

Economic, Social and Political Developments in Ghana: A Relook at the Guggisberg Era in the Gold Coast (1919-1927)

Kwame Osei Kwarteng
Department of History, University of Cape Coast, Ghana

Edmund Selorm Sosu
Department of Arts Education, University of Cape Coast, Ghana

Abstract

In Africa and most countries of the developing world, infrastructural projects are mostly carried out with the goal of eradicating poverty, misery, diseases and deprivation, as well as to ensure equity in the sharing of national cake. Therefore, right after colonization of Africa, the colonial authorities set in motion the process of providing one infrastructural project or the other in their colonies. Typical examples were construction of roads and railways, harbours, pipe borne water, electricity, construction of school buildings, hospitals or dispensaries, sinking of wells and the like. Though, these projects were seen to be woefully inadequate by some African Historians, who have been critical of the colonial administrations' provision of the so called infrastructural projects as tools for exploitation of the resources of the colonies for the benefit of their home country, to the neglect of the improvement of the circumstances of the colonial subjects or territories. This paper using primary and secondary data examines the developments that occurred in Ghana in the economic, social and political spheres focusing on the era of Guggisberg as the Governor of Colonial Ghana (the Gold Coast) from 1919 to 1927 and discusses its implication for the current political gimmick.

Keywords: Development, Transport, Education, Hospital, Constitution

1.0 Introduction

The recent political history of Ghana, more especially, since the inception of the fourth Republican Constitution on January 7, 1993, presidential candidates, particularly the incumbent presidents or heads of state who were seeking re-election often focused their campaign messages on the infrastructure they have put up during their first term in office or what their predecessor who was a member of their own political party did. Precisely, in Ghana's recent political landscape, the two major political parties—National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) had always centred their campaign messages or their manifestoes on either the achievements of the incumbent president or his predecessor. For instance, Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings, who shot himself into Ghana's political scene through a coup d'état in 1981; metamorphosed into a democratically elected president in January, 1993, focused his campaign messages in 1992 and 1996 on achievements of his military Junta, Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), which he headed for eleven years and his first term in office from 1993 to 1996. Similarly, John Agyekum Kufour, the second president of the fourth republic of Ghana, based his campaign messages and manifestoes in the 2000 and 2004 elections on the achievements of Prime Minister Kofi Abrefa Busia of the Second Republic under whom he served as Deputy Foreign Minister and his own achievements between 2001 and 2004. Both Presidents John Evans Atta Mills¹ and John Dramani Mahama² premised their campaign messages and manifestoes in 2008 and 2012 elections respectively on Rawlings' achievements. In this paper we intend to examine and highlight the Economic, Social and Political developments that took place during the administration of Frederick Gordon Guggisberg from 1919 to 1927 in relation to contemporary Ghanaian political rhetoric. The thrust of the synthesis in this paper is looked at from three parts. First, a simple hypothetical plan for analyzing development is presented. Secondly, the developmental activities engaged in by Guggisberg are examined in terms of the exposition on development. Finally, more general conclusions are drawn on the basis of the examination of Guggisberg's development, focusing more on Ghana's development in the twenty-first century.

1.1 What is development?

The logical point of exit for any attempt to study the era of Guggisberg in the quest of presenting the issue in this

¹ Mills was the Vice President of Rawlings from 1997-2001. He contested 2000 and 2004 general elections on the ticket of NDC but lost to John Agyekum Kufour on all these occasions. However, he was successful in his third attempt in 2008 when he defeated NPP candidate Nana Akuffo Addo in a round off election with John Mahama as his running mate.

² John Mahama is the incumbent President of Ghana, who will be seeking re-election in November, 2016. As the vice President of John Evans Atta Mills, he was sworn in as president following the demise of the latter in July 2012 when the country was gearing up for presidential and parliamentary elections in December that year. John Mahama then contested the election as the incumbent and won campaigning on the achievements of Rawlings and Mills his predecessors.

paper to the social, economic and political development in the country requires the definition of the term 'development'. Development is a significant improvement in a country's economic, social and political conditions which could also be translated as an increased in skill, capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being of people in a nation.¹ For the purpose of this paper, it will be defined as an establishment deliberately orchestrated to create wealth and improve people's lives. According to Dudley Seer, development involves (1) the capacity to obtain physical necessities, particularly food; (2) a job (not necessarily paid employment) but including studying, working on a family farm or keeping house; (3) Equality, which should be considered an objective in its right; (4) participation in government; (5) belonging to a nation that is truly independent, both economically and politically and finally; (6) adequate educational levels.²

Aware of the aforementioned, several connotations can be adduced from the exposition. The first instance is that massive development is undertaken sometimes during the tenure of office of the government in power. Secondly, all developmental activities undertaken must lead to improvement in the well-being of the masses. Thirdly, institution of any developmental activity in a country on a large extent leads to serious political, economic or social threat on incumbent government or persons living during the period of the development. For this purpose, government in power mostly put up developmental activities to prioritise their goals. Finally, developmental activities of a government inform us what the government in power view as the essential pillars of its tenure of office. Submitting to the tenets of hypothesis on development, the rest of the discussion plods on the developments invented by Guggisberg in the Gold Coast in the light of the exposition on the term development and also draws a more general conclusion to development in the twenty-first century Ghana.

2.0 Administration of Frederick Gordon Guggisberg

By 1902 the British had completed their colonization of the Gold Coast, and entrenched British influence by setting up the administration of the colony which was headed by a Governor. The successive governors and other officials were appointed to oversee the day to day administration of the Gold Coast. F. G. Guggisberg was one of such governors appointed in 1919 to manage the Gold Coast colony. It is worth noting that Guggisberg actually applied for the post of Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, but was instead given the post of the governor³ probably because of his contribution during the First World War or his strong attachment to the Gold Coast. Prior to his appointment as governor, Guggisberg had served as Assistant Director of Surveys in the Gold Coast from 1902 to 1908 and as a Surveyor General in Nigeria from 1910 to 1914. Thus, he was intimately aware of the political, economic and social problems of the Gold Coast and at the same time knew the technical problems connected with public work.⁴ Guggisberg remains one of the outstanding persons in the history of Ghana, respected for the kind of economic planning and leadership he was able to give and for his combination of idealism, moral fervor, and shrewd practical foresight.⁵ These qualities undoubtedly explain why Guggisberg's administration witnessed unprecedented and remarkable social, economic and political development which were not only revolutionary but also gave a fillip to the future socio-economic and political reforms of the country.

In order to appreciate the contribution of Guggisberg to the socio-economic development of Ghana, it is imperative to have a panoramic view of the situation prior to his appointment. At the time Guggisberg was appointed governor, there were inadequate roads and railways to help cart agricultural and mineral produce from the interior to the coast in large quantities. In the area of education, it was mostly the missionary societies that provided formal education. The government's contribution to education was restricted to provision of grants-in-aid to the schools. Most of the schools were poorly organized, ill equipped, and staffed by teachers who were inadequately trained. There were almost no good technical and industrial schools. In the area of health, the facilities that existed were unable to meet the needs of the people.⁶ A few hospitals had been built in the principal towns where there was concentration of European population, but most of them looked only after Europeans. The rest of the country did not have any such government facilities.⁷ Again, the inter-war years witnessed a period of paternal colonial economic administration when the criterion of colonial economic policy was the self-sufficiency of the British colonies.⁸ Such was the situation existent at the time of Guggisberg's

¹ W. Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, 1973. Tanzanian Publishing House: Dar-Es-Salaam .p.6.

² S. Shah, *Development: Meaning and Concept of Development* article shared by Shelly Shah, retrieved from <http://www.sociologydiscussion.com/society/development-meaning-and-concept-of-development/688>

³ A. A. Boahen, *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. 1975. New York: Longman Group Ltd. p. 109

⁴ K. Ewusi, *Economic Development Planning in Ghana*. New York: Exposition press. 1973. p. 2

⁵ D. Kimble, *A political History of Ghana: The Rise of Gold Coast Nationalism, 1850-1928*. Clarendon Press, 1963. p. 42

⁶ Daily Guide Newspaper, Accra, 16 July, 2016. p.4

⁷ D. E. K. Amenumey, *Ghana: A Concise History from Pre-colonial Times to the 20th Century*. Woeli Pub. Services. 2008. p. 183.

⁸ J. W. De Graft Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa: Thoughts of Young Africa Addressed to Young Britain*, 2nd ed.

accession to the governorship of the Gold Coast. This existing situation was either to facilitate or hinder the realization of Guggisberg's development programme for the Gold Coast. The ensuing paragraphs succinctly and evidently elucidate his achievement in the light of the concept development.

3.1 Economic development under Guggisberg

In performing his role as Governor of the colony, Guggisberg tackled three key areas of the Gold Coast economy namely; transport, industry and agriculture. Although, it is not novel for a chosen governor or president to share his or her plans for his administration, on the part of Guggisberg, he was noted for his integrated ten-year development plan which to him would serve as the bedrock of his entire administration (1919-1927)¹. By the ten-year development plan, the concept of a viable social and economic Gold Coast was for the first time, injected into official government policy.² Per the development plan, Guggisberg intended to make total expenditure of £25 million. He wished to provide the country with the physical facilities that would promote economic development.³ Guggisberg hoped that much of his programme would be financed with government revenues as the crown did not finance the development of her colonies. He considered that it was crucial for revenue of the country to increase. To this end, he deemed it expedient to lower costs of production of exports and also increase trade.⁴ This feat, he knew, would be achieved if an effective transportation system was in place.

3.2 Transport

The face of the twenty first century is an easy accessibility in the movement of persons and goods. Projecting this as far as the earlier part of the twentieth century, Guggisberg is seen to take cognisance of the need for a faster and safer mobility in the activities of the citizenries of Gold Coast. In doing this, with a projected expenditure of £24 million, about £15.5 million was dedicated to transport. Although, the contemporary critics will see this as extortion of the revenue generated in the Gold Coast, it is still factual that his administration chalked considerable successes in the transport networks in the country. His administration saw the expansion of the railway and road networks. Even though he was not the originator of railway and road transports, he completed the lines already begun, built new ones, and even planned to extend the rail lines to the North.⁵ An effective system of transport, to him, was crucial in bringing the economic robustness of the Gold Coast to bear. Under him, the Huni Valley - Kade branch of rail line (1923-1929) was completed to serve the cocoa and timber areas of the central province and the remaining stretch of the main Accra-Kumasi line which had been halted at Tafo was completed in 1923.⁶ The Kumasi-Sekondi line was also strengthened and re-routed. By 1927, a total of 207 miles of new railway lines were completed⁷ which increased the railway mileage from 269 to 375 miles.⁸ In spite of these achievements in rail transport, Guggisberg's promise to extend the railway system from the south to the north was not fulfilled.⁹ The Northern Territories though were not endowed with viable economic resources, were a rich source of labour for the southern export economy which was booming. Stretching the railway network to the north would not have made any major contribution to the economy since there were no natural economic resources to be tapped. It was mainly for this reason that the rail lines could not be extended to north. Another reason was the south reliance on labour from the north. Adu Boahen, however, argues that Guggisberg's failure to connect the railway line to the North was due largely to financial reasons.¹⁰ This view of Adu Boahen cannot be substantiated as government revenue had been increasing at an annual rate of 9% between 1912 and 1919. Besides, Guggisberg inherited a surplus of £1.25 million. There was also bumper cocoa production in 1919 and 1920 so that exports for the two years rose above the 1918 level.¹¹ These are enough reasons to suggest that Guggisberg's inability to extend the railways to the North was not due significantly to financial reasons as he had several financial options at his disposal.

Having constructed some railway lines, roads were next to occupy Guggisberg's attention. At the close of World War I there were some 1,200 miles of roads. Many of them were built by the chiefs in their desire to transport cocoa to the market. However, with only few cars (eleven cars) registered after the Motor Traffic

London: Frank Cass. 1971. p. xiv.

¹ Reports on the *Legislative Council Debates*, 17 November, 1919.

² D. E. Apter, *The Gold Coast in Transition*. New Jersey: Princeton. 1955. p. 42

³ Amenumey, *Ghana: A Concise History*, p. 182

⁴ Ewusi, *Economic Development*, p. 3

⁵ Boahen, *Evolution and Change*, p. 111

⁶ A. Asamoah, *Socio-Economic Development Strategies of Independent African Countries: The Ghanaian Experience*. Ghana university press, 1996. p. 34

⁷ Ewusi. *Economic development*, p. 4

⁸ Boahen, *Evolution and Change*, p. 111

⁹ P. Konings, *The State and Rural Class Formation in Ghana: A Comparative Analysis*. London: KPI Ltd. 1986. p. 163

¹⁰ Boahen, *Evolution and Change*, p. 111

¹¹ Ewusi, *Economic development*, p. 7

Ordinance, heavy Lorries tore up the roughly leveled laterite earthly roads until the introduction of the light Ford cars.¹ Guggisberg's contribution in this area was to improve the existing roads and to construct new ones. He also encouraged the Public Work Department to conduct experiments in economical road construction. In the mid -1920s, the department devised the tarmet, a form of tarred and metalled road, which was used to improve the main roads to make for easy access to the railheads and stations. Special attention was given to the construction of roads in the Northern Territories where changes in infrastructure were revolutionary.² Between 1919 and 1927, 3,338 miles of new roads were built and 1,310 reconditioned. This brought the total of motorable roads to 4,688 miles.³ The improvements in road and railway networks facilitated the spread of cocoa farms and freed large numbers of head-carriers who could then work in the cocoa or mining sectors where demand for labour was high.⁴ However, the railway and road construction were skewed as they were concentrated on the cocoa growing areas of the country to the neglect of several other areas.

Still on transport, the biggest single scheme under Guggisberg was the construction of the deep-water harbour at Takoradi which eventually cost £3,133,366.⁵ Work on the construction of the harbor began in 1921 and on 8th November, 1926 the first ship entered the harbor. The harbor is composed of two breakwaters, some 2,500 feet apart, running from the shore to an easterly direction. In all the area covered by the harbor is approximately 220 acres. The project on the construction of the harbour was undertaken amidst opposition from some colonial officers, some mercantile interests both at home and abroad, and from some members of the Legislative Council as well as dying members of the Aborigine's Right Protection Society.⁶ To Guggisberg, building the harbour was the only means of increasing the country's external trade. By 1924, he was able to point to a revival of trade, with the highest recorded quantity of cocoa exported and a new peak of revenue, as sufficient justification for his confidence.⁷ Much of the wealth of the Gold Coast came from the trade which flowed through this port, which was thereby, partly responsible for the economic position of the Gold Coast.⁸ Until the construction of the Tema Harbour, the port at Takoradi served as the gateway to Ghana's imports and exports. On the whole, the new means of transportation brought with them an increase in commerce with the annual value of the total trade (imports and exports) from 1919 -1926 twice as much as that of 1913-1919. The colony's revenue also showed an increase of over a 100 percent.⁹

Guggisberg's involvement in the economic field did not end with the provision of transport infrastructure but the mining industry also received its fair share. There was substantial increase in mining activities during his time. Gold had been mined by traditional methods for centuries. To initiate the exploration of other mineral resources, Guggisberg formed the Geological Department whose work in mineral exploration led to the discovery of diamonds. By the 1920s commercial scientific production had begun. The diamond was mostly found in the Eastern region. Alluvial mining or panning for diamonds was also allowed to be carried out by individual African prospectors at places like Oda.¹⁰ Let's now look at what he did in the area of Agriculture.

3.3. Agriculture

In terms of agriculture, Guggisberg made efforts to expand the cocoa industry. Because of the increased improvement in transport facilities, the cocoa industry spread very rapidly into Asante and other parts of the colony. By the end of his office, the Gold Coast had become the leading producer of cocoa in the world, supplying more than half of the total world output. Guggisberg however failed to do anything about the swollen shoot disease which began to attack cocoa trees. Guggisberg did not only promote the cocoa industry by thus making it the leading export item, but he also was particular about the diversification of agriculture. To do this, he sought to revive the palm oil industry and the growing of sisal on the Accra plains. To this end, he established experimental farms for oil palm and sisal near Takoradi.¹¹ The cultivation of groundnut, shea butter and coconut were also given the push. To protect the country's forests from over exploitation, he introduced the Forest Bill which became law in 1927. The law also provided for the establishment of a Forestry Department to take charge of reserves which conserved the country's forest cover which was being destroyed at the rate of 300 square miles

¹ Kimble, *A Political History*, p. 57

² Boahen, *Evolution and Change*, p. 112

³ *The Administration of Governor Guggisberg*, http://ghanadistricts.com/home/?_id=49&sa=4768&ssa=783

⁴ R. Palmer, *Skills Development, the Enabling Environment and Informal Micro-enterprise in Ghana*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2007. p. 121

⁵ Annual Report on the social and Economic performance of the people of the Gold Coast 1931-1932.p.50

⁶ Boahen, *Evolution and Change*, p. 110

⁷ Kimble, *A Political History*, p. 57

⁸ Apter, *The Gold Coast in Transition*, p. 42

⁹ *The Administration of Governor Guggisberg*, http://ghanadistricts.com/home/?_id=49&sa=4768&ssa=783

¹⁰ Amenumey, *Ghana: A concise History*, p. 184

¹¹ Boahen, *Evolution and Change*, p. 112

per annum.¹ He also encouraged the growing of groundnuts a few miles from Accra. Guggisberg was admittedly unsuccessful in his attempts to diversify agriculture. This is unsurprising since no government before him had been able to overcome this problem. However, in spite of his failure, he was the first to realize the dangers of a mono-crop economy and to attempt to do something about it.²

4.0 Africanization policy

The ultimate aim of Guggisberg was not only to develop trade but also to improve the standard of living of the local people. To this end, Guggisberg embarked on a mission to Africanise the civil service. By this, he sought for an increased African opportunity in the civil service. Again, any branch of the administration was to be opened to suitably qualified Africans. Even though this move was strongly criticized by the press and the Legislative Council for the reason that Africans already had opportunities to serve their country in the Oman councils of their own states, Guggisberg made a strong case which went a long way to meet the demands for equal opportunity. According to him, neither African nor a European would have any claim to promotion to a staff appointment on account of his colour but because he is the best man for the appointment. (WHAT DO WE SEE TODAY: NEPOTISM AND TRIBALISM GALORE) Guggisberg considered this policy essential on the grounds of both justice and economy.³ His efforts resulted in the creation of twenty special class appointments for Africans in the 1920s. In 1921 he outlined to the Legislative Council a progressive programme for the gradual replacement of at least 50 percent of existing European staff. Guggisberg felt such a policy would in itself do a great deal to develop the country.⁴ Indeed, when his administration came to an end, the number of Africans admitted into European appointments had increased from 3 in 1919 to 38 in 1927.⁵ The result of this was the creation of a new class of junior medical officers at a salary of £400 per annum who were to work until they were considered sufficiently experienced for appointment as full medical officers.⁶

However, this effort at Africanisation was abandoned by Guggisberg's successors⁷ such that the noble vision of Guggisberg remained only an elusively mirage. Nevertheless, this imaginative scheme of Africanisation was of tremendous importance. For the first time a clear statement of long-term policy replaced annual hopes and promises, and while it could not be followed by successive governors, at least the general line of advance was laid down.⁸

5.0 Social development under Guggisberg

While the development of transportation infrastructure and economic prosperity was high on Guggisberg's agenda, he was also deeply concerned with the provision of social facilities, schools and medical facilities. In fact, he put great emphasis on the provision of health and education facilities and actually considered all the work he did in the economic field as directed towards making it possible to provide especially schools and hospitals.⁹ His efforts in the social field could be seen in social welfare, housing, construction of new hospitals and improvement of existing ones, preventive medicine, education, improved water supply, town and country planning.¹⁰

A department of social welfare was planned to cater for the physically handicapped, corrigible social marginal, delinquent children and youths among others in the municipalities and settlements of in the mines. The social welfare programme did not cover the rural areas because the extended family system with its reciprocal balance of obligations and rights provided all the social scrutiny that was required. As regards housing, estates were planned for the big urban administrative centres like Accra, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi, and Cape Coast. In the implementation of the general housing scheme priority was given to mining areas as the sector contributed chiefly to the country's revenue.

In the field of health, Guggisberg saw the need to reverse the existing trend and therefore extended the

¹ *The Administration of Governor Guggisberg*, http://ghanadistricts.com/home/?_id=49&sa=4768&ssa=783

² Boahen, *Evolution and Change*, p. 112

³ Kimble, *A Political History*, p. 105

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 107

⁵ Some of the personalities include A.F.R. Dove and E. Tagoe (Medical Officers); Francisco Ribeirio (Junior Medical Officer); J.Spio-Garbrah and V.A. Tettey (Inspectors of Schools); A.H.R. Joseph (Assistant Master, Games in Achimota College); J.S. Martinson (Assistant Superintendent in Agriculture); W.H. Simmons and W. Callender (Assistant Commissioners of Police); K. Asante and A.A. Young (Surveyors); J.O. Plange (Estate Officer) and M.H. Addy (African Probationer Engineer) [In Gold Coast staff list : African Appointment. Gold Coast: Government Printing Office, Accra. 1928] p.4

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 109

⁷ Boahen, *Evolution and Change*, p. 115

⁸ Kimble, *A Political History*, p. 124

⁹ Amenumey, *Ghana: A concise History*, p. 186

¹⁰ Asamoah, *Socio-economic Development Strategies*, p. 34

medical care to a large number of the people by building clinics and hospitals in other parts of the country.¹ Nineteen new hospitals were built during the period of Guggisberg's governorship, the largest single project being the construction of Korle-Bu hospital in Accra² which was commissioned in 1923. In addition to a regular hospital, there was to be a medical school. The plan was that African doctors who were refused the opportunity to do practical work in British universities should do their practical work at the hospital and thereby qualify to be appointed government doctors. Again, in health delivery, emphasis was to be shifted from curative to preventive medicine.³ Korle-Bu became the general and model hospital for the entire nation, to which very serious cases needing skilled and specialist treatment were referred. However, Guggisberg failed in his plan to provide clinical training locally for British Trained African doctors⁴ and the plan was also shelved by Guggisberg's successor, A. R. Fraser, and was not revived until after independence.⁵

One other feat attained by Guggisberg on the social front was his desire to preserve the country's rich heritage. In line with this, he established the Anthropological Department and gave sponsorship to the works of scholars such as Captain R.S. Rattray whose research publications on Akan customs, culture, religion, art, and history are still treasured.⁶

Perhaps, the greatest of Guggisberg's achievements in the social field was felt in education sector. Indeed, Guggisberg is recognized as having made revolutionary contributions to the development of education in Ghana. To him, education had to be of the right type, training a class of leaders capable of choosing between beneficial and harmful institutions and ideas from the West.⁷ He expressed dissatisfaction at the existing educational system. According to him, not only was the educational system inadequate of not going far enough but it had proved inefficient in its results.⁸ Guggisberg bemoaned the focus given to book-work over handy-work in the system of primary schools.⁹ In 1921, Guggisberg planned a thorough re-organisation of education covering infant, primary and secondary schools, industrial, technical, and clerical education, teacher training, and evening classes for older men.¹⁰ Guggisberg created a Committee of Educationalists to articulate a comprehensive education policy for the Gold Coast, which strongly advocated a plethora of manual activities such as gardening, woodwork, metal work, and clay work to overcome the mere bookishness of school instruction.¹¹ Special attention was paid to the proposed government secondary school, the house system, the appointment of staff, the general content of secondary education, and the need for a new teacher-training college. Again, new salary scales were set out for teachers, and rates of grants for assisted schools were increased conditional upon their payment of the new salaries. The committee also recommended the establishment of trade schools offering practical courses.

As far as trade schools were concerned, 1920 saw the opening of four government trade schools that served to supplement the work of a government technical school established in Accra in 1909. These trade schools were located in Asuansi, near Cape Coast, Kibi in the Eastern Province, Mampon in Asante, and Yendi.¹² The trade school in Yendi was later transferred to Tamale, the provincial capital. In these schools, regular education was combined with instruction in the latest methods of cultivating important agricultural products.¹³ In 1921, the Accra Technical School was enlarged, the teacher-training course was extended from two to three years, and infant teaching was re-organised, with special attention to the use of vernacular. A four-year course was offered to ex-standard III boys who were trained in carpentry, bricklaying, and road-making as well as food-farming and the care of cocoa and palm oil.¹⁴ Guggisberg also built new technical schools where surveying and engineering were taught.¹⁵

In 1923 the Colonial Office established an Advisory Committee on Native Education in the British Tropical African Dependencies which was to provide the first general colonial educational policies of the British since the 1847 Education Committee. One factor that led to the creation of the 1923 committee was the first Phelps-Stokes

¹ *The Administration of Governor Guggisberg*, http://ghanadistricts.com/home/?_49&sa=4768&ssa=783

² Ewusi, *Economic development*, p. 20

³ Asamoah, *Socio-economic Development Strategies*, p. 34

⁴ Amenumey, *Ghana: A Concise History*, p. 188

⁵ Boahen, *Evolution and Change*, p. 114

⁶ V. Okyere, *Ghana: A Historical Survey*, Accra: Vinojab, 2000, p. 147

⁷ J. Grischow, *A History of Development in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, 1989-1957*. 1999, p. 69

⁸ H. McWilliam, & M. Kwamena-Poh, *The Development of Education in Ghana*, Longman 1975.

⁹ Palmer, *Skills Development, the Enabling Environment*, p. 121

¹⁰ Kimble, *A Political History*, p. 110

¹¹ P. Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1965.

¹² Kimble, *A Political History*, p. 112

¹³ Amenumey, *Ghana: A Concise History*, p. 187

¹⁴ Kimble, *A Political History*, p. 122

¹⁵ Amenumey, *Ghana: A Concise History*, p. 187

Report.¹ This report had the general aim of re-orientating education in the African colonies to meet the needs of African people, to provide them with elements of good agriculture, and to give them training in simple crafts and home economics.² Guggisberg adopted the Phelps-Stokes Report wholeheartedly and attempted to implement the policies in the Gold Coast. Guggisberg's Sixteen Principles of Education³ announced to the Legislative Council in February, 1925 were therefore the product of the Education Committee set up in 1920 and the influence of the Phelps-Stokes Report.⁴

In 1925, an Education Ordinance was promulgated which fixed the standards non-government schools were to satisfy to qualify for grants. Grants were now to be given to technical, secondary and training colleges.⁵ There was thus a substantial increase in government grants to Mission and other schools, with strong incentives for efficiency. Improvement in the salary and status for the teaching profession was accompanied by the establishment of a central register of qualified teachers which prevented the employment of unregistered teachers. All these steps were aimed at improving the standard of teaching in the schools, producing more and better teachers, and raising the standard of the better schools. Other complementary measures in the field of education included the establishment of a uniform standard VII examination for the whole country, improvement in the school curriculum, a £20,000 grant towards new buildings for the Scottish Mission Training college at Akropong, the lengthening of the standard teacher course to four years, and the detailed discussion of problems of vernacular teaching and textbooks. In addition, about 136 'bush schools' were closed, causing widespread discontent and criticism.⁶ Guggisberg successfully constructed the Achimota School which was opened in 1927. He enlarged an earlier plan to build a normal government school to one which added other departments to the school. The full range of departments were kindergarten, primary, secondary and University College. Achimota was headed by the Rev. A G Frazer who was assisted by Dr. J. E. K. Aggrey, two great educationists who put the school on a firm footing. Guggisberg also moved the Accra Training College to Achimota and gave it better facilities.⁷

As regards the development of education in the North, Guggisberg drew up a personal memorandum which gave new direction to the educational development of the North. The aim was to encourage the Missions as far as possible and also to insist on the official approval of their work and an ultimate control of all schools by the government. A special post was created for a superintendent of education for the Northern Territories and Rev. A. H. Candler was appointed the first superintendent in 1926. Rev. Candler toured the region and got rid of some of the worst teachers and drew up a detailed proposal for reform. The Northern Territories Education Ordinance was drafted in 1927 which established a local Board of Education to oversee the payment of grants to mission schools in the North. Guggisberg's drive, however, could not correct the regional disparities in education. The North remained very much poor as far as education was concerned.⁸ Notwithstanding the shortcomings of the educational policy of Guggisberg, the Educational Ordinance of 1925, continued to be the colonial government's main educational policy until the implementation of the Accelerated Development Plan of 1951.

A close look at Guggisberg's activities in the field of education shows that his provision for regular inspection of schools and his insistence on a minimum annual salary of £100-£180 for teachers, including those in mission schools, were new ventures which were quite laudable. But these measures resulted in the closure of many mission schools, as the churches did not have financial resources, and the government did not give them adequate grants-in-aid to meet the new requirements. If Guggisberg had accepted that the mission education institutions were, like Achimota, equally providing services towards progress of the country, and had granted to institutions like Mfantshipim School, St. Nicholas Grammar School (now Adisadel College) and the Akropong Training College, even half the amount of money he spent on the government college, it would have benefited the country a great deal. Also, the closure of as many as 136 bush or inefficient schools put many children out of school since they could not find room in the few schools left. However, not sufficing here, Guggisberg's development plan provided a school of which generation nationalist activities emerged, the roads on which they travelled and the harbour on which the Gold Coast leaders sailed into a national-minded world.

Criticism of Guggisberg's educational reforms has also come from the camp of David T. Williams in his article *Sir Gordon Guggisberg and Educational Reform in the Gold Coast, 1919-1927*. According to Williams, despite the increase in the grants-in-aid given to schools, it did not lead to any significant change in the percentage of total school income. Again, there was no appreciable increase in female ratio in schools. This is because whereas in 1891 the ratio of female to male students was 1:3.9, in 1925 it was 1:4, and in 1928 1:3.5.

¹ Palmer, *Skills Development, the Enabling Environment*, p. 123

² G. Brown, *British Educational Policy in West and Central Africa*, 1964, p. 367

³ McWilliam, & Kwamena-Poh, *The Development of Education in Ghana*, p. 24

⁴ Palmer, *Skills Development, the Enabling Environment*, p. 123

⁵ Amenumey, *Ghana: A Concise History*, p. 187

⁶ Kimble, *A Political History*, p. 119

⁷ Amenumey, *Ghana: A Concise History*, p. 187

⁸ Kimble, *A Political History*, p. 121

The ratio, therefore, was approximately the same as in the 1920s but better off in the 1910s. Also, the percentage of increase in enrolment and attendance in the schools were similar to that experienced previous years and that the rate of growth was in fact lower than the trend in the rate during Guggisberg's tenure of office. Moreover, while Achimota was a very good school, its graduates became elitists instead of being well integrated to society. Thus, Guggisberg only implemented the British public school philosophy into a society that was basically different, causing it to be a superfluous exercise.¹

One could also advance the argument that the most important fault of the educational system pushed by Guggisberg was that it was not geared to the employment requirements of the colony. Unemployment, after completion of education was a major problem of the system. Due to the nature of education, most people were only suitable to take up positions as clerks. The job vacancy in this area, compared with the availability of labour, was limited. Then, there was the problem of young men who found it demeaning to take on any job that required manual labour. Many of them preferred to continue to have their families support them than to undertake manual work.² Thus, Guggisberg's educational effort, apart from creating a short-lived increase in the demand for artisans, did not appear to have gone far enough towards developing a sustainable demand for skilled labour. This, combined with the external economic shocks which impacted on country's labour market, skills training were became unpopular option for the youth.³

Though, the overall educational plan of Guggisberg was outstanding; it unfortunately reached only few people so it could not have an overall impact on the society. Too few people studied beyond the secondary level, and for those who did, many received substandard education that gave them skills that could not be used in the economy. Even if Achimota School provided the necessary education to propel the future economic growth of the Gold Coast, only a few students had this opportunity. Apart from this, Achimota School did not remain in its ideal state for very long because it was so expensive to finance and not all governments after Guggisberg had the same vision to keep it alive. Initially as a 'protected' school, many features and policies were exclusive. No doubt, Achimota has existed as a high quality institution but has been less exclusive and fallen prey to educational reforms that were later implemented, thus making it a pale shadow of its 'ideal' state. After Guggisberg there were calls for the development of education to be hastened and for the budget for education to be increased.⁴

6.0 Political development under Guggisberg

Since Guggisberg worked in an environment of budding political pressures, it is also germane to have an overview of his efforts in the political arena. On the constitutional scene, Guggisberg introduced the 1925 constitution to replace the 1916 Clifford constitution which gave more slots to Europeans on the Legislative Council.⁵ By the 1925 constitution, the number of representatives in the Legislative Council was increased from eleven official (officers in government) and nine unofficial members to fifteen and fourteen respectively.⁶ The unofficial membership was made up of five Europeans – three nominated by the governor and two representing mining and commercial interests while the remaining nine were Gold Coast Africans.⁷ Of this nine, three were to represent the municipalities of Accra, Cape Coast, and Sekondi. Six members were to be paramount chiefs elected by the three provincial councils of the Eastern, Central, and Western provinces. Guggisberg made it possible for Chiefs to take part in the deliberations or activities of the Legislative Council, and from that time up to January 1951, the chiefs played an important and noble part in the central legislature, notably Nana Sir Ofori Atta I, Omanhene of Akyem Abuakwa State, Nana Amanfi III, Asebu State, Nana Sir Tsibu Darko, Omanhene Assin Atandaso State, Nana Ayirebi Acquah III, Omanhene of Effutu State and Nana Ofori Atta II, Omanhene of Akyem Abuakwa State.⁸ Guggisberg's belief in the preservation of native institutions and in the administration of the country through the traditional authorities rather than in cooperation with the educated classes accounted for the prominence given to the traditional rulers. This action of Guggisberg sought to cripple the Gold Coast Aborigines Rights and Protection Society and saw the upsurge of bitter resentment on the part of the educated elite, who argued that by their education, they and not the illiterate chiefs should be recognized as the representatives of the people. Their plea was however ignored and the 1925 constitution remained in force until

¹ T. D. Williams, "Sir Gordon Guggisberg and Educational Reform in the Gold Coast, 1919-1927", *Comparative Education Review*, vol. 8, no. 3, 1964 p. 295

² E. Pinpong, *Interactions between Education, Economy and Politics: A Case of Ghana's Educational System from a Historical Perspective*. Unpublished Msc thesis, Norges Handelshøyskole, 2006, p. 43

³ Palmer, *Skills Development, the Enabling Environment*, p. 127

⁴ Pinpong, *Interactions between Education, Economy and Politics*, p. 47

⁵ R. S. Gocking, *The History of Ghana*, London: Greenwood Press, 2005, p. 59

⁶ Boahen, *Evolution and Change*, p. 115

⁷ Okyere, *Ghana*, p. 147

⁸ Apter. *The Gold Coast in Transition*, p.139.

1946 when it was replaced with the Burns constitution.¹ Had the colonial administration consented to the provision made for the election of elites and chiefs so as to increase the number of commoners on the Legislative Council, as Casely Hayford hoped, it would have brought unity between the chiefs and the educated commoners, instead of driving a wedge between the two.²

Another exploit of Guggisberg on the political scene of the Gold Coast was the institution of the Native Administrative Ordinance in 1927. This which sought the preservation of native institutions and administration through the chiefs, and led to the creation of the Provincial Council of Chiefs all geared towards the improvement of traditional government. However, by neglecting provision of financial control over the chiefs, by failing to establish stool treasuries, and by failing to give the educated elite representation on the council, the Ordinance did not prove adequate as hoped.³ The Native Administration Ordinance of 1927, like the 1925 constitution, was a source of bitter conflict between the paramount chiefs and the intelligentsia nationalist leaders as a whole. Casely Hayford and his colleagues of the Gold Coast branch of the NCBWA were thus accused of attempting to wrest national political leadership from the chiefs.⁴ Apart from this, one could question the extent of Guggisberg's commitment to ensuring a representative government by the 1925 constitution. A testament to this is found in the fact that even though local representation on the Legislative Council was improved, the Executive Council continued to remain the preserve of Europeans as it was still composed of the Governor and five British officials.⁵

Still on the political radar, Guggisberg contributed to the repatriation of Prempeh I who had been exiled since 1896 by the British. Soon after Guggisberg's assumption of office, the Asante made an appeal for the release of Prempeh and were supported by the African members on the Legislative Council led by Nana Ofori Atta and E. P. Brown. Guggisberg supported this appeal and in 1924 approved the request and persuaded the Colonial Office to agree. After Prempeh's return as a private citizen, Guggisberg once again sponsored a petition for his installation as Kumasihe in November 1926.⁶ Guggisberg however failed in the field of municipal government reform which sought to ensure greater and better representation of the educated elite and nationalists as well as a more effective administration of the towns. The introduction of the Municipal Corporations Bill thus did not see the light of day. Also, throughout his governorship, Guggisberg introduced and stuck to indirect system of government in which he relied on traditional rulers, believing, that it was they and not the educated elite who were the leaders of the people. By this, he failed to appreciate the consequences of the rapid economic and social changes he had worked hard to bring about.⁷

From a distance one may describe Guggisberg's policies, especially in the economic and social arenas, as too optimistic and ambitious to be accomplished by a single person. However, it is worth noting that Guggisberg inherited a surplus of £1.25 million and this provided him with the capital to provide much-needed public works. Also, Government revenue more than doubled in his time and this did not only enable him to carry out his projects but also increase the annual surplus in the government budget by over £200,000. Again, the early political awareness of the natives might have pushed Guggisberg to consider most of the projects he undertook. Political organisations like the Aborigines Right Protection Society and Casely Hayford's National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA) were active at this time and made vocal demands for public works.⁸ Daniel Greenstreet, in his article, *The Guggisberg Ten-year Development Plan*, comes to the defense of Guggisberg and says that Guggisberg had sufficient reason for being ambitious because the plan was drawn at a time of growing prosperity- a prosperity that the commercial organisations and cocoa farmers had not experienced before. Further, with the cessation of hostilities, optimism prevailed. Guggisberg therefore might have been influenced by the post war optimism.⁹

7.0 Conclusion

At the formal opening of Achimota College, Guggisberg succinctly asserted that:

Money is invested in railways, roads and harbours to develop the earning capacity of the country. More important and more valuable is that invested in the citizens of the country. But there must be no niggardly hand; money must be invested in sufficient quantities. A cheap road and a penny-wise harbour do little to increase trade, a cheap educational policy would do

¹ Boahen, *Evolution and Change*, p. 116

² Okyere, *Ghana*, p. 147.

³ Boahen, *Evolution and Change*, p. 116

⁴ De Graft Johnson, *Towards Nationhood*, p. xx

⁵ Okyere, *Ghana*, p. 147

⁶ M. A. Owusu, *Prempeh II and the making of Modern Asante*, Accra: Woeli Publishing Services, 2009, pp. 42-43

⁷ Boahen, *Evolution and Change*, p. 117

⁸ Ewusi, *Economic Development*, p. 22

⁹ D. K. Greenstreet, "The Guggisberg Ten-year Development Plan". *The Economic Bulletin of Ghana*, vol. 8 no. 1., 1964, p. 6

little to improve citizens or increase their value.¹

The statement above exhibit the fact that developmental activities by any governor or sitting president should see to alleviating a canker or bettering or improving the lives of the subjects in the country. These are evident from the fact that he instituted an africanisation policy that eliminated favouritism in employment; an education system that exposed one to the outside world; and finally a modern hospital that attends to the lives of members in and around its hub. Although, like every human endeavor which requires some checks, Guggisberg highlighted the fact that the governorship (leadership) is accountability to the people and the very people must have their representatives in the legislature. Agreeing to this course, he did not turn deaf ears to the demand for the increase of Ghanaian representation in the legislature but gave due credence to their demands. In all, his developmental activities indicate the fact that any venture engaged in by any government in the sphere or sector of development must first meet the pressing needs of the populace, second, should be useful to the next generation so as to avoid wastefulness of resources, and finally, to a lesser extent, operates in ways that see to an improvement in the physical, social, political and economic make-ups of the majority in that country.

References

- Amenumey, D. E. K. (2008). *Ghana: A Concise History from Pre-colonial Times to the 20th Century*. Woeli Pub. Services.
- Apter, D. E. (1955). *The Gold Coast in Transition*. New Jersey: Princeton.
- Asamoah, A.(1996). *Socio-economic Development Strategies of Independent African Countries: The Ghanaian Experience*. Accra, Ghana University Press.
- Boahen, A. A. (1975). *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. New York, Longman Group Ltd.
- Brown, G. (1964).British Educational Policy in West and Central Africa”, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 2(3), 365-377.
- Daily Guide*, 16 July,2016.
- De Graft Johnson, J. W. (1971). *Towards Nationhood in West Africa: Thoughts of Young Africa Addressed to Young Britain*, 2nd ed. London: Frank Cass.
- Ewusi, K. (1973).*Economic Development Planning in Ghana*. New York, Exposition Press.
- Formal opening of Achimota by His Excellency the Governor, Bri-General Sir F. Gordon Guggisberg, K.C.M.G. D.S.O. R.E. on Friday, 28th January, 1927
- Foster, P. (1965). *Education and Social Change in Ghana*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London.
- Gocking, R. S. (2005). *The History of Ghana*, London: Greenwood Press.
- Greenstreet, D. K. (1964). *The Guggisberg Ten-year Development Plan*. The Economic Bulletin of Ghana, 8 (1).
- Grischow, J. A (1999).*History of Development in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, 1989-1957*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Queen’s University.
- Kimble, D. (1963).*A Political History of Ghana: The Rise of Gold Coast Nationalism, 1850-1928*, Clarendon Press: Oxford.
- Konings, P. (1986). *The State and Rural Class Formation in Ghana: A Comparative Analysis*. London, KPI Ltd.
- McWilliam, H. & Kwamena-Poh, M. (1975).*The Development of Education in Ghana*, Longman, London.
- Okyere, V. (2000). *Ghana: A Historical Survey*, Accra: Vinox.
- Owusu, M. A. (2009). *Prempeh II and the making of Modern Asante* .,Accra: Woeli Publishing Services,
- Palmer, R.(2007).*Skills Development, the Enabling Environment and Informal Micro-enterprise in Ghana*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh.
- Pimpong, E. (2006).*Interactions between Education, Economy and Politics: A Case of Ghana’s Educational System from a Historical Perspective*. Unpublished Msc thesis, Norges Handelshøyskole.
- S. Shah, *Development: Meaning and Concept of Development* article shared by Shelly Shah, retrieved from <http://www.sociologydiscussion.com/society/development-meaning-and-concept-of-development/688>
- The Administration of Governor Guggisberg*. Retrieved on 15/09/15 from http://ghanadistricts.com/home/?_id=49&sa=4768&ssa=783
- W. Rodney. (1973). *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Tanzanian Publishing House: Dar-Es-Salaam.
- Williams, T. D. (1964). *Sir Gordon Guggisberg and Educational Reform in the Gold Coast, 1919-1927*, *Comparative Education Review*, 8(3), 290-306.

¹ Formal opening of Achimota by His Excellency the Governor, Bri-General Sir F. Gordon Guggisberg, K.C.M.G. D.S.O. R.E. on Friday, 28th January, 1927. p.12