leaders have to struggle together with their citizens.

Chiefs for the most part play an unofficial role in the policy process. Though individual chiefs may work in the central government bureaucracy, they are not directly represented in the Ghana Education Service Council, the policy advisory council on K-12 and thus do not directly formulate policy as the Ghana Education Act 506 (1995) clearly indicates (Government Printer, 1995). Nonetheless, a sizable number are frontline implementers of policy by virtue of being teachers and education administrators in classrooms and offices. However, in their traditional localities, their transformational, catalytic and entrepreneurial leadership styles have in instances blazed paths for official policy makers to follow. Such decisive policy initiatives manifest themselves when one considers the lead roles chiefs played and continue to play in the establishment of schools, education trusts and foundations for the purposes of enshrining and promoting education in their localities.

Busia, (1951); McWilliams & Kwamena-Poh, (1975); and Arhin, (1983, 1993) attest to the fact that the various bursary schemes initiated by chiefs in their different
traditional domains ultimately helped nudged the first post-independent government to institute a nation wide scheme, Ghana Education Trust (GET) in 1958 for various education purposes. A major focus of the GET was the building of new secondary schools and the award of bursaries to students to pursue secondary and post secondary education. However, Arhin (1993) and Rathbone (2000) note the fact that a perception of political opposition by Nkrumah’s government made for legislation that both proscribed and coalesced the various schemes by the chiefs into the GET. This was somehow in line with the centralizing of education planning and policy alluded to earlier by Bray (1999).

Half a century later, it is interesting to note that the King of Asante, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, on his elevation to the Golden Stool in 1999, declared the promotion of formal education as a criterion for any future assessment of his reign. To actualize that vision, he instituted a trust fund with a board of trustees in 2000 (Osei Tutu II, 2000). The snowballing effect of this initiative is first the establishment of similar schemes by his brother chiefs and their traditional councils. The example of the Offinsoman Education Trust Fund initiated by the Offinsohene, Nana Wiafe Akenten III, affirms this view. In a coincidence that seems too strange to gloss over, the Ghana government in August 2001 inaugurated the new Ghana Education Trust Fund (GET-Fund). The primary focus of the GETFund is to provide funding to supplement the provision of education at all levels by the government. The Ghana Education Trust Fund Act, (2000) Act 58 (3a), states that

The sources of money for the fund are as follows: (a) an amount of money, equivalent to two and half percent of the prevailing rate of the value added tax to be paid by the Value Added Service to the fund or such percentage not being less than two and half percent of the value added tax rate, as parliament may determine; (b) such other money as may be allocated by Parliament for the fund; (c) money that accrues to the fund from investment made by the body of trustees of the fund; (d) grants, donations, gifts and other voluntary contributions to the
fund; and other monies or property that may in any manner become lawfully payable and vested in the Board of trustees for the fund.

In their individual traditional roles and in their collective capacity as the statutory Traditional Councils, Regional House of Chiefs and the National House of Chiefs, traditional leaders as policy actors exert a considerable amount of influence on the education sub sector policy formulation; and undoubtedly play a highly significant role in policy implementation, even though they operate from the level of unofficial participants. But when appointed as members of school boards, statutory councils, boards and corporations, they indubitably exert appropriate influence in the roles they play.

Summary

This chapter has sought to explore the dynamics of the leadership structures and role of Ashanti traditional leadership systems and its contribution towards the development of education in Asanteman. It was discerned that the process of formal schooling and western education was given a decisive impetus to advance in the core area of Asante with a perceptible change in the attitude of her leadership in the early part of the twentieth century, after a rather late start compared to the coastal regions of Ghana.

The discourse on power and authority revealed both the universal and unique aspects of this perpetually problematic but vital human institution in Asante. The sacred and secular nature of leadership with a commitment to stirring consciousness before group consciousness and restoring hope in communities was noted.

The centralized nature of Ghanaian education planning was explored in the literature review, but the startling discovery was the space Ashanti traditional leadership created for itself to fully participate in the process of advancing schooling for her citizens
until their efforts were halted by a combination of legislative and executive fiats in the first republic. The more stable post 1966 political scene saw a resumption that has culminated in the current surge to fully center education and human resource development as a prop in the reinvention of the relevance of traditional leadership.

The duality and complementary of genders roles in Asante traditional leadership was noted. The critical observation was made that at present effort should made towards a more conscious and sustainable drive to center girls’ education in order to ensure equity in the human resource development of Asanteman. The performance of seven girls’ senior secondary schools in the top ten, two of them, St Louis Girls Secondary and Yaa Asantewaa Secondary School, located in Asante in the 2003 terminal national exams gives added impetus to this stance (GES, 2004).

The unofficial but significant role of traditional leadership in the policy formation and implementation milieu was also discussed. The cogent conclusion was a need to fully participate in this area of government since the important decisions as to who gets what, when and how much were decided in this sphere with important and far reaching implications for the whole country.

The major point of interest and discovery was the fact that chiefs and traditional leaders in Asante have consistently played leading roles in the education enterprise in Ghana but this fact has more often than not been glossed over in recounting education related issues. They are mentioned as appendages and afterthoughts and not as equal stakeholders in spite of the enormous investments in time, fiscal commitment, community mobilization and sweat equity, gender sensitization, diffusing the innovation of schooling in their communities, diplomatic contacts for community advancement and
with the present corps serving as role models for the young folks in their communities.

This gap in the literature is hopefully rectified by the current assignment.

The next chapter focuses on a review of both the methodological literature and the methodology with which the research was undertaken.
Chapter Three

Research Methods

Some underlying theories and methodological literature review.

The premise for this dissertation is guided by the fact that a developing Asante society in a modern country has to chart new paths with its leaders in a realm presently dominated by western cultural and educational principals. The issue for which solutions are being sought in this discourse is schooling and constraints on its leadership is in fact a western export to Ghana and other African countries and cultures. Thus, any underlying theories should be framed within concessions described by the two cultures that intersect in the study, Asante and western cultures in a Ghanaian context, with additional layers provided by the histories of these culture; their dynamic and evolving relationships.

This study as stated earlier offers an opportunity to interrogate the relevance of Asante traditional leadership in a modern state. It even at times also raises the issue as to if a centuries old institution, chieftaincy as a leadership system, meets the requirements and characteristic of modern leadership thinking within the parameters erected by scholars in that field. This is not to argue that there is a universally accepted criterion for leadership.

A multiplicity of Asante and western theories frames the evolution of this thesis. Otumfuo Osei Tutu II’s call to transform Asante through formal education has inherent within it the Asante and Akan concept of *nnoboa* or communal interdependence. Busia (1951); Wiredu (1996); Gyekye (2000) and others attribute Asante social and leadership fabric to communalism. Aubrey (2002) equates *nnoboa* to a type of “community merry-go-round concept.” It refers to the way in which communities and or villagers come
together to help each other with private farming activities—building projects, birth, marriage and funeral celebrations (Antubam, 1963; Kyeremanten 1964; Arthur, 1994). *Nnobo* succinctly embodies variants of economic, psychological and development support in Asante villages, towns and communities.

The *nnobo* philosophy also conveys the symbolism communicated by the unity and strength, *nkabumu*, of a bunch of palm frond broom, *praya*. When in single strands, it is fragile, but when bunched up, it is unbreakable and serves various utilitarian purposes. The *nnobo* and *praya* philosophies, with their grassroots, inclusive and embracing nature, and in the mode of Freire’s (1970, 1981) participatory orientation, form a basis for the theoretical underpinning of this dissertation. One of the many uses of this symbol is to utilize the sense of unity it confers to sweep out the mire of ignorance and lack of knowledge that has in a manner arrested the pace of development and participation in issues of concerns to Asante. It additionally connotes leadership in unity, conferring strength to advance community and group interest.

*Sankofa “se wo were fi na wosan kofa a yenkyi”* is an Asante adage and philosophy that literally translates, “There is nothing wrong with learning from hindsight”; and that reflects within it the belief that the quest for knowledge is based on critical examination, intelligent and patient investigation. It also expresses the principle that the past serves as a guide for planning the future, or wisdom in learning from the past in building the future. But in the movement with time, the gems from the past must be picked from behind and carried forward. In traditional art forms and Asante folklore, it is depicted as a bird that flies forward with its head turned backward. Traditional leaders and leadership systems straddle both the past and the future, thus in resuscitating
education in Asante, they have a vital role to stir the consciences of society, mentor and moderate the pace of change, and also reinvent their authority in the process. The construction of a theoretical frame within Asante philosophical parameters is thus an appropriate approach to this study.

A vehicle for this reinvention of traditional authority and power is the medium of modern day non-governmental organizations. Osborne & Gaebler (1992) argue among other issues that a government that is encumbered by bureaucracy and fails to encompass its citizens and also provide efficient services is of no merit to the people. One should not lose sight of the fact that Asante traditional and other African leadership system before the advent of European colonial enterprise had well structured governments that provided multifaceted services to their citizens. Colonialism had breached, encroached, corroded and emasculated traditional leadership and their structures. Nascent and centralizing political leadership in postcolonial Ghana in the immediate post independent era sought to undermine and almost manipulated it out of legal existence but its tenacious resilient nature had ensured the survival of this test (Ninsin, 1993; Allman & Tashjian 2000; Rathbone, 2000). The current drive by the King, chiefs and the citizens of Asante in the education realm, in more ways than one seems to borrow from the theory of offering and restoring hope in their people along the lines suggested by Osborne & Gaebler (1992) and Howard (2001) by charting new paths for chieftaincy and in the process reinventing the relevance of the institution.

The old calling for deeds of bravery in war and prowess in hunting no longer accounts for the stellar qualities that modern traditional leadership demands, neither does reliance on deeds by ancestors suffice in the prevailing situation, though concessions to
the latter point may account for one’s initial nomination and election as a leader. The avenue as stated is through the utilization of the philosophy of *nnoboa*, which does translate and align to the characteristic philosophy of non-profit or non-governmental organizations. Solomon (1999) defines six basic characteristics of the nonprofit sector as a collection of entities that are “organizations; private as opposed to governmental; nonprofit distributing; self governing; voluntary; and of public benefit.” Aubrey (2002) in her survey of African nonprofits reiterates some of these and expands on them to an eight-fold criterion to include the following:

1. They are not arms of the state
2. They do not receive a substantial portion of their operating budgets from government
3. Their membership are voluntary, and their operating funds come from voluntary contributions and fund raising
4. They are not beholden to the state in the pursuance of their organizational objectives
5. They are autonomous especially in the formulation of their organizational objectives
6. They are not profit making; their earnings are regenerated into the organization for the continuation of their activities
7. The organization is run by nationals of the country if it is a national NGO (NNGO) or a local NGO (LNGO) and
8. The organization may be run by an international staff if it is an international NGO (INGO) (Aubrey, 1997, 2002).

The establishment of education endowments and trusts funds, as a medium of supplementing education finance, restoring hope and faith in Asante communities meets most of the standards outlined by Solomon (1999) and Aubrey (1997, 2002) in their typology of non-governmental organizations. Thus an evaluative study of traditional leadership and its practices ought to take cognizance of this fact and pursue investigations of the institute along the theories outlined.
An extension of this thinking leads one to the realization that the *susu* or mutual saving schemes prevalent among Ghanaian women, especially market women and other semi professionals as an avenue for the mobilization of funds lines on the indigenous continuum which the OEF seeks to explore to advance education. The philosophy under which *susu* schemes operate is very simple. The crushing need for reasonable capital to practice myriad trades and professions and also sustain their families; and the regular banking system’s refusal to extend credit or recognize them as credit worthy leads these groups of women to contribute seemingly insignificant amounts of money on a daily basis that are then given to one person at the end of the week or month depending on the mold being operated. This is rotated till each member of a group has been similarly served, and some appreciable capital has been acquired in the process. The OEF by requesting similar “insignificant monthly or yearly contributions”, the equivalent of thirty cents a year, from Asante citizens and residents of Ashanti Region (Otumfu Osei Tutu II, 2000), seeks to supplement central government funding and expand access to education. It is in my view developing an “educational susu scheme”, with the expectation that a reasonable number of citizens would be enabled to access various levels of education in spite of limited financial ability. This pragmatic and participatory approach to the vital issue of confronting challenges that inhibit education can be observed to have its appeal reaching into the core of the community. It has also span out to embrace the Asante and Ghanaian Diaspora, ensuring in the process the involvement of the total community, the *oman* or state.

Theories from the western scholarship that guide this study include a combination of modernism, postmodernism, feminist constructs and grounded research theories. It
needs to be noted that all the theories cited above have its advocates and critics. For instance, George F. Wills, a noted conservative and columnist of Newsweek magazine in a recent critique of postmodernism *Privileging Modernism* advanced the argument that postmodernists “… like making art out of opinions and unfiltered experience making esthetic concerns subservient to social critiques”. While this may seem a valid conservative critique, it nonetheless in my view glosses over the fact that modernism, postmodernism and the social theories that have sprouted since their inception after the Second World War has given voice to those who had here the to never had a voice in social and ethnographic research, let alone stake a claim in its reports. This decentering and consequent lack of participation and thus ownership in research findings is the very principle men like Robert Chambers (1997) and the late Paulo Freire (1970, 1981) caution ethnographic researchers to look out and guide against, or else produce “fly on the wall” works. Facilitating a hearing of the voices of respondents is a cardinal focus of this study at presentations, during the defense of the dissertation and the subsequent works that would emerge from it.

Commenting on his role as a consultant, Paulo Freire (1981) said,

> When I agree to act as a consultant for a government, I must be assured, out of respect for the people, that my collaboration does not become an invasion, however disguised, of their rights…Once the ground has been determined, then my role is transformed, I become a co-worker with the nationals rather than a mere applier of formulas (p. 28).

By extension Freire is implying from my perspective the fact that the researcher who is willing to learn, immerse him/herself in his/her new home, ask the relevant questions in unobtrusive ways ends up gaining new vistas of the environment in which he/she is operating in and thereby enters others experiences and gains knowledge. The
experiences of Stambach (2000) in Tanzania, and Allman & Tashjian (2000) in Ghana attest to this paradigm. Using the experiences of these researchers as cues enhanced the validity and the outcome of this dissertation.

A cardinal instrument of my approach was the development of an ability to listen and learn. For in listening, one not alone immerses him/herself but was also able to closely observe the environment in which one was operating and relearn anew things that might have been taken for granted by virtue of the fact of being an insider. The development of a critical listening posture was a crucial component of my research approach that enabled me to see and learn through the views and visions of my co-researchers.

Burawoy, et al (2000), notes that institutional ethnography as was practiced by a section of the Chicago School of Sociology exposed the subterranean world of institutions and brought some needed reforms by inserting the voices of inmates in their findings. But in the same space, it is noted that Becker’s pioneering role in studies of “deviance” or “disorganization”, gladly funded by officialdom led to the imposition of stifling regulation on these groups by social agencies instead of assisting them to overcome societal norms that propelled them to such status. This observation serves as a reminder to avert the misapplication of the findings of this work to the disadvantage of those who hopefully participated in it. It additionally notes the fact that whatever the research findings and conclusions unearthed, it should include and not exclude the multiple views and voices of co-researchers and collaborators; efforts were made not to just turn them into subjects for the study. The opportunity of dialogue with a native son
opened up vistas for effective collaboration with co-researchers that might otherwise be
denied to an outsider striving to look inside.

Feminist theorists introduce important constructs to the research milieu. These
include but are not limited to empowerment, disempowerment, story telling, and multiply
voices. Olsen (2000) cautions that feminist theorists cannot be categorized as a
monolithic, global, homogenous group focused on gender issues. The many variants of
feminists however center and strive to realize social justice for women in specific
context. A core creed of feminist theory or theories is the recognition of male dominance
and the restrictions it imposes and impresses on women, Martin (1994).

Feminist theory further argues that it is difficult to represent people in reality
without their direct participation Olson (2000). It is more comfortable with research done
with an “emic”, that is an insider’ perspective, as opposed to an “etic” approach or
research done with an outsider’s stance. Etic perspective is often associated with
quantitative research, with its almost total lack of close involvement and association with
the subject of study. The detached unemotionally involved approach it is claimed makes
for dispassionate outcomes and untainted results. But one can really wonder and question
the substance of this argument in view of the fact that humans construct the paradigm
within which the research is conducted.

Both attributes originated from the Frankfurt school, but the emic stance is now
an ingrained element of qualitative research and is apparent in the next chapter of this
work. Additionally, the basic characteristic of the emic as an element of qualitative
research perpetually seeking “verstehen”, that is to grasp, understand and convey
situations from participants or actors’ understanding of issues at a particular place and
time in the course of fieldwork endears it to feminists and other practitioners of qualitative inquiry. Interviewing and listening to the life stories and perspectives of chiefs, educators, community leaders, parents’, apprentices etc who were included in the purposive sample, featured on the same magnitude as that of other respondents in the study.

The Asante traditional leadership spectrum encompasses both men and women Mikell, and Skinner (1989); Wilks (1993); Yankah (1998); Rathbone (2000). Women comprise almost fifty-two percent of Ghana’s population UNDP (2000); Ghana Government Statistician, (2002). According to the annual report of the Ghana Education Service (2000), there is a growing preponderance of female students out numbering male students in urban coeducational institutions. This reality necessitated an input from this vital segment of the population, who has been referred to as precious beads by Yeboah (1997), to add and ensure added validity to the research findings.

Modernism was introduced in the period after the Second World War according to Denzin & Lincoln (2000). It precipitated the cracks in the hegemony of the establishment and its hold in the world of research. It also dented the sway of the positivists and their claims to rational research. It additionally gave voice to the underclass, the underprivileged and the colonized. Thus research from the point of view of power brokers shifted to the point of view of the underclass, the underprivileged and the colonized. The latter shift is in tune with Michelle Fine et al (2000) assertion of working the hyphen that is, principally centering the view of the participants and the observed and not that of the researcher. Stanfield II (1994), concisely framed the point of view of the “other” when he asserted,
There are certain corners of Western life, such as modern social sciences and sciences in general, in which the fundamental influences of ethnicity in shaping interpretations of reality are ignored or given only minimal attention. Thus more clearly, it is difficult for many to understand or to see that even the most “rational” modes of scientific thought are fundamentally ethnic products (p. 175).

The dawn of post modernism and the blurred genres marked the period of cross migration between humanists and social scientists into each other’s realm of study to seek and cross fertilize ideas to inform their respective fields of studies. Social scientists hoped to poached complex structural and post structural reading of social text. Humanists sought to explore new social theories, new ways to study popular culture and its ethnographic context in the view of Denzin and Lincoln (2000). The end product of this cross transfusion is the continued movement away from foundational and quasi-foundational criteria. Cross-disciplinary borrowing to enrich the outcome of my work was certainly entertained, as a necessary research tool to facilitate my fieldwork. To achieve this objective a mix of qualitative and quantitative paradigms were utilized in the current work. Borrowed ideas from the worlds of policy analysis, political theory, education, gender theories, history et al are constants of this evolving study. I should note that neither the thesis defense nor publication of this work connotes an end to the continuous study of the subject under discussion.

Grounded theory according to Bogdan & Biklen (1995) and Rubin & Rubin (1995) is rooted in and from the information and explanations from the field that originates from the details, evidence and examples from interviews, observations and participation in fieldwork. The proponents of the theory, Glaser and Strauss (1967)
explain it as what is happening in terms of those involved in the situation. At the base of all grounded theory is the necessary interaction between the researcher and interviewee. According to Denzin & Lincoln (1994), the theory evolves during research through the continuous interplay between analysis and data collection. A central feature of this analytic approach is a general method of constant comparative analysis. That is generating theory initially from data or if existing theories seem appropriate to the area of study from that source, then this may be elaborated or modified, as incoming data are meticulously played against it. Proponents of quantitative methodology utilize it as a supplementary instrument of analysis; and thereby confer added legitimacy on this theory with its adaptation and utilization in diverse academic disciplines also. The grounded theory component of this work manifest itself by assuring that analysis; categorizing; coding, identifying themes emerging from data in the field commenced in the field in Ghana to contribute to the rich texture of data that was collected. Collaborative interviews, education policy documents, education reports from offices and libraries, newspaper articles, and other documents from the field were digested to facilitate necessary feedback before I departed from the sites of interviews.

Data from the field as averred, determined the final parameters within which the study was conducted.

A point of view.

The interest in the subject under investigation originated from the multiple functions in which I am engage in Ghana as a professional public education administrator and policy analyst; a traditional leader and chief of a small village, casting me in the role of a societal pillar in an immediate and wider social context; a husband of an educator; a
parent and father of three students; and finally as someone who started his professional life teaching in secondary schools for twelve years and is therefore a life long teacher. These varied activities were carried out before and after embarking on graduate studies. In addition to these Ghanaian experiences, I have undoubtedly been influenced by my visits to the Netherlands, Britain, Côte d’Ivoire and Togo, and periods of graduate studies in the United States and active participation in a number of social and academic clubs and organizations.

My membership and participation in proceedings of the Offinso Traditional Council composed of divisional and sub-divisional chiefs that function as the statutory advisory council to the paramount chief of the Offinso traditional area conferred on me the status of an insider. My status as an insider in the traditional leadership strata and as a senior public education administrator and policy analyst conferred a unique opportunity to discourse on this issue from the perspective of “a triple tier insider” looking out in contrast to that of an outsider looking in. I will admit that though this might have constituted a barrier, the advantage bestowed by this unique opportunity far outweighed any limitations this status imposed.

The roles outlined above, and decisions made under any of the caps, undoubtedly impacts and affects segments of the populations of the country weather they are in school as pupils and students or out of school as parents and consumers or clients of education policy and members of the Offinso community. Thus as the country debates new paths to chart in her educational discourse and as Asante gropes for directions to confront evolving educational challenges, I feel compelled to join in and offer some insights that I can contribute in the realm of leadership. This is done with the minimal expectation that
some seeds or facets of a different but positive streak unearthed during the research will cause little ripples and are added to the issues being considered for implementation.

It has been noted that very few, if ever any research, are wholly neutral and not subject to some level of partial subjectivity (Denzin & Lincoln 1994; Cresell, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 1994; Burawoy et al, 2000). The ostensibly detached, objective approach of quantitative research couched in positivist tones could not apply in this study. The utilization of dispassionate rational objectivity, distance, and control, supposedly basic traits of quantitative research and positivism could not be evoked in this assignment. The above observations are not meant to stigmatize quantitative research methods in any negative perspectives. This is more so in view of the fact that the two approaches are at times interdependent to facilitate necessary study and findings, not withstanding their separate approaches. Charles S. Reichart and Thomas D. Cook (1979, p.23), aptly notes “… even the most introspective and subjective oriented investigators cannot help but count heads or use quantitative concepts as “bigger than or less than.” In this specific study, the fact that six sites were the areas of focus additionally negates any taints of totally obliterating a quantitative input.

The empathetic nature of qualitative research that requires a certain level of involvement with, and tries to see and present issues from an insider’s perspective trails within it also the potential to end up advocating issues and concerns of the subject of study. “Native sons” may best advance such advocacy roles, if it is an ethnographic study. The persuasive and colorful presentation of Chagga society evoked by Stambach (2000) may however neutralize the last observation. But it could not wholly negate the
possibility of a son of the soil having a head start over an outsider, even though both researchers may carry different bags of concerns and biases into the same field.

Challenges in field research are meant to be resolved within the abilities of the researcher without an overt exhibition of bias; and this is the responsibility I assumed by consenting to research in my area of origin and of an evolving and dynamic institution to which I belong.

Rubin & Rubin (1995) further affirm that, “Culture defines who is an insider and who is an outsider. It sets up boundaries between those who should and those who should not be taught the rules. To learn about culture an interviewer …must be allowed to cross the boundary and become accepted as one who can be taught” (p. 171). A willingness to immerse one’s self in a culture and learn about it brings information and opens windows into the experiences of people we meet. This point is amply attested to by the welcome and co-operation Mikell (1997, 1981); Allman, (1994, 1997 and 2000); Stambach (1990, 1996 and 2000) and Berry (2001) were accorded in the numerous forays made to the sites of their studies thousands of miles from “home” and “in their new homes and environments”. In fact, Allman, Berry and Mikell in Ghana and Stambach in Tanzania do assert that they discovered new homes away from home. Mandela (1994) describes such an experience as the crossing of rivers to garner new insights. The crossing of “academic boundaries” has since the era of Malinowski and the Meads et al at the beginning of the last century been an accepted norm of qualitative research that is borrowed from the field of anthropology. Thus in a way, my transition from the world of Athens to Offinso, Juaben, Kokofu, Sunyani, Accra, and Kumasi in Ghana and back to Ohio University, constitute a transition of some sort, more especially, when I was engaged in a pursuit to
unravel the mystique of leadership perceptions in the traditional domain. I had to create and make “new homes” from my old haunts to assure effective entrée and acceptance. And in my specific instance, I crossed more then rivers in traversing the geographic expanse of the Atlantic Ocean, the North Sea and the North Pole in my quest.

The transcendent and evolving nature of qualitative research leads to the “bricolage” approach at times adopted as part of the study. As indicated above, the researcher turning into a “bricoleur” or “a jack of all trades” in pursuit of his/her study is nothing innovative, according to Denzin & Lincoln (2000). They further acknowledge that in the era of blurred genres, the qualitative researcher has assumed a greater liberty to cross cut and borrow from different disciplines to inform his or her study. This is part of the movement, which has turned “… the humanities to become the central resources for critical, interpretive theory, and for qualitative research broadly conceived” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p.3). The image of a quilt maker or in this instance an Asante Bonwire kente weaver is thus imposed on the researcher and in the process the practice of research while interactive, was also theoretical, interpretive and political. Asante folklore ascribes the origins of kente to Bonwire. In opting to interrogate the issues of traditional leadership and its participation in a revival and transformation of formal education, I was certainly casting myself into the role of a quilt maker and or an Asante Bonwire kente weaver, a role that requires dexterity of mind, forging new but maintaining old relationships and building bridges to both east and west to help unravel positive leadership qualities that would facilitate effective schooling in Asanteman.

Chambers (1997), however, cautions that in any such theoretical, political or interpretative undertaking, “the knowledge of the last”, that is the people or culture being
researched, should be made to count and placed first, instead of the researcher “flying in” and without any dirt attaching to the hands impose “new” and unworkable knowledge on local situations, without due cognizance to whatever local practices had sustain that culture until the arrival of the “savior”. This is a position with which I am in total agreement and that served as a guide in my field research. Friere (1970, 1981) similarly commented on the need to be part of the environment in which one conducts his research. While in some instances I blended into the milieu without much disquiet, on other occasions I had to perform needed customary rites before integration and reintegration.

**Access to the site of the research and the participants.**

The site for the conduct of fieldwork was my home country Ghana and more specifically my home region, the Ashanti Region. The focus was on intersection of traditional leadership and education and the process of education change as it has evolve and been impacted by the 1987 education reforms especially in the Offinso traditional area and district, Juaben in the Ejisu-Juaben District, Kokofu in the Amansei East District, Kumasi, the “cultural capital of Ghana” in the Kumasi Metropolis and in the national capital, Accra. Associated side trips to Sunyani, Techiman, and Cape Coast added to the research experiences. Aside of Accra, which was on the coastal board of the country, the other four localities were in four districts in the Ashanti Region. With Kumasi as the core, Offinso was situated in a northwestern direction. Juaben was southeast of the axis and Kokofu lay in a southwestern direction. The distances transverse by these locations was extensive. Please refer to Appendix “B” for the sites identified on the map of Ghana.
The initial naivety exhibited in opting to cover such an extensive area for the interviews manifested itself within days of arrival on the site. However, this did not act as a deterrent to limit the scope of the research or deny me access to the sites for the fieldwork. The enormity of the area covered, the traveling time spent on some of the dusty and where tarmac, and potholed, uncomfortable traveling and energy sapping roads is what is being commented on here. An added observation was the huge dent to the limited budget, mostly loans with which the fieldwork was conducted.

Since this was a formal study, I had initiated contacts through personal conversation, letters, e-mails and phone calls to some participants eliciting various forms of consent and permission to be part of the fieldwork. Preliminary contacts were initiated with two of the three amanhene when they toured the United States with the Otumfuo in 2001; and a delegation of which I was a member from Ohio University’s African Studies Program interacted with the Asantehene’s entourage in Pontiac, Michigan, on a number of issues, including the institution of an Otumfuo Fellowship in the program. The subsequent follow up was through letters that were mailed to them one month before my departure from Athens to book interview appointments and phone calls to reconfirm these appointments on arrival in Ghana. Such an entrée had been assured with the two paramount chiefs’ request that I should keep them posted whenever I was to embark on my fieldwork (Oral communication, May, 2001).

The third omanhene and the other divisional and sub-divisional chiefs were informed formally at a sitting of the Offinso Traditional Council of my intent to conduct interviews as part of my research. This had also been preceded with a private audience with the omanhene. The registrar of the council was also informed to allow me access to
the archives of the council. Nana Offinsohene, Nana Wiafe Akenten III, the *omanhene* of Offinso has in fact been an enthusiast of my quest for graduate studies and rendered much needed morale and other kind support.

To facilitate access to the selected chiefs, either paramount, divisional or sub-divisional in status, not with standing the academic nature of the study, and in order not to breach any customary norms and mores, I had to perform the necessary customary ritual of presenting *akwasunasa* (entrée drinks or gesture of goodwill drinks) of two bottles of schnapps before the commencement of any interviews or observation. And this was in spite of the fact that such interviews were conducted “privately” either in the private residences of the chiefs or the private living areas within their palaces and in the absence of their *akyeame* or linguists.

This approach is reinforced by Yankah (1995), quoting Baffour Osei Akoto, a senior *okyeame* of the Otumfuo, “…whatever is done with drink (liquor) should be done with drink, and that which is performed with water, should be done with water”. With my background, I invited sanctions without conforming and performing within expected customary norms at the courts of chiefs, as I painfully recall when I committed such a faux pas in traditional protocol during the celebration of one *Akwasidea* in August 2000 in the company of a guest. Such breaches harbor the potential to totally derail all and any rapport that has been cultivated. Engendering a favorable research environment is basic to the success of any fieldwork, thus my traditional role imposed an added need to be observant of such norms to facilitate a successful field trip.

A coincidental aspect of the discourse with the three *amanhene* who participated in these interviews was the fact that one took place on *Menedapaa*, the Saturday
preceding Akweside, the festive Sunday that occurs nine times in a calendar year and two on Akweside itself, that is on August 17 and 18, 2002 respectively. These cyclic forty days festivals “celebrates Nyeame (God) and the spirits of departed rulers and ancestors who are propitiated, their names and deeds recalled, and favors and mercies solicited” (Busia, 1951). Thus any inclination to circumvent court etiquette on such a festive occasion would ultimately have foreclosed future opportunities to develop the links that had been forged. The gain from such concessions to traditional norms also reinforced the perception of the “native son” seeking to understand the milieu from which I emerged, within which I would operate and in all probabilities return to in future.

Before my departure from Athens, letters were also dispatched to the Deputy Director General, Ghana Education Service and the Administrator, Ghana Education Trust Fund, requesting interviews. Additionally, e-mails were exchanged with the latter to fertilize the grounds for the fieldwork. Aside of their current top-level roles in Ghana’s education structure, these were already board members of the OEF before their appointment to their respective positions. The latter furthermore is an alumnus of Ohio University, and so presented possibilities and opportunities to enable snowballing for the purposes of the research. Please refer to Appendix “G” and “G 1”.

My previous work location in the secretariat of the Ghana Education Service Council and the network that had been nurtured throughout a lifetime of work yielded appreciative returns during the fieldwork. The linkages forged earlier facilitated access to a consultant of the ministry of education and the GES, a deputy director general of GES, the then director of secondary education division, the heads of the three secondary schools in Kumasi and Offinso, the general secretary and her deputy of the Ghana
National Association of Teachers (GNAT) and their district secretary in Offinso and other education professionals who collaborated in the field work.

Similarly, a cultivated niche within the tier of traditional leadership assured access to both queen mothers and the other chiefs and participants who collaborated in the study. A particularly stimulating focus group session ensured with four queen mothers after they “roasted” me for not complying with traditional norms on my return from “college abroad” since in their specific instances, they were absent from the Offinso Traditional Council meeting during which my field work was announced to council members. After assuaging their “hurt feeling” with the assurance of providing “traditional drink”, a really invigorating two hours of semi structured and directed exchanges ensured to enrich the research outcome.

Additionally, oral directives and a few phone calls from the Deputy Director General of the Ghana Education Service further ensured access to the Director, Secondary Education Division, Ghana Education Service Headquarters Directorate, the District Director of Education, Offinso and the heads of the three secondary schools that participated in the fieldwork.

Not with standing such official permissions, I still had to negotiate entry into specific sites with the personnel I encountered to ensure smooth adaptation into their milieu and possibly avert sabotage. Trust and rapport, cannot be imposed, but needs to be developed on a one on one basis or whenever possible through introductions (snowballing) by previous informants depending on how one related to such people. To an extent, this was the exact sequence of events that facilitated the purposive inclusion and interviews with the wife of the head of one of the secondary schools in Kumasi and
an alumnus of that school who also happened to be an oheneba, son of the Bompata stool of Asante Akim.

I did not anticipate any problems emanating from any of my sources going into the field or deliberately chose to minimize any potential challenges. I was far from right in this assumption. The distances I had to cover in traveling within Ghana to ensure that my targeted sample was interviewed were daunting. A major challenge I had to contend with was the need to rebook appointments when there were mix-ups with my interviewees especially, the bureaucrats in Accra. Such need to reschedule had a near disastrous impact on my time frame for interviews. One interview had to be rescheduled thrice and a few others twice. And this was in spite of the fact that prior contacts were made and times for the interviews reconfirmed during face-to-face meetings within the first three weeks of my arrival in Ghana. Another interview had to be scrapped since my intended interviewee kept up a stream of excuses till I gave up on the fifth try. Even in the traditional realm, a follow up interview with the Kokofuhene could not also materialize due to an emergency summons of the Kokofuhene by the Otumfuo to a function in Kumasi. But the positive outcome of the abortive trip to Kokofu was an opportunity to visit Lake Bosomtwe, a crater lake within the domain of the chief.

My adherence to time scheduling was brought into discussion when the Juabenhene indicated that he had expected us since eleven o’clock in the morning on our arrival at his palace around two o’clock in the afternoon. The chair of my committee who had kindly consented to initiate me into fieldwork was on this trip with me and my embarrassment at this slip was predictable. We had been held up participating in the Akwesidea festivities in Offinso, two hours drive away from Juaben; and therefore could
not leave before twelve noon or risk breaching traditional norms. The insight from this experience was that a careful synchronization of time to accommodate collaborators from the different areas needed to be planned ahead of each interview, observation or participation.

**Techniques for data collection**

I had anticipated before the fieldwork the utilization of the following qualitative methods to facilitate data collection- interviews, observation, participation, document analysis and archival searches of the various traditional councils. In fact I least expected that the life stories of participants would feature prominently in attaining a successful outcome to the field component of my work. While I utilized all the techniques I had projected, the threading of the life stories of most of the participants that was only intended as introductory to ease access added a deeper, thick and rich texture to sustain the basic assumptions that underlay the research question, the intersection of Asante’s traditional leadership and formal education and the quest for relevance and reinvention of this leadership system in Ghana.

The resort to participant-observation as one of the techniques that was used in the field reinforced the fact that ethnography as a research tool was tapped. This ensured that naturalism was consciously pursued in consonance with the dictum of Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 9-10):

Ethnography exploits the capacity that any social actor possesses for learning new cultures, and the objectivity to which this process gives rise. Even where he or she is researching a familiar group or setting, the participant observer is required to treat this as ‘anthropologically strange’, in an effort to make explicit the presuppositions he or she takes for granted as a cultural member. In this way, it is hoped; the culture is turned into an object available for study. Naturalism proposes that through marginality, in social position and perspective, it is possible to construct an account of the culture under investigation that both understands it
from within and captures it as external to, and independent of, the researcher: in other words as a natural phenomenon.

Opportunities to participate in the decentralized science and math workshop for girls in basic and senior secondary schools in Offinso between September 2-5, 2002 and the monthly deliberations of the Offinso Traditional Council between the months of August–December 2002, from the viewpoints of both a researcher and participant during the research period reinforced the above contention.

A major technique I used was the interview format. According to Rubin and Rubin (1995),

Interviews are [friendly] purposeful conversations, geared toward one party seeking information from another or more partners”. Qualitative interviews are further described as a “…way of finding out how others feel and think about their world…[interviewers] understand and reconstruct events in which they participate…you can extend your intellectual and emotional reach across time, class, race, sex and geographical divisions.

The opportunity to share in the world of other communities, traditional and educational leaders was certainly a welcomed and learning experience. Guba & Lincoln (1985) delineate the purposes for interviews to include but not limited to obtaining here and now constructions of persons, events, activities, organizations, feelings, motivations, claims, concerns, cultures and other entities. These possibilities enabled the gleaning of deeper insights of the phenomenon of traditional leadership that were in the normal course of events taken for granted by the researcher.

Either consciously or inadvertently, one could not avoid drawing parallels with quantitative interviews that lean towards the structured format with prepared or arranged questions that allow no departure from the text. It is normally rigid and inflexible, with
no leeway for probes or follows up questions. It can and does breed boredom and additionally denies the interviewer the opportunity to exhibit any interviewing skills acquired either with training or experience (Dipboye & Gaugler, 1993; Half, 1993; Castetter, 1996).

Qualitative interviews on the other hand tend mostly toward the unstructured format to allow for its characteristic flexibility and flow. It may also be semi-structured, but as Bogdan & Biklen (1998) cautions, “…you are confident of getting comparable data across subjects, but you lose the opportunity to understand how the subjects themselves structure the topic at hand”. Merton, Fiske & Kendell (1990) however intimate that when researchers want more specific information, they use a semi-structured format.

Strict adherence to the interview format that guided the research was avoided if it was realized that it hindered the flow of information from respondents and co-researchers. This was the issue in more then one instance during the fieldwork. However, three specific instances, that readily comes to mind in the course of my field research and which I specially noted were the interviews with the consultant of the ministry of education, the Kokofuhene and the focus group interview with the four ahemaa (queen mothers) from the Offīnso area.

All three interviews far exceeded the one-hour limit that I had earmark for each interview session as the collaborators enthusiastically delved into the issues we did dialogue about from different angles. This observation is not however meant to devalue the contributions of my other co-researchers. The passion and depths of their exposition was a striking feature that still lingers on in my mind. Please refer to Appendix “A” for a
list of the interviewees who kindly participated in the study and “Appendix F”, for a sample of the interview protocol that was utilized to guide the field research.

Additionally, sources from libraries and the Internet were accessed to aid the research effort; “the Burawoy boys” utilized the latter effectively in the work that resulted in *Global Ethnography: Forces, Connections, and Imagination in a Postmodern World*. I utilized the internet to access current information on Ghana, read Ghanaian newspapers, on education, on the issue of leadership and also borrow books and journals through the Ohio Link from member libraries when ever Alden Library indicated it had not got any work I needed to access to facilitate the dissertation.

The proliferation of “communication centers and internet cafes” in the cities, towns, and villages of Ghana facilitated my ability to keep in touch with the chair of my dissertation committee through both e-mail and telephone contacts. These centers and cafes operated from various locations and did range from state of the art settings with banks of computers, telephone booths and conference rooms to one computer and single line telephone dial up connections in “container shops”. Container shops are either plywood or metal sheets nailed or welded together in hexagon shapes with doors or windows cut into them for access and ventilation. In spite of the diverse structural outlays, their most important role of keeping me in touch with the center in Athens cannot be discounted. My use of the internet, email, and telephone to stay connected demonstrated in a practical and personal manner the globalize world in play.

Audiotaping and photographs, both of which are traditional aids of research effort within the last century played significant roles in the fieldwork undertaken in the summer-fall 2002 in Ghana. Ghanaians love to be either photographed or filmed. The
beaming similes that are most often flashed at visitors with or without cameras attest to this observation. The realities of an insider who would mail back footage were welcomed and facilitated the utilization of these tools in my field research. I need to add that even though I have used a tape recorder on a couple of occasions in recording interviews, I had a scary experience when I discovered ten minutes into one of my interview that my recorder was malfunctioning and I had to take notes in long hand. This pointer to potential foul ups down the road ensured that I procured a backup recorder in the course of the fieldwork. A similar experience occurred during my last interview in Athens. After e-mail exchanges, the chair of my committee very generously sent a backup recorder to me through an exchange student who was due in Ghana in the fall of 2002. It need to be noted that Bogdan & Biklen (1998), Rubin & Rubin (1995), Maxwell (1996) among others, have all commented on the noted foul ups a researcher may encounter in the field on this score and I certainly had mine with the recorder.

Another technique out of the basket of qualitative research that I employed was snowballing, that is the introduction to an informant or interviewee by another informant. One of the strengths of snowballing sampling is its efficiency in finding sites or persons whose attributes are central to the research problem. It also enables the researcher to build a sample that represents an active social network in an organization or community (Lindlof, 1995). This technique was used in roping in an assistant director of education in charge of access and quality and wife of a headmaster who was in my targeted sample. It was also utilized in inducting a human resource professional and son of a chief to be part of the sample that was interviewed for the work. I need comment that both interviewees were co-opted partly as a result of the lively and warm reception the headmaster of
Prempeh College accorded me when I arrived at his residence on a Sunday evening for our interview.

It is amazing the number of times I was asked to leave behind a questionnaire or provide one, return later to collect the answers that had been provided and thus facilitate the procedure thereby making it easy for both the researcher and the official concerned. This request often came from the director level education professionals. Each time, the researcher answered that while he had a protocol, a decision and determination had been made not to provide this ahead of any interview, since as much as possibly, he wanted to avoid being provided prepared answers as it would take out the one on one or group interaction that enabled a read of body language during interviews. The non-verbal messages conveyed by body language during one on one interviews holds within it lodes of communication signals as to the truthfulness or otherwise of the interviewees (Hiltrop and Udall, 1995). This was a validity test and asset that I was not willing to give up.

Compliance with such request additionally portended within it the curtailing of opportunities to follow up on issues and ideas that came out during interviews. Couched within these innocuous requests was the realization of the fact that most of these officials perceived of research only within the parameters of sensitized and sterilized quantitative realms. Additionally, a perception of not being comfortably with my approach was detected among some of the officials whom I had wanted to interview. In two specific instances, the excuse of either unavailability of time or work overload prevented planned interviews taking place after numerous rescheduling.
Sample selection.

With the focus of the research staked on discerning leadership practices that work to promote educational delivery; and a stakeholder approach to assess the input if any of Asante traditional leadership in formal education; participation in and observation of the activities of the selected traditional, education and school leaders and community members was an important part of any activity that was undertaken to help make meaningful understanding of issues discussed in the dissertation. From interviews, observations, participation and document reviews a holistic picture was drawn and eventually emerged for this work. The interdependent and linked nature of research with no totally clear-cut and arbitrarily distinguished breaks between qualitative and quantitative approaches was joined when I decided the sampling figure with which I had to work.

My collaborators in this work were purposely sampled for the study. Punch (1998) explains “purposive sampling” as “sampling in a deliberate way, with some purpose or focus in mind” (1998: 193). Patton (1990) asserts that “information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the study”; and thus the description “purposeful sampling.”

I purposely and deliberately selected a group of forty-one participants to interview for the study; and with the exception of two, the rest were additionally parents aside of whatever profession or role that qualified them for inclusion. I had at the inception intended to interview fifty people but the realities of fieldwork, budget constrains, and data collection saturation influenced my decision to exit the field at the point that I did.
The dictates of the field influenced and determined the composition of the sample that I purposively selected. These were made up of fifteen women and twenty-six men. The women included four *ahemaa* (queen mothers) of four towns within Offinso who participated in a focus group interview outside their realm but still within their comfort zones in Accra, the marital home of the *Offinsohemma* (the paramount queen mother of Offinso); three top flight educators- a consultant, a deputy director general and the general secretary of the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), the largest professional and trade union group in the country, the headmistress of the first Roman Catholic girls secondary school in Kumasi and Asante, a senior metropolitan office supervisor; and the headmistress of a junior secondary school and three junior teachers on her staff who also participated in a focus group interview. Additionally, the first recipient of the Otumfuo Fellowship instituted by Ohio University, a woman was also interviewed on my return to Athens.

The twenty-five men who participated in the field research ranged in stature from a carpenter apprentice’s to a member of Ghana’s Council of State, the statutory advisory body to the President of Ghana. The trip in summer 2004 roped the executive secretary, Otumfuo Education Fund. An opportunistic encounter with a young carpenter’s apprentice who informed me that he was a citizen of Offinso but is currently learning a trade with his senior brother in Achimota, a suburb of Accra initiated the process. The opportunistic encounter with this twenty-year old junior secondary school graduate, who walked onto the front porch of my house to complete an assignment for my wife, was a happenstance I was not ready to let pass the day after my arrival in Ghana. In my view,
he fitted Howard’s (2001) contention in connection with the participation and learning abilities of children,

   Participation is found on a long continuum and can be selected and fine-tuned to fit particular situations. Children do participate in their own development with increasing degrees of consciousness, and this can be shaped to move community development along as well. (p. 10).

   Though he was twenty years and in most westerner societies supposedly an adult, in Akan culture, he was not a “fully grown adult” due to the fact that he was an apprentice and thus could safely be placed in the category described above. The Akan and Ghanaian perception of an adult is a person who contributes chop money, a stipend to the upkeep of a home. Additionally, the opportunistic encounter reaffirmed the assertion by Patton (1990), Rubin and Rubin (1995), Lincoln and Denzin (2000) that the researcher should open himself to events in the field and utilize them as they occur. Such a process, they contended also ensured that the data emerged from the field.

   My sample included a sixty-six years akondwasuafuo “stool carrier” at the court of the Offinsohene, who has lived through the reign of four amanhene and served three of them since 1947. This placed him at a particularly incisive location and endowed with a wealth of information about the nascent era, when schools and the process of formal education were being established at a fever pitch rate in the Offinso area. My other informants in this category included five junior secondary school teachers who participated in the focus group interview with their female counterparts, the headmaster of the first coeducational secondary school in Offinso and that of the prime boys secondary school in Kumasi and Asante, a senior house master, an assistant headmaster who is also a traditional leader, two teachers’ trade unionists, a deputy general secretary (an advisor to his traditional leader) and the district secretary of GNAT, a district director.
of education, a director of education at the headquarters of GES, a district chief executive (political head of a district and a former district director of education), and nine men at various levels of traditional leadership positions. The terrain of all nine traditional leaders impacted on formal education in multiple ways. Their roles and involvement together with the stories that are presented below and in the next chapter represents a fascinating array of contributions by reigning leaders, their predecessors and the communities that they lead.

The diverse range of professions, social stature, public and private responsibilities, worldviews etc of my correspondents was astounding. For example, the three amanhene had pursued totally different career paths but had all ended up as traditional leaders of their realms. Their life stories as repeated or reported in their own words bring out the diversity and added both color and detail that enriched and validate my research. The Offinsohene recounted that before he ascended the Dwamena and Akenten Stool,

I was born in 1942. I attended Offinso State School. I had to leave Okuapeman Secondary School in the second year to follow my uncle, Nana Offinsohene Wiafe Akenten II into internal political exile and later to Nigeria during President Nkrumah’s reign. When I returned from exile, I worked for four years with the Swiss multinational company, A Lang. I then worked with Dr. Bilson at the Allen Clinic, Kumasi, for some time as a terrazzo worker. I later secured employment with R.T. Briscoe, a German multinational company as a timber clerk during the Busia era in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Later I worked with the Indian owed Glamour Stores as a shopkeeper for eleven years. I also worked with J. C. Adu Timbers, a private timber company as a bush manager till 1990. I finally ventured into private business as both a transport operator and timber contractor in 1991. On the death of my uncle and predecessor, I contested for the vacant Offinso stool with nine others and was nominated and enstooled as the paramount chief in 1993. I swore the oath of allegiance to Offinsoman on November 4, 1993 in the presence of an entourage from Asantehene, Otumfu Opoku Ware II that included his senior Nifa Kyeame (Right Wing Linguist), Okyeme Owusu Banahene and the Registrar of the Asante Region House of Chiefs, Nana Asante. On November 8, 1993, I swore before Otumfu Opoku Ware II and the Asanteman Council at an
impressive ceremony in Kumasi. The Otumfuo commented on the large entourage of citizens and followers from Offinso who participated in the ceremony and noted that he was yet to see a bigger crowd at any such ceremony. There were over 70 busloads of people from Offinso that excluded private cars and those who joined up in Kumasi to participate in the ceremonies. (Taped interview, August 18, 2002).

The Kokofuhene in relating his career path before his ascent to the

\textit{Aduampfoantwi Stool} indicated,

I, Barima Offe Akwesi Okogyeasuo, the reigning Omanhene of Kokofu (Paramount Chief of Kokofu) am the retired headmaster of Obuasi AGC Basic School. I was installed in 1999 after a contested succession between seven claimants to the \textit{Aduampfoantwi Stool}. My father was a circuit steward of the Methodist mission. He had earlier worked with Chief Commissioner Francis Fuller, in demarcating stool land boundaries between various Asante chiefs. He therefore ensured that all his ten children including the girls had western Christian formal education. I taught at my alma mater Kokofu Methodist Primary School for some years before proceeding to Wesley College for my initial professional teacher’s training. I finally graduated from University of Cape Coast with a Diploma in the Advance Study of Education (DASE). I then joined the education department of the biggest mining company in Ghana, Ashanti Goldfields at Obuasi. In all, I had slightly over forty years of service as an educator before ascending the Kokofu stool. I have been a ruler for almost three years, from July 1999 to date. If you add the period of unqualified trained teacher in 1955, I did about forty-four years as a teacher. One year untrained teaching, five years on the course training. I went for “Certificate B”, “Post B”, Associate Diploma, and Advanced Diploma. So make it six years but it was all part of the training. I was then teacher on training (Taped interview, August 17, 2002).

At the end of his interview, and while escorting us to our van outside his palace, Barima Offe Akwesi Okogyeasuo pointed out his eighty years old senior sister, a retired senior teacher who was buying groceries from a shop opposite the Kokofu palace, the site of our interview.

A courtly feature of the Juabenhene’s interview session was the constant blowing of “ntahera” (the orchestra of seven elephant tusk horns) by the horn blowers and the intermittent drumming on the “atumpan and fontomforom” drum ensembles in the course of the interview. They definitely lent the aura of the festive occasion to the interview but
at the same time impeded the smooth recording of the interview by the tape recorder since it tended at times to overshadow what was being said. Another feature I did notice about the lay out of the Juaben Palace was the sprawling durbar grounds in the fore front of the place with two raised cement daises for the use of the Omanhene and his Ohemaa (queen mother) at durbars and other public occasions.

An electrical engineer and alumnus of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, Nana Otuo Siriboe, has been the occupant of the Juaben stool for the past thirty-one years since 1971. He agreed to the interview on an Akwasidea afternoon after the morning ritual to God and his accentors had been undertaken; and before ceremonies to conclude the day of worship were performed in the early evening. The interview took place on the second level porch in the living area of the palace at Juaben. There was no linguist in attendance. He informed us that within the previous two weeks he had traveled with Ghana’s President John Agyekum Kuffour outside to the Far East scouting for investments for the country.

He promised to give us a copy of the paper he read at Indiana University in the spring of 2002 that captured the span and story of his reign as the Juabenhene. He also offered to make available a copy of his résumé if I called on him at his residence in Accra. By way of background he informed us that he would be celebrating his thirty-first anniversary as a chief on August 27, 2002. He had had the benefit and privilege of serving his people as a farmer, an industrialist, a member of the Council of State, member of two constitutional assemblies in 1978/79 and 1991/92, member and chair of the boards of governors of St Louis Girls Secondary School and Juaben Secondary School, board chair of Okomfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Kumasi, and service in various capacities to
Ghana. He believes that it is an aggregation of all these services that made his alma mater, KNUST, conferred on him in July 2002, an honorary doctorate degree in science. At the time of the interview, he was yet to go and robe because the honor was conferred while he was out of the country and he had no prior information before the conferral. On the educational side, Nana observed that that is the highest honor that one can hope for.

The extensive backgrounds of the three amanhene is inserted to testify to the range of backgrounds that constituted the rainbow of collaborators with whom I had the privilege to work and learn from in an intuitive way. The bricolage of personalities who were involved in the interviews certainly did not hit me until I had done several readings of the interview transcripts. I just could not believe what I had put together. These included a lowly apprentice whose views were as valuable as the insights that were delved and shared by a member of Ghana’s statutory Council of State and those in between these two. The views these people so generously expressed are what are woven here into the tapestry of “thick description” that emerged, grounded from the field to differentiate the themes that are outlined below and that constitute the focus of this dissertation. In fact it reminds me of the image of the kente weaver, working with different people and varied backgrounds to weave a vivid picture of educational leadership and the role of traditional leaders in this spectrum as they seek to reinvent their relevance and negotiate new spheres of influence and operation.

**Coding of the data.**

Bogdan & Biklen (1998) advice a short break before the commencement of what Rubin & Rubin (1995) describes as sharing the most important outcomes of “what you heard and saw” in the fieldwork with the rest of the world. Too long a break results in a
lack of initiative to restart the process of coding and analysis and in some cases lost opportunities to even conclude the work. But operating within such constrains as limited time, tight budgets, breaks and absence from family and roots, and finally careers to resume, I wondered if the luxury of a break could be accommodated.

The awful reality that overwhelmed the current assignment was the creeping inertia that a particularly brutal winter induced at a point after solely transcribing the taped interviews. Breaking the stupor that I seemed to have sunk into was very tough. This was certainly induced to an extent by the five months that was spent in the field with a slightly relaxed time schedule. An added reason was the realistic issues involved in settling part of my family in a new and unfamiliar environment in Athens during the especially harsh winter of 2003. An addition to this stupor into the summer of 2003 was the medical emergency my eldest son whom we had left in Ghana had to contend with as he underwent a series of unsuccessful eye surgeries after the diagnosis of keratoconus.

Transcribing the notes and interviews from the field was a tedious but enjoyable exercise that most often transposed me to the sites where particular interviews were recorded to vividly relive events in my imagination. It assured that I paid special attention to those portions of the interviews that were recorded in the Asante Twi language in order to catch the nuances that were being conveyed. Additionally, transcribing served to guarantee that the bond of confidentiality that existed between the interviewees and me was maintained.

A multiplicity of codes and themes certainly emerged out of the fieldwork. But the uttermost care needed to be exercised in gluing together those portions of the work that would present an exciting, empathetic portray of my subject, informants and at the
same time fulfill the requirement of academia while subtle efforts were embedded in the presentation to expand the boundaries of qualitative research, imitating the Allman and Tashjian (2000), Burawoy et al (2000), Stambach (2000) and Berry (2001) approaches. The major themes that emerged out of the extensive coding that were engaged in to reduce the large volume of transcribed interviews are presented in the next chapter.

Conclusion

Challenges and possibilities existed to aid this work and help it unearth new attitudes and directions in the quest for leadership to facilitate formal education in Asante and Ghana. Stambach (2000) captioned her end chapter in *Lessons from Mount Kilimanjaro: Schooling, community and gender in East Africa* with a potent Swahili proverb, “Mountains never meet, but people do”. She later expounds on the proverb to mean among other issues “relationships are created through the movements of people and the news they carry”. In the light of the growing relations that are being forged between Ohio University through its African Studies Program and Institute for the African Child on one hand and Asanteman and the Otumfuo on the other side, prospects and possibilities exist for continuing dialogue and discourse to explore, facilitate and grow a new and collaborative leadership for educational change in Asanteman.

The questions and queries raised by Nyerere (1967), Freire (1970, 1981), Chambers (1997) on participatory involvement by affected constituents and stakeholders in the formulation of programs and policies were explored and mined to facilitate and guide the current review of educational direction in Asante and Ghana. This work adds to the basket of options on the table with the findings and conclusions it draws on appropriate traditional leadership styles to aid in Asante and Ghana’s education planning
and implementation. It also revels and explores insights into one of several niches that are utilized to reinvent the relevance of traditional Asante leadership and authority as it quests to redefine itself in a contemporary nation-state, Ghana.
Summary

The chapter opened with the discussion and analysis of a methodological literature review. This review was placed in this portion to both shorten the previous literature review and enliven the flow of the dissertation.

Relevant theories were developed from Asante and Akan paradigms to guide the thesis. Additionally, some western research theories and approaches were inducted as guides. But the proviso was sounded that actual events that unfolded in the fields were the parameters that guided the field research.

The point of view and multiple orientations of the researcher were made known to obviate the potential of excessive bias. The triple tier insider opportunities open to the researcher to ensure entrée and access the site were also made known. The probable traps and pitfalls that await an “indigenous son” conducting research in a known environment were also acknowledged. But the participatory orientation and depth of the purposive sample in the field research counteracted any such lapses. The purposive range of the selected interviewees and the diverse views expressed on the issues that were discussed obviated all issues of bias.

The variety of research techniques that were utilized in the field, observations, participation and the interview protocol that was used to conduct portions of the research were also developed. The development of themes to assist coding, classification and analysis of data that emerged from the field were also noted and acknowledged as the grounded roots of the dissertation. The general underlying theme of seeking to observe, understand and present issues from the perspectives of co-researchers was a declared principle that guided the field research. The ethnographic metaphor of the kente waver,
who weaves ideas and glued issues from myriad conversations and life situations, emerges fully from the methodology that was employed in the conduct of the field research.
Chapter Four

Weaving palaces and bare classrooms: The link between traditional Asante leadership and formal schooling.

Introduction

In chapter two of this study, an extensive review of the literature connected with the institution of traditional leadership (chieftaincy) in Asante, its origins, institutions, philosophy of life and culture was undertaken but clearly missing from these scholarly enterprises was a more directed and comprehensive study of the role of her traditional leaders in the advancement of formal schooling. This was the observable gap that the researcher noted and set out to contribute to with the research that was undertaken in the summer and fall of 2002 with a follow up in July-August, 2004.

Chapter three discussed the theories and methodology that has guided and helped to shape the dissertation. Additionally, it explored aspects of the techniques that were utilized to advance the work. The next few sections present portions of the findings of my five months of field exploration and investigation in two regions, five districts, and a number of towns and villages in Asante and Greater Accra Regions in Ghana. It should be noted that trips that were not originally related to the study were also undertaken to the Brong Ahafo, Central and Eastern Regions; but ideas and issues were gleaned for the dissertation from the interactions and discourses that took place.

The issues that consistently evolved out of participants answers, my participation and observations in related activities; and the comments that emerged from the field, and which demanded answers to advance an understanding of the intersection of traditional leadership and formal education are presented under the themes that further reinforces the
perceptions of a reinvention of the relevance of the institution of chieftaincy in Asante and Ghanaian life:

a). Bridging a communication gap

b). Gender, traditional leadership and the issue of education in Asante

d). Conflict resolution, traditional leadership & education in Asante

e). The power of mobilization, traditional leadership and education (diffusion of information & knowledge)

f). Stakeholders, policy formation in education and traditional leadership

h). Mired in poverty: Traditional leaders and efforts to break the grip of poverty in educational development

The range of personalities who participated as co-researchers in my field work and the varied locations within which I conducted the over one hundred hours of recorded and written interviews, observation of and participation in events explains the title of the chapter on the data analysis that is presented in this work.

**Some interview sites.**

My first three interviews in Asante significantly took place during an Akwasidea weekend. The locations for my first two interviews in Asante were the well-kept palaces of the two amahene (paramount chiefs) who had been generous and offered to participate in the study well over a year ahead of its start. The third interview occurred in the equally well-apportioned and walled private residence of the third omanhene. The town where the first interview took place, Kokofu, is in a rural setting about two hours drive from Kumasi. It is located in close proximity to the only natural lake in Ghana, Lake Bosomtwi; and sited in the area known as Amansei, the origins of Asante.
civilization. The hilly outlay and lake environs induced a cool and forested atmosphere that offered a serene welcome. However, the road from Kumasi though tarmac, was hilly, curvy with deep valleys to one side and the last ten miles heavily potholed. The twelve-sitter Seventh Day Adventists Teachers’ Training College van that was loaned to us for the weekend trip on two occasions had to meander through stagnant rivulets that cut across the poorly maintained road.

Sculptured cement lion statues guarded the entrance to the palace in Kokofu. We had to traverse three terrazzo courtyards with stools and chairs arranged around them before being ushered into the reception and office area of the omanhene. The solid wall and white washed ground floor of the main house supported a wooden second floor. This indicated an older style of building that was common in the early twentieth century in the then Gold Coast. The stonewalled ground floor gave the green-carpeted room a cool, calming atmosphere. The omanhene answered my curious stares and compliments on the architecture when he informed me that the palace was added to over the centuries and that the big four-way junction that boarded it to one side was actually the durbar ground for the town.

The Juaben palace, the site of the second interview had an extensive and tarmac durbar ground with shady trees around the forefront. To two sides of the grounds were permanent red painted cement daises for the use of the omanhene and ohemaa during durbars and other official functions. Statues of two lions guarded its portals. We were similarly ushered through three courtyards before being offered seats in a big conference room with a high ceiling on the first floor while our presence was announced to the omanhene on the second floor. The long white lace drapes on the windows gave the room
extra cool graces that signify the serious issues that were deliberated within its big pillars. After waiting our turn for about thirty minutes, we were ushered to a second floor indoor, red-carpeted terrace, where four chairs has been arranged for the omanhene to receive small groups of visitors. His chair was backed against the well of the porch and next to the entrance of a big hall. Our chair leaned alongside the stairway railings.

The amanhene preceded our official welcome handshakes with bresuo, welcome drinks of our choice, in this instance a bottle of beer and soda each time, before delving into our mission. We reciprocated with akwasunasa (entrée drinks or gesture of goodwill drinks) of two bottles of schnapps on each occasion, before stating our mission and proceeding with our interviews. This was in accord with traditional Akan court protocol.

The third interview took place back in Offinso in the evening after Akwasidea celebration during the day. It had been a long exhaustive weekend and day, but the appointments for the interviews had been booked with an eye to ensure that the chair of my dissertation committee participated in these three interviews before his departure from Ghana. A distinguishing feature of Offinso is the well-planned layout of the town, which has only its main street, the road to the government offices and the St Patrick Catholic Mission Hospital tarmac. The secondary roads and streets are still unpaved with a tendency to develop gullies whenever it rained. Another feature is the cement block story buildings that bear testimony to the roaring cocoa boom that funded their construction in the 1950s and 1960s. In the course of our interview, the omanhene revealed the fact that his immediate predecessor, Nana Wiafe Akenten II (1946-1993) and his traditional council had formulated and implemented the policy of developing a new township when he was enstooled in 1946. He said embedded in the policy was the
deliberate decision that only cement block buildings were to be approved for construction in the Offinso New Township area that was to join twenty four adjoining villages into both the traditional and political district capital. When we entered the well-manicured and groomed grounds of the omanhene’s private residence, we were speedily ushered into his private meeting room. After the traditional protocols, we plunged straight into the interviews. Nana Offinsohene was the only one out of the three amanhene, who opted to speak in the Asante Twi language for the interview. He indicted a preference and higher level of comfort in using his mother tongue in this instance. The other two interviews were conducted in the English language. It is significant and worth noting that all three amanhene opted to dispense with the attendance of their linguists during the interviews.

In contrast to these settings, the bare, pot holed cemented floor, grim and dust blown walls of a Maase-Offinso Junior Secondary classroom in which one of my focus group meetings was held symbolically reflected the extent of the issues and challenges that Asante traditional leaders grapple with as they seek to advance formal education in their realm and help to position their subjects for beneficial participation in the world. However, the school compound was clean with well-manicured lawns, white washed and lined walkways. Around the compound were mango trees that served multiple purposes, providing shady, open-air class space whenever teachers decided to conduct classes outside and abundant juicy fruits when in season. But the new block’s shoddy flooring and the crumbling look of the older block reinforced the perception of acute need and lack of the requisite teaching and learning materials. This fact was confirmed during the course of my focus group interaction with the teachers and elders of the town.
While all three towns were founding members of the Asante confederacy and seats of *amanhene*, Juaben and Kokofu were additionally important towns within their respective districts, but Offinso had the added distinction of also being the administrative and political capital of the district that had the same name, Offinso.

Juxtaposed along side the settings described above were the various government offices in Accra where I conducted interviews with education professionals and the district chief executive in the government offices at Offinso. These settings were generally wall to wall-carpeted, air-conditioned and with ceiling fans to ensure circulation of the chilled air. The exception was the store front office of the Offinso district GNAT with hard decked table chairs and three plastic covered writing tables and a droning table fan as furnishing.

In contrast to the traditional protocol of exchanges that occurred in the palaces and private residences of traditional leaders and other participants, only three respondents preceded our interviews with offers of either soda or tea to drink. I had to convince myself to understand this behavior in terms of workplace etiquette as against the relaxed environs of the palaces, private residences and other locations. At least they could have offered plain drinking water as standard Ghanaian etiquette stipulate.

**Presentation of data: Bridging a communication gap.**

Humans live by communication, and the practices that define us, as humans are a direct growth of the ways in which we communicate our language, reasoning, morality and social organization (Burbles, 1993). Asante traditional leadership and society prides itself on the communication links it has evolved over the centuries to fuse the various strata of Asante society (Wiredu, 1996; Yankah, 1998). A number of respondents who
participated in the fieldwork commented either positively or negatively on the manifest
dynamics such communication linkages display in advancing educational development as
a group process under the spur of traditional leaders. They also noted the retarding effort
when issues connected with education were not adequately communicated to them.

The Kokofuhene gave a vivid description of utilizing media other than the
traditional modes to diffuse information, raise funds, create consciousness and ensure
community participation and ownership of the process of developing schools in his
locality. In answer to the question if his elders and community contributed and
participated in his efforts to rehabilitate the schools in the Kokofu Township, the seat of
his kingdom, he expounded:

… I needed to rehabilitate the old block for the JSS that was previously the joint
school for the primary section so what I did was that since we could not get
money easily I instituted periodic open air church service, all the churches came
together for joint service and it was being held on Akwesidea evenings. When
Akwesidea comes on we hold our traditional activities in the morning and in the
evening all the churches and the community meet at the post office square; and
you know church activities now are things that are attracting people, and
attracting easy collection of money so during that time we invite renowned
preachers from outside. Those who are working on the FM stations whose voices
are being heard. I invite them to come down and preach here whether Christian or
Muslim, I invite them. We have had quite a number of these since I came we have
had not less then thirty sessions. The money we got from collections the first year
was about one million six hundred thousand cedis; we used that to renovate that
school and from that time we started as it were keeping the money to renovate a
block for our KG. It’s an old dilapidated building we want to move them to the
primary school. So we are using the money to do that. That has been one of the
helping factors to improve the community’s situation. Then I instituted open
forums every month at which the community is brought together at the palace to
discuss issues and education has been one of the major issues that has been
discussed. I invite the District Education Officer, the District Chief Executive that
is the local government head to come and tell us what they are doing about
schools, what they want to do and the education officers to come and talk to the
people about schools, problems that are being observed in our schools and how
best they could advice the parents to overcome such problems. Just last Tuesday
we had a forum on health and we had the Polytechnic Students Union of
Dispensing Technicians from Kumasi, a hundred and twenty of them with the
medical officers of Bekwei and Kokofu come over and talk about diseases that attack people within the locality and that actually brings problems for parents and children. And that has been one of the approaches to tackling the issue of education in my area (Taped interview, August 17, 2002).

The interplay of community and group dynamics and effective communication in the specific instance of Kokofu has two schools rehabilitated, a health forum inaugurated and other community initiatives started. Certainly, the decision of the Kokofuhene to tap into the recent proliferation of radio stations and its presenters indicates an addition to the traditional mode of communication and an immediate benefit to his kingdom.

In Offinso, it resulted in the establishment of the Offinsoman Education Trust Fund (OETF); supplementary fiscal support of the district’s best public school teacher award scheme; a consciousness and focus on formal education as an essential prop for community advancement; and a process of questioning and keeping the district directorate on its toes. Reflecting on the current state of education in his traditional area, the Offinsohene indicated,

The Offinso Traditional Council under my leadership has taken the issue of education a step further. In fact we were the first to establish an education endowment fund for our pupils from the basic to the tertiary level- The Offinsoman Education Trust Fund, as a result of the deliberations of the Offinsoman Congress convened at the instance of the Offinso Traditional Council in 1997. You can have copies of the trust deed that was finalized this year (2002). The committee in charge of the fund is under the chairmanship of Mr. Ben Dapaah, a retired chief director in Ghana’s public service. It gives a bit of detailed account about our efforts so far and future planning especially with regards to incorporating boys on a formal basis into the scheme alongside girls. We however concede the lead to the Otumfuo Education Fund since we all serve under the Golden Stool. Moreover we limited our area of operation to within the Offinso traditional area while the OEF covers Asante and the whole of Ghana. I should however stress the fact that our awards cover anybody who resides in the traditional area. We have some beneficiaries from the northern part of Ghana whose parents have resided for a considerable length of time in the Offinso area (Taped interview, August 18, 2002).
Such group dynamics in communicating and fostering participation and ownership in community enterprises also tended to work out on one-to-one basis. The Juabenhene verified this when he shared his joy and appreciation about the contribution of one of his siblings,

...But I can say with some modesty that under my inspiration a younger brother of mine from his own free will has put up a pre-school school block worth about 400 million cedis from his own resources and donated it to the state (Juaben). You may want to go and see it. It is quite close to the palace and on the way to Kumasi (Taped interview, August 18, 2002).

In contrast to such positive observations about communicating community participation are the views of some of the interviewees who claimed that they were either unaware of the various drives and initiatives in regard to individual and community involvement and or that such schemes did fall outside their purview. The observations of the two youngest respondents is striking in this instance. A junior secondary school graduate and apprentice carpenter responded in reaction to the question if he had heard about the Otumfuo Education Fund or the Offinsoman Education Trust Fund:

I do not know much about these funds. I have not heard the appeals to contribute nor has anybody requested for my contribution. I do not believe that I will pay though because I am an apprentice. I do not usually participate in communal labor when I am in my home town except when a demand for my skills is required (Recorded interview, August 1, 2002).

The responses of the first recipient of the Otumfuo Fellowship, instituted in Ohio University’s African Studies Program, were equally stunning in some of its similarities with the views of the young man expressed above but it was also remarkable in its difference. This young woman informed me that she was selected as the first recipient of the fellowship after competitive interviewing with seven men and one other woman. Expounding on the role of traditional leaders in education she said,
Otumfu has exhibited a strong passion for education. I did not follow his activity very much while I was in Ghana, but in staking a claim for those who cannot afford to pay for their education he wins my admiration. My initial reaction to the establishment of the OEF was that it was laudable and encouraging as the Asante, are not known in Ghana for pursuing formal education to higher levels. If other traditional leaders were to follow this path, Ghana would be a better place in terms of improved human capital. I did not contribute to the fund when I was in Ghana, but now I realize I have arrears to pay both fiscally and materially when I return. I am now willing to contribute in other ways too… (Recorded interview May 18, 2003).

The views and reactions of some of the four queen mothers who participated in a focus group discussion were also strikingly significant in that they revealed gaps in the communication modes between these leaders and their male counterparts even though they are supposedly joint traditional leaders in their towns and village. The Atipinhene of Offinso who informed me about the presence of the queen mothers in Accra and also gave me a ride to the site of the interview after my session with him joined me in the group interaction. This was certainly nnoboa in action since he want beyond the mere provision of information but also ensured my access to them in providing a ride in his saloon car and participated in the group interview. I should add that his information saved me the additional cost of traveling to Offinso to arrange such a meeting.

Three of the queen mothers indicated that they were presently married while the other said she was divorced. The youngest two did say that they had had some years of primary school education before dropping out and the other two stated that they had had no formal schooling. They ranged in age from thirty years for the youngest to fifty-two years for the oldest. When they were asked to share their individual comments and observations on the operations of both the Offinsoman Education Trust Fund and the Otumfuo Education Trust, portions of their concerns gushed out as captured below:
Ayankasuo: I am aware of its existence but no child from my village has yet benefited from it to my knowledge.
Amowie: Two people from my village applied but they were not awarded anything. That makes me a bit skeptical about the operations of the fund.
Ampabame: I am not aware of the fact that the fund has started operating. All that I know is that my village was tasked with sending in its contribution.
KOK: What about the OEF?
Collectively: Nana, we are not fully abreast with the operation of the OETF, how then do you expect us to be fully in tune with the OEF? We need to be educated as to the mode of applying for these awards. And we need to add that it should be simple and transparent.
Atipinhene: I know that in Akomadan two people have benefited from both the OET and OEF awards. You know I come from Akomadan and so I know about it. And I think you may have beneficiaries in your towns and villages but you may not be aware of them. I think you ought to let your people apply for them before you can fully benefit.
Amowie: To be honest I did not know that you had to take the initiative on your own and apply for the award. I was under the impression that the state (Offinso Traditional Council) would on its own dispense the scholarships and inform us. So if you would help us out by educating us on how to go through the process of the application we would appreciate it.

The responses of the queens show that a link in communication is broken between the leadership of male and female traditional leaders. This dictates a rethink of the strategies that have been utilized to spear drive the education agenda in Asante and make it a more inclusive process for both sets of leaders and the communities in whose interest such policies are pursued.

**Traditional leadership, education and the gender gap in Asante: “Most of the time you ignore us.”**

All the collaborators in the fieldwork agreed on the fact that gender conflicts in its multiple dimensions was an issue that existed, and that has been tackled but still needed constant attention. The persistent attention gender demanded; the need to ensure equity and the attention that traditional leadership had engaged it in regards to formal schooling were brought out in the responses of both the Juabenhene and the court server of the
Offinsohene, Opanin Kwaku Addea in their interviews. The Juabenhene, Nana Otuo Siriboe, as part of his extensive public service, contributed twenty-one years as both a board member and chair of St. Louis Girls Secondary School in Kumasi and ten years as the chair of the Juaben Secondary School, a coeducational school in his principal town. It should be noted that St Louis founded in 1954 is the first girls secondary school established in the Asante Region. We visited the compound of Juaben Secondary School after the interview, before our departure from Juaben. In answer to a question if Juaben has or had a scheme similar to the OEF in operation with girls’ education as a focus, Nana Juabenhene replied,

In the mid forties my predecessor Nana Sarpong saw wisdom in girls’ education and through levies and contributions gave us the first girls’ boarding school outside of Kumasi that was subsequently converted over the years into a woman’s training college and now into a co-educational secondary school; you realize that Juaben has a tradition of supporting education. When you look at it critically, Juaben has not negatively perceived women’s education. It comes as a credit to my predecessor for breaking that psychological barrier. Pursuant to that I have on my own from time to time paid for teachers to give extra tuition to students to prepare them for examinations. And in the course of time I have been able to push some of those who passed to further their education… (Taped interview, August 18, 2002)

While commenting on the spread of schooling in the Offinso traditional area, Opanin Kwaku Addea, a stool carrier of Offinso, indirectly expounded on the early attempts to establish a girls’ school in Offinso in the 1950s,

KA: The missions saw it as a form of competition to facilitate the spread of schools. The government later placed a ban on the missions establishing schools. This brought in its wake the local authority schools that were established by the local councils. I should add that Nana Wiafe Akenten II first established the present State “A” School in Offinso New Town as a girls’ school in 1954. But this effort floundered till it was turned into a co-educational school. I recall that the buildings used for that purpose were initially meant for the training of “emergency teachers” to fill the demand for teachers that the expansion of schools
in Offinso and other places had created. It was also entrusted to the Catholic priest at Maase-Offinso, one Fr. Hubert to manage. (Taped interview, August 19, 2002)

The Offinsohene reaffirmed the above assertion when he disclosed in reminiscing about his maternal uncle and predecessor Nana Wiafe Akenten II that,

He met only one middle school located at Adukrom at his installation in 1946, but by the end of his reign in 1993, we see the extent of educational expansion that had occurred as already indicated in the number of primary and middle schools that were established. I need to recall that the genesis of both Dwamena Akenten Secondary School and the Offinso Teachers’ Training College resides in a failed effort to establish a girls’ school in Offinso Newtown. We should also recall that the teachers’ training college was originally a woman’s training college until it became coeducational in the 1980s. Both the midwifery and nurses’ training schools at the St. Patrick’s Hospital, Maase-Offinso, formerly carted for the post primary professional education of young girls from the area. Unfortunately the government discounted intake into the nurses’ training school in the 1980s when it withdrew its subsidy… (Taped interview, August 17, 2002).

In contrast to these glowing recalls by the respondents just cited, the tensions, conflicts and the seemingly impenetrable views on gender relations and the different positions held on this discourse by Asante men and women was brought tangibly to the fore in the answer of one of the queen mothers who participated in a focus group discussion on leadership, schooling and the different roles of men and women in this process. In answer to a follow up question, why do you not you talk to the men to be alive to their responsibilities, what are you doing about the attitude of the men?

Amowie: This is what I have been harping on. Even though we are suppose to rule the towns and villages jointly with you (men), most of the time you ignore us and do not involve us in your decision making process. Even some of the men we are married to do not usually extend us full respect, so to talk to somebody’s husband on these issues is a bit touchy, and normally it may even be the women who take care of the needs of the children. But when we convene meetings and the men are there, they have to infer the fact that some of the issues we touch on and discuss impact on their lack of responsibility. If the child reports that the
mother would not allow him/her to use the lantern for studies or buy her a school uniform, the man should realize that those are his direct responsibilities. And let’s face the reality here, since when did the buying of school uniforms become the responsibility of women? The issue of school fees and other associated costs should rightly speak all be the responsibility of men. In fact they have made parenting something of an almost or let me say totally female responsibility but that should not be the case. But love for our children and a desire to see them through schooling and not end up as drop outs drive our urge and responsibility towards them. Nana, I can assure you we have lots of irresponsible men in Offinso. (Oral communication, Focus group interview, December 12, 2002)

The different answers of my male and female respondents capture some issues concerning how the conversation on gender has been carried out in the communities where the research was conducted. The queen mother’s answer, which was met with a chorus of agreement by her counterparts, was in sharp contrast to the answers most of my male collaborates dialogued on the issue. Over the course of the interview the royal women made it clear that men did not always respect either their leadership roles or even their roles as wives. The unequal burden of parenting with women carrying an unfavorable and heavy share was an issue that resonated throughout the fieldwork whenever I interviewed women. The Ayankasu queen mother while commenting on the unequal parenting burdens said:

We can firmly assure you that the women bear a disproportionate share of the responsibility, be it in normal childcare, and cost of schooling or you name it. This state of affairs pervades the whole area of the Offinso Traditional Area. One sister of mine teaches at Busei and from what she tells me this is the norm in the whole of Offinso … the parents especially the males would send you off to school, but taking full responsibility in terms of the cost of schooling is normally lacking as we have already said. Formerly they would bluntly tell you that I would not send you to or give you an opportunity for schooling and there was nothing you could do about your father’s edict. That is why I had no education, because I was not sent to school. The fear was that most girls ended up as drop outs due to any number of reasons; pregnancy counted prominently among the fears. There was also the attitude that a girl’s place was ultimately marriage and the kitchen. But these days they would send you off to school but would to a large extent shrink from exercising their full responsibility. But if it does happen that
the children are many the tendencies is to favor the boys in some instance (Oral communication, Focus group interview, December 12, 2002).

The unequal sharing of parental responsibility in the gender discourse is an issue on which both the rural and urban women, educated and uneducated felt very passionate about. But this passion was lost from the men.

Coupled with these was the low premium and inherent discriminatory behavior of pulling girls out of schools to join their mothers in petty trading to generate the needed economic support for their male siblings to acquire formal education. The consultant and coordinator, Implementation Coordination Unit and a former Director of Basic Education, vividly elaborated on this issue:

For girls’ education that’s why I said we trained girls’ education officers. With the establishment of the Girls Education Unit under the Basic Education Division in 1997 when I was the director, we asked that they train girls’ education officers and put them in every district office. They became members of the DEPT and they carried out enrolment drives in the districts and sensitization on the need to send every girl to school. They were also to try and eliminate conditions that hindered the enrolment of girls in their communities. PRA and PLA skills like asking people how much they used on food, education or funerals, using stones to tell you the amount of money spent on each of these you would find out that they spent practically nothing on girls education as opposed to that of boys and when you probe further they would tell you a girl would end up in the kitchen of a man. But when you tell them you were a girl whose mother gave her an opportunity to pursue education and ask would you not want your girl to be like me one day, and they would sit up. I went to Tso Kome, a Ga fishing village on the coast near Accra on a sensitization drive and the women told me that broken marriages was a major cause militating against girl child education. When I asked them to explain the reason why they held such views they told me when the men divorce them they leave the children with the women and that they valued and placed a premium on educating boys. They further explained that when they are divorced they withdraw their girls from school to help them do petty trading so that they can raise the needed funds to educate their boys. When the women were making these assertions the men also pleaded that I should advise the women not to seek divorce from them. I told the men to lead responsible lives and help to look after the children so that the women would not withdraw the girls from school. They were very happy and we ended up patching up a lot of marriages. (Taped interview October 16, 2002).
However, the District Chief Executive of Offinso, a retired District Director of Education with extensive years of service in different Asante education districts offices and schools was both critical of parent’s appreciation of formal education in Offinso and highly empathetic in his views on facilitating the education of the “girl child”. He noted,

It looks like parents in Offinso most of whom are farmers are unconcerned and are more interested in the land than in education. In fact it is recently that people are getting to realize the role they should play so as to promote the education of their children. This has come about as a result of sensitization from either opinion leaders or teachers themselves who are experiencing these problems. So now people are seeing their way forward. The problem is especially with the education of the girl child, we have not been promoting this aspect of our children’s education properly because we feel our girls do not matter and that the real places for them is the kitchen. In fact this old perception has not died down. Those who came to the STMC inauguration are those who already know the value of education. Those we wanted there did not turn up. We organize education forum and you hardly get them. Another area is child labor. It is also worrying us especially with girls. Because of poverty, we always push the girls to other people to stay and work with. I have announced and we are going to make it into a policy that whoever engages a girl to stay or work with have to send her to school or find her a gainful trade to learn. There should be a period within the day that she should be sent out. But we would like them to send them to school. (Taped interview, September 2, 2002)

The participation and collaboration that the district chief executive quested for elsewhere in his interview from the district’s political authority, traditional leaders, educators, parents and students nonetheless existed and was exhibited during the inaugural ceremony for the first ever district STMC held at the Dwamena Akenten Secondary School dinning hall. An invitation to participate in this event exposed me to colleagues of traditional leaders, a queen mother, two chiefs, a number of female role models, a few parents and other personalities who interacted with the young female students to inspire them and urge them to forge on with their aspirations to pursue professions in the sciences after graduation from high school.
Conflict resolution, traditional leadership and education in Asante

Conflicts and their resolutions are healthy manifestations of the diverse views and paths of and for developments that exist in most communities. Undoubtedly, it is a sub-sector of the leadership equation pie that I least expected to feature in the discourse on the intersection of traditional leadership and formal education in Asante. However, a surprising revelation of the research was the conflicted roles traditional leaders were often called upon to play in their quest to develop and advance formal education in their realms. They were most times called upon or offered themselves as arbitrators in conflict situations. The recently retired director of secondary education of the Ghana Education Service encapsulated the varied roles of traditional leaders and touched on their conflict mediation function in answer to the question, what are the general expectations of your directorate as regards traditional leaders in school and educational issues?

You see traditional leaders are very important stakeholders in our educational delivery. In fact their support and participation is very crucial for the survival and progress of the schools located in their localities. Interestingly enough, some of them take keen interest; they offer themselves to be used as agents of change. Some of them serve on governing boards (board of governors) some of them show interest in PTAs, some on their own individual levels make a lot of inputs. They offer buildings, classrooms, and land for the promotion of education in the community… Discipline in our schools even though let me be honest with you, sometimes when we want to be very hard on some of the students, they are either party to this decision or sometimes others turn round to intervene and perhaps suggest other forms of sanctions. So invariably we listen to their advice and it makes for cordial relationship, it makes for peace and we appreciate that. (Taped interview, October 2002).

The Kokofuhene reaffirmed the views expressed by the director of education in recounting his active involvement in resolving the crisis that almost wrecked the only secondary school in his realm during the 2002 world cup soccer finals.

Quite recently when they were doing games, the world soccer cup, teachers were not attending classes and therefore the final year students demonstrated against
them and they even started breaking windows in the school. I heard about it and before I could go there they had sent all the students out of the school. I invited the headmaster and he told me that they had sent them to go and bring their parents to come and sign bonds of good behavior. I told him that was all right but that if the parents came to the school they should let me come and listen to what they were going to tell them. Lo and behold they had called the parents and called the students and the parents were demanding that the students should tell what happened and tell the grievances that they used as their triumph card in doing that sort of thing. I saw that they were saying a lot of things, which were actually destroying the image of teachers and it, were even making some of the parents very unhappy about the school and some were even threatening to withdraw their children out of the school. So when I listened for some time I told them that that plan of action was not conducive so we would like to meet the children separately and meet the teachers too separately. So when I asked the teachers to go out, parents and I listened for some time and told the children that what they were doing was wrong and what they were doing was not appropriate. I told them that they had their prefects, they have the school council and if they had any grievances they could have used their school council and I as a chief I was around and a past teacher whom they always saw on the compound talking about a couple of things with teachers trying to help, why did they not come and confide in me? And you go to the extent of destroying things and coming before your parents to say all these things about teachers. The students became very sorry about it and they apologized to me. I then told them that we were going to solve the problem. We made them go out and called the teachers in. (Taped interview, August 17, 2002).

The deft insertion of the Kokofuhene in a crisis that threatened to devastate the only secondary in his town and the negotiating tactics he employed, co-opting dissenting parents as allies to resolve the issues, strengthens the earlier assertion made by the director of secondary education on the essential role of traditional leaders in some instances preserving tranquility on the education front.

But in other situations their good intentions were either misinterpreted or deliberately misconstrued. The Offinsohene in his interview narrated his version of events that characterized the sour and strained relations between the traditional council and the district directorate of education during the tenure of the recently retired district director of education. In answer to a question if the Offinso Traditional Council
collaborated with the district and regional directorates of education or it implement its education policy in isolation from these principal stakeholders, he said:

We do collaborate with them. But recently because of our interest in education, teachers and head teachers of basic schools in the area lodged a complaint against the current District Director. He recently intrigued to bring a rift between the traditional council and teachers in the district but he failed because they realized that we were highly interested in education. I quite remember that during the recent celebration of our annual Nmoawanidekwo festival we publicly commended some teachers and recognized them at the durbar. We have already stated that if we were not interested in education we would not have organized the various forums with teachers and also expanded the funds, energies and land that we have committed to education. These made them aware that our concerns also made us a ready avenue to communicate their grievances and concerns for settlement with their director, in fact act as arbitrators. The major complaints centered on non payment of allowances due them, the non-organization of in-service training courses for various grades of teachers, the diversion of textbooks and other materials meant for the district, inappropriate language and behavior on the part of the director. We invited the District Director and conveyed the issues to him. He requested for a period of time to respond to the allegations. He later sadly responded that the traditional council should not involve itself in issues of education and its administration in the district. This obviously brought strained relations between us. We took up the issue at an appropriate level and were informed that he had a few months to his terminal and compulsory retirement and thus we should allow him to leave. The strained relation is obviously a total departure from the zeal and promises of close collaboration, renewal and reform that he pledged on assumption of office three years ago. But in spite of his attitude we still hope to forge ahead with our interest and commitment to education in our traditional area. (Taped interview, August 18, 2002).

The immediate past headmistress of Offinso-Maase Catholic JSS confirmed the raging conflicts and tensions between the district’s educational directorate, traditional leaders and teachers in her interview. She also alluded to the district directorate’s inability to tap and utilize her skills that partly accounts for her decision to transfer out of the district. But the relevant fact is that she corroborated some of the Offinsohene’s contentions when she indicated,

The district office did not recognize me as an adult educator. They saw me as the head of a JSS and were not ready to tap into my expertise. They only expected me
to perform the supervisory activities of a school head. Though I introduced myself and made them aware of my background when I first came here; I thought with my background they could use me as a resource person when in-service courses were organized for the teachers. But in-service courses were not being organized. The District Director can best explain why this was not being done. I said the District Director would be the best person to explain because the budget covering these activities are prepared by his outfit and all these are catered for. He is in charge of that. In my position I cannot explain why? But as an executive member of the head teachers association we contacted him on several occasions to explain why in-service courses were not being organized, he gave the explanation that financial encumbrances had not arrived yet. Anytime we went there was an excuse… (Taped interview, September 29, 2003).

Portions of the omanhene’s views and headmistress’ assertions were interestingly confirmed in the interview held later with the district director when he asserted that:

Issues of education in the district ought to be left in the ambit of the professionals in my office without undue interference from the traditional council since we have been trained to handle such technical matters … (Taped interview, September 4, 2002).

Subsequent interactions with other education professionals and the district’s political head in the course of the fieldwork revealed the fact that the district director was a minority of one in his view and position.

Commenting on the current state of K-12 education in the Offinso area, the district chief executive observed,

Nana to be frank with you, we are in a crisis. My former colleague, the District Director has under performed and is a disappointment. This is reflected in the results that the schools in the district are posting and the grades the pupils in the public schools are making. It is sad to recall that pupils in the private basic schools with unqualified and underpaid teachers perform better. It is also reflected in the current tension between the directorate, traditional council, and teachers. Anyway our salvation is the fact that he is on the verge of retirement. Our hope is that the next director would coordinate planning with the district and traditional councils. The district director has not performed in his role as the advisor to the district council… (Taped interview, September 2, 2000).
This point however does not mitigate the conflicted functions traditional leaders inadvertently end up in forging ahead in the quest to advance formal education especially with local bureaucrats. It is also indicative of the pitfalls they constantly have to navigate and negotiate when they venture outside the realms of “strictly traditional leadership” and seeks to participate in the discourse of education and development as unofficial stakeholders in the policy implementation milieu.

**Mired in poverty: The challenge of poverty, educational development and Asante traditional leadership**

The theme of poverty and its gripping impact on the efforts of the traditional leaders and their communities to advance schooling was reechoed in different settings and from diverse perspectives by various interviewees. The hydra-headed challenge that poverty posed and its retarding effect in aborting the hopes and aspirations of the leaders whose constituents we covered in the conversations was staggering. But on a positive note it was also revealed that this was being addressed in various ways. It was also observed by some of the interviewees that boundless possibilities existed beyond this gaping mire.

One traditional leader, the Atipinhene of Offinso, posed and answered his rhetorical question, Nana are we mired in poverty? He then proceeded to argue that in spite of the visible hardship in the villages and towns induced partly by the World Bank and IMF imposed structural adjustment and highly indebted country programs that Ghana and Asante has endured since the early 1980s into the beginning of the twenty-first century, the resilience of the people was such that they were not ready to bend in to the dictates of poverty. In the view of the Atipinhene the positive outflow from the discourse
was that some of the issues that had emerged out of this situation had been identified and was being tackled through the use of traditional, individual and collective community mechanisms, *nnoboa*. He had benefited through this medium from immediate close family co-sponsorship. His climb into the hierarchy of traditional leadership reflects both the constant need to reinvigorate this stratum and also acknowledge and reward community service. He offered,

I was born in Akomadan in the Offinso traditional area to a farmer. My father died about thirty years ago. I started school in Akomadan and transferred to Kumasi. I went to Okuapeman Secondary after common entrance examination in form two. I did forms one to five there and transferred to Prempeh College for my sixth form course. I went to State University of New York, and did my first and second degrees in chemical engineering. I then came to KNUST to lecture. I got a scholarship to go to either University of Leeds, Britain to do food science and a Canadian scholarship. I found the latter to be attractive and left for Canada in December 1985 where I took a doctorate in food engineering. I graduated in 1990 and came back to Ghana to continue my teaching in engineering. In 1995, my uncle who faithful had served the Omanhene of Offinso, Nana Wiafe Akenten II, in recognition of his service was given a stool. My uncle nominated me to take his place because he was an old man and could not exercise the demands of the office of a chief. Nana Wiafe Akenten III accepted my nomination and I was enstooled in July 1995 as the Atipinhene of Offinso. I was at the same time doing my teaching as the head of department of chemical engineering till 1997 when I left university teaching and became the principal of Accra Polytechnic in 1998. I was there till 2001 when I left to head the National Board for Small Scale Industries as the Executive Director. We are into starting and growing micro and small-scale industries all over Ghana. (Taped interview, December 12, 2002)

While discussing his background, Nana Atipinhene unwaveringly touched on the inherent traditional, individual and collective mechanisms that are now being expounded in the variety of education endowments or *education susu and education nnoboa* in Asante to combat the scourge of poverty,

Probably one thing that I would like to talk about, which is very unique among the Akan and probably other people in Ghana is that we have an extended family system where your uncle, in this respect we are talking about your mother’s brother, and in other ways we talk about your father’s brother as your uncle, but
here I am talking about my maternal side; we have a unique inheritance system where we inherit our uncles that is from the mother’s side. Because of this unique relationship, uncles from the maternal side tend to help the children of their sisters. So my father and my uncle all contributed towards my educational knowledge and stature, which I have achieved. More so at the latter part of my educational endeavors I was helped greatly through the actions of my uncle. At that time my father had actually died and in fact I had also stayed with my uncle since I came to Kumasi when I was in primary (grade) seven. I was about thirteen or fourteen years old. So I had been with my uncle for so long he had taken an interest in my education greatly, even trying to help me get to the United Kingdom and United States of America in the initial stages. So education has been a very unique part of my work. And in fact when my uncle was given the stool for his services and he decided that he was old and that he did not think that he would like to take the offer, I am told he had to solicit Nana Wiafe Akenten III about the possibility of me replacing him. Probably I don’t know but I believe among the extended family I was one of the highly educated ones so I believe in my heart that skewed everything to my advantage. So education has been a very important tool, which in the traditional area we want to use to be able to help in the growth of our traditional area and the growth of our economy (Taped interview December 12, 2002).

The opportunity of a focus group interaction between me, four other traditional leaders and members of the Maasehene’s council of elders and eleven teachers and the headmistress of Maase Roman Catholic Junior Secondary School presented a succinct analysis of this novel reality. A junior female post secondary home economics teacher at the school offered a very incisive perspective on the gripping hold of poverty and a way out of this strangle hold when she observed during our focus group meeting in the potholed cemented floor classroom in her school that,

My short period of stay in the Maase-Offinso locality has exposed me to the extent of poverty prevailing in the locality and its demeaning effect on the local populace; and consequently it’s exacerbating fallout on students in our school. The major outcome was the fact that poverty made the students unhappy and uninterested in schooling. This was principally due to the fact that requests for normal school supplies translated into huge financial outlays that the parents were not ready to shoulder resulting in the students being in a constant state of panic. The fact that most of the mothers were also single parents who had no jobs to sustain their financial burdens was also an issue that should not be discounted. Nana, Mim, Brong Ahafo Region where I come from is relatively prosperous since we have Mim Agro-Forestry, Mim Timbers, Scanstyle Furniture and other
outlets that offer employment to the people, thereby adding to the economic activities of the area instead of just a reliance on farming. Nana, I suggest that the elders of this area should pool their resources and help to establish employment avenues instead of just relying on Dupaul Timbers that employ only about fifty people and farming…. (Taped Focus group meeting. November 26, 2002).

In an echo of the young teacher’s views, the Kokofuhene reiterated that,

… poverty, the cost of schooling in terms of the material inputs the parents has to offer these days compared to when I schooled for ten years barefooted is very high. And the parents cannot think of sending their children off to school without these things in addition to providing them with three square meals a day. The result is that they end up going into the bush (farms) with them to cut down on the cost of living…You know, even paying the minimum contribution of two hundred cedis a month per individual for the Otumfuo Education Fund is not easy…when the cocoa season is on and you levy people, you easily get the money but when the season is off and you are collecting one cedi you have a problem… (Taped interview, August 17, 2002).

The issue of poverty did not reflect only in the income levels but also the lack of or provision of basic social infrastructure like portable water, tarred roads, access to health care and sanitation facilities in deprived communities that in other parts of the world are taken for granted. According to the consultant to the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service:

We have identified nine standards as benchmarks of deprivation. When you say a place is deprived it cannot be totally devoid of all nine indicators. Even in the urban centers we can have characteristics of deprivation so we have defined it up to the community level. So we can have a place where parts of it are endowed and another section would be deprived. We have identified nine characteristics- lack of motor able access roads, transportation difficulties, lack of electricity, lack of telecommunication and postal services, lack of portable water, lack of decent accommodation, lack of health care facilities, poor school infrastructure and predominately untrained teachers manning a school. These are the nine characteristics and we sent these to the districts. We have ranked the schools according to the degrees of deprivation. This is one of the challenges we are resolving. We had nine thousand plus schools that needed to be upgraded from most of these indicators … (Taped interview, October 16, 2002).
The experiences of the Deputy Director General of the Ghana Education Service vividly speak to and captured this facet when she recounted her experiences during her duty tour in Tepa, Ahafo- Ano South District, a rural area in Asante from 1995-2001. In answer to the question, what were some of the challenges you faced as a district director of education in a rural Ashanti district, she explained

I cannot say they were challenges as such. You know having stayed in an urban area with electricity, water and other facilities at my disposal then finding myself in a rural area where there was no electricity, it was initially tough, but in actual fact I took it as normal because I realized that not all parts of the country enjoyed electricity. And I also realized that if Europeans and Americans volunteers who have everything at their disposal in their countries would come over to Ghana and accept postings to such places then I did not have any excuses for refusing transfer to that place. So I went and I decided to stay there because I felt that accepting transfer is one thing, remaining at the place is another thing and identifying yourself with the people is another thing. So the first three months when I got to Tepa I made sure I never went to Kumasi or if I came at all I went back the same day. There was no accommodation for me, and Stephen, the Archbishop’s driver who happened to be from Tepa gave me one room in his family’s compound house. It was a challenge but that did not deter me from doing what I felt should be done. Staying with them, eating with them, drinking the same water that they were drinking made the people realize that I was prepared to stay and work with them and in actual fact that helped me a lot because wherever I went I was welcomed because people said oh no when she was coming we said we did not want a woman but she is the first person who has come to our village, who has eaten our food and drank the dirty water we have been drinking therefore we should give her the support to help us. (Taped interview, August 28, 2002).

The disclosure by the Deputy Director General also embedded within it the resilience and strength of the community; a willingness to organize through their chiefs and overcome the handicaps and impediments that acted to retard their quest to share through their children the potential benefits of formal education. She highlighted this intrinsic community wealth when she added the fact that;

And so anything that I asked of the community they did without complain, even contributing money, they contributed, asking them to provide accommodation for teachers, and other things. Whatever I asked them to do they were willing to do it for me and for their children. So for the nearly six years that
I was there I was able to achieve a lot through the support of the communities, traditional leaders and the political leadership … The chiefs were part of my success stories. Whenever I visited a community the first point of call was the chief or odikro. As our tradition demand they would ask why I was there. I would explain my mission and then we would interact. They would us ask how I would be helping their community then I would throw the challenge to them that you do this and that and then I would ask the assembly to come in. So in actual fact we were able to mobilize the community to improve upon the conditions of the structures in their own communities, to provide toilet facilities for the schools, to make farms for the teachers. That area though was a rural district and the people somehow or the other needed somebody to help them to be educated. I do not know whether people were not doing it but I did not find it difficult because where ever I went I was accepted, I was welcomed and I was made to feel part and parcel of that community (Taped interview, August 28, 2002).

The depth of community hardiness, which the Atipinhene had referred to at the beginning of this section as constituting the bedrock of wealth; the anchor of community and individual survival; and a tool for advancement, in a persisting environment of poverty, is clearly brought to the fore by the disclosure the Deputy Director General made about her service and sojourn in rural Asante. These revelations strengthens the fact that nnoboa as a philosophy of life should be a continuum for the advancement of Asante in her quest to develop her human resources through education. The basis for the current drive to reinvent the authority, power and influence of Asante traditional leaders with education as the rider undoubtedly harbor within it the norms of susu, nnoboa, and sankofa, basic fabrics of Asante society.

**Stakeholders, policy formation in education and Asante traditional leadership**

The presentation of the issue of stakeholders, specifically traditional leaders and their divergent roles in the education policy milieu revealed a number of insightful contradictions that needs elucidation to ensure a more appreciative acknowledgment of their multiply roles in this area of leadership and planning.
A major contradiction is the point that a traditional leader, in this instance, the Juabenhene, serves on the statutory Council of State, the highest policy advisory body to the Ghanaian Presidency, but no provision is made for traditional leadership representation on the Ghana Education Service Council, the K-12 advisory body to the minister of education and the central government. Additionally four other traditional leaders including the president of the National House of Chiefs serve on the Council of State. Yet the greater majority of the interviewees acknowledged the invaluable and incisive contribution of this group of leaders to educational development in Asante and other parts of Ghana especially in the implementation of education policy at the grassroots.

The then Director of Secondary Education Division at the GES headquarters outlined the involvement of traditional leaders in education policy formulation and delivery when he said:

You see traditional leaders are very important stakeholders in our educational delivery. In fact their support and participation is very crucial for the survival and progress of the schools located in their localities. Interestingly, some of them take keen interest in education and they offer themselves to be used as agents of change. Some of them serve on boards of governors; some of them show interest in PTAs, some on their own individual levels make a lot of inputs- they offer buildings, classrooms, land for the promotion of education in their communities and at the national level… (Taped interview, September 24, 2002).

The consultant of the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service reiterated this exposition when she pointed out in response to the question is there a role for traditional and community leaders in education enterprise at the local level,

We are saying that communities should participate in the running of their schools so it is a wrong policy to say that communities and or their leaders should stay out of educational issues…each partner has a role to play. We must try and make sure that all partners understand and play their roles effectively. There is a role for the government, there is role for the teachers, and there is a role for parents and also
for the community. The traditional leader is part of the community and these are the type that offers leadership in providing uniforms, structures and other forms of assistance to ensure education delivery in their areas… (Taped interview, October 16, 2002).

In a recap of these views, the current headmaster of Prempeh College, the first boys secondary school in Asante and former headmaster of Dompoase Secondary School, confirmed these assertions and cited the very active stakeholder role of Adansi traditional leaders and their community in collaborating with the central government in setting policy as to the location of schools and other social facilities in that locality from the period of the first republic till now. The Adansi are a subset of the Asante residing within the environs of the famous Obusei goldfields to the south west of Kumasi. He asserted,

The traditional leaders consciously decided that this must be here and this must be there. They participated in the decisions to site different facilities in different towns. For example, Formena, the traditional capital had a big clinic, and the other towns had the training colleges, secondary and technical schools. Each town had its elementary school though. It can be described as a process of active political consultation between the chiefs and the political leadership that ended up in Adansi getting all those facilities. This is a collaboration that I still see is going on, maybe even in a more proactive manner than previously… as I said, they still believe in the “we concept”, it is ours. For instance, the Dompoasehene is the board chairman of the Dompoase Secondary School, my previous station. He has ordinary level graduation but is very active in the affairs of the school … (Taped interview, December 15, 2002).

The salient contribution of traditional leaders to education delivery at the grassroots levels in Asante and other parts of Ghana; and the grudging recognition of this contribution undoubtedly underlay the shift in policy to officially allocate traditional leaders membership of District Oversight Committees (DEOCs), District Educational Planning Teams (DEPTs), boards of governors of secondary/technical schools and school management committees for basic schools (SMCs). In answer to the question how the
MOE/GES were assuring community and traditional leaders’ participation in education, the consultant to the MOE/GES stated,

We work with the queen mothers and chiefs. That is why we put them on the DEPTs. They are a factor, people look on them with respect and they are leaders within their own communities so when you interact with them they go back and help in the process of sensitizing their people, especially the women on the need to send children to school …community participation is very vital to and in the success of the fCUBE program. We have put in place certain structures to ensure the success of community participation in the program. These include the DEOCs, DEPTs, SMCs and PTAs. Those are the structures we have put in place to ensure participation in education delivery and we assess the functionality levels of these structures. The functionality level of PTAs and SMCs is 63% in the country and that of the DEOCs is even higher at 90.9%. We have chiefs and queen mothers on some DEOCs and on all the rest… (Taped interview, October 16, 2002)

On the broader national front, a revealing discovery was the fact that now as during the colonial past, the actions and deeds of traditional leaders does at times blaze the path for future government policy. The classic example that was cited was the setting up of the OEF in 2000 acting as the catalyst for the establishment of the GET-fund. While deliberating on his role as a member of the board of trustees of OEF and the first administrator of the GET-fund, an Ohio University alumnus attested that,

…I am a founding trustee of OEF and that was before I took up this new appointment, administrator of GET-fund. There is a tendency to reduce my involvement in the OEF to the minimum and concentrate on the GET-fund, that has a bigger role and financial muscle in shaping up education in this country…There are no conflicts but the point is that I cannot have enough time to give to both of them, and so I really need more time for the GET-fund; that is a full time job as opposed to the work on the OEF that is part time and voluntary in terms of the fact that it is only people who are willing to serve on it that get appointed (Taped interview, September 10, 2002).

The presentation on the issue of stakeholder participation in education policy formation, implementation, and traditional leadership should appropriately conclude with the views of the Juabenhene. The Juabenhene in the course of our conversation described
the extent of influence Asante and other traditional leaders exert in the policy milieu. He affirmed in response to the question when do traditional leaders get into the policy making process as regards education or other areas where your leadership take you:

There are no formal linkages. But we have the influence because those who are being educated are subjects of the stool. The stool stands to gain if her people are empowered by way of knowledge to aspire to greater heights and positions of influence in the greater society by virtue of their learning and then share and shed that influence on their societies. So in this regard I would also say that my predecessor offered a scholarship to one of our subjects to train at Cambridge University and when he returned he joined the civil service and rose to become deputy secretary to the cabinet in 1968. So there are no direct links as such but through our influence over the students and teachers and even in government circles we are able to earn and ensure policy in such a way as to take care of our interest. (Taped interview, August 18, 2002).

The power of mobilization, diffusion of information, education and traditional leadership.

Both the General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary of the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) made concrete remarks that tied in to the prowess of organization, mobilizing skills, diffusion of information and other leadership attributes that Asante traditional leaders have exhibited to facilitate the spread of education within Asanteman. The education unionists mentioned the residual power of the old war machine against Denkyirea that was now attuned to mental emancipation, knowledge acquisition, diffusion and education.

Reflecting on the operation of the OEF, the Deputy General Secretary of GNAT pointed out that,

I think the OEF is a very laudable initiative and in a developing country I think we should be telling the truth and also recognizing our limitations. I mentioned earlier on that even in the face of resource constrains government officials have pretended that the fCUBE policy was free and that anybody who went to school would have his/her logistics supplied especially at the basic level. So if there is a very progressive forward looking King who has a core of very
progressive advisors who identified this as the new war they want to wage against poverty, ignorance and disease; and then they are able to marshal resources from within Ashanti and also outside Ashanti so that they want to really rise the standard of teaching and learning in Ashanti, I think it is a step in the right direction. What is even more gratifying is the promise of the same fund to provide a house to the best teacher in Ashanti Region every year. I think that has also been a component of the project and if we have more and more traditional rulers mobilizing resources to improve our schools then the central government would be a bit relaxed and would put its money perhaps into training personnel and giving them further training and in-service training to be able to really operate the schools instead of attempting to cover everything from start. So for me the OEF is really laudable (Taped interview, September 23, 2002).

Commenting on the influence that the Otumfu’s mobilizing ability in education has conferred on him on the national and international scene, the Secretary General of GNAT observed,

This is the stage that you find such a traditional leader more of an intermediary, more of a stabilizer if there is a problem or conflict. And even more of a mobilizing force or person especially nowadays when we are talking about enrolment, about girl child education and other social issues… Maybe in the urban area of Accra, the big city, the influence of a traditional leader might not be that evident but going down there to the community where they still hold them up, you do realize that you need them. Of course there are other ones that you can single out like Otumfu, the Asantehene who has now become a national figure, who is not limited to just his group of people or subjects. But he has extended his influence to the national level and to everybody in this country and even beyond Ghana… (Taped interview, October 15, 2003).

The Offinso District Chief Executive commended the lead role the Offinso Traditional Council and the Omanhene have assumed in fostering ownership of the process of schooling. This was a factor he cited as the basis for the district assembly’s decision to harmonize its educational policy and follow the direction set by the traditional leaders, with regard to girls’ education. Commenting on the fact that the kitchen should no longer be the destination of choice for girls nor “girl-child labor” a viable and profitable option of labor in the district, he asserted,
The problem is especially with girl child education, we have not been promoting this aspect of our children’s education properly in our area because we feel our girls do not matter and that the real places for them is the kitchen… Another area is child labor. It is also worrying us especially with girls. Because of poverty, we always push the girls to other people to stay with and work. I have announced and we are going to make it into a policy that whoever engages a girl to stay or work with have to send her to school or find her a gainful trade to learn. There should be a period within the day that she should be sent out. But we would like them to send them to school… The district assembly is the over all political authority in the district. We are going to enact by-laws, so that any body that fails to comply, the appropriate sanctions would be applied and then also the assembly would try to put in place mechanisms for getting help to these girls. It can be scholarships, uniforms and books for schools. In certain situations it is poverty that militates against people sending girls to school. In Offinso, a focus on girl child education is lacking… Even the Offinso Traditional Council itself appreciates this and has started to implement the policy to improve the situation. It has an educational trust fund with its main focus on assisting girls pursue secondary education. As at now, they have not less than ten girls under sponsorship (Taped interview, September 2, 2002).

Reacting to the issue of traditional leadership, mobilization and community involvement, the metropolitan assistant director of education, Kumasi, in charge of supervision drew on her experiences from the Adansi District and recollected,

In the Adansi District you would find that the traditional leaders in the rural areas were more involved than those in Obuasi. This was because the latter were in an urban area. They did not have the time. Compared to Kumasi where we do not often meet the chiefs in whose localities the schools are sited, in Adansi if you sent word ahead of your visits, you would arrive to find a durbar organized to welcome you… The communities helped with communal labor. They did not always contribute financially, sometimes the PTAs were also levied but such levies were small. They were open to sensitization campaigns and responsive to some of the things we carried to and discussed with them… They were informed in the sense that they came together to draw up what we called community school improvement plans. For example they provided the land for the building and expansion of schools in their communities. And before we posted teachers to the rural areas we discussed it with these leaders. To a considerable extent the chiefs and their people were actively involved in the running of their schools (Taped interview, December 15, 2002).

The optimistic picture other interviewees painted contrasted with the view that was expressed by a son of the Bompata stool of Asante Akim, a 1972 house prefect and
an alumnus of Prempeh College and University of Ghana, Legon. Commenting on the involvement of the Bompatahene, an alumnus of Oxford University, England and Ghana’s permanent representative at the United Nations, in the resolution of challenges K-12 education encountered in his area, he offered,

... I cannot candidly comment on that. I have not seen his direct contribution or involvement. But the Benkumhene who is also a graduate and has a master’s degree and is currently the District Co-coordinating Director in the Sekyere West District may want to help. Nana Bompatahene is my father but he does not want to associate with the educated folks. The Benekumhene for instances, could easily hold the fort for him when he is away but he would go in for the illiterate, people he would lord over and who would not argue issues with him or offer cogent suggestions; and because of that I do not see what is happening in Bompata. There is no improvement what so ever. And so I do not see what is going on and I do not know what he is doing but as far as I am concerned nothing is taking place. This is a rather big indictment on our traditional leaders (Taped interview, December 15, 2002).

He continued by indicating that the predecessors of the current Bompatahene were illiterates who comparatively did quite well in providing leadership and mobilizing the community to effect changes in orientation and advance basic schooling in the traditional area,

Nana’s predecessors were illiterates and so I would not be hard on them. For example my father, Nana Boakye Yiadom was an elementary school leaver and the one after him, Nana Akowuah was a stark illiterate, so such a person you would not expect much from him... However, my father spearheaded efforts to build Bompata Training College during the first republic. It has now been turned into the Bompata Secondary School. The original premise was the middle school. But Nana currently does not care and does not seem too much involved... (Taped interview, December 15, 2002).

The last respondent did sound hyperbolic in his some of his pronouncements, but the refreshing fact is that he was most outspoken on the lapses of traditional leaders in the pursuit of the revival of schooling in their domains as a deliberate tool to reaffirm,
reinvent, and re-legitimize their roles into relevance in the lives of their citizens. While I
did not have the opportunity to interact with those he criticized, the more crucial issue is
his acknowledgement of the role of traditional leaders as coalescing agents of
mobilization, diffusion of information and educational development in their realms. He
also indirectly hinted at the limited role of “absentee traditional leaders” in such efforts.

**A redefined theory on Asante traditional leadership.**

The leadership circle theory underlying this work reveal the intertwined nature of
leadership in the Asante milieu that reaches out to encompass and embrace all issues and
challenges that facilitate existence and add to the relevance of community enhancement.
It is an ever-evolving circle that reinvents itself by co-opting opportunities to enrich
community life through service and exude hope in the future. It is a lived and experienced
actuality perpetually turning to meet and resolve emerging societal situations that seek
communal and positive solutions and the possibility of improvement and hope as balms
of resolution.

Asante traditional leadership is revealed as process of continuous communal
interaction and interfaces with demands and expectations on both the “leaders and the
followers” who at each point may “reverse roles” to enhance the institution of leadership
and in the process make it relevant in people’s lives and cultures. It may be depicted as a
set of imperfect concentric circles that continually merges at certain points on their axis.
Within the imperfect circles resides and coalesces the different and competing
constituents –subjects, citizens, court functionaries, students, political parties,
government circles, intervening issues and challenges, and linkages with other leaders.
The utilization of people with the necessary professional orientation in both the Otumfuо Education Fund and the Offinsoman Educational Trust Fund to spearhead the change agenda in education attests to the phenomena of Asante traditional leaders conceding leadership roles; revitalizing the leadership strata and its multiple agendas with the cooption of local experts to frame and implement policies that inevitably earn these leaders accolades as transformational and progressive change agents. In the process, such policy success translates to redefine their relevance in the lives of their people and confers added legitimacy to their roles, even though their powers are circumscribed in the modern state system in which they operate. The incumbent Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II for instances is popularly signified for the wisdom and hope his educational and other policies has exhibited and the possibilities such policies has evoked in and for his subjects and citizens.

**Summary**

The story the headmaster of Twene Amanfo Secondary Technical School, Ohio University alumnus told me during a visit to his school should be an appropriate sum up for the presentation and analysis of my data. He did indicate the fact that after a period of seven years of service in the school, turning it round- extensively developing its physical infrastructure, improving its academic goals, setting high new standards, broadening its vision and horizons, and making the school the option of first choice for both parents and their children, in a collaborative enterprise, that had been recognized by both the traditional leaders who conferred a new traditional title “Oyeadye” on him and the Ghana Education Service with a promotion to the status of a district director, he was ready to move on to another area or office and new challenges. A motivation for this move
according to him was the traditional recognition that was accorded him. It marked the height of achievement for him and exhibited the positive outcomes that active collaboration with and between stakeholders could achieve in any locality and at the national level.

The story revels the symbiotic relations that traditional leaders and the modern political system with its bureaucracy forges to pursue common agendas, in this instance the advance of formal education. As the various interviewees, especially the educational professionals reiterated, it also demonstrate the central role traditional leadership plays in the scheme of life of the Asante and the relevance of the institution in facilitating issues and meeting community and societal challenges.
Chapter Five

Discussion, summary, conclusions and recommendation

Introduction

The preceding chapter presented in an ethnographic format, and using the voices of co-researchers and respondents, aspects of traditional Asante leadership and its intersection with formal education as it currently functions in portions of Asanteman and Ghana today. Based on interviewees’ responses, this study redefined Asante traditional leadership.

Chapter three outlined the philosophies and theories concerning leadership from both the west and the east that guided the research. The connection was made between traditional modes of unity and development, nkabumu and nnoboa as a basis for the current drive to utilize education as the vessel for both re-engineering the role of the chief and education as the tool for human resource development in Asante. The concepts of nkabumu, praya, nnoboa, susu and sankofà link the theories that underpinned the arguments in the thesis.

Chapter two of the study reviewed the existing literature on Asante society, leadership delineation, some of the philosophies and cultural outlook of the people of Asanteman related to their leadership system. The literature review revealed the lack of focus on Asante traditional leadership and its contribution to the growth of formal education in Asanteman and Ghana. Their varied and notable contributions vis-à-vis formal education in Asante and Ghana would hopefully be highlighted by this thesis and be fully recognized and appreciated.
Chapter one laid out the foundation for the study of this fascinating and emerging focus on the leadership of a people who have been perceived for a long time in Ghanaian society as more interested in certain dimensions of human pursuits other then education.

The environments within which leaders operate undoubtedly impact the decisions and policies made and the mode of arriving at such outcomes. Respondents’ philosophies of traditional leaders in Asante and Ghana and their drive to attain improved levels of education, stressed the fact that appreciable advances would be achieved when traditional leaders are accorded significant roles as stakeholders in the processes to reconfigure education in Asante and Ghana. The articulation of this point of view was heightened and common among the interviewees from all social levels and professions who participated in the study.

An attribute of increased traditional leadership participation in the educational discourse in Asante and other parts of Ghana is the fact that the current corps of traditional leaders is either first or second-generation beneficiaries of the initial surge to plant formal education in Asante. The Kokofuhene iterated this fact in reaction to a probe about how he got imbued with the community service spirit. He said,

My father was an old man who worked under Captain Fuller, the Boundary Commissioner of Ashanti in the old Gold Coast. My father was not an educated person but he worked under him so he had the need for education imbedded in him before he got married. I am the tenth child of the family. Everybody in my immediate family at least had primary and middle school education. This is a tradition that we have carried to encompass our children and members of our extended family (Taped interview, August 2002).

The Atipinhene of Offinso similarly acknowledged the immense roles played by both his father and extended maternal family in ensuring that he had the benefit of modern formal education. This corps of leaders, together with the other professionals
who have been infused into the traditional leadership strata, orient the realm of leaders towards an active participatory role in influencing policy formation and implementation in the education and other sectors as it impacts their citizens and group interests.

Portions of the life story of the Maase-Offinso Gyaasehene, Nana Osei Wusu depicts to a considerable extent the cyclic and beneficiary nature of Asante leadership as recounted to me during the course of the field work. His story and the others that were related to me in the field partly formed the basis for the redefinition of Asante leadership theory in the previous chapter. The seventy-five years old Nana Osei Wusu, a former “pupil teacher” indicated that,

We were among the first pupils of the Maase Roman Catholic School. We had to walk about five miles each morning to Offinso Old Town till a block was built for us here in Maase-Offinso. But even then we still had to travel to either Jamasi or Bekwi as the case may be to complete standard seven (ten years of formal schooling), that is the last four years. I went to Bekwi in order to complete my schooling and your uncle Nana Kokro Sampa II, your predecessor, ended up in Jamasi… So in a way contributing to the building of extensions to the school reminds me of what our predecessors did. I am adding to the process with the expectation that those who benefit from what we are doing will contribute to the growth and human wealth of this village (Maase) in terms of the skills they will eventually acquire and the professions they will pursue….

The above observations and comments situate the frame within which the discussion, summary, conclusion and recommendation of this study will be conducted.

**Discussion of findings.**

The fact that leadership attempts to effect positive change as a process has been referred to and acknowledged. The cyclic nature of leadership with the undeclared or explicitly stated objective of sustaining itself and enhancing its relevance at least in the instance of Asante traditional domain was similarly discussed in the preceding chapter. Both the education professionals and other interviewees commended the relevance of
traditional leaders in their role as major stakeholders and players in the education realm in Asante and Ghana and the varied roles they exercised. These leaders are seen to advance the educational agenda of the Asante and the country. This viewpoint is counter to the very minority opinion of a few bureaucrats that education is a complex, professional and technical process whose implementation is best entrusted to bureaucrats without traditional leaders and their communities’ direct participation in the process. However, it is noted that the majority perspective concur with the findings of Busia, (1968); Antwi, (1992); Agyemang (1996) and Cromer et al, (1996) that education is a community process with varied stakeholders who espouse different and converging interests. The first three authors in fact conducted their studies in Ghana and affirm the relevance of traditional leaders in the process.

The concerted view of the interviewed educational professionals on the position of traditional leaders in educational delivery made me wonder if their professional roles were just veneers beneath which lurked “traditional adherents” who were more inclined to advance the import of traditional leaders in the attainment of educational goals. A sober reflection, however, generally reveals their awareness and acceptance of the intricate and web-like reach of traditional leaders in the social fabric of their communities and recognition of prevailing stakeholder realities. The web reach of traditional leaders is readily shown by the response of their communities to calls to communal duty by the gong-gong, the response of experts serving on the boards of trustees of both OEF and OETF, their networking abilities within their communities, with the government and at times external partners in the interest of educational development and the speed with which breaches of customary norms by guests of such leaders get to them. Ohio
University’s Center for International Studies /African Studies Program memorandum of understanding with the OEF is an example of one such Asante traditional leadership and external partnerships. Another example is the grant by the World Bank of $30 million to the Asanteman Council’s Promoting Partnerships with Traditional Authorities, initiated by the Otumfu to enhance the social, sanitation, health and educational status of Asante and some localities within the Brong Ahafo, Central and Volta Regions (www://ghanaweb.com/ID=62556)

The consensus among these education professionals, both the classroom teachers and administrators, was that programs were periled from inception without the active involvement of chiefs and their communities. Furthermore, they cited the pitfalls the PNDC’s 1987 school reform process encountered as one such outcome of an education policy developed and partly implemented at the beginning without the direct participation of chiefs to reinforce their argument.

The readiness of the current corps of Asante traditional leadership to embark on an active stake holder’s role in reengineering the educational agenda in the kingdom is made abundantly clear by the policies and actions of Otumfu Osei Tutu II and the Offinsohene Nana Wiafe Akenten III to name just two of such leaders in the institution of educational endowments and trust funds among other policy initiatives to facilitate modern formal education. The investments in formal education are premised partly on a creed of developing a cadre of educated and skilled citizenry and manpower that can engage and participate on a meaningful level in the emerging global village. But these revelations in my view tend to predict and follow the earlier initiatives and veer towards formal education in post 1901 Asante and the accelerated pace of this development with
the return of Otumfuo Agyemang Prempeh I in 1924 from colonial imposed exile from the Seychelles. The tempo was kept up through the reigns of both Otumfuo Osei Agyemang Prempeh II (1933-71) and Otumfuo Opoku Ware II (1971-99). The former gave land grants for over fifteen secondary schools, numerous basic schools, two teachers training colleges and some tertiary institutions. The latter, in his professional life as a practicing land surveyor did demarcate a number of such schools for development in the environs of Kumasi including the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Asante.

The policy trend initiated in the traditional capital was to a large extent duplicated in the other parts of the kingdom. The interviewees from Offinso including Nana Wiafe Akenten III, Offinsohene and Op. Kwaku Addea, Akondwasuafuo (stool carrier) at the court of Offinsohene both directly attested to the fact that the spate of entrepreneurial school building expansion engaged in by Nana Wiafe Akenten II (1946-93) in Offinso was partly influenced by the Kumasi example. They additionally attributed his catalytic leadership in the school building spree to the fact that he was one of the few traditional rulers of his era in the Gold Coast to have graduated from Achimota School and practiced his profession as a government certified teacher before ascending the Offinso stool. In the current era, though Offinso initiated her educational funding endowment schemes ahead of Kumasi in 1997, the reigning Offinsohene, Nana Wiafe Akenten III in his interview was careful to concede the lead role in this venture to Otumfuo Osei Tutu II in view of the fact that the Otumfuo Educational Trust had a wider coverage, and was both national and international in terms of appeal and contributors. This stance obviously streamed
from the fact that he did not want to be seen competing with the Otumfuo, the King of Asanteman and history.

Acknowledging the voices of women.

A phenomenon that was observed was the acute awareness about gender by all the interviewees who participated in the study. The unquestionable impression conveyed was that Asante and Ghana needed all their human resources to develop on an even level for eventual community and national good. Some of the award schemes, for instance Offinsoman Education Trust Fund, specifically and deliberately targeted brilliant young girls and excluded boys as initial recipients in a bid to even the gender imbalance created by the myriad of issues that tended to plague and thwart possibilities of education for these young women. At the national level, the institution of the Science Mathematics and Technology Clinics (SMTC) and its decentralization to the regional and district levels, the establishment of a Girls’ Education Division in the Ghana Education Service with unit and circuit officers in each district office and the appointment since 2001 of a deputy minister in charge of Girls Education to cater for young women were all indices of a need to combat their server underdevelopment. These were commendable efforts to center the dialogue on the empowerment of girls and women in the core of both traditional leadership and national agendas.

However, the contrasting and interesting perception on gender expressed by the interviewers in the course of the research is an obvious area that needs to be commented on. The men tended to equate gender advances in terms of the schooling opportunities opened up for women and also in the development of physical infrastructure that were developed exclusively for the use of women. For instance, references were made to the
fact that development of physical structures for girls’ schools was undertaken in Offinso, Juaben and Kumasi in the colonial era well before the advent of independence. Though such separate schools for girls as in the Offinso State Girls School established in the early 1950s and the Juaben State Girls School in the 1940s did not always thrive, they nonetheless were turned round or metamorphosed as the basis for future coeducational establishments in the instance of the Juaben State Girls School into the current Juaben Secondary School and the Offinso State Girls School eventually into the Offinso Women’s Teacher Training College and currently Offinso Teacher Training College.

Another appreciable facet of the gender divide was the noticeable number of women in the top echelons of educational administration in Asante and Ghana with whom traditional leaders had to interact on the education-building quest. The clear messages from these interactions were that traditional leaders respected and were ready to discourse with women who had attained positions of public authority on merit. The experiences of the Deputy Director General, GES in the Ahafo-Ano District (Tepa), the Assistant Director (Supervision), Metropolitan Education Office, Kumasi in the Adansi East District and the General Secretary, GNAT, recounted earlier in chapter four supports this view. However, the treatment meted out to the former headmistress of Maase-Offinso Roman Catholic Junior Secondary School by the Offinso Education Directorate, the non-recognition and utilization of her multiple talents, issues that partly precipitated her decision to transfer to another district that was ready to use her skills, belie a serious indictment on general male attitude towards women and at times even colleagues especially at the workplace.
Gender issues for women in the traditional leadership strata transcended the provision of physical structures. As the queen mother of Amowie succinctly cast it in the focus group interview to tremendous applause from her colleagues,

Even though we are suppose to rule the towns and villages jointly with you (men), most of the time you ignore us and do not involve us in your decision making process. Even some of the men we are married to do not usually extend us full respect, so to talk to somebody’s husband on these issues is a bit touchy, and normally it may even be the women who take care of the needs of the children… (Focus group interview. September, 2002).

There was a desire for more active participation in the traditional decision making processes instead of just hanging on at the fringes and being informed after the fact in the queen mother’s observations. Maybe it is about time that Asante leadership rethinks the theory of consulting *abrewa* (the old lady) at the end of decision-making moments and involves her at the inception of the process. Again, there were issues of personal and family sensitivity to consider in exercising leadership, especially when fathers were found to be derelict in situations that fostered a sense of non-participation in the traditional processes and lack of respect in women’s personal spaces and relationships. These assertions throws up issues about the blurred junction between private and public spaces in an aspect of women’s traditional leadership approaches that was barely thought of as an issue by the male counterparts.

Women’s senses and feelings of disempowerment and bearing the brunt of traditional discriminatory practices were clearly articulated by the consultant and director of ICU when she commented upon the fact that traditional practices fostered pulling girls out of school to do petty trading to support male siblings’ education. This is certainly an ironic anomaly. And the observation by the Offinso District Chief Executive that the district administration and assembly were considering bylaws to curb the incidence of
placing young girls in work situations as house helps, “chop-bar attendants” and similar such menial situations instead of in the classrooms, which robbed them of the potential of developing their talents and deprived traditional leaders of a stock of educated citizens whose ultimate contributions to society’s good were diminished by missing out on basic education.

The potential of basic education to heighten health awareness, ensure proper family up keep, limit number of children in families and increase income possibilities have been reiterated by Oppong (1977); Levy (1992); Hyde (1993) and UNDP (2000) among others. The first two authors specifically conducted their studies in Ghana; and thus traditional leaders like the Otumfuo and Offinsohene who tilt educational endowments in favor of girls in a bid to even the gender disparity and alleviate the poverty trend seem to be adhering to the findings of studies that spell out the potential of community and socio-economic development with their agendas for women and a quest to reinvent the relevance of traditional leadership systems.

At least it could be acknowledged as the Juabenhenene indicated that traditional leadership has been gender disposed yet the dialogue to expand the contours of such inclination need to be expanded and also be a continuous process of inclusion and community education. The voices of women should feature equally and significantly in the Asante kingdom’s efforts to develop her human resources through education and reposition her traditional leaders.

*Sankofa: Mobilizing through Susu and Nnoba* *to overcome poverty.*

The continuous reference to poverty and its debilitating tentacles by respondents and the stark comment by the Offinso Atipinhene that we are mired in poverty, focus the
work on another facet of concern as Asante traditional leaders seek to promote education, and thereby enhance their citizens’ abilities to engage in meaningful levels of survival while rejuvenating the relevance of traditional leadership. The fact that Ghana is presently entrenched in the lower third of World Bank (2001) and UNDP (2002) economic indicators for nations and that the national per capita income has slipped consistently each year since attainment of independence in 1958 (CIA, 2001), makes the efforts of Asante traditional leaders to revitalize education and utilize it as a medium to re-legitimize themselves seem a Herculean task.

However recourse to the observations of the Deputy Director General, GES in the Ahafo-Ano District, the Assistant Director (Supervision) in the Adansi East District Education Office, the Catering teacher at Maase Roman Catholic Junior Secondary School and the Offinso Atipinhene generates the hope that possibilities yet exist under the leadership of chiefs to roll back the ravages of poverty through education. The common thread of possibilities these respondents offered as resolutions to the mire of poverty is community resoluteness and local philosophies of life. These harbors within them doctrines that had at its core the norms of susu, mooba, and sankofa, basic fabrics and values of Asante society. These are the very principles that the Otumfuo and Offinsohene with their education endowment funds and the Kokofuohene with his post Akweisdea celebration, Sunday evening non-denominational services, geared toward school rehabilitation and community education forums, utilize as building blocks to glue their communities together and forge common aspiration through education. In the process they reposition their rules and made the institution of chieftaincy and traditional leadership relevant in community and national life.
Between the *dawroo* (gong-gong) and the radio.

This research investigated forms of communication used by traditional leaders to reach out effectively to and with the citizenry in order to promote education as a vital component in the human resource development of Asante and Ghana. What was particularly striking was the urge to use the open, wide and accessible reach provided by the privately owned frequency modulated (FM) radio stations in the environs of Kumasi and beyond to Accra and other big towns in Ghana to bridge the distances that the traditional media, *atumpan* the talking drums and *dawroo* gong-gong could no longer transcend. The Kokokfuohene acknowledged the use of “famous radio preachers” from both the Christian and Islamic faiths to entice additional participants from both within and outside his domain during such services. An observation I made was the fact that it was edifying traditional religious adherents could coexist peacefully with believers of the two major religious imports to Asante and Ghana. This demonstrated the strong social wealth and group cohesion that chiefs could weld together for development through education.

While it was noted that traditional leaders were quick to incorporate new forms of media to convey messages about group development in regard to education, there were noticeable lapses in effectively communicating some of their educational agendas to their citizens. The profess lack of knowledge by the four queen mothers from Offinso about the operations of both the OETF and the OEF communicated a gap in successfully conveying their messages of change; it perhaps affirmed the Amowie queen mother’s view of ignoring the women most of the time. Again, the comment by the apprentice carpenter that he was unaware of both schemes and thus was not inclined to immediately
contribute to them deflects from the communication approaches of the chiefs. On a more positive note though, the Juabenhene’s one on one approach with a junior brother resulted in that person solely funding the construction of a three-classroom kindergarten block with head teacher’s offices and staff room. The volunteer spirit exhibited by board members of the various educational trust and endowments were equally praiseworthy.

The general conclusion that can be drawn is the need for the chiefs to rework their communication strategies to include more people at the local level in the ownership, diffusion and dispersal of policies that are formulated for local advancement. The symbol of traditional summons to community meetings, *dawroo* the gong-gong is still relevant but the reach of radio to enhance and reinvigorate the authority of traditional Asante leaders has complemented its power.

**A foot in the classroom door and a step in the corridors of power.**

There was the noticeable insistence by education professionals except one of the importance and relevance of chiefs to participate in the policy formulation and implementation process in the education sector in view of their stature in Asante and Ghanaian society. However, it was found that no chief served in an official capacity on the major K-12 educational policy advisory body for the Ghana government, the Ghana Education Service Council (GESC). One could argue that some chiefs did serve on the council in their private and professional capacity but this role in the strictest sense could only afford them a semblance of limited influence. A different picture came into play in the composition of bodies that reported to the GESC, among them, the District Education Oversight Committees, Board of Governors for secondary and teacher training institutes
and the school management committees for basic schools whose composition specify the inclusion of chiefs.

In contrast to their limited and circumscribed role in the GESC, at the implementation level, I noticed a vibrancy that was beyond imagination in the myriad of functions traditional leaders carved for themselves as participators in the education process. Such roles ranged from promoting the establishment of schools in their localities with various partners both secular and religious, land grants for school projects, donation of buildings for use by schools, service on school boards and district/unit management bodies and recently the institution of education endowments and trust funds to facilitate the educational dreams of some students from the basic through to the tertiary levels.

In the course of my interview with her, the GNAT’s General Secretary related the story of meeting a college mate who was a chief during a duty tour in the extreme northern part of Ghana and utilizing the presence and position of that person to mediate in a pending teachers strike in that area and also ameliorate the lot of teachers in that community. She commented on the fact that that incident was one of many instances when GNAT officials had utilized their close connections with schoolmates who are chiefs to foster improved community teacher relations to facilitate the attainment of mutual group goals.

While I could not discern the exact number of chiefs who were front line implementers of policy as classroom teachers and education directorate officials, there was a general consensus that the numbers involved were sizable. And the GNAT General Secretary promised to conduct a survey to identify such serving teachers and professionals and further rope in retired teachers who also performed as chiefs to form a
pool of experts both the GNAT and chiefs could fall on for various local and community purposes. The fact that they could be a sizeable figure cannot be discounted in view of the fact that three of my interviewees were both professional educators and chiefs.

The contrast to the fact that no chief serves on the GESC is the presence of a number of chiefs on the statutory council of state, the highest advisory body to the President of the Republic of Ghana. The President of the National House of Chiefs is prescribed by Article 89(1b) as a statutory member of the twenty-five-member council of state. Four other chiefs serve in either nominated or elected capacities on the council. One of my respondents the Juabenhene, a member of the Council of State aptly assessed the link between the influence potential of chiefs and their impact on the policy formation process and education when asked about the role of the chief in education policy formation:

There are no formal linkages. But we have the influence because those who are being educated are subjects of the stool. The stool stands to gain if her people are empowered by way of knowledge to aspire to greater heights and positions of influence in the greater society by virtue of their learning and then share and shed that influence on their societies. So in this regard I would also say that my predecessor offered a scholarship to one of our subjects to train at Cambridge University and when he returned he joined the civil service and rose to become deputy secretary to the cabinet in 1968. So there are no direct links as such but through our influence over the students and teachers and even in government circles we are able to earn and ensure policy in such a way as to take care of our interest. (Taped interview, August 18, 2002).

**Resolving conflicts for group and community development.**

A surprising discovery from the data was that conflicts and their resolution was an issue that occupied the attention of Asante traditional leaders in the education field. They claimed that efforts to resolve such conflicts at times led to their being embroiled in situations they did not really enjoy.
The interesting finding was that while the chiefs at times were unwittingly drawn into these situations, there were attitudes of turf encroachment on the part of educational administrators who felt that chiefs were unnecessarily intruding into their public space. Two such glaring instances from the data was the inability of the headmaster of the Kokofuo Secondary School to invite the Kokofuohene to arbitrate in the world soccer cup demonstration that rocked the school till the chief offered himself and brought resolution and closure to the issue for the good of his community and to preserve the existence of the school.

In the other instances confirmed by the three interviewees involved, while the Offinsohene was striving for peaceful resolutions to education related issues in his traditional area, the district director of education felt not only threaten but made the illogical declaration that that education was so complex an issue that strictly speaking ought to be left to the charge of the “experts” in his directorate to manage and handle. This was a minority view that was not shared by any other person. In fact both the consultant to the GES and the then Director of Secondary Education roundly contradicted him in their views on the participation of chiefs in the education process and the many roles they played to ensure its success and growth in their localities including resolutions of conflicts of various kinds.

One example is the headmistress of the Maase Roman Catholic School who transferred out of the district partly as a result of the head’s strained relationship with the district director of education. Her association’s incessant demands for refresher and in-service training and the director’s inability or unwillingness to fund such budgeted
programs also contributed to her decision to leave. The loss, from the point of view of the educational process, was that her skills were underutilized.

The direct outcome to the loss of such personnel was the continued underperformance of candidates in the public schools in Offinso district, which the district chief executive attributed to the non-leadership, provided by his former colleague the district director, constantly at loggerheads with all stakeholders including the chiefs of Offinso.

The conclusion that can be inferred from the two instances cited and discussed above is that while chiefs’ participation in social programs like speech and prize awards days and material donation and support were welcomed, too close an involvement in ensuring fair and equitable education administration were not always appreciated. There was the perceived notion of interference in school or district administration. But then in their quest to reinvigorate and validate their roles they constantly veer towards participating in the education process, for the good and development of their communities.

**Summary**

This study utilized the focus provided by the Otumfuo’s inaugural concern with education as the basis for the examination of Asante traditional leadership and the stakeholders’ niche it seeks to carve for itself through the lens of education. Chapter one of the study, discussed the background of the study, statement of the problem, educational significance, an overview of the literature, limitation and delimitation of the study, educational importance of the research that was conducted and a definition of terms. An analysis of leadership was undertaken to set the parameters for the work. It was
observed that interaction with the tier of amahene, ahenefo, ahemaa, npainfo and amamfo on the one hand and education professionals on the other would provide the field resources for the research. The statement of the problem significance posed some critical questions about Ghana’s education reforms in the late 1980’s; the policy frame with which it was implemented and the role of the chiefs if any in the process and the niche Asante chiefs have since carved out in the practice of education to establish ownership and restore a level of community control.

The overview of the literature took place in two sections, with the first section focusing on the literature review of aspects of traditional leadership, the culture, philosophy of life and education in Asante. The other section was a theoretical and methodological review connected with the research. The educational importance motivating the studies was also briefly mentioned and a definition of terms provided as a guide.

The literature review in Chapter Two probed the dynamics of Asante leadership structures and its involvement with formal education in Asante at inception in the twentieth century. It revealed the dispersal of the cloud of suspicion and distrust that initially greeted it gave way to a vigorous engagement that was not wholly welcomed by the first post independent government for ideological and political reasons. This partly accounted for the government nationalizing and creating a near monopoly in the education sector.

Chapter three opened with a methodological literature review and discussed various theories from both the west and the east as probable underpinnings for the assignment. It focused on a set of theories that emerged from the field research to frame
the parameters for the study. These included theories from Asante philosophy and western philosophical paradigms. The techniques for data collection, sample selection and coding the data were outlined and discussed in detail.

Chapter four revealed that the relatively unfettered post 1966 public space opened avenues for active participation by traditional Asante leaders in education up through the culmination of the establishment of both the OET and OETF as examples and channels of participation and opportunities for growing the human stock potential of Asanteman. Though for a moment during the period leading to the 1987 school reform, the then government almost relapsed into state monopoly of the process of education. One can argue reasonably that the educational and professional backgrounds of the present corps of traditional leaders in Asante and other parts of Ghana aided the initiative to carve a wider niche in education.

The active stake holder’s role spear headed by Asante traditional leaders partially resulted at the end of the twentieth century in Asante possessing the largest spread of school infrastructure and the highest level of attendees from K-12 through tertiary levels in Ghana. The sense of community ownership fostered by the Otumfuo, amahene, ahenefo, ahemaa, npainfo and amamfo’s dynamic interest and involvement in education certainly helps to explain the recent top-notch performances by schools in Asante in the terminal senior secondary certificate examinations conducted by the West African Examinations Council. In the 2003 school year, three schools from Asante were ranked in the top five schools nationally; and five schools in Asante were ranked in the top twenty schools out of a total of five hundred and three senior secondary schools from the ten regions of Ghana (Daily Graphic, January12, 2004; GES, 2004).
The dual drive to advance both boys and girls through education was noted but the caveat that was sounded was that a more conscious effort ought to be invested in girls’ education to ensure equity in the human resource development of Asanteman and Ghana. This is obviously more so when related to the fact that three of the top five best performing senior secondary schools by the 2003 league of results are girls’ schools; and also the fact that three of the five top ranked schools at the national grade twelve terminal exams in Asante are also girls schools.

The drive to tap into “new media formats” like radio to aid in mobilizing communities for communal action and as a channel of diffusing the changing agendas of traditional leaders’ vis-à-vis education was found to be an effective supplement to the “old media of oral communication, dawroo and atumpam.” The response to voluntary service by the experts manning the various education endowments corresponds to the vibrancy exhibit during communal work on school sites.

While the managers at the national level were appreciative of the involvement of traditional leaders in most facets of the education enterprise, some district and school level lead managers resented such participation, especially during moments of conflicts where these traditional leaders were most predisposed to be effective as neutral arbitrators. Such attitudes certainly streamed from notions of turf encroachments. However, in assessing the role of traditional leaders during such conflict periods, it is important to evoke the ethnographic metaphor of the kente weaver, working at his traditional loom and depicted as weaving strands of ideas and gluing issues from countless conversations and life situations into beautiful design patterns as the traditional leaders networking and connecting with different personalities within and outside the
realm, local and external agencies and bureaucrats at the local and national levels to stabilize and advance education in their areas of authority.

The threat of poverty to retard the efforts to open the possibilities of hope offered by education was noted. What was remarkable was the recourse to traditional philosophies of *nnoboa, nkabumu and susu*, as channels of remobilizing to tear down the barriers of mental oppression and access the light of at least basic education under the guidance and in response to the call, interest and ownership by the Otumfuo and other traditional leaders.

**Conclusions**

During the recent *Adae Kese* (Big Akwesidae) to commemorate the fifth anniversary of his enstoolment as the sixteenth King of Asante, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II said; “…Traditional leaders should not leave government alone to solve the problems of the people…. We have an obligation to intervene in socio-economic development if we are to be relevant in today’s world…” (Otumfuo Osei Tutu, 2004). This statement echoes the Otumfuo’s installation proclamation that inspired this study and points to a continuing trend of active participation in education and other social developments on the part of Asante royalty.

The current study showed the different roles traditional leaders have utilized since the inception of formal education in Asante at the beginning of the twentieth century, and especially during the last twenty-five years, to participate in the process of fostering education change for their citizenry. The initial lukewarm attitude towards education changed into an active stakeholder role. This manifests itself currently in the number of functions Asante leaders engage in the process of promoting education. The immediate
function of role modeling by virtue of most traditional leaders being educated is worthy of mention. Additionally, Asante traditional leaders have through their proxies directly and indirectly participated in determining education policy formation and implementation. In their public, professional and private capacities they have acted as frontline policy formulators and implementers in government bureaucracies, in the classroom as teachers, and as decision makers directing the location of schools. They have partnered with both secular and religious authorities and at times on their own initiative have embarked on school building programs.

An acute awareness to advance educational opportunities for girls and women permeate some of the initiatives that were encountered to develop the human resource stock of traditional localities and also complement national efforts to ensure equity and equal opportunities for girls and boys education. A discovery was the fact that some male traditional leaders approached the issue of gender in terms of structures and opportunities for education while their female counterparts viewed it from a wider angle that included personal respect in the exercise of traditional leadership roles and participation in decision-making process at inception and not consultation at the end. However, there appeared to be blurred junctions in distinguishing the public and private arenas of operation for some of the female traditional leaders, leading at times to hesitancy instead of providing leadership.

Traditional Asante leaders’ prowess of mobilization in the interest of education development were recounted in each locality where interviews took place. This involved mobilizing fiscal, material and human resources in school building endeavors. All three amanhene who were interviewed cited instances when they funded or supplemented
aspects of community education development or personally paid the school fees of students who were not their relatives. This was in addition to ensuring the institution of trust funds to facilitate schooling for a broader number of students. In utilizing their personal funds they were to an extent additionally emulating the example of the Otumfu who in addition to establishing the OEF has personally donated various sums of money to individual schools for a number of projects and also paid the fees of some needy students.

Traditional leaders sourced additional fiscal support from government, religious and at times bilateral and multilateral funding agencies to argument funding for educational projects.

Mobilizing materials for education involved securing material support from district councils and nongovernmental groups by traditional leaders. The leadership role exhibited by the queen mother of Ayankasuo-Offinso in assuring and securing the consent of a nongovernmental organization to site a school project in her village testifies to the boundless courage of female traditional leaders to perform when thrust into the center. The determination exhibited by the queen mother of Offinso-Maase to ensure the completion of a three-classroom block with offices for the Maase Roman Catholic Junior Secondary School was equally significant and reinforces this perception of the effectiveness of female traditional leaders.

In mobilizing their people to work on school and education related projects, traditional leaders tapped into the stock of experts who volunteered and served on the education and endowment trust boards, expanding the borders of inclusion to enfold persons who would otherwise be left out. In the process they conceded leadership to others during moments when their limited know-how demanded such concessions.
Traditional leaders’ functions in the interest of education include service on schools boards of governors, district and unit management bodies; as keynote speakers at school functions like the district SMTE clinics and award days, as conflict managers to resolve school conflicts and preserve their development, as resource mobilizes for donations and buildings for schools sites. Additionally, they have acted as points of contact for the diffusion of information to their communities whenever they organize durbars to welcome education service officials on sensitization trips to their towns and villages.

The Ghanaian musicologist Dr. Ephraim Amu titled his masterpiece composition “Yen Ara Asaase Ni” (This is our own land) with expectations of high leadership performance from holders of public offices in both the traditional and modern sectors. One can argue that Asante traditional leadership under the added spur of Otumfu Osei Tutu II have performed with a few exceptions to the high critical standard expressed by the lyrics of the song; their leadership is a dynamic process that merits constant and periodic evaluation especially with regards to education.

**Recommendations**

A number of issues project themselves out of this study that bears close monitoring and sustained studies since the processes of education and leadership are both dynamic and evolutionary:

The Asante education system buys into the national mode. The continuous need to intermittently review the national K-12 school curricular, and make it relevant to personal; job market and national manpower goals were made clear. Endeavors to effect
such curricular changes should involve stakeholders including traditional leaders in the
review process to ensure ownership and shared visions from inception.

The ability to sustain the interest of the public in the leadership endeavors of
traditional leaders’ vis-à-vis contribution to the various educational endowments was
predicated on a number of parameters. Prominent among these is the fact that various
traditional localities should contribute amounts that accord with their roles in the
traditional set up to eschew perceptions of not contributing enough.

The need to provide annual audited accounts that is widely published and
circulated was a salient, silent and overriding concern of a number of respondents.
Additionally, the urge to guide against contributors fatigue, by investing a reasonable
proportion of current fiscal inflows in government bonds and shares in the Ghana stock
markets, to assure viability and benefit for the long term was also sounded.

Finally, the improved performance levels recorded by schools whose traditional
leadership exhibited keen interest in student performance and output was cited as a basic
rational to ensure close involvement of traditional leadership and the process of formal
education. These are dynamic issues that merit continuous and further study in Asante
traditional leadership and the processes of educational change in Ghana.
Reference:


GA District: The state of the child report. Accra: GNCC.

Kumasi Metropolis: The state of the child report. Accra: GNCC.

Lara District: The state of the child report. Accra: GNCC.

Legal and institutional profile of Ghanaian women and children. Accra: UNICEF.


____________. (1957) *The autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah*. Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd.


Appendix A

List of Interviewees

The diverse voices from different social milieus that facilitated a discerning appreciation of the intersection of Asante traditional leadership and the process of formal education change is presented below to express my enduring gratitude for sharing their insights and enabling me to learn from them. Their names are listed in the order of interview. Their profession or occupation is similarly indicated. The cities/towns/villages where the interviews took place are listed alongside their names.

Kwame Konadu  Apprentice carpenter and Offinso citizen, Accra

Barima Offe Akwasi Okogyeasu  Kokofuhene, Kokofu

Nana Otuo Siriboe  Juabenene, Juaben

Nana Wiafe Akenten III  Offinshene, Offinso

Mr. J. Y. Oduro  District Chief Executive, Offinso District, Offinso

Mr. S. K. Debang  Headmaster, Dwanena Akenten Secondary School, Offinso

Mr. Adu Abroquah  Senior Housemaster, Dwanena Akenten Secondary School, Offinso

Mr. Kwasi Edusei  District Director of Education, Offinso

Ms. Cecilia Johnson  Headmistress, St. Louis Girls Secondary School, Kumasi.

Mr. J. Oppong-Kyeremanteng  District Secretary, Ghana National Association of Teachers, Offinso.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position / Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Fousaba M. Banahene</td>
<td>Executive Secretary, Ghana Education Trust Fund, Accra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Lydia Osei</td>
<td>Deputy Director General, Ghana Education Service, Accra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Nyoagbe</td>
<td>Deputy General Secretary, Ghana National Association of Teachers, Accra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Comfort M. Brituwm</td>
<td>Former Headmistress, Maase Roman Catholic Junior Secondary School, Offinso-Maase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Irene Adanusa</td>
<td>General Secretary, Ghana National Association of Teachers, Accra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Florence Daaku</td>
<td>Coordinator, Implementation Coordination Unit, Ministry of Education / Ghana Education Service, Accra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. A. Owusu-Achiaw</td>
<td>Headmaster, Prempeh College, Kumasi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Mary Owusu-Achiaw</td>
<td>Assistant Director (Supervision) Metropolitan Education Office, Kumasi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nana (Dr.) Baah Boakye</td>
<td>Atipinhene, Offinso, Executive Director, National Board for Small Scale Industries and former Principal of Accra Polytechnic. Accra &amp; Offinso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nana Edusei Boateng</td>
<td>Nkosuohene, Offinso and Assistant Headmaster, Namong Secondary Technical School, Namong-Offinso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nana Akua Amponsah</td>
<td>Queen Mother, Buasi-Offinso/Accra.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nana Ama Agyeman II</td>
<td>Queen Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nana Adow Pomma</td>
<td>Queen Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nana Ama Fosuwaah</td>
<td>Queen Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nana Kofi Owusu</td>
<td>Gyeasehene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nana Oduro Kwarteng</td>
<td>Abontendonhene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nana Adu Bobie</td>
<td>Atumetufuohene</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Samuel Akuoku</td>
<td>Director</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Ernest Boakye</td>
<td>Human Resource Professional &amp; House Captain 1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Mary Ayeh</td>
<td>Maase Roman Catholic Junior Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Emanuel Adusah</td>
<td>Assistant Headmaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Bernice Asante</td>
<td>Technical Drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. E. K. Yeboah</td>
<td>Agricultural Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Kwame Yeboah</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Kate Osei</td>
<td>Catering Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Sam Owusu</td>
<td>English Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position/Institution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Ben Owusu</td>
<td>English Language &amp; Cultural Studies, Maase Roman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Catholic Junior Secondary School, Maase-Offinso.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Rita C. Kumah</td>
<td>1st Otumfuo Fellow, Ohio University, Athens, Oh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nana Brefo Booateng</td>
<td>Executive Secretary, Otumfuo Education Fund, Kumasi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Other participants who were not directly interviewed but who were contacted in the course of the fieldwork and whose viewpoints subliminal made it into this work are acknowledged with gratitude:

Mr. Jarvis Agyeman-Badu    Headmaster, Twene Amoako Secondary Technical School, Suyani, Brong Ahafo Region, Ghana

Mr. Charles Kuma Korante    Principal, SDA Teachers’ Training College, Koforidu, Eastern Region, Ghana & CEO, Abibiman Schools, Accra, Ghana

Mr. Selete Nyomi           Founder & CEO, Agoro Cultural Group, Cape Coast, Central Region, Ghana.

Mr. Abadoo-Forson          Tour Guide, Agoro Cultural Group, Cape Coast, Central Region, Ghana.

Nana Owusuwa Dufie Ankra,  Queenmother, Maase-Offinso,

Kyeame Appiah-Kubi         Maase-Offinso, Ashanti Region, Ghana.
Maps of locations of Ghana and Asanteman

Source: Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection
Appendix C

Definition of terms

**Adae**

This is the festival celebrated twice within the Akan/Asante calendar month of forty-two days, prayers and offerings are made to *Nyame* (God) and the ancestors. Akwasidae is commemorated on Sundays and Wukudae on Wednesdays.

**Akan**

The group of Akan speaking peoples from central and southern Ghana and the Côte d’Ivoire. This group includes the Asante, Fante, Akuapem, Akyem, Kwawu, Bono, Denkyira, Wassa, Nzima and Baule. The Akan ethnic group form about forty-five percent of the total population of Ghana. They are believed to have migrated from the Western Sudan and the area of the Niger bend to settle in their present location (Kondor, 1993; Wiredue, 1996; Ghana Government Statistician, 2002).

**Akyeamepoma**

The staff or finials of office of the spokesperson or linguist of a chief or queen mother.

**Asante**

A sub-sect of the Akan ethnic group of Ghana and the Ivory Coast; and the largest segment of this group who are located in the central and southern forest belt of Ghana. “Asante” instead of the anglicized “Ashanti” is used in the study to refer to both the wider area under discussion instead of the political region, and the people who call themselves Asante.
Cedi

Ghana’s monetary denomination.

Ohene

The head or chief of a village, town or community among the Akans of Ghana.

Decent to the position is normally delineated in a lineage. He usually completes the process of enstoolment with a swearing ceremony before his overlord, normally a paramount chief.

Omanhene

A paramount chief and in the specific case of Asante, one who completes the process of his installation with a swearing ceremony before the Otumfuo Asantehene, (King of Asante).

Ohemaa

A queen mother of a village, town or paramount area.

Okyeame

A court official of a king, chief or queen mother of the Akans of Ghana. Usually called a linguist, a more appropriate designation would be a spokesperson.

Otumfuo

One of the titles of the King of Asante, it means the source or owner of power.

Susu

Mutual saving scheme usually operated by market women, craftsmen and women and other semi professionals. A very close western approximation would be the credit union.
Appendix D

Participant Consent Information

I am conducting research on traditional leadership participation in K-12 education in the Asante Kingdom of Ghana. The study is spurred by the interest of Otumfuo Osei Tutu II in education. I will like to invite you to participate in an interview that will last for one hour. You should be eighteen years of age or older in order to participate in this research. The benefits of the research are to (a) Learn and share best practices to improve school and education leadership. (b) Assess participants’ perceptions about the role of traditional leaders in K-12 education. (c) Assess effectiveness of traditional rulers in promoting formal education. There are no known risks to you as a result of your participation in this research. To assure you of confidentiality, your name and identity will not be revealed in reports of the research. Video and or audiotapes will be stored securely while in existence and will only be viewed by the researcher and my dissertation committee. The tapes will be destroyed within a year after the final defense of my dissertation. I will appreciate if you would participate in my study. My findings will be part of my doctoral dissertation. If you consent to participate, I hope you will additionally agree to allow me to contact you in future for clarifications and follow up questions. Please, kindly indicate your willingness to participate in my work or indicate your unwillingness. Thank very much you.
Appendix E

Participant Consent Form

I, the undersigned agree, to participate in the study being conducted by Mr. Kwaku Owusu-Kwarteng, of Ohio University, Athens, Ohio.

I understand the purposes of the research explained to me by Mr. Kwaku Owusu-Kwarteng. I understand and accept his assurance of confidentiality. I understand that the information I share with him will be used in the writing of his dissertation. I understand that parts or his entire dissertation will be presented at academic meetings and conferences. I understand that parts or the entire dissertation will be submitted to a journal or journals for publication.

Signed by _______________________

Signature of participant
Appendix F

Interview Protocol

Demographic information

1. Would you please furnish me your age?
2. Please furnish a brief educational background, if any?
3. Your profession?
4. Can you give a concise background of your role in your organization or community?

Identification of issues

5. Do mention any four issues of concern affecting the management/running of your local school?
6. What specific leadership issues do you encounter as a parent/guardian in your local school?
7. Can you suggest any means for the resolution of these concerns?

Traditional leaders/Community participation

8. Is your local chief/queen mother involved in any way in the running of your local school?
9. What provisions has been formulated for girls’ education in your village or town by the local chief and or queen mother and the village management committee?
10. Does the town/village management committee play any role in the operation of your school?
11. Is there an active parent teacher organization in your school?
12. Give a brief description of the role of the parent teacher organization in running
the school.

13. What is your perception about the inauguration of the Otumfuo Education Fund
(OEF)? Please, be a bit of detailed in your answer.

14. Do you find any issues with the objectives of the OEF as presently outlined? If so
what are they?

15. Can you suggest two areas of focus for the OEF?

16. Have you or do you intend to contribute fiscally or otherwise towards the
attainment of the OEF goals?

17. How should the locally generated portion of funds towards the OEF be disbursed?

18. What has been the reaction of your town/village chief to the institution of the OEF

19. What has been the reaction of the general populace towards the OEF?

20. Has a similar scheme been contemplated in your town/village/traditional area or
been operated here before?

Specific to traditional leaders

21. How has your role changed in the last ten years?

22. How would you compare your role with that of your predecessor?

23. How does a “traditional ruler” address “modern needs”?

24. Who are your role models?

25. How do traditional and state authorities work together?

School heads and education directorate perceptions

26. What are the expectations of the school as regards traditional leadership/
community participation in school issues?
27. Does the district/ regional education directorate perceive traditional leaders and their communities as partners or stakeholders in school affairs?

28. Which areas are outlined for their participation?

29. Do traditional leaders/ communities have an input in the formation of education policy?

30. At what level or stage of policy formation do they participate?

31. What role if any do traditional leaders have in policy implementation?

Thank you for your participation. I do hope I would be welcomed again if the need arises for a follow up or additional clarification. Have a good day.
Appendix G

Letter to Deputy Director General, GES.

32 S. Shannon Ave
Athens Oh. 45701
June 8, 2002

Ms. Lydia Osei
Deputy Director General, GES
Headquarters
Accra-Ghana

My dear Ms. Osei,

This short note is just to extend my congratulations to on your recent appointment as the Deputy Director General, GES. I wish you a successful tenure during your period of service.

I wish to also inform you that I will be coming down to Accra on July 30, 2002, together with the Ohio University’s Director of African Studies Program, Dr. Steve Howard. I do hope you will agree to grant us an appointment with you to discuss issues of mutual interest relating to education.

God bless and keep you.

Sincerely

Kwaku Owusu-Kwarteng
Appendix G 1

Letter to the Executive Secretary, Ghana Education Trust Fund.

32 S. Shannon Ave
Athens, OH. 45701
June 8, 2002

Mr. Fosuaba A. Mensah Banahene
Executive Secretary
Ghana Education Trust Fund
Ministry of Education
Accra- Ghana.

Dear Mr. Banahene,

I do hope that my message of congratulation, though a bit late is still in order, on your appointment as the Executive Secretary of the GET-Fund.

This short note is to inform you that Dr. Steve Howard and I would be arriving in Accra by KLM in the evening of July 30, 2002. He is to supervise the start of my doctoral field research.

Dr. Howard is highly interested in meeting Prof. Ekumfi-Ameyaw, Minister of Education. I did mention the fact that you are currently working with him and thus would be able to secure an appointment for us to discuss issues of mutual interest. I hope our faith in you in securing the appointment will be fulfilled.

Sincerely,

Kwaku Owusu-Kwarteng
Appendix G 2

South Shannon Ave.
Athens, OH 45701
June 20, 2002

To Nana/Mr./Madam ………………………
………………………………………………..
Dear Nana/Mr./Madam,

Request to Participate in Research

I am a Ghanaian doctoral student at Ohio University, Athens, Ohio. I have completed my course work in the field of education with a focus on culture, education, administration and leadership. I am in the process of conducting field research on leadership in the education milieu in the Asante Kingdom. My research topic is:

ASANTE TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP AND THE PROCESS OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

I would appreciate if you would kindly consent to participate in my research work. Find attached a questionnaire designed for the purpose of collecting information for the study. Your honest response to this questionnaire is very important to the overall success of the study. Please be assured that the information you give is confidential and would be treated as such.

This research is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. William Stephen Howard, Associate Professor, Educational Studies, and Director, African Studies Program, Ohio University, Athens, OH.

I count on your cooperation for the successful completion of this research. Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Kwaku Owusu-Kwarteng

Approved by

Dr. William Stephen Howard
Advisor and Chair of Doctoral Committee
Educational Studies
Ohio University
Athens, OH, 45701.