

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

ATTITUDES OF MUSLIM PARENTS TOWARDS GIRL-CHILD  
EDUCATION IN BAWKU MUNICIPALITY IN THE UPPER-EAST REGION  
OF GHANA

ATUBIGA CLETUS STEPHEN

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BY

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ADMINISTRATION

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## DECLARATION

### **Candidate's Declaration**

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature:..... Date:.....

Name: Atubiuga Cletus Stephen

### **Supervisor's Declaration**

I hereby declare that the preparation of the dissertation was supervised in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Signature:.....Date:.....

Name: Mr. Stephen Baafi-Frimpong

## ABSTRACT

The study which used descriptive survey design was basically to find out the attitudes of Muslim parents towards girl-child education in Bawku municipality in the upper-east region of Ghana. A sample of 100 respondents from communities in the Bawku Municipality comprised 25 farmers, 25 unemployed youth, 25 opinion leaders and 25 petty traders was used.

A questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection and the data were analysed using descriptive statistics. A main finding was that in the Muslim communities, the woman's role is limited to the kitchen as such she did not need formal education.

It was also established that boys in the Muslim communities are offered more educational opportunities than girls. Also the low level of female enrolment and low retention rate are due to economic constraints, socio-cultural beliefs and practices such as early marriage, teenage pregnancies and child labour.

To do away with this erroneous notion that the girl-child for that matter the woman's place is in the kitchen, a vigorous campaign by religious leaders and other stakeholders should be organized to educate parent about the importance of the girl-child education especially among the Muslim parents.

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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my dearest wife Mrs. Rebecca Awuga for her moral, financial and spiritual support and encouragement against all odds whiles I was in school.

Also to share the dedication to my dear and lovely children Kenneth Atubiga, Balinda Atubiga and Nelson Atubiga.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background to the Study**

Bawku East is the most northern District among the 138 Districts in Ghana. On the northern corridor of Bawku East is the Frontier of Burkina Faso and on the Eastern corridor lies the frontier of the Republic of Togo. The people of Bawku engage in peasant agriculture and petty trading across the international borders. The people are generally poor and therefore find it difficult to send their children to school. The greatest affected here is the girl-child. Due to the poverty level in the Municipality, most people prefer to send their children to do petty-trading and also help on their farms.

Bawku East is one of eight districts in the Upper East Region of the Republic of Ghana. The native tribe is Kusasi and their traditional native language is Kusal. However, there are other ethnic groups such as Mamprusi, Moshie, Busanga, Hausa, Frafra, Akan, Bimobas and Konkombas just to mention but a few. The main languages spoken in the municipality are Kusaal, Hausa, Bisa, Moshie and Mamprusi. Islam, Christianity and traditional African religion are the predominant religions among the people.

The Muslim community perceives girl-child education as a waste of resources and a deliberate attempt to divert the religious faith of their off-spring

especially the girl-child whose dominant role in society in the future is child bearing and home-keeping and therefore they show lukewarm attitude towards the education of the girl-child. There is ample testimony to attest to the fact that the municipality is one of the most deprived in the country especially among the Muslim communities. In these Muslim communities there are still Muslim who perceives secular education as a privilege and luxury for only the affluent in society. The introduction of the free compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) has precipitated the establishment of more than thirty English-Arabic schools in the municipality. Unfortunately these schools are either the haphazardly established or not properly managed and therefore do not yield the desired results thereby making the already doubting “Thomases” to have little confidence in contributing their quota to curb this social and educational canker of not sending the girl-child to school.

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana provides for equally of access to education, the elimination of gender-role stereotyping and for an education system, which is expected to close the gap in educational levels between men and women. Unfortunately, western formal education started in Ghana with women considerably in a disadvantage position. This was so because colonial education under the Wesley, Basel and Catholic missions discriminated against females. For every 100 boys the Wesleyans admitted there were only 11 girls. The Basel Mission had 59 girls to every 100 boys and the Catholic had 28 girls to every 100 boys (Svaniker, 1997). For many years education in Ghana was sponsored by missionaries who believe in separate boarding schools for boys and girls at the

secondary level and because of their in attitude towards the education of females, there were more boys' schools than girls' schools. Thus the gap between the education of the boys and girls dates back to the colonial era and the attempt to bridge the gap has not been easy.

When the governments of Ghana started building secondary schools, there was an unwritten convention that only one-third of the place in co-educational institutions should be given to girls. This was strictly implemented in the case of Achimota School because the quota for female had been filled. At one time the National Council on Women and Development (NCWD) is said to have sent a delegation to the then headmaster of the school to point out that girls were being discriminated against in admission to the school (Shani, 1996).

Traditionally, the Ghanaian woman has always been restricted to the informal productive sector as well as reproductive functions. In formal employment the woman's access to employment has been limited by her lack of education or type of education she received. Consequently females were segregated into areas include teaching, nursing, catering, hairdressing, and secretarial and clerical services. Only a few women are in professions like medicine and law (Anyagri, 1993).

There is paucity of Muslim female in high level decision making positions and their conspicuous absence does not provide Muslim female students with role models that may inspire them to higher levels of achievement. Some teachers also tend to transmit the female cultural stereotypes to girls consciously or unconsciously they create the impression that girls are not as capable as boys in

certain field of education and as such should not venture into certain areas of study. An example is that girls are often advised to shy away from science. Girls who excel in these subject areas are often branded “witches” or given derogatory names by both official uniform curriculum, the hidden curriculum ensures that the distribution of knowledge within the school is unequal.

In schools teachers transmit messages that underscore the authority and superiority of males and this lowers girls aspirations and thereby fosters negative attitude towards formal education. This can negatively affect the attitude, mostly gender biased textbooks and materials, classroom organization and course offerings implicitly communicate gender-differentiate role and sex stereotypical behaviours that reinforce negative self-image of girls.

Research conducted on female education has also identified certain socio-cultural factors, which impede female participation and retention in the educational system (Girls education unit of GES 1997). These factors include early marriage, religion and parental attitude towards female education.

In Ghana the philosophy of procreation is implanted in the minds of females which cause them to fulfill the expectations of society by aspiring towards what society expects them. The females treasure and prefer early marriage and child bearing to education. Mothers in particular become worried and concerned that delaying marriage because of education may result in their daughters not getting married or losing the ability to have children.

There are several instance where mothers who are anxious to see their grandchildren, put pressure on their daughters to get married once they have an

adequate level of education and this may happen after secondary school, thus effectively reducing the number of girls who can continue to the tertiary levels. Certain cultural practices like child betrothal and 'Dipo' rites indirectly encourage female adolescents to enter into early marriage. The "Trokosi" system is another cultural practice that enslaves girls in a shrine as atonement for the sins of their family members and this contributes to low level of girls' education in some region of Ghana.

Religious values concerning the need to protect female virginity leads Muslim parents to disregard female education particularly where it involves their girls leaving home to attend a school might be tempted to think that public schools do not promote social values like honesty, righteousness, sympathy love and respect. They feel that public schools or the pursuit of higher education could result in their daughters acquiring certain undesirable social attitudes, which might be inconsistent with their religious exhortation (Bening, 1990). Such parents might prefer sending their daughters to religious or mission schools.

Parental and family attitude have a strong influence on the decision to invest in female children's education. Research on female education highlights an ambivalent attitude towards investment in female education, based on many negative perceptions of girls and women. Some parents believe that boys are more intelligent than girls, perform better in school and are a better educational investment than girls (Abimbillah, 1984).

A factor, which is often stressed in discussions of parental preference for boys' education is the prevalence of patrilineal inheritance system, which is

typical and peculiar to the people of Northern Ghana. It has also been established that certain socio-economic factors such as poverty and direct cost of education, the opportunity cost of female education and the level of parental education to a large extent inhibit the effective participation and retention of female in the educational system.

One of the main reasons for low female enrolment and high dropout rates in Ghana is economic constraint, which has increased both the direct and indirect costs of education for parents. A policy document on basic education sector improvement programme outlines the private contributions to education based on the third Ghana living standards survey (Osei, 1994). This document states that households spend money on school registration fees, contributions to Parents Teachers Associations uniforms and sports clothes books and school supplies transport to and from school food. Boarding and lodging, expenses on such activities as clubs, extra classes and other expenses paid in kind.

Due to poverty and other limited resources on the part of parents preference is usually to boy's education neglecting the girls. In most households schooling therefore represents an opportunity cost to those sending their children to school. Studies on factors affecting female education indicate that girls performed larger share of family labour than boys. Girls cook, clean the house, fetch water and help mothers in trading. These households' chores are sometimes burdensome and detrimental to effective participation and retention of females in the educational system.



Other studies on female education have shown that the educational background of parents has an influence on their daughters' effective participation and smooth transition of the educational ladder (Swanson, 1994). For example girls whose parents attain an appreciable level of education do not easily drop out on account of poor parental attitude or poverty.

The school environment with its gender relate factors which include pregnancy and sexual harassment, inadequate number of female teachers to act as role models, non availability of girls specific structures and finally the distance to school have been found as constraints to female education. These factors are particularly prevalent in the rural areas and in the northern part of Ghana.

Many people believe that pregnancy is the major cause of the high rate of dropouts for girls at the primary secondary school levels. A study conducted by the staff of USAID in 1975 provided educational statistic from 1973 to 1974 which showed that the highest drop out rate for girls occur between classes 3 and 6 when girls were between 9 and 12 years old (Osei, 1994). At this stage however, they could not have been pregnant and certainly were too young to make their own independent decision about the usefulness or otherwise of education. It is therefore clear that the probable reason for low enrolment of female in schools may be that parents are very convinced of the value of formal education for females. Sexual harassment of female has been discovered as one of the main problems facing girls in schools. In a survey of 10 Senior Secondary school by Shani (1994), a number of girls interviewed cited teasing, humiliation, verbal bullying and ridicule of girls by boys as major problems for girls at school. This

harassment occurs both within and outside the classroom, often on the way to school.

According to Habib (2005), female teachers constituted 36% of the total teaching force in the country and majority of these teachers were in the urban areas (Girls Education unit progress report, 1998). This is therefore the needs that for more female teachers to be sent to deprived and remote areas as it is believed ministry of education's basic education sector improvement programme policy document is that to ensure higher percentage of girl's enrolment more female teachers should be posted to areas of very low girl's enrolment. This is expected to ensure that girls have role models whose example will urge them to achieve high academic performance and greater heights in life (Haldene, 1996).

It has been reported that parents object to the lack of basic facilities in schools, notable latrines and halls separate for girls which they consider necessary to protect their daughters, dignity and security. In Ghana some schools, especially those in rural areas do not have separate urinal and toilet facilities for boys and girls and this may not encourage parents especially those from Muslim communities to send their daughters to school (Atakpa, 1978). The closer the school is to the home the lesser parents tend to worry about their children's (especially girls) attendance at school. Fentima (1996) writing on school conditions in the African countries asserted that in communities where there were no schools, children had to walk several kilometers. The distance factor was cited as a prime reason for non-enrolment of young children especially girls. This contributed to the large percentage of non-enrolled children in the 6-7 years age

group and the high number of children classified as “late enrolled.” Even though the 1992, constitution of Ghana states that basic education shall be free, compulsory and available to all, it is currently not free. Only about 60% of Ghanaian children enroll in school and it has been observed that parents are more likely to hold girls back from starting school than boys.

In 1995, the government of Ghana instituted a policy for Free Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) by the year 2005. Even though this policy has taken root, many girls are likely to be out of school simply because it is not their family’s priority that they should be educated. Since resources are limited to parents a choice has to be made either to educate the boys or the girls. This choice is most likely to be in favour of boys, whose parents think that through their education; eventually regular income would be earned to support the family. Female-headed households in Ghana have increased from 29% in 1984 to 35% in 1995 with the percentage in rural areas rising from 40% in 1985 to 47% in 1996 (Atakpa, 1978). If the woman is to perform her role as heads of the household then she needs to be adequately educated.

The problem of female education is at present considered as one of the crucial issues in education. Under the Beijing platform of action, education is considered as a basic human right and a key to achieving the goal of equality, development and peace. Countries have therefore been charged with the responsibility of ensuring quality education for female students in fulfillment of these aspirations.

In recognition of the importance of female education, successive governments of Ghana have pursued policies on education, which create a free and fair environment for universal education. Since Ghana achieved political independence the policies of successive government have been aimed at universal and free basic education for all children of school age. For example, the Education Act of 1961 advocated for free and compulsory basic education for all children whilst the education reform policy of 1987 targeted expansion and equity in access at all levels of education.

In the 1987 reform policy, the government also undertook measures to reinforce its commitment to female education by stating unequivocally that the target for admission and retention throughout the system should be 50% male and 50% female (Boakye, 1997). To further ensure gender balance in the curriculum another policy which enjoins all students to study all subjects at the primary level was formulated for implementation (Gpa, 1996). Until then, girls exclusively studied home science, cookery and needlework whilst boys studied carpentry and other technical subjects. In spite of all these measures to redress the enrolment disparities between males and females, girls continue to lag behind boys at all levels of education.

Writing on girl's enrolment and transition rates Osei (1994) showed that generally enrolment of females has been falling below that of males at all levels of formal education over the years. She used secondary data to demonstrate that, in the early 1990s, for every 100 pupils in primary schools only 45 were girls. This proportion however, reduces as they climb up the academic ladder. At the

Junior Secondary School level the percentage falls to 41 percent. By the time they get to the senior secondary school, for every 100 students, there are only 33 girls as compared to 67 boys. When they reach the university level, the percentages of females further reduces to 22 while that of males increase to 78.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite all the efforts being made by the government, non governmental organizations, policy-makers and stakeholders in the education of the girl-child and for that matter all children of school going age in the Bawku Municipality, there is still a large number of children who are not in school. This is possible because, there are many Muslim adults who think Western Education (secular education) has brought in its wake untold hardship and shame to the family and society at large and therefore should be vigorously discouraged. There is no gain saying that many of the common deviant behaviours such as prostitution, teenage pregnancy, and drug abuse just to mention a few are either ignorantly or deliberately associated with western education and this is a recipe for the hostile attitude towards it by the people in question.

In spite of the grave concern expressed by various stakeholders of education with regard to the poor enrolment of girls (particularly, Muslim girls) in schools, it appear not much have been done in terms of scientific research to provide insight into the problem. This is particularly so in the Bawku Municipal, even though several workshops on the issues of low female enrolments are often held.

While some people attribute the problem of low female enrolment of Muslim girls to parental misconception or poor attitude to Western education, others attribute it to the influence of the Islamic religion. It was therefore the desire of the researcher to find out the attitudes of the Muslim parents that were really responsible for the poor enrolment or poor level of education among Muslim girls in Bawku Municipality.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The world is now a global village and no single individual or community can accept to be left in isolation. There is an international concern about empowering women and several forces are holding all over the world to highlight this phenomenon. It is an undisputed fact that education is the cheapest and commonest vehicle to ride to this destination. The main purpose of the study therefore was to find out the attitude of the Muslims in the Bawku Municipality towards the education of the girl child.

Another purpose is to find out socio-cultural and other factors that militated against the education of the girl child in the Muslim communities. The research was also intended to find out what practice steps could be used to encourage the Muslim communities in Bawku in particular and the nation at large to change their attitude positively towards girl-child education.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions were posed to guide the study:

1. What is the attitude of Muslim parents towards the education of the Muslim girl child?

2. What is the level of educational opportunities for girls?
3. What are the enrollment and retention rate of girls in the schools?
4. What factors militate against the education of the Muslim girl-child?
5. What suggestions do people offer for improving the education of the Muslim girl child?

### **Significance of the Study**

The study will unearth some misconceptions and disregard the people of the Muslim communities have about girl-child education and how it affects the social and economic development of the area in particular and the country in general. The study may also help identify problems militating against education of the Muslim girl, which will be the first step toward finding solutions to the problems. Again it is hoped that the findings of the study and conclusions drawn from it may help the government, education policy makers and administrators to come out with policies and regulations that will promote education of Muslim girl and all girls in general.

### **Limitations**

Ideally research of this nature should have covered majority of the Muslim community in the Municipality if not all. However, limited time, finance and transportation problems limited the researcher to study only a sample Muslims.

Furthermore, due to lack of co-operation from some respondents, and the cosmopolitan nature of the Municipality, the researcher had it very difficult interaction with the target groups particularly the illiterates in the selected area of

the study. This was particularly because of language barrier. All these were likely to affect whatever conclusions might be drawn from the study.

### **Delimitation**

The study was restricted to looking at the attitude of Muslim parents towards the education of the girl-child and the factors that militated against education of the girl child.

### **Organization of the Study**

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one deals with the introduction which includes background of the study, statement of the problem, and purpose of the study and research questions. Chapter focuses on the review of related literature. The third chapter dwells on the methodology. Chapter focuses on results and discussions. Chapter five presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Introduction**

This chapter reviews literature related to the topic as documented by some writers, scholars and researchers. The review is done on the basis of the following sub-topics: Parental background and female education; distance to school and female enrolment; education to the Muslim girl-child; general concerns shows about discrimination against women by international communities; status of women-the conflict view and teenage pregnancy and early marriage.

#### **Parental Educational Background and Female Education**

Studies have shown that the higher the level of parental education, the higher educational participation of their daughters. A recent survey of teachers, university students and secondary school students in Ghana, which examined the educational background of parents of students, illustrates the multiplier effect of female education. Female students whose mothers had higher education were themselves given opportunities and funding to promote their own education to higher levels. Only a small minority of female students at the university and secondary levels had mothers with no education at all or limited education up to primary school level. The implication of this is that the multiplier effect to work,

it is important for females to be educated by beyond the primary school level (Osei, 1994).

Other studies have also shown that the impact on daughters schooling will be greater if the mother has secondary education. According to Shani (1996), the educational background of many educated parents in the rural area influence decisions and attitude in favour of enrolling boys rather than girls in school. It was clear that parents without any formal educational background had little interests in educating their female children. They failed to appreciate the essence of schooling for their female children. On the other hand, parents who had some form of formal education placed equal value on both male and female education. Parents' educational backgrounds therefore go a long way to change their attitudes towards the bias against women and consequently increase the number of female children who go to school.

Haldane-Lutterdot (1995) points out that parents who are themselves illiterates tend to see little value in girls' education. In a study to ascertain the factors that impede females from attaining higher levels of education, Habib (2005) found out that girls aspired to the tertiary educational level were those whose parents had wider secondary or tertiary education. In conclusion the literature indicates that the educational background of parents is an important factor in the educational participation of girls. The literature also suggests that better educated mothers are likely to educate their daughters to any possible level.

## **Religion and Female Education**

Islamic religion is usually associated with low female participation in schools. The history of the imposition of formal western Education, which is associated with Christianity and the pressure to convert, is still very much an issue in some Islamic regions. Muslim parents prefer Islamic education for their daughters' for fear that western education will promote in girls' values and behaviour which are contrary to Islamic ethics.

On his part Atakpa (1996) asserts that the issue of choosing between secular and religious education seems to be very pertinent issue in some Islamic communities. In a study to ascertain the causes of low level of enrolment among Muslim girls in Ghana, Shani (1996) found that, the attitude of Muslim parents towards female enrolment is now changing for the better. About 86% of the parents interviewed expressed the desire to educate their daughters up to University level and 93% of parents responded that the Islamic religion is not against female education rather it encourages it.

The practices of betrothal and early marriage are among the factors causing relatively low retention of girls at the basic level, especially among Muslim communities in northern Ghana.

## **Early Marriage and Female Education**

In his study about the causes of low level of education among Muslim girls in the Nandom district, Abukari (1996) confirmed that the majority of parents withdrew their daughters from school for the purpose of marriage at ages between 15 and 20 years. Also Anyagri (1993) found that parents withdrew their

daughters from school to be given out as maids and for marriage in order to collect bride price to support their large extended families.

According to Abambilla (1984), people of Kusaug Bawku East, West and Garu Tempane of the Upper East Region of Ghana view girls as savings accounts of parents due to the strong value they attach to the early marriage. This has resulted in a fall in the level of female educational participation in the area. The influence of poverty on female enrolment cannot be underestimated, as many parents cited the increasing cost of schooling as the major factor that influenced their decision to discount educating their daughters or remove them from school. Almost all the studies reviewed specify this as a constraint to female education. This is not surprising given the economic condition in Ghana and the fact that poverty is widespread and affects schools and families alike. The literature indicates the extent to which parents have to cover the shortfalls due to the economic hardships, which have had a devastating impact on household income and educational system.

### **Distance to School and Female Enrolment**

In Ghana, Osei (1991) asserts that the distance a child has to walk to school in principle is 3 kilometers. However, in the rural areas for most and 3 Northern parts of the country where the population is sparse and schools are scattered, with few transport facilities, the majority of the children walk longer distance before they get to school and this explains why gender disparities are high in those areas, as girls find it difficult to withstand this routine walking to and from school due to fatigue.

Atakpa (1996) observes that the catchments area of a rural primary school. The children have to walk long distances to and fro from school. This situation puts school children especially girls at a disadvantage. This is because many parents will not like their daughters to walk long distances along unsafe footpaths in the bush to go to school.

Every society is unique and has its own peculiarities. Every society has a culture, which is also unique and as a society such a culture must be maintained and passed on from generation if the society is to continue its existence. Traditional modes were therefore needed in former times to transmit the culture to the generation. As times went on it become necessary to transmit the culture to the young through specially structured means and so the school system developed. The development of formal school is a means to meet the complexity of modern society.

Shani (1986) observes that education is basically the process whereby each individual learns to become a complete social member of the society. Schools are special institutions tasked with the training of the young on behalf of the society. Thus, schools wee set to cater for the needs and aspirations of the society. Despite these points of emphasis, we may define education as a process by which the individual is enabled to develop his capacities through acquisition of the right knowledge, attitudes, values and skills both for the benefit of individuals and for the benefit of society. Hence, the goals of society change form time to time and therefore is the need for the system of education and the curricula of schools to change to suit the needs of the society at any point in time.

## **Value of Education to the Muslim Girl-Child**

Habib (2005) observes that Crisis in Muslim Education states that education includes any process of shaping the potentialities of the maturing organism, be it formal or informal. Informal education is incidental and results from the constant interaction with the environment, and its strength in shaping values and habit can hardly be overestimated. In the other hand, formal education is a conscious effort by society to impact the skills and modes of thought considered essential. The importance of secular education to Muslims cannot be overemphasized. Gone are the day when people could live well and serve their communities only with their basic strength and crude knowledge of what every profession they were in. we are now in a computer age where the ability to read and write is necessary for the individual to function effectively in the community hence the need for education.

Education provides people with professions such as teaching, nursing, carpentry, salesmanship, and catering just to mention a few. With a profession, the individual earns incomes that make it possible for him/her to accomplish the third and fifth foundation of Islam that is giving (regular) charity, which is termed as zakat and the performance of hajj, which involves pilgrimage to Mecca. Education also helps one to raise a healthy and well-educated family, which invariably contributes to the development of the society and for that matter the nation at large.

It is no accident that in the Quran, humankind is described as Allah's viceroy and the crown and chief of his creation. Intelligence and knowledge are regarded as mankind's greatest gift receives from God, which he/she is called upon to utilize to the service of his or her maker. These gifts and the tremendous power they confer in him/her are accountable for his or her actions that is, for the important as well as the unimportant ones. Also it is record in the Hadiths of the prophet that, he told his followers at the time the greatest gift they could give to their children was education even if it meant sending them to as far as china for their intelligent level to be well developed to cope with the task ahead. There is the need for the individual to be educated on a wide range issues rather than being indoctrinated by informal education.

Now the concept of humankind's responsibilities shows that education in an Islamic society and for that matter Muslim communities would be an activity unlike any other either within its limits or in any other society. Education is assumed to have unlimited potentialities in molding character and elevating humankind to the highest rank in God's creation of which both sexes are capable. Islam does not believe that one sex (gender) by virtue of their nature is predisposed to excellence. Born without any inherent handicaps, both sexes attain success in life or fail to attain success according to how their parents or society educate them.

Despite the importance of education enumerated above, education does not seem to catch up with the Municipality. At a ceremony to open a Junior Secondary School at Koforidua, Alhaji Iddrisu Mahama, Minister of Defence in

the erstwhile provisional National Defence Council has this to say among other things “I entreat you to give equal opportunities to the children irrespective of their sex” (12 Noon Ghana Television News of 7<sup>th</sup> May 1994).

### **General Concerns shown about Discrimination against Women by the International Communities**

Ever since the international women’s year in 1975 highlighted the issue on equality of men and women, women’s issues, which previously concerned only voluntary organizations, have attained national and international significance. There have been numerous and varied research studies into the conditions of women in different societies. Conferences and seminars have also been held at regional and international levels all over the world, which afforded women the opportunity to identify, discuss and find ways of solving the problems, which had are still impeding women’s emancipation and their full integration into the economic, social and political lives of their various countries (United Nation Convention on the Elimination of all Discrimination Against Women, 1991). From these research studies and discussions, it was realized that women all over the world suffered similar types of injustices and discrimination within the family structure in employment, in education and in access to professional training and the like. It has been well noted that women have been discriminated against when it comes to education of girls child. It had been explained that in the traditional societies a major role for a woman is to ensure continuity of the lineage and she was expected to marry soon after puberty. This certainly relegated the education of the girl-child to the background.



The woman did not need formal education to perform her matrimonial and maternal responsibilities. It was expected that a woman would be provided for, by her husband, and since education becomes a means for entry into highly paid job in the formal sector, it was considered more important for boys to have formal education. This is because boys were expected to be breadwinners in the family. This has been supported by Atakpa (1996) whose findings revealed that besides the traditional process of training the girl child in preparation for her adult matrimonial and maternal roles, parent in traditional African societies totally lacked vision of any other appropriate roles of women for a happy and successful family.

These laudable findings have brought to light the kind of incrimination against girls' in terms of their education in many rural and sub-urban communities of which the Muslim community of Bawku Municipality is no exception. The success stories of many educated Ghanaian women, for example, honorable Hawa Yakubu, the member of parliament for Bawku Central Constituency, however, revealed that many Muslim conservative parents in the Bawku Municipality are now in a better position to envisage a better future for girls if they are properly educated (Abimbillah, 1984).

Despite the laudable contribution towards the education of the girls-child by government non government organizations and individuals, the “doubting Thomases: or conservative Muslim parents within the Bawku Municipality are of the view that the very idea of sending the girl child to be schooled into the

laziness and idleness of western education holds ugly prospects too horrifying for them (Shani, 1996). Muslim believes that education of girls will make them unmarriageable or make them lazy and indolent and unable to farm and trade even when they are married. Some Muslim parents within the Bawku Municipality see western education as a calculated attempt to divert their religious (Islam) belief to Christianity and therefore a shame to the family and society (Habib, 2005).

Notwithstanding the view of critics such as Muslim parents of the Bawku community, the United Nations declared 1975 as an international women year and enjoined member states to set up national machinery which would among other things study the condition of women, initiate programme to promote the emancipation of women and monitor progress made in this direction, it was therefore not a surprise the erstwhile Provisional nation Defence Council (PNDC) in 1981, incorporated the 31 December Women Movement's (a non-governmental organization) activities into its programmes, which subsequently led to the formation of the National Commission for Women and Development (NCWD). And in the present fourth republic dispensation for Ghana, almost all political groupings vying for political authority of the state have special clauses on women in their manifestoes geared towards the emancipation of women. The creation of the Ministry for Women and children's affairs by the new patriotic party (NPP) Government is ample testimony of the government's commitment to the emancipation of women. Suffice it is say that the creation of the women's ministry by his Excellency John Agyekum Kufuor's administration and the springing up of non-governmental organizations such as the association of women

layers in Africa (AWLA) and the women and Juvenile Unit of the Police (WAJU), all aim at championing the fight against discrimination against women and ultimately empower them. The programme of action of the International Conference on Population and development focuses on education as one of the important means to give women knowledge, likes and self-confidence necessary to help them participate fully in development processes (United Nation Publication 1995). It continues that, basic education gives women access to printed knowledge essential skills and new technologies, which improve their operation opportunities.

In support of this the framework for action to implement the world declaration on basic education for all cities, differences in illiteracy between women and men between the number of girls and boys out of school. It states that wherever such inequalities exist it is an urgent priority to improve access to education for girls and women and to remove obstacles that hampers their active participation. That priority action should include educational programmes for girls and women designed to eliminate the social and cultural barriers that have discouraged or even excluded them from the benefits of regular education programmes and to promote equal opportunities in all aspects of their lives.

### **Status of Women- the Conflicting View**

Under this sub-heading, the researcher will examine the status given to women in the Ghanaian context of which the Bawku Municipality Muslim community is no exception and the conflicting view about it. Every human society has a body of beliefs that regulate the way its people behave and relate to

one another in the society. Herein Ghana there are certain aspects of the Ghanaian culture, which have bearings on the issue on women's emancipation.

These are customs; traditions and belief which have over the year helped to keep women under subjugation and them, feel generally inferior to men and incapable of operating at the same level as men in society.

Every Ghanaian woman grows up knowing that it is the women who cooks the meals and generally sees to it that the house is clean and well kept and things are in their proper places. Whatever the level of education or professional status, she does not normally expect her husband to share household chores with her. If for one reason or the other than choices to help, it does not mean that it is his duty to do so. The society does not listen to women who complain that their husbands do not render helping hand in executing household chores.

The treatment that has been given to women over the past years stem from the fact that if it is ignorance that has made women to accept the inferior position to which they have been relegated by society. Beliefs about a women's subordinate position based on cultural and religious concept that can not stand up to close scrutiny, as well as misconceptions about her physiology and her intelligence have made women accept without question the superiority of men.

Moreover, such beliefs and misconceptions have made women feel generally inadequate and incapable of functioning effectively in society at the same level with men. But she argues that even though, biologically, there are difference in the features of a male and a female, these differences do not portray that one is an inferior quality. They have been endowed with brains such that one

does not think for the other. Bening (1990) has attributed the status of women to policy makers and planners. They maintain that these people assume that men are the heads and breadwinners of many households and hence any assistance or benefits directed to them or to the households, as the basic production unit would automatically filter through their women folk. But this is not so because the idea of benefits trickling down to women is hardly supported by the evidence that women are not regarded as co-owners of the family in their own right but in a subordinate role as unpaid family workers making a contribution to the household economy. Moreover this contribution is expected of them as part of their household duties as housewives.

According to Shani (1996) the assumption that assistance provided men filters down to women is very wrong because men are individualistic and seldom share their wealth with their spouse. It is believed it would have been right if the assumption had been in favour of women, for women tend share their wealth with their spouse. It is believed it would have been right if the assumption had been in favour of women, for women's wealth is not only shared among the nuclear family but to other extended family members as well. Sharing of their wealth with others is a contributory factor to their low economic status. With the emphasis of government on the participation and full integration of women in the development process, policy-makers and planners should first of all focus attention on the nature and feasibility of institutional changes that would enable women who make up over half the total population to have a greater say in the formulation and

implementation of specific government policies and programmes that affect their well being.

Adequate representation of women in decision-making bodies at all levels will help to ensure that their needs and problems are in the first place correctly perceived and identified, and that the type of special programme directed at them as a target group are relevant to their felt needs. A well-planned education granted to people help to enhance their socio-economic status especially if they are able to attain it to an appreciable level. As far as formal education is concerned women as a whole are disadvantaged because of the misconception society has about them. This attitude notwithstanding, the United Nations Human Development Report (1996) has stated that fairer opportunities for women and better access to education contribute to their human development, that of other family members and to economic growth.

It has also been stated in the report that empowering women through education to exercise their choices is the surest way to contribute to economic growth and overall development. Organizations, stakeholders, traditional leaders (imams/priests) should encourage girl-child education through schemes like endowment fund scholarships and special awards to highly educated women in society.

### **Attitude of Men towards Girl Education**

In the traditional African society parents place a lower value on the education of their daughters than that of their sons. This attitude is partly due to the fear that their daughters will become pregnant before completion of school

and certification. It is also the belief that a girls' place is in the kitchen and that whatever the level of her education she will one day be married and cared for by her husband. Parental attitude are also influenced by inadequate financial resource, which often thwart the efforts of school girls and apparently encourage some girls to seek material support through promiscuity. Shani (1996) cited several instances from different countries of gender stereotyping which widens as education progresses. Abimbillah (1984) supports this assertion by pointing out that an educational system: which teaches technical skills without imparting an appreciation of social justice, simple becomes part of the wider system of cultural and social regulation and control, which is likely to condone a situation of bias.

This critique is made even with regard to initiatives designed to raise female participation, pointing to the need for a careful examination of the ways in which the educational system itself reinforces gender inequality. Another group in the educational system, which has enhanced gender inequality in schools, is teachers. In a study conducted by Atakpa (1996) found that boys were more and often likely to have extended conversations with teachers. They also cited studies which show that teachers are more likely to give male students detailed instructions on how to do things for themselves while with female students they are more likely to do things for them. They suggested that the outcome of such biased interactions for girls include reduced commitment to careers.

### **Teenage Pregnancy and Early Marriage**

Issues of teenage pregnancy and early marriage have been matters of public concern in most development countries. They are a source of worry to

individuals, organizations and governments. Atakpa (1996) defines teenage pregnancy, as pregnancy that occurs before the girl is psychologically matured. He says that this happens when the female is usually between the ages of twelve and twenty and that although the girls can have a baby, her socio-economic condition may not favour tendering or caring for a baby.

Shani (1996) describes early marriage on the basis of cordial relationship between two families, on moral grounds or for economic reasons. Even though there are several factors which may lead to teenage pregnancy depending on the environment in which the girl lives or comes from, the researcher's interest is that of early marriage, which may hinder the girl's education.

Anyagri (1993) maintains that most women become mothers during their reproductive years. He says that in some countries women start having children as early as in their teens. This assertion is true of most African regions especially those in the sub-urban and rural areas where female education is secondary matter of concern, because of the views about who and what a woman is and what is envisaged about her future. For instance in societies where women are seen primarily as wives and mothers, and other social roles are considered difficult for women to achieve girls enter marriage and bear children at very young ages. In these societies women are less likely than boys to receive any education and fewer job opportunities. The men fail in realizing that educational achievement is critical to improving women's ability to choose the number of children they desire and is strongly associated with many other fertility related choices. According to Atakpa (1996) schooling beyond the primary level provides skills and enhances



that schooling opens the door to knowledge and information and promotes independence.

Educated women marry later, want smaller families, start child bearing later and have fewer children. They are likely to know more about contraception, start using it earlier in the family formation process and rely on modern as opposed to traditional methods. Thus, educated women do not experience teenage pregnancy and early marriage, which are two notorious factors that affect the educational attainment of the girls-child and her subsequent role in the family and in the community.

As mentioned earlier on, most girls who become pregnant prematurely come from traditional settings or societies, which cherish child-marriage. These girls are fully much aware of the problems they encounter but the nature of marriage contract that they go through does not allow them to throw any challenges, whatsoever. They therefore resort to bearing their pain in silence or eloping with men to very distant places far from home or if they ran away from on their own they fall prey to prostitution and other vices. Habib (2005) maintain that parents do not give out their children for marriage for nothing. They have reasons, which vary from to place to place. Some of these are economic morality based, religious affiliation or socio-cultural factors. In all cases when it comes to satisfying any of these, on matter the educational attainment of the girls, her education is usually terminated. If for any of the above reasons a girl is given out in marriage, the husband will in no way consent to the girls' appeal to continue with her education. This is because of the assumption that education aids girls to

behave immorally coupled with the fact the girl is likely to discontinue the marriage when she becomes more enlightened about life. Also a husband who had to pay so much dowry and other related costs will never allow his teenage wife to go back to school. He will rather want her to be housewife as well as helping him till his land.

It has been found out that, girl do not normally like going to their former schools agter giving birth to children. They prefer to continue their education in schools which are cited far away from their former schools. But it must be noted that no man will like his teenage wife to move into a different environment without him because of education. For these and other reasons best known to them, girls refuse to go back to school even though they are aware that it is only education that can help them out of their predicaments (Habib, 2005).

From the literature review, it is realized that if women are given the necessary education which is a keynote to all developmental process they can contribute meaningfully to themselves and to national development. It is in this regard that government, non-governmental organization as well as individuals locally, notional and internationally are dwelling much on female education to enhance their status and socio economic development.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the focus is on the description of the research methods used to collect the data for this study. This description includes the target population for the study the sample and sampling procedure used and the administration of the instruments. The procedure for data analysis has also been presented.

#### **Research Design**

The research design for the study was a survey. According to Nwana (1993) refers to the collection of standardized information from a specific population or some sample of it, usually but not necessarily by means of questionnaires or interview.

A survey is used for two major research purposes; descriptive and analytical. With the former, the researcher's aim is primarily to have an accurate description of what people in the target population do and think. In analytic survey studies, hypotheses are formulated, based on the data collected, and checked against further information from the same survey. Since the aim very often of a survey is to make generalizations about a relatively large section or all of the population, in drawing a sample for the survey it must be ensured that it is as much as possible typical of the population. This research design was deemed appropriate because the researcher wanted to find out the current status of

attitudes of Muslim parents towards girl-child education in Bawku Municipality in the Upper-East Region of Ghana.

### **Population**

The population and housing census conducted in the year 2000 shows that Bawku East Municipality had an approximate population of 29,965 out which the Muslims constituted 45.2%. Thus the target population was the estimated 134,740 Muslims in the Bawku Municipality based on the census data.

### **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

Owning to the vastness and high population of the area, and the difficulty in reaching all the population a sample of 100 respondents of the Bawku Muslim Community comprising 25 farmers selected from the Bawku peasant farmers association, 25 petty traders selected from the Bawku traders association 25 opinion leaders from the central Mosque and 25 unemployed youth picked randomly from the Bawku town except for the youths. For the recognized associations the individual participants were selected using the table of random numbers. In all cases the lists of Muslims were isolated from the general lists of the associations before randomly selecting the participants. In the case of the youth, the convenient sampling technique was used in the selection as the researcher gave the questionnaire to those he met on the street on a particular day.

### **Research Instrument**

The main research instruments used to gather data were a set of self-developed questionnaire and an interview guide. Both open and closed ended items were included in the questionnaire used to collect information regarding the

cause of low level of education among Muslim girls in Bawku Municipality. In all 36 closed-ended, questions and one open ended question were used. The questionnaire consisted of four sections. Section 'A' sought information on personal data of respondents like age, sex, religious denomination, occupation, educational background and family size. Section 'B' sought information about the attitude of Muslims towards girl-child education whilst section C dealt with the extent to which girls of Muslim parents are enrolled and retained in schools in Bawku Municipality. Finally Section 'D' sought information on factors militating against Muslims girl-child education in Bawku.

### **Validity and Reliability of Research Instrument**

The questionnaire, which was personally designed by the research, was critically scrutinized by the supervisor to ensure its content and construct validity, thereby ensuring that it covered all the areas it was supposed to cover as well as getting rid of all forms of ambiguities.

The questionnaire was also pilot-tested at Tumu, after which the necessary corrections were made to ensure that it would elicit the right responses. The respondents' interpretation of the test items are important for the validity of the instrument used and the external reliability of the data gathered. The questionnaire was therefore personally administered by the research that took the pain to explain issues to the respondents in order to avoid misinterpretations. The researcher particularly assisted those who could not read and write very well, to respond to the questions. Those who could read were given one week to respond to the

questionnaire after which the researcher went back to collect them. The reliability co-efficient of the research instrument was computed to be 0.8247.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher personally administered the questionnaires. For the identifiable groups of farmers, petty traders, and opinion leaders, after randomly selecting the respondents through the table of random numbers, the researcher collected their addresses and traced them to their residences or workplaces. When the purpose of the study had been explained to them the literates were then given one week to respond to the questionnaire after which the researcher went back to retrieve them. For the illiterates the researcher took pains to fill the questionnaire for them. In all, 90 out of the 100 questionnaire administered were retrieved. Thus the recovery rate was 90%.

It must be emphasized that even though people were initially enthusiastic to collect the questionnaire, they found it very difficult to meet the deadline as some claimed they were tight-scheduled. For this and some other reasons the time schedule has to be adjusted.

### **Data Analysis**

The data obtained from the respondents were coded and quantified and then recorded on data summary following the format required by the statistical Package for the social sciences (SPSS) computer software with the help of a friend. The data were subsequently fed into the computer and the SPSS programme was used in the statistical analysis. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages.

CHAPTER FOUR  
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Introduction**

This chapter presents and analyses the data collected for the study. Discussions of the finding are also presented. The analysis is done on the basis of the biographic data of respondent and research questions. Scores were assigned to responses to enable the researcher analysed the data to establish the relationship that existed between the Muslim community of Bawku Municipality and the education of the Muslim girl-child.

**Background of Respondents**

In all, 100 adult Muslim respondents were targeted out which 90 actually responded to the questionnaire. Out of the 90 respondents, 50 were females while 40 were makes. Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5 present the age, sex distribution, educational, and occupational background of respondents respectively.

**Table 1****Age distribution of respondents**

Age Group	Male		Female	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
25-34	20	22.2	24	26.6
35-44	14	15.5	18	20.0
45-54	4	4.4	6	6.6
55 and above	2	2.2	2	2.2
Total	40	44.4	50	55.5

From the above table it can be seen that more women responded to the questionnaire as the issue concern them most. Almost those who responded mostly belong to 25-34 age groups as they are those who had the opportunity of completing second cycle institutions.

**Table 2****Sex distribution of respondents**

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	40	44.4
Female	50	55.5
Total	90	100.0



Though there are more literate males than females in the community, many of them who were contacted for the exercise refused to respond to the items in the questionnaire hence the number of females outnumbered males.

**Table 3**

**Educational background**

Level of education	Male		Female	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Primary	4	4.4	22	24.4
Middle school	20	22.2	12	13.3
Junior secondary school	2	2.2	8	8.8
Secondary school	6	-	1	1.1
Com./Voc. Technical	-	-	3	3.3
Tertiary	3	3.33	2	2.2
University	2	2.22	-	-
Arabic school	3	3.33	1	1.11
Total	40	44.4	50	55.5

Table 3 above indicates that majority of the respondents were middle school leavers. When some respondents were asked as to how and when they got to that level of education, many of them indicated that it was during Kwame Nkrumah's regime when there was the introduction of the Accelerated development plan which sought to give free compulsory universal basic education. According to the respondents their parents were encouraged and

compelled to send them to school or face the full rigors of the law. Some respondents even lamented over the overthrow of the Nkrumah regime, which brought to an abrupt end their educational ambitions. In all, about 74% of the respondents had only basic education qualification.

**Table 4**  
**Occupational background of respondents**

Sex	F		PT		CS		A		U	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Male	10	25.0	15	37.5	-	-	-	-	15	37.5
(40)										
Female	25	50.0	15	30.0	2	4.0	3	6.0		10.0
(50)										

**Key**

- S = Sex
- F = Farming
- PT = Petty Trading
- CS = Civil Servant
- A = Artisan
- U = Unemployed

From Table 4 it is clear that the majority of the respondents were either farmers or petty. It was disappointing to note that 37.5% of the female respondents who were unemployed claimed they were housewives mostly peasant farmers and petty traders and housewives. As mostly peasant farmers and petty

trades and housewives, they were likely to find it difficult raising the necessary funds to support their children's education. This is particularly so considering the large family sizes of the respondents.

**Table 5**  
**Family size of respondents**

No. of People in Family	Number of Respondents
Single	10
2	16
3	3
4	12
5	13
6	10
7	20
8	4
9	2
Total	90

Bawku is predominantly a Muslim town where Muslim communities cherish early marriage and childbearing. These Muslims live polygamous life and therefore their women compete in child bearing with the belief that the more children you have with your husband the larger their inheritance of his wealth. In their quest to give birth to make children to win the hearts of their husbands, they unconsciously increase their family size, which invariably becomes a financial burden and reduces their standard of living as more mouths chase few resources.

This problem also precipitate school drop out as parents cannot afford to meet their wards basic educational needs such as school fees and subsequently these drop-out fall prey to some social vices like stealing and prostitution just to mention a few.

### **Analysis of the Main Data**

#### **Research Question 1**

What is the attitude of the Muslim parents towards the education of the Muslim girl-child? This research question sought to find out the attitude of Muslim parents towards the education of the girl-child. Items I -5 on table 8 were used to elicit responses from respondents. Table 6 presents the summary of the level of education which respondents wished their children should attain.

**Table 6**

#### **Extent of girls education respondents wished their children to attain**

Level of education	Frequency		Percentage	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
None	-	-	0	0
1 <sup>st</sup> Cycle	8	5	8.89	5.5
Institution				
2 <sup>nd</sup> Cycle	12	5	13.3	5.5
Institution				
Tertiary institution	10	10	11.1	11.1
University	10	30	11.1	33.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>44.4</b>	<b>55.5</b>

Most respondents expressed the wish of seeing their children attain high educational laurels many of these respondents were females who belong to the economically active group who have realized that there was the need to pursue quality education to enable one lead a better life style. Some respondents also complained of perceived ill treatment they received from the health sector, electricity and security personnel. There were some respondents who blamed their predicament on sheer ignorance and blatant refusal of their parents to give them education, a situation they the respondents would not allow to surface in the lives of their children. They wish to have some one in their families at least who is enlightened and can defend their course when the need arises. This means they are interested in the education of their children.

#### **Discussion of Attitudes of Muslim Parents toward Girl-Child Education**

From Table 8, it is observed that majority of respondents do not agree that the Quran plays down on girl-child education. Whereas 92.5% of the male disagree 94% of the Female respondents disagree. The place of the Muslim girl-child is in the Kitchen however both male and female respondents agreed it. On secular education acculturating individual, the male respondents had 92.5% who agreed and the female had 94%. On the notion that since the girl-child has to get married at an early age she does not need any lengthy education, while no male responded all the female respondents (100%) agreed that the girl-child did not need any lengthy education.

## Research Question 2

Are Muslims boys offered more educational opportunities than Muslim girls? This research question sought to find out whether Muslim boys are given more educational opportunities than Muslim girl-child.

Table 7 presents the summary of the level of support for girl-child education to which respondents are prepared to give the girl-child in her education.

**Table 7**  
**Support for girl-child education**

Interest	Male	Female	Male	Female
Yes	40	50	44.44	55.56
No	-	-	-	-
Total	40	50	44.44	55.56

From the Table, it can clearly be seen that all responded yes. When the researcher enquired further, majority of the reasons given were attributed to the era of explosion of knowledge. Some were also of the view that gone were the days when men were the breadwinners of their families, since many have shirked their traditional roles of fending for their wives and siblings and put the burden party or wholly on their wives, then women should be given equal opportunity with men as far as education is concerned. Other respondents could not hide their envy for their Christian counterparts, whom they said because of their educational attainment, they command some degree of socio-economic status in the

community. They therefore prayed for the day that the Muslim girl-child would also walk with such aura of confidence and dignity.

### **Discussion of Findings for Research Question 2**

Research on female education highlights an ambivalent attitude towards investment in female education based on much negative perception of girls and women. (Source) Some parents believe that boys are more intelligent than girls. The study also found out that born without any inherent handicaps, both sexes attain success in life or fail to attain according to how their parents or society educate them. Muslim parents must be educated to know that the woman's role is not only in the kitchen but that the woman needs formal education to impact the skills and modes of thought considered essential. Also because of the high premium placed on boys by parents, Muslim women in child bearing in their quest to give their husband's male's children to win their hearts. This leads to the increase in the family size.

This brings about increase in the family size and leads to financial burden and reduces their standard of living. Responses on Muslim boys offered more educational opportunities than Muslim girl-child is presented on Table 9.

**Table 8****The attitude of Muslim parents towards the Muslim girl-child in the Bawku****Municipality**

Perception	NR	A	D	T	NR	A	D	T
The Quran plays down on the education of the girl-child	3 (7.5)		37 (92.5)	40 (100)	3 (6)		47 (94)	50 (100)
The place of the Muslim girl-child is the kitchen	40 (100)			40 (100)	50 (100)			50 (100)
Boys are not made to perform household chores like girls			40 (100)	40 (100)			50 (100)	50 (100)
Secular education acculturates an individual	3 (7.5)	37 (95.5)		40 (100)	3 (6)	47 (94)		50 (100)

**Key**

NR = No Response

A = Agree

D = Disagree

T = Total



**Table 9****The attitude of Muslim parents towards the Muslim girl-child in the Bawku****Municipality**

Perception	NR	A	D	T	NR	A	D	T
	(M)				(F)			
Most Muslim parents prefer educating their boy child to their girl child	40 (100)			40 (100)	50 (100)			50 (100)
Muslim parents prefer educating their boy child to their girl child	40 (100)			40 (100)	50 (100)			50 (100)
Boys are not made to perform household chores like girls	40 (100)			40 (100)	50 (100)			50 (100)
Boys are not made with educational materials than girls	30 (7.5)	37 (95.5)	10 (25)	40 (100)	50 (100)	20 (20)	30 (60)	50 (100)
Most girls like boys should be enrolled in school	40 (100)				50 (100)			

**Key**

NR = No Response

A = Agree

D = Disagree

T = Total

From Table 9 on the issue of Muslim boys being offered more educational opportunities than Muslim girls in Bawku Municipality all of the male respondents did not respond to whether boys are offered more educational opportunities, whether Muslim parents prefer educating their boy child to their girl-child and whether boys are not made to perform household chores like girls. The female respondents on the other hand, agreed by 100% that Muslim parents prefer educating their boy child to their girl child, they also agreed that given limited resources Muslim parents prefer educating their boy child to their girl child. The females also agree that boys are not made to perform household chores like girls. On the part of getting more educational materials for boys than girls 50% of both respondents disagreed that boys should be given more materials than girls.

### **Research Question 3**

What are the levels of retention and enrolment in the schools? This research question sort to find out to what extend girls are enrolled and retained in schools in Bawku. Items 1-10 on Table 10 were used to elicit responses from respondents.

The researcher realized that both male and female respondents first and foremost called for a vigorous leaders, opinion leaders and other stakeholders to educate parents against the erroneous notion that the girl-child for that matter women's place is in the kitchen and that whatever level of her education, she will one day get married and be cared for by her husband.

Respondents also pointed out that, like some chiefs in other communities have initiated programmes to help in the education of the youth within their respective communities to enhance girl-child education.

Also respondents were of the view that scholarship schemes should be given to brilliant but needy students as a moral booster and urged their religious clerics (Imams) to endeavour to enlighten them on the difference between religious teaching and tenets from cultural beliefs.

**Table 10**

**Level of enrollment in schools**

Perception	NR (M)	A	D	T	NR (F)	A	D	T
Most girls than boys often drop out of school	40 (100)			40 (100)	50 (100)			50 (100)
The girl-child drops out of school because of parents ability to pay fees		37 (92.5)	3 (7.5)	40 (100)		47 (94)	3 (6)	50 (100)
The girl-child drop out of school because of teachers attitude towards them			40 (100)	40 (100)			50 (100)	50 (100)
Muslim girl-child drops out of school because boys tease them			40 (100)	40 (100)			50 (100)	50 (100)

**Table 10 Continued**

Muslim girls drop out of school because there are not role models for them to copy	25 (62.5)	15 (37.5)	40 (100)		20 (40)	30 (60)	50 (100)
The Quran and Hadith do not encourage girl-child education	3 (7.5)		37 (92.5)	40 (100)	3 (6)		47 (94)
Most girls drop out of school because they are often harassed by men			40 (100)			50 (100)	50 (100)
Due to large family size parents usually do not have time for their girl-child			40 (100)			50 (100)	50 (100)
Muslim parents do not want secular education for their girl-child			40 (100)			50 (100)	50 (100)
Secular education is misleading			20 (50)		40 (100)	20 (40)	30 (60)
							50 (100)

**Key**

NR = No Response

A = Agree

D = Disagree

T = Total

#### **Research Question 4**

What factors militate against the education of the Muslim girl-child? This research question sort to find out the factors that militate against the education of the Muslim girl-child Items 1-11 on Table 11 were used to elicit responses form respondents.

Respondents gave many reason ranging from economic to socio-cultural beliefs and practices such as poverty, early marriage, teenage pregnancies and child labour. Respondents were also of the view that because they were greatly arabised than Islamise, they misconstrued the Arabian culture of disregard and subordination of women to mean some of the teachings and tenets of Islam.

Due to this perception they ignorantly refuses to send their daughters to school or where they did, little interests was emphasized. Some respondents also attributed the problem to poverty. In families where extreme poverty reigns high hey prefer to send their female children to do petty trading to argument the meager family income than to be schooled into the laziness and idleness of western education which hold ugly prospects too horrifying for them. Other factors deduced was that if early marriage as some claimed that the teachings of Islam have indicated that a woman should not exceed the age of fifteen (as soon as she begins to menstruate) without being married, consequently there is no point wasting resources to send the girl-child to school.

**Table 11****Factors which militate against Muslim girl-child education**

Perception	NR (M)	A	D	T	NR (F)	A	D	T
Poverty level of parents		40 (100)		40 (100)		50 (100)		50 (100)
Poor attitude of the girl-child towards education	10 (25)		30 (75)	40 (100)		20 (40)	30 (60)	50 (100)
The attitude of teachers towards the girl-child								
Muslim girls drop out of school because there are not role models for them to copy		25 (62.5)	15 (37.5)	40 (100)		20 (40)	30 (60)	50 (100)
The Quran and Hadith do not encourage girl-child education	3 (7.5)		37 (92.5)	40 (100)	3 (6)		47 (94)	50 (100)
Most girls drop out of school because they are often harassed by men		40 (100)		40 (100)		50 (100)		50 (100)
Due to large family size parents usually do not have time for their girl-child		40 (100)		40 (100)		50 (100)		50 (100)

**Table 11 Continued**

Muslim parents do not	40	40	50	50	
want secular education	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	
for their girl-child					
Secular education is	20	40	20	30	50
misleading	(50)	(100)	(40)	(60)	(100)

**Key**

NR = No Response

A = Agree

D = Disagree

T = Total

**Discussion of Findings from Research Question**

The respondents gave many reasons, which militate against the education of the Muslim girl-child, ranging from economic to socio-cultural beliefs and practices such as poverty, early marriage, teenage pregnancies and child labour. The respondents were also of the view that they were Arabised and Islamised. They therefore misconstrued the Arabian Culture of disregard and subordination of women to some of the tenets of Islam.

It was due to this perception that the Muslim community ignorantly refused to send their daughters to school or where they did little interests was emphasized. Respondents also attributed the problem to poverty in families where extreme poverty reigns high they prefer to send their female education to do petty

trading to augment the meager family income than sending their children to school.

Other factor deduced was that of early marriage as some claim that the teachings of Islam have indicated that a woman should not exceed the age of fifteen (as soon as she begins to menstruate) without being marriage, consequently there is no point wasting resources to send their girl-child to school. On the factors that militate against Muslim girl-child education 100% of male and female respondents agree that poverty level of parents is a factor that militates against Muslim girl-child education. On the poor attitude of the girl-child whereas 75% of the male respondents disagreed 60% of the female respondents disagreed. On the issue of factors which militate against girl-child education, 62.5% of the male respondents, disagreed whereas 60% of the female respondents disagreed. The distance between the school and the girl child's home as a factor that militates against the girl-child education has no response form the male side but the female respondents agreed 10%. "No friendly structures", on this issue 62.5% of the male respondents did not respond 37.5% agreed lack of girl friendly structures were militating against the girl-child education. On the part of the female respondents 60% agreed and 40% disagreed. On the girl-child working to support family income 75% of male respondents did not respond 25% disagreed. 80% of the female respondents agreed and 20% did not respond 25% disagreed. 80% of the female respondents agreed and 20% disagreed. Early marriages encouraged are factors that militate against Muslim girl-child education 100% of



male respondents did not respond and 100% of females agreed that early marriages are encouraged and these militate against girl-child education.

Low level of community support to girl-child education 100% of the male respondents did not respond and 100% of female respondents agreed that there was low level of community support to girl child education. On the issue of women with high educational background finding it difficult to get husbands 100% of the male respondents did not respond and 100% of the female respondents agree that this was true. Educate women turn to be disrespectful on this not while 65% of male and female respondents agree that this is true 60% of the female respondents disagree. The issue of highly educated women encouraging low participation of girls in school by employing them to perform household tasks 62.5% of the male respondents did not respond 37% agreed 70% of the female respondents agreed and 30% disagreed.

### **Discussion of Research Question 5**

What suggestions do people offer for the improvement of the education of the Muslim girl-child? For questions both male and female respondents called for a vigorous campaign by religious leaders' opinion and other stake holders to educate parents against the erroneous notion that the girl child for that matter women's place is in the kitchen and that whether level of her education, she will get married and cared for by her husband.

Respondents also pointed out that like some chiefs in other communities have initiated programmes to help in the education of the youth within their

respective communities similar initiative could be embarked in the Muslim communities to enhance girl-child education.

Some people are also of the view that the school feeding programme started by the Catholic Relief Services in some school in Municipality encourage the girl child to go to school and should not be abandoned. United Nations children's fund should also be encourage to do more in getting bicycles to the girl child whose home are far from the school they attend. These measures when put in place will go a long way to improve the girl-child education in Bawku Municipality.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Introduction**

This Chapter summarizes the research study and also presents a summary of the findings of the study as well as conclusions drawn from the findings. Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, recommendations are also made to guide educational practitioners and stakeholders.

#### **Summary**

The main purpose of this study was to find out why in spite of several injunctions in the Quran and Hadiths of the Prophet of Islam urging Muslims to give knowledge to their daughters, even if it means sending them as far as to the far East (China) the attitude and socio-cultural practices of the Muslims community of Bawku Municipality militate against girl-child education.\

In pursuance of these objectives, questionnaires and interview were used as the main instruments for data collection to arrive at an understanding of this phenomenon. The researcher with the help of the dissertation supervisor designed the questionnaires and interview guide. Since the study concerned a vast community with high population estimated this is different from page 34 people comprising farmers, traders, opinion leaders and the unemployed was selected using the stratified random sampling procedures.

The researcher personally administered the instruments. The participants who were literate were provided questionnaires and given two weeks to respond to, after which the researcher went back to retrieve them. Those illiterate participants were subjected to interview by the researcher. The interview based on structured interview guide consisted of the same as found in the questionnaire.

The data collected were coded, fed into the computer and analyzed using the SPSS computer application software. Basically description statistics were used for the data analysis.

The percentage rank was employed to investigate the attitude of Muslim parents towards the education of the Muslim girl child, are Muslim boys offered more education opportunities than Muslim girl child, are Muslim boys offered more education opportunities than Muslim girls, to what extent are girl enrolled and retained in schools in Bawku, what factors militate against the education of the Muslim girl-child and what suggestions do people offer for the improvement of the education of the Muslim girl-child.

### **Key Findings**

The main findings of the research were that:

1. A majority (67.0%) of Muslim parents had negative attitude towards the education of Muslim girl-child because they thought in the Muslim communities the woman's role was limited to the kitchen and she did not need formal education to perform her matrimonial duties since she would be provided for by her husband.

2. Muslim boys were offered more educational opportunities than Muslim girls. This was based on many negative perceptions of girls and women. Some parents believed that boys are more intelligent than girls, perform better in school and are better educational investment than girls.
3. One of the main reasons for low female enrolment and low retention rate was economic constraint. Girls in the ability to pay and levies in school was often a source of embarrassment, which drove them out of school.
4. The Factors that militated against the education of the Muslim girl-child ranged from economic to socio-cultural beliefs and practices such as poverty, early marriage, teenage pregnancies and child labour.
5. Most respondents called for a vigorous campaign by religious leaders and other stake-holders to educated parents against the erroneous notion that the girl-child and for that matter women's place is in the kitchen and that whatever level of her education, she will one day get married and be cared for by her husband.

### **Conclusions**

On the basis of the findings of the study the following conclusions are drawn. First it can be concluded from the study that lack of proper education on the essence of educating females is a major problem hindering the education of the girl-child. Thus it Muslim parents are well educated to know that the women's role is not limited to the kitchen and that she even needs education to place values on the education of girls.

It may also be concluded that the education of the female is an economic decision and that if Muslim parents are assisted to improve upon their economic situation they would be encouraged to educate the girl-child. Finally, it may be concluded that solution to this nagging problem of Muslims not educating the girl-child lies in the collective effort of all stakeholders of education including parents, students, religious bodies, opinion leaders, government and non-governmental organizations. At the basic level, if government will strictly adhere to the policy of Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education as provided for in the constitution, all girls will be in school and not discriminated against.

### **Recommendations**

On the basis of the findings of the study and conclusions drawn from it, the following recommendations are made:

1. Chiefs and religious clerics (Imans) within the Bawku Municipality should be proactive in their message and teachings to disabuse the minds of the people as they see to them as their security.
2. Some of the complimentary roles that contributed to the success of the Accelerated Development Plan was the enforcement of the educational policies and the heavy investments in terms of infrastructures and logistics such as textbooks and fee free education. In the light of this, the introduction of the collaboration with the Bawku Municipality should endeavour to see to its effective implementation.
3. Non-governmental organizations, Religious groups in collaboration with gender quality advocate groups should organize periodic education

seminars to enlighten people of the Municipality about the importance of educating the girl-child.

4. Women role models should occasionally visit the Muslim communities to meet women groups and boost their morale to enhance the idea of girl-child education.

In some communities attempts are being made to promote chastity and in the same vein effort should be put in place to promote girl-child education.

1. Male teachers should be particularly educated on interaction or interpersonal skills. This will enable them relate and communicate effectively with girls. Teachers' attitudes have significant implications for female persistence and academic achievement and attainment in school. It is therefore being recommended that teachers be made aware of their various roles in reducing girls drop out. Newly trained teachers should be taken through strategies to serve as advocate for girl-child education.
2. Moreover teachers who engage in practices that militate against girl-child education should be prosecuted and tougher punishment imposed on them to serve as a deterrent to others. This can be done only when all stakeholders of education serve as watchdogs. Male pupils are identified as major offenders of abusing girls verbally, teasing and cartooning them in public. Male pupils to a large extent therefore, have influence on girl retention as indicated in the study. Male pupils who engage in acts, which tend to undermine girl-child education, should be made to face the full rigours of the law. To ensure these, stakeholders of education, especially

the Municipal Assembly should enact some by-laws to protect the girls in school. When this is done success of the access and participation component of the FCUBE programme will be achieved.

There are school-related expenses apart from school fees, which affects girls' retention. These include uniform, stationary, school building fund, money for purchasing science, agricultural and vocational materials and tools. Girls who have difficulty in getting these often fall prey to male adults or even their mates. Such relationship often leads to pregnancy and eventually drops out from school. It is laudable that government is providing school building and furniture in addition to some sponsorship packages but there is more to be done.

All stakeholders should endeavour to sponsor girl-child education. For instance, traditional rulers, District Assemblies and other opinion leaders should set up funds to offer scholarships and uniforms for needy girls. The scholarship should not be limited to only needy pupils with academic excellence but those with skills in sports and culture to mention but a few.

1. It is also recommended that parents with low socio-economic levels of income should be encouraged to benefit from the HIPC Fund in order to meet the educational needs of their children, especially the girl-child.

In order to encourage access and participation to ensure high enrolment rate, the government is putting up school buildings, the need for specific facilities to protect the privacy of the girl-child in school should be paramount. The results of the study elicit the need for urinals and lavatories with water to help retain the girl-child in school. Parent Teacher Associations and District Assemblies should



ensure that the needed facilities are provided to give our girls privacy. The need for these cannot be over emphasized as adolescents girls often stay out of school during their menstrual periods. Analysis of gender biases of textbooks in school has received considerably attention (Mackimon, 1997). The results of this study indicate the influence of textbook biases against girls. It is a fact that textbooks have hidden messages, which convey certain value and norms to students and influence student's academic achievement and attainment. If the girl would be encouraged to stay in school and aim high academically, then the issue of gender stereotypes in textbooks, which impact negatively on attainment of girls in school, would be a thing of the past.

Textbooks and other instructional materials should no more negate the girl-child. Pictures and stories in our textbooks should no longer portray female as mothers in the house caring for babies and selling in the market only but also people whose occupation demands high education such as statesmen, lawyers and doctors.

It is recommended that stakeholders of education should endeavours to make our school environment girl-friendly. This can be done if sex education is respect the right of girls and therefore help retain them in school.

Finally, it is recommended that there should be a provision of a regular review of girl-child education advocacy so that problems of girl-child in school could receive regular attention. The school lunch programme first organized by the Catholic Relief Service should not be phased out.

Also the assistance being given by UNICEF where the girl-child from deprived areas and where schools are far from their homes are given bicycles should be sustained.

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APPENDIX  
QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is being used for a study by a student in the Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, University of Cape Coast. Its purpose is to find out the attitude of people towards the education of the Muslim girl-child. It must be noted that this study is solely for academic purpose. So you are assured of confidentiality.

You are however requested to answer all the questions that follow as frankly and openly as you can.

SECTION A

**Instruction**

Indicate your answer to the following questions by taking the appropriate answer or by completing the spaces provided.

1. Age: [ ]
2. Sex: Male [ ] Female [ ]
3. Religion: Islam [ ] Christianity [ ]  
Traditional [ ]
4. Educational Background:  
No Schooling [ ] Basic [ ]  
Secondary [ ] Student [ ]
5. Occupation: Arabic School [ ] Trader [ ]  
Student [ ] Civil [ ]  
Teacher [ ] Student [ ]

6. Family Size: .....

7. No. of children: Boys [ ] Girls [ ]

### SECTION B

The statements below relate to the attitude of people towards the education of the Muslim girl child. Tick (✓) the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement. The scale notations are 'S.A Strongly Agree 'A' Agree 'S.D' Strongly Disagree 'D' Disagree.

STATEMENT	SA	A	SD	D
8. The Quran plays down on the education of the girl child.				
9. The place of the Muslim girl child is in the Kitchen				
10. Secular education acculturates an individual?				
11. Since the girl child has to get marriage an early age, she does not need any length education.				
12. Most Muslim parents prefer educating their boy child to their girl child.				
13. Given limited resources Muslim parent prefer educating their boy child to the girl child				
14. Boys are not made to perform household chores like Girls.				
15. boys should usually be provided with educational Material than girls.				
16. Most girls like boys should be unrolled in school				

## SECTION C

To what extent are girls enrolled and retained in schools in Bawku Municipality.

	SA	A	SD	D
17. More girls than boys often drop out of school				
18. The girl child drops out of school because of parents inability to pay fees				
19. The girl child drops out of school because teachers attitude towards them.				
20. Muslim girl child drops out of school because boys tease them.				
21. Muslim girls drop out of school because there are no role models for them to copy.				
22. The Quran and the Hadiths do not encourage girl child education				
23. Most girls drop out of school because they are Harassed by men.				
24. due to large family size parents usually do not have time for their girl child				
25. Muslim parents do not want secular education for their girl child				
26. Secular education is misleading.				



## SECTION D

What factors militate against Muslim girl-child education? Bawku Municipality?

STATEMENT	SA	A	SD	D
27. Poverty level of parents				
28. Poor attitude of the girl child toward education.				
29. The attitude of teachers toward the girl child.				
30. The distance between the school and the girl child				
31. There are no Girl child friendly structures.				
32. The girl child working to support family income.				
33. Early marriage are encouraged.				
34. Low level of community support to girl education				
35. Women with high educational background find it difficult.				
36. Educated women tend to be disrespectful				
37. Highly educated women tend to encourage low participation of girl in school by employing them to perform tasks which prevent them from schooling.				
38. The idea that boys are academically superior to girls so they should be given preference in education.				
39. Teenage mothers are encouraged to go back to school.				

40. What suggestion do you have for improving girl child education in the Municipality.....

.....