

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN SECONDARY EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY
OF THE BEREKUM DISTRICT IN THE BRONG AHAFO REGION

BY

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original research, and that not part of it has been presented either in part or whole for another degree in this University of elsewhere.

Signature:.....Date:.....

Candidate's Name: LETICIA AFUA AYEH

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to investigate female participation in secondary education in the Berekum District. Purposive and random sampling techniques were used to select a total of 136 respondents involved in the study. The instruments used were questionnaire and documentation. The results from the data collected indicated one critical fact. It was found that parents would opt to educate their boy children even though they considered that there were numerous benefits in relation to the education of the girl child.

At the end of the research, four phenomenal reasons accounting for the incidence of basic school dropouts among girls in the Berekum District were unearthed. The first among them was that, a sizeable number of the girls enrolled in the basic schools got pregnant along the line. This was followed by the issue of financial constraint on the part of parents/guardians, for which reason they could not educate the girls as much as they did for the boys. The third reason was that quite a number of the girls performed poorly academically. Unfortunate incidence of protracted ill-health was found to be another reason which prevented girls from pursuing secondary education.

Among the recommendations made were the need for the government to intensify its sensitization programme aimed at getting more girls to enter higher institutions so as to be self-dependent. Again individual schools should endeavour to offer motivational packages to girls who perform well in schools by offering them educational materials to serve as a booster. Also special classes, especially in Mathematics and Science should be organized for girls in the second cycle to help them attain a higher grade in the subjects. The need for further research on participation of girls in secondary school has also been stated.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my two sons, Isaac Kwabena Boafo and Kwabena Asante-Boahen for their patience. It is also to Rev. and Mrs. Ebenezer Addo of Abakrampa Church of Pentecost.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Like many developing countries, Ghana spends quite a huge amount of her Gross National Product (GNP) on the education of her citizen. Annual government budget estimates that, over 40% of each year's entire government expenditure goes to the education sector. The justification for spending quite a chunk of the nation's expenditure on education is the belief that the development of a nation lies in the hands of an educated population. Investment in informal education is also an important way to develop human capital, reduce poverty and increase social mobility among the citizenry. Anyawu, as cited by Harbison (1973) agrees with this when he notes that

Human resources constitute the ultimate basis for the wealth of nations. Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production; human beings are active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organizations and carry forward national development. Clearly, a country which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people and utilize them effectively in the national economy, will be unable to develop anything else, Harbison, (1973) p. 45 – 59.

Ghana as a country, has exhibited that the development of human resource is second to

none, this is so because since independence in 1957, successive governments have

attempted with varying degrees of success to provide education for all children. Evidence of this can be seen in the Accelerated Development Plan for Education in 1951, the Education Act of 1961, Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) Law 42 and the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) Act in 1985 being implemented since 1997. Investing in people makes it possible to take advantage of technical progress as well as to sustain it. It is expected of every parent in Ghana, who has a child of school going age who is between five and sixteen years, will send him or her to school, failure of which will attract a fine.

Education helps in several ways to sharpen the outlook of an individual. When a person is properly educated, he/she can fit into any society in which he/she finds himself or herself. An educated person is able to absorb new ideas and information faster, and is able to apply unfamiliar inputs and new processes more effectively. Such educated persons become receptive to new ideas and processes and they are also able to apply them to specific circumstances and environments. Education helps to develop in an individual a critical mind. It helps one to acquire knowledge and have confidence in one's self. A highly educated person also serves as a role model.

The present system of pre-university education is twelve years, consisting of six years primary, three years Junior Secondary and three years Senior Secondary School. The first nine years, that is up to the Junior Secondary School level is tuition free and compulsory for all children of school going age. The implementation of the policy, universal Basic Education has increased the general school enrolment in Ghana. In the 1987/88 academic year, the number of public primary schools was 9,424 and in ten years later that is in 1997/98 the number of public

primary schools grew to 11,236. Also in 1987/88, the number of J.S.S. was 5,260, but that grew to 5,571 in 1997/98. The number of Secondary Schools also grew from 169 to 445 (National Education Forum, 1999).

In spite of the efforts made by the government to improve upon education in the country, the level of participation by females is insignificant. Even though the number of females in the country outnumbers that of males, the proportion of female literates is far below that of male. What has been observed about the gender disparities in educational participation is that, from Junior Secondary School to Senior Secondary School up to tertiary level, not only are girls under represented, but also the population of girls decreases significantly as they move up the educational ladder. At the end of the 1994/95 academic year, national data indicated that females constituted 46%, 43%, 35% and 25% of student population at the Primary, Junior Secondary School, Senior Secondary School and Tertiary levels of education respectively.

Socially, education serves as a medium that leads to an informed citizenry. The need for a sound education everywhere can hardly be over-emphasised. In an era of transition, education serves the purposes of social reconstruction, economic efficiency, social philosophy, creation of modern men and women, development of manpower resources and the development of individual excellence (Harbison,1973). It has been realized of late that more quantitative expansion of education is not enough guarantee for development, but rather educational development in its right quantitative and qualitative relations produces better results than mere quantitative growth. As a result, both developed and developing nations have become very particular about the qualitative development of education. Having established that those who receive secondary school education and above perform better in society and are able to acquire practical skills and competencies which help them to fit well into any society in which they find

themselves, it is necessary for both sexes to participate in secondary education so as to acquire such capabilities.

The educational system in Ghana provides equal opportunities to its citizens regardless of sex or geographical location. As such, each person has the right to pursue any course of education to any level, according to one's ability without any restriction. To pursue any further level of education in Ghana, one has to possess the initial or basic pre-requisite of intellectual capability which is at present determined by the Basic Education Certificate Examination (B.E.C.E.). The second pre-requisite is financial ability. Although the state subsidizes part of the secondary and tertiary education by way of construction of school building, supplying equipment for teaching and learning and the maintenance of school facilities, it behoves the recipient to bear the other costs. Such costs comprises transport charges, expenditure on stationery and textbooks, clothing as well as some boarding costs in the case of receiving secondary and tertiary education. Both males and females who acquire good grades or the basic requirements have equal opportunities to enter the various schools in Ghana.

Of late much emphasis is being placed on the fact that women constitute a major and indispensable part of human resources for national development. In Ghana therefore, the establishment of the National Council on Women and Development (NCWD) in 1975, Forum for African Women Educationist (FAWE) in the early 1990s, Science, Mathematics and Technology Education (S.T.M.E.) Clinics in 1986 have as their purpose, ensuring the full integration of women in national development.

Girls' education is receiving high profile policy attention in Ghana today. At the political level, the New Patriotic Party (N.P.P.) government appointed in 2001, a Minister of State to be in charge of Basic, Girl Child and Secondary Education. The Girl Education Unit (GEU)

established in the Ghana Education Service (GES) in 1997 under the auspices of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) programme has intensified its activities. The unit has produced a draft policy document entitled “A National Vision for Girls Education in Ghana and A Framework for Action Charting, the way forward”. It also has a network of officers at the regional and district levels to carry out the strategies of the unit.

The attempt to create an enabling policy environment at the national level complements a growing number of interventions undertaken by local and traditional government and civil society organization such as the District Assemblies, Chiefs, Queen mothers, churches, welfare organizations and girls’ associations. Local and international non-governmental organizations are major players in the area of girls’ education, investing their efforts in a very broad spectrum of activities geared towards improving girls’ participation. Playing a strong supporting role in the field at all levels are bi-lateral and multi-lateral agencies working in partnership with governmental and other organizations towards the achievement of equitable participation of girls in education as a development goal. This has been done through the provision of funding, technical assistance, information sharing and capacity building. It is important to note that activities outside of central government have formed the pillar of interventions in girls’ education to date.

Historically Ghana has prided herself in having an educational policy that discriminates against no one in terms of race, creed or gender, despite these the researcher has observed that within the villages in the Berekum District, many girls in these area, especially of ages ranging between ten and twenty years who could be pursuing education, are engaged in traditional subsistence farming, petty trading, learning to acquire skill in vocation, among others. Apparently, these girls do not have the intention or the desire for furthering their education.

Such observations may seem to indicate that a far greater proportion of females in the Berekum District do not enrol in secondary school, let alone higher levels. This means that the District spends or commit substantial amount of human resources in the district to the basic education. Consequently, the contribution of women in the district to socio-economic development would as well be greatly limited since they could mainly participate in the primary sector of economic activities such as traditional subsistence farming and petty trading. If indeed there is a relatively low participation of girls in the Berekum District in Secondary Education in spite of the equal opportunities provided to both sexes regardless of geographical location, coupled with the government's interventions in girls' education, a question may be posed as to what factors account for this low female participation? Are there any peculiar characteristics or conditions that place girls in the Berekum District at some disadvantaged positions as far as educational pursuits are concerned? What are these peculiar conditions or sources of disadvantage, if any?

Statement of the Problem

The value of schooling, whether economic or otherwise becomes well defined from the secondary level. At that level, the recipients become more mature and capable of gaining better understanding of the world around them. It is there that recipients are able to grasp the more difficult and complex skills necessary for high level productive ventures. Their exposure to more complex methods of problem solving at this stage is a crucial asset that stimulates them towards new discoveries and innovations, and in adopting new methods of production towards rapid socio-economic growth. Having gained the advantage of higher education, the educated ones find themselves in a better position to play various roles geared towards nation building. An acceleration in a country's development process calls for more of its people receiving more

education over and above the basic level. By this, Ghana needs to ensure that both girls and boys are educated to the highest level possible so that all Ghanaians irrespective of their gender will be able to contribute their quota to the process of building the Ghanaian society. This great need notwithstanding, it has been found that the enrolment of girls at the higher level of education in the Berekum District is less encouraging.

A number of interventions at both the District and National levels have been resorted to with the aim of addressing this gender disparity in the Berekum district in relation to the enrolment of boys and girls in the secondary level.

Again, the government, through the Ministry of Education (MOE) has critically examined and are addressing gender issues in education to ensure that the objectives of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) programme are accomplished, with girls being catered for. Gender issues in education are being addressed because it has been realized by stakeholders as well as observers that the decline in proportion in girls' education is due to peculiar problems which require special and prompt attention.

In her bid to address the problem of gender imbalance in participation (enrolment, retention and achievement) of girls in education, Ghana has adopted a number of strategies to get more girls in school; for example, female teachers are enticed with incentives to retain them in rural areas to serve as role models to girls and their parents.

To buttress the efforts being made by the government to help solve the problem of low participation of girls in education, a National Forum was held in Accra in June 1995, which attracted participants from districts with low female enrolment rates. All Regional Directors of Education, Headmasters, Non-Governmental Organisations, development partners and many others were in attendance. Participants designed key strategies for girls which have been

incorporated into the FCUBE programme to achieve gender equality as well as to improve quality access and relevance of education. To add to that, information and educational campaigns are being adopted to help sensitize parents on the need to invest in the female children as they do in their male ones as far as education is concerned. While districts with low female enrolment in education are being helped to find solutions to that problem, those with appreciable number of enrolment are being given awards to help boost their morale.

Strategies have also been instituted for both boys and girls, with the aim of helping to solve the high rate of school dropouts Atakpa (1996). It is envisaged that when the above measures are well executed, it will enable more girls to enrol in school and retain them as well as to complete their courses successfully. The goals set for the promotion of girls' education in Ghana are very challenging and their achievement will require the collective efforts of policy makers, educators, community leaders, parents and even the girls themselves. District Education Planning Teams have been established in all districts to mobilize communities and sensitize them on their expected roles and responsibilities as far as the girl-child education is concerned.

The need therefore exists to find out the enrolment rate of girls in Senior Secondary School in the Berekum District vis-à-vis that of boys and the ratio of girls from Junior Secondary Schools in the district. This will offer the writer an opportunity to establish the exact state of affairs as far as girl-child education in the Berekum District is concerned. Based on the finding, the writer would launch an indepth research into the reasons for which fewer than expected number of girls is given higher education in the Berekum District. Thus, the main problem to be researched into has to do with finding out why parents in the Berekum District are unwilling to offer their girl-children secondary education.

Purpose of the Study

The study was to find the extent of participation of girls in Senior Secondary Education in relation to their male counterparts in the Berekum District and to find the factors responsible for the variations or otherwise. It was also meant to find out the attitudes and practices towards the participation of girls in secondary education.

Research Questions

To accomplish the purpose of the study the following research questions were addressed:

1. Do the economic resources of families influence the decisions of parents in the Berekum District in the pursuit of secondary education by their daughters?
2. To what extent does parents' educational background affect their decision to assist their daughters to receive further education?
3. Do people in the Berekum District cherish the traditional notion that females do not need further education as males do?
4. Does the lack of reference groups of females in modern sector employment reduce the source of motivation for girls' participation in secondary education?
5. Does the environment readily offer economic opportunities for female self-employment?
6. Do parents engage girls in child labour which result in their poor academic performance?

Significance of the Study

The study will be conducted with the aim to unearth the exact situation regarding the participation of girls in the Berekum District in further education. Essentially, the study will

contribute to the existing body of knowledge about female participation in secondary education particularly in the Berekum District.

It is hoped that if the findings of the study are made available, they would benefit policy makers as well as educational planners.

Delimitations

The scope of the study was limited to the Berekum District alone because it is the place where the researcher comes from and as such knows much about the people. The study was limited to six out of eight circuits in the district which include Berekum, Biadan, Kato, Jinijini, Senase and Mpatasie.

Limitations

The schools where the study was limited had their own problems as some of the head teachers felt somehow reluctant in providing the researcher with the needed information by playing hide and seek with her. Mention can be made of the heads of Jinijini S.D.A. and Berekum R/C. Even the head teacher of Kato L/A J.S.S. failed to provide his attendance registers, with the excuse that he had then been posted there and had no idea as to where the registers were.

In spite of the difficulty cited, the researcher obtained the required information from the respondents. This was made possible when the researcher explained the essence of the research adequately to them. The respondents were told that the study was meant to find means of improving upon girls' education in the Berekum District; it was not meant to find faults for punishment.

Definition of Terms

The under-listed terms in this work have special meanings which have been provided.

The definitions of words found in this work are applicable in this study only.

1. Girl-Child – A girl of school going age.
2. District Under study – Berekum District
3. Secondary School – Senior High School
4. Respondents – People who were interviewed in the course of the research work.
5. Second Cycle institutions – Senior High Schools
6. Dropout girls – Girls who could not complete Junior High School
7. Higher Education – Senior High School and above
8. J.S.S. – Junior Secondary School
9. Increased education – High education
10. M1 – M4 – Middle form one to Middle form four
11. NCWD – National Council on Women and Development
12. Secondary Education – Level of education between Basic and Tertiary.

Organisation of the Study

Chapter one is the introduction of the thesis. It deals with the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, delimitations, limitations and the organization of the study.

Chapter two is concerned with the review of relevant literature on the topic, that is education and socio-economic development, importance of female education in development,

women and participation in education and labour force, drop out situation among girls, factors accounting for the problems faced by females in education and the labour market and the Ghanaian situation among others.

Chapter three covers the methodology, topics such as the design, sample, and the procedure for collecting data, problems encountered in data collection and data analysis procedure.

Chapter four is the data discussion and the final chapter focuses on the summary, conclusion and recommendations. In addition, mention is made of appendices and references.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter deals with the review of the related literature. The review is presented under subtopics.

Education and Socio-economic Development

A good number of studies have been carried out to show the contribution of education towards economic growth. Blaug (1969) cites Schultz, conducted a study in the United States, in which he measured the correlation between education and economic growth in the country over the period 1900 to 1956. His findings from the study were that, both the stock of education and reproducible non-human capital rose favourably between the years 1900 and 1956. He concluded, depending on his findings that education had contributed to the economic growth of the United States, since there was a positive correlation between educational output and economic output. His study shows that a rise in educational output brings about a corresponding increase in economic growth.

Also, a study was carried out by Bowman and Bowman (1971), concerning eighty three countries to find out the relationship between the indicators of educational development and economic growth among the countries. The countries were thus grouped into three categories: 32 poor countries, 27 mixed countries (neither poor nor rich) and 24 rich countries. The researchers compared the relationship between literacy rates and the Gross National Product (GNP) per capital in 1950 using 1955 U.S. purchasing power for the various groups. They

observed that, the poor countries with per capital income never exceeding \$300, had literacy rates below 40 percent, while the rich countries which had more than \$500 per capital income, had rates of literacy to be as high as 70 percent and above. But it was found out in the 27 mixed countries that the per capital incomes were unrelated to the literacy rates which ranged between 30 percent and 70 percent. The conclusion they reached from the study was that a 40 percent literacy rate was necessary for income per head to exceed \$300 while 90 percent literacy rate seemed necessary to realize per capital incomes of \$500 and above.

Relationship between Education and Development

The relationship between education and developments in general has been commented on by a number of writers. Opong and Abu (1981) note a number of benefits that accrue from education to the individual who receives it.

Firstly, literacy facilitates access to vital information. It also helps to provide employable skills of occupational knowledge that will give access to job opening so as to earn income in the modern sector of the economy. Again, it helps to enhance the status of the individual, thereby providing him/her with a sense of security in life.

Importance of Education in Job creation

Osei (1974) points out that education is needless to say, one of the most important tools that a country may employ in its socio-economic development strategy. She mentions higher standards of living, better social and political organizational systems and the development of high quality mention. She cites specifically the historical experience of Ghana in support of the argument for the role of secondary education. She notes that by 1960, secondary education was

fast becoming the basic level of education required for training in an increasingly wide range of skills which the country's fast expanding ways of life and economy demanded. It is observed by Foster cited in Adams (1971) that existing evidence suggests that education is the most important single factor associated with an individual's upward social mobility. And in many developing nations, education is often decisive in determining access to many elite roles. Referring to the role of advanced level of education into the role or advanced level of education in society, Foster notes that, especially in developing countries, it is secondary and higher education that largely determine access to upper level and middle level occupational roles. He however, observes that sometimes the premium placed on the possession of educational qualifications is not dictated by the demands of the job openings. Limited opportunities for paid employment coupled with the rapid expansion in the size of the output of the educational system tend to influence general public demand for access to higher education in order to compete for the few job opportunities. It is noted by Zymelman cited in Adams (1971) that as a result of the introduction of modern methods and techniques of production and services, there has been the need for workers to possess increased education and training. He points out that for increased productivity to be realized in modern times, advanced level of education is of great importance. Huq (1965) observes that "education is an instrument of personal and social development" (p.71), adding that it plays a key role in the formation of human capital which is the basis for any socio-economic transformation. Aside the role education plays in human capital formation; it has the potential of discovering new talents, new goods, new technologies and new instruments of social policy. Huq notes again that education inspires progress by bringing about desirable changes in traditional habits, motives and attitudes of people towards social-economic development whether people will seek and achieve any development depends on the direction of their motives, attitudes

and habits.

Studies in some industrialized countries conducted by Huq (1965), confirm the role of education in national development. He observes that “Japan’s achievement both in economic development and in reconstruction is rightly attributed to the human factor as represented by educated and trained manpower” and that this has proved to be “the most valuable resource in building up the country (p.82).

The effect of educational expansion on the growth of the Japanese economy, according to Huq, is indicated by rising industrial production. During the period 1895 to 1961, while enrolment ratio rose from 0.3 percent in all types of higher education, the index number of industrial production rose from 3 percent to 57 percent. Huq observes a high degree of correlation between secondary school enrolment and production and per capital national income.

Turning to the Soviet Union, Huq states that in the transition of the country from a backward economy to a self-sustain one, the leaders of the revolution saw the key role of education as an instrument for most effective use of it. He points out that apart from promoting the long-term aims of the social policy of the U.S.S.R. education was also effective in serving as a “power level” (p.92) for economic progress and a rapid rise in the productivity of labour. Here again Huq observes the crucial role secondary and higher education for that matter played in the process. He states that raising the qualification of the labour force through secondary and higher education yields very significant results for instance he observes from his study that the national economic profitability of investments in secondary and higher education exceeded all other indicators of benefits derived from educational investment, growing from 52 percent in 1940 to 144 percent by 1960.

Although education, as indicated by the foregoing discussion is seen to play a vital role in

both personal and social development, many writers caution that the role assigned to education should not be over stretched. They noted that education is not an independent variable, “but has to be seen in a wider context” (D'Aeth, 1975, p.7) measured factors that determine both social and personal development, contributing to this view point, Foster, like other writers, mentions among others, variables like paternal status, Intelligence Quotient (IQ) “and even sheer personal drive and persistence” (p.14) as contributing to an individual’s social upward mobility. A developed or rapidly expanding economy may also provide a variety of ancillary opportunities for mobility quite independent of educational qualifications. Foster argues further that sheer expansion in educational facilities is by no means a sufficient condition for national growth. Expressing a similar view point, Griffith (1968) asserts “that in backward rural area, the schools cannot be made the main instrument of progress” (p.11). To him it is only when economic development has already taken place that the schools can play any meaningful part in development.

The issue of casualty in the relationship between education and economic growth is raised by Zymelman cited in Adams (1971). He observes that even though studies relating to expenditures in education and economic growth show a relationship between increases in economic growth, yet this relationship does not imply casualty. The increases do not necessarily indicate which factors caused the other. Just as an improved educational system can bring about economic growth, a developed or rapidly developing economy can bring about an improvement in the educational system. It is true that too much may sometimes be said about the importance of education and its contribution towards development. The view point shared in the discussion in the last couple of paragraphs therefore serves as a check against the overstretching of the role of education. However, the fact that education actually plays a positive role in development

cannot be over emphasized. Some scholars have even concluded that the contribution of education to earnings as an index of economic growth is greater than all other factors put together. Blaug in Blaug (ed) (1965) estimates the contribution of education to be two thirds of all factors including IQ, personal drive and ambition – level of a nation’s development etc. Huq (1965) also argues that although not all the functions of education have been brought within the scope of economic and for that matter, statistical analysis “their value of economic and social progress of a nation is too great to be overlooked” (p.82). It can be deduced from the above discussion that education plays a vital role in bringing about both social and personal development, though it does so not in isolation of other factors.

The Importance of Female Education in Development

Education, especially formal education, is a powerful agent of progress. The formal educational system is the major instructional mechanism for developing critical human skills and knowledge. It is thus, a key element in promoting economic growth, social equity and over-all national development. Education helps to develop the potential in the individual so as to make them useful to themselves and to the society as a whole. Thus, education leads to the total development of “the whole person” by developing their intellectual, affective character and psycho-motor skills, Anyawu (1995).

Invariably, it is the human resources of a nation, more than its physical and material resources, which ultimately determine the character and pace of its economic and social development. Human resources development is a process through which people develop attitudes and acquire knowledge and skills. Education has proved to be the single most prominent factor in the development of these attitudes, knowledge and skills.

Education affects productivity and growth through several means. One such channel is the change in attitudes and perceptions that people develop. A well educated person absorbs new information faster and applies unfamiliar inputs and new processes more effectively. He/she is receptive to new ideas and processes and is able to apply these to specific circumstances and environment. It is reported in the World Development report (1991) that in Peru, farmers who had an additional year of schooling increased their probability of adopting modern farm technology by 45%. Also in Thailand, farmers with four years of schooling were, three times more likely to use new chemical inputs than farmers with one to three years of schooling.

Education and Improved Population

In jobs which require quick evaluation of new information and fast reactions, formal education prompts adaptability to momentary changes. Thus education improves productivity and affects output which also leads to increase in the national income. Studies have also illustrated the link between education and improved population. It was seen from a World Bank survey (1985) of eighteen low-income countries on the relationship between formal education and agricultural productivity or efficiency, measured in terms of crop yield showed that farmers who had completed four years of schooling had productivity of 8.7% higher than their counterparts with no schooling. Thus all things being equal, farmers, with higher education are likely to have higher productivity than those who drop out earlier. Schooling, according to Eisemon (1988) may also increase productive capacities by equipping and/or related to agricultural production that used the products and processes of modern technology. Productivity increases are greatest for those with at least a primary school education. Instruction in academic subjects may be more effective than pre-vocational training in so far as employment and

measures of productivity are concerned. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in *“The Comparative Education Review”* (vol 32, No.1: 99) observed in 1991 that one lesson from the past is that, the economies in countries such as Japan and South Korea which committed themselves to education and training made great strides in both human development and economic growth. According to the same publication Asia’s four little Tigers (Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore) had something in common prior to industrial “take off” and that was the high level of access to elementary education or primary schooling. Of the four countries Taiwan as at 1965, had the lowest enrolment figure (97.16%) the general effect of the expansion of primary schooling was the availability of literate and numerate women as well as men for the work force at the time of rapid industrialization. This means that if parental perception and attitude of girls’ education are favourable, it is likely to bring about higher level of literate women to participate effectively in a modern economy.

The importance or benefits of female education to socio-economic development of a nation cannot be over emphasized. The literature has clearly shown that real development cannot occur if females are not part of the development process. Since the nation cannot leave her female population behind in terms of education, then parental perception and attitude which is a central issue when girls’ education is concerned must be looked at again and the means of promoting it explored. School literacy, as the Asian Tigers experience shows, also fosters profound cognitive changes in the ability to employ and manipulate formal logical structures in reasoning with and from printed tests. Four to six years of schooling is thought to be necessary to make literacy permanent. Literacy skills are not lost when an individual leaves school, but the level of mastery of these skills in school will influence competence in literacy tasks in later life

The evidence above shows that people who receive some form of education perform

more efficiently and produce work of higher quality. Rising expectations and social demand for education and other goods and services replace fatalistic acceptance of poverty consequently, it is not surprising that years of research on the external efficiency of educational investments in developing countries have produced a persuasive rationale for expanding access to schooling and raising levels of educational attainment. Schooling, as recognized by Eisemon (1988) has been associated with many outcomes. Some of these outcomes are rationalistic and empirical attitudes that are conducive to participation in modern institutions of production and governance. They also include profound cognitive changes resulting from the use of written language and facilitating adoption and use of new technologies. Involvement in the market economy, leading to increased earnings and higher levels of productivity in agriculture and wage employment, and lower fertility rates, good nutritional practices and better health are other outcomes Eisemon identified.

Available evidence again indicates that women's education plays an important role in child care, especially in relation to infant mortality levels. School participation improves health and lowers fertility mainly through strengthening the effects of other factors associated with schooling. High rates of school participation and relatively high levels of educational attainment (full primary and lower secondary schooling) are associated with reductions in fertility and infant mortality and with increases in life expectancy. International Monetary Fund (Comparative Education Review: p. 63-64 1999)

At the request of the government of Liberia, a study was conducted by a Technical Assistance Mission of the International Labour Organization (ILO) on unemployment and manpower development among school leavers in Liberia. The study reveals that the growth of enrolments in all grades of education fluctuates from year to year and that girls tended to enrol in

schools in smaller numbers than boys.

In a study, Bayo (1986) finds out that there had been a general increase in enrolment in the Gambia in recent years from 22 percent of school going population in 1978/79 to 43.4 percent in 1984/85. He notices that the percentage increase is more rapid among girls than boys even though on the whole boys outnumber girls at a ratio of 2:1. This gives the indication that female education is rising in recent years relative to that of males in the Gambia. Boserup (1970) observes proportions of enrolments that are nearly equal for both sexes among the Latin American countries she studied. In all the countries, she notes that female percentage in schools ranges between 47 percent and 50 percent, with Honduras being 49 percent girls and 51 percent boys, and El-Salvador 47 percent girls and 53 percent boys at all levels of education.

At the secondary and higher levels, most of the studies under review show gross under representation of girls. Bayo's study on the Gambia shows that the gap between boys and girls became much wider as they entered the higher levels. The U.N.D.P. study on Syria reveals that notwithstanding the considerable improvement in enrolments generally, the percentage of girls at the secondary school level is much lower than that of boys with much worse situations in rural areas. At the Democratic Yemen, it is found that girls are the more handicapped in terms of enrolment at the secondary and higher levels than at the basic level as compared with their male counterparts.

In Rwanda, where the gap between the enrolment of boys and that of girls is found to be very close at the elementary level, the UNDP study (2005) reveals that girls form one-third of students at the secondary level. A similar pattern of enrolment is found in Indonesia, whereas at the primary level enrolment is approaching 100 percent for both sexes, but girls are found to lag behind boys in enrolment at the secondary and higher levels. The UNDP study on Haiti however

presents a situation that is contrary to that of the other countries at the secondary level. Here it is revealed that at the secondary level enrolment is fairly equal for both boys and girls. The study on the Latin American countries by Boserup shows similar pattern of enrolment for both sexes at the advanced levels like what is prevailing in Haiti. Thus, in the Latin American countries there is virtually no difference concerning sex proportions at both the basic and advance levels of education regardless of the economic circumstances of the countries. For instance both Venezuela and Puerto Rico have relatively small proportions of student in further education, 6.3 percent and 9.3 percent respectively. Out of these relatively small sizes, Venezuela has 47 percent while Puerto Rico has 50 percent of the proportions of girls at the secondary and higher levels of education. The ILO study in Liberia also reports that girls persevere equally with boys at the secondary level in terms of size and performance.

Dropout Situation among Girls

Another issue that stirs up great concern among both governments and educationists is that of rates of dropout recorded in the studies above, which show higher percentage among girls than among boys in the majority of cases. It was discovered that in countries like Rwanda, Indonesia, the Democratic Yemen and Haiti, generally the dropout rate for girls is higher than for boys and remains a major problem, worsening off at the secondary level. The study of Syria reveals that dropout rate for a girl is much greater in rural areas than it is in the urban. At the elementary level in Liberia, the rate of dropout is found to be higher for girls than for boys. The situation changes at the secondary level where females are found to be less than the males in the extent of dropout. The researchers thus observe that the problem is how to get girls through the elementary stage after which they stand at least as good a chance as the boys to be able to

complete the higher levels. Although some studies do not come out with any significant difference in enrolment and dropout rates among boys and girls, the studies have revealed that on the whole, boys have higher enrolment and less dropout rates than girls. At this juncture, it may be necessary to examine possible factors that account for the low level of enrolment and higher rates of dropout among girls.

Problems faced by females in education and the labour force

Social scientists have identified some general factors that are fundamentally responsible for the problems faced by women regarding their participation in education and the labour force. Rogers (1980) notes that the root cause of the under representation of females in both education and the labour force is the stated assumption based on the biological imperatives of the female sex that has been cherished by people over the years.

This assertion has to do with long standing traditions that affects the development of women as a whole. She observes that right from childhood, parents and society have differentiated males and females. Boys are regarded to be superior, capable of showing more initiative, achievement-oriented and fit for position of responsibility. Girls on the other hand are considered to be inferior, more dependent and that their important role in life is marriage and child bearing. This observation is shared by scholars such as Boserup (1970) and Foster (in Adams (ed) (1971).

Date-Baah (1979) has made the observation that women are placed in subordinate position due to the socio-cultural conditioning of society itself. As a result of this conditioning, women themselves believe that they cannot attain the valued goals of men, though they know them to be the important ones. With their self-motivation thus inhibited, they are kept in their

subordinate position, being less ambitious in seeking advancement in society since they hold that upwards mobility is not their prerogative but men's. It is observed by Ubomba-Jaswa (1986) that gender prejudice against women is less conspicuous in the developed economies; gender prejudice affects the participation of wastage. She knows that while fewer girls than boys enrol in school generally, more girls tend to repeat various classes or drop out of school. The situation in the schools also presents some amount of discrimination between the sexes. Certain courses or subjects offered in the schools, especially above the basic level of education, are sex-stereotyped. This is seen predominantly in the practical courses. Whereas, for instance, Agricultural Science is considered masculine, Home Science is considered feminine, with women pursuing so-called feminine courses, they are eventually found in feminine marginal occupations, which are less remunerative while males dominate jobs and careers that are highly paying and "respected" (p.4). With the observation that cultural values on which family and social systems are based play a major role in determining participation of women in education and the economy, Boserup (1971) states that the participation of girls in education for instance will be greater if the society has a positive attitude towards the education of girls, and less if there is a negative attitude.

Hence, where the economic factor plays a leading role in educational enrolments, it generally affects both sexes. The economic factor is less evident in determining the size of girls to that of boys in education. This observation is based on her finding among the Latin American countries where enrolment proportions were nearly equal for both sexes in the educational system at all levels. Boserup further notes that the type of education women receive generally does not qualify them for modern sector employment. Also due to the entrenched social prejudices, women would find it difficult and even feel a sense of deep insecurity to venture into

certain types of education styled as masculine and modern sector employment generally.

Highlighting the educational vocational aspirations of females, Foster (in Adams (ed) 1971) notes that girls tend to be “more typically concentrated in the less prestigious terminal types of secondary institutions which often provide a more specifically vocational training” (p.27). Foster also notes that as a result of the socio-cultural conditioning, investments in education are made on boys at the expense of girls, especially in a situation of limited family economic resources.

Opong and Abu (1981) note that the number of women in professions and administrative position is much less. Referring specifically to rural women, they note that as a result of their general lack of qualifications, women are mostly found to be engaged in small scale, low productivity and low income activities in agriculture, manufacturing and commerce alike.

In the studies on developing countries reviewed above, certain specific factors are found by the researchers to cause the under representation and high wastage rates of girls in schooling. In the four developing countries involved in the UNDP evaluation study, generally tradition and social convention are found to be dictating that it is not worthwhile educating girls and that they are needed at home until they get married. For instance in the Democratic Yemen, parents are found to cherish a strong notion that formal education is not necessary for marriage which they consider as a girl’s basic goal in life. In Indonesia, one major reason for the much lower representation of girls at the secondary and higher levels of education is that poor parents reckon that it is more advantageous to invest in the education of boys than that of girls.

The Ghanaian situation

Some studies in the Ghanaian situation with regard to female education present findings that are common to those from the developing countries discussed in the foregoing paragraphs, using figures from the Ghana Education statistics 1970/71, Smock (1975) observes a great disparity between the sexes with girls lagging far behind boys in school participation. Atakpa's study (in NCWD seminar report, 1978) on "practices regarding allocation of places to women in schools and colleges" reveals that at each stage of the educational ladder the population of girls decreases. According to the study the ratio of the population of boys and girls at the middle school is found to be 59 to 41 which shows that the girls relatively competed with the boys by way of enrolment. However at the secondary level, the ratio is found to be 70 to 30, indicating a high under representation of girls at this level in spite of the steady increase noted in the proportion of girls from 26 percent in 1968/69 to 30 percent in 1975. A study on women's participation in education in Ghana by Dugbaza (1984) confirms the above findings. Adopting the single figure sex ratio method where the ratio refers to the number of males per 100 females" (p.25), he discovers that for the years 1973/74, 1975/76, 1977/78 and 1978/79, the sex ratios were more than 100 for levels of education except for initial Teacher Training Colleges in 1978/79. It is observed that the situation is most favourable at the elementary school level where the sex ratios are not much higher than 100. Although in one instance, it is as high as 147.3, the ratios for all the primary schools appear to be stable over the years. At the JSS school level, slight increases are found to be present in the ratios indicating lapses by females.

Dugbaza notes, as in Atakpa's study, that as pupils climb the educational ladder, the sex ratios increase; an indication that the proportion of female becomes much less than that of males.

At the secondary level the ratios are found to be high in many cases being over 400 (i.e. 100 girls to 400 boys). The only exception is for initial Teacher Training Colleges whose ratios are found to be similar to the primary school ones during the study period. A commendable observation made in the study in spite of the consistently less female enrolment, is that the ratios for the various levels decreased steadily over the years. For instance the ratios, which represent the proportion of males to every 100 females, dropped steadily for secondary schools as 261.1, 248.0, 233.8 and 168.8 for the years 1973/74, 1975/76, 1977/78 and 1978/79 respectively. This indicates that females were improving in their participation in secondary education over the years.

Dropout rate among females is observed in Dugbaza's (1984) study to be higher than among males. A wastage rate of 19.4 percent is recorded for males as against 28.7 for females in 1973/74 for the first six years of schooling. At the secondary level, the rates of wastage are 3 percent and 16 percent for males and females respectively. It is evident from the study that not only do fewer females participate at the various levels of education in Ghana, but also that they suffer high wastage rates than do males (p.29). A study on dropout rate in some Accra schools by Campbell – Plot (in NCWD Seminar Report, 1978) reveals however that there is no striking disparity between boys and girls. As evident from the foregoing studies in Ghana, Ewusi (1987) notes that in spite of the positive official attitude in providing equal educational opportunities for males and females, educational facilities in the country have not been equally utilized by both sexes thus creating a gap in literacy. Opong and Abu (1981) however content that the promulgation of the 1961 Education Act which made elementary education free and compulsory for all Ghanaian children of school going age, with phenomenal increase in enrolment in schools has caused the enrolment and literacy gap between the sexes to close with each successive

decade. This observation is consistent with the findings of Atakpa and Dugbaza (1995)

With regard to the causes of the low level of participation of females in education in Ghana, a number of factors have been identified. The factors identified in Atakpa's study include general unwillingness of parents to send their children to school, and the use of girls as maids and market hands by parents and guardians. In a study by Akuffo; in (NCWD seminar report, 1978) on causes of wastage in female education it was found, among others, that the poor economic background of parents significantly contributes to the situation. In illustrating the point that the use of children's labour contributed to the difficulties encountered by the government in enforcing the Education Act of 1961, Oppong and Abu (1981) note that, among the Northern Moslem Dagomba, parents were reluctant to send their children to school, especially girls, because their labour was needed at home and on the farm.

A study on problems girls face in pursuing education was conducted in the Central region of Ghana by Korama (1975), the problem she observed from the study include negative attitudes of parents towards girls' education in general, economic problems and the job aspirations for girls by both the pupils and parents which tend to be limited to primary and secondary occupations. The foregoing studies in developing countries, including Ghana, have in the majority of cases, shown a vast disparity between males and females to the utilization of educational facilities with much worsened trends at the secondary and higher levels, whereas few women in general enrol in school, their rate of dropout is higher than that of men. The factors that have been identified to cause this pattern of school among the sexes include, among others socio-cultural situation where sex roles in life are differentiated early in childhood, economic background of parents and socio-economic development of the particular society.

Theoretical framework

Parental attitude is a major factor in children's education especially that of girls (Odaga & Heneveld 1995, Davison 1993), a favourable parental attitude is likely to bring about an increase in girls' participation in education and vice versa. To explain how socio-cultural factors influence participation in education, Odaga & Heneveld (1995), used a framework originally developed by Njau and Wamahu to show how certain social programmes affected the education of girls.

According to Odaga & Heneveld (1995) socio-cultural expectations of girls and the priority given their future roles as mothers and wives have strong negative bearings on their formal educational opportunities. Socio-cultural customs and beliefs influence decisions to withdraw them from school, their own decisions to drop-out of schools, their academic performance, and grade level attainment. In fact, they noted that apprenticeships and initiation ceremonies were viewed by societies in Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and Kenya as more efficient at preparing girls for their future roles as wives and mothers than the formal educational systems. Apprenticeships continue to provide practical entrepreneurial skills to several young people across the region. Such programmes are popular with parents who often want to ensure that their daughters acquire some practical skills before they got married. Sewing and trading are particularly popular activities for young girls Kapakasa, (1992); Odaga & Heneveld (1995).

The effect of initiation ceremonies on girls' education

Initiation ceremonies continue to play an important educational role in some sub-Saharan African communities. In Malawi some parents are more willing to cover the costs of initiation than they are to cover formal schooling cost (Kapakasa, 1992; Odaga & Heneveld, 1995).

Evidence from Malawi, again, reveals that initiation brings with it several dilemmas for girls, affecting their attendance and performance and even leading to drop out. The scheduling of initiation ceremonies conflicts with the school calendar leading to absenteeism from school. Although culturally, initiation marks the passage from childhood to adulthood, school authorities continue to treat initiated girls who return to school as children, not adults. They expect them to participate in certain activities and also punish them in a manner which is considered inappropriate for adults. Initiated girls also find it difficult to return to formal school or concentrate on their studies because their next expectation is marriage. Kapakasa, (1992). Some initiation ceremonies include circumcision, others do not. Girls and boys who go through initiation ceremonies that include circumcision ceremonies are scheduled to take place during school holidays, but when circumcised they perceive themselves as adults. On returning to school they have a negative attitude to their uncircumcised teachers, especially female teachers, and they become undisciplined. There is also a sharp decline in their academic performance and are likely to play truant and eventually drop out of school. The interrelationship between initiation ceremonies, bride price and early marriage and early drop out by pupils is amply demonstrated in the njau and wamahu framework. This framework assumes that parents see the initiation ceremonies as important way of preparing girls for their future roles as mothers/wives in society and therefore value education as a secondary matter. Since parents are interested in collecting bride price, they encourage their daughters to marry early and, hence, dropout of school.

In Ghana, “Bragoro” among the Krobos are examples of initiation ceremonies for girls. These ceremonies signify that the girl is matured to be a wife/mother. Sometimes these ceremonies coincide with the school calendar and the affected girls may stay away from school

for weeks. This phenomenon will continue so long as parents continue to see puberty rites as more important to the extent that girls will be allowed to absent themselves from school in order to go through these initiation rites.

Effects of religion on girls' education

Religion, especially Islam, is usually associated with low female participation in schools Odaga & Heneveld (1995). The history of the imposition of formal western education, which is associated with Christianity, and the pressure to convert, it is still very much an issue in some Islamic regions. Whatever the case, it is evident that some parents prefer Islamic education for their daughters as the fear of western education promotes values and behaviours for girls which are contrary to norms, often articulated as religious edicts, remain strong.

The framework illustrates very well the socio-cultural factors which influence girls' participation in education. Unfortunately, this framework does not account adequately for all the reasons why girls may not participate in education. Besides socio-cultural factors, other factors, especially socio-economic ones, may also account for the low participation of girls in education. Due to the shortcomings of the theory used by Odaga & Heneveld above, there is the need for a model which addresses the relationship between socio-cultural and socio-economic factors and girls' education adequately.

Factors that militate against female participation in education

To accommodate and account for the influence of socio-economic factors as well as socio-cultural factors in education, a framework used by Rugh (2000) has been adapted to suit this study. This framework states that girls' education is largely dependent on positive parental

attitude and willingness on the part of parents to sustain the costs.

To explain this, Rugh (2000), categorized factors affecting parental attitudes about girls' schooling under three main headings: parental background and characteristics, the cost and benefits parents' see in education and the general norms and practices of the community that affects parents attitude about schooling. According to Rugh certain background characteristics of parents have been shown in a number of studies to be connected with educational participation. The three most important are economic level, parental education, and place of residence. One of the most important predictors of education participation, both enrolment and completion, is the relative economic level of the households from which children come. According to this writer, fewer children of the poor perform better, while more children of the wealthy do not. Therefore when household's incomes are low, girls are affected. However, it has been stressed that poverty did not differently affect the participation of girls and boys in most schools in Pakistan. Also in Egypt, poor urban boys drop out at or before the end of primary school to earn income or learn skilled trades while girls remain in school with hopes of qualifying for respectable civil service jobs.

Parent educational background

According to Rugh, another important characteristic of parental background is educational status. To the writer, though most studies dealing with this factor report that it is the education of the mother that is an important predictor of whether a girl goes to or stays in school, fathers may also have some effect. Miske and VanBelle-Prouty reports that daughters of educated women are as much as 40% more likely to enrol in school. Filmer (2000) using demographic and health survey data in India, Nepal and Pakistan, shows that both average level

of education attainment and the maximum number of years of schooling completed by household adults aged 20-64 have statistically significant effects on the educational participation of children. The marginal effect of increasing the average years of schooling of female adults in the household by one year, for example, increased the chances of children's enrolment between one and 6 percentage points.

Effect of residence on girls' enrolment

Another strong predictor of overall and in particular girls' enrolment is place of residence (i.e. urban or rural residence of their families). Where information is available, all measures of participation and attainment show consistently more positive outcomes in urban areas. These indicators include enrolment, dropout, completion and often even achievement. Urban parents are more likely to feel the importance of schooling for both boys and girls. For them the benefits of education are obvious and the constraints fewer, schools are nearby, the household work load is less, community norms favour education, and employment opportunities are more widespread and visible.

Again Rugh wrote that even parents' decisions about schooling may be largely based on an unconscious sifting of options, it is nonetheless important to review the various costs and benefits as parents may perceive them. To her poverty had become a justifiable reason for participation. In the past, tradition seemed to be an acceptable reason for a woman not to have participated earlier.

Cost of education

“The cost of schooling” almost always appears prominently in lists of reasons for non-

enrolment or limited participation. The cost that deter poorer children from attending school are well known, and include such expenses as school fees, clothing (including uniforms and shoes), supplies of textbooks, snack foods, transportation and in some cases after-school tutoring. Though some costs may seem normal, such as clothing and shoes, they are always so. A school child may be expected to wear a dress in poor families and may have to wear shoes when they might otherwise go barefooted. Parents may give children pocket money or buy them special kinds of food to school. Although not always absolutely necessary, these costs may be considered part of the expense of schooling, in order that children “will not be shamed in front of others”. Girls’ expenses often exceed those of boys if uniforms are required.

Rugh in addition wrote that when primary and secondary enrolment declined in Tanzania in the 1990s and educators discovered children starting school on average much later (at about age 10), a study was conducted to investigate the effects of costs on school-going. The study found that the private return to schooling had declined significantly during this period. Parents also saw dramatic differences between the still-affordable cost of primary and the no-longer-affordable cost of secondary for poor families. According to Rugh the authors concluded that even if more places were provided, without subsidization, the cost of secondary school were enough to discourage enrolment at both levels, since the returns of primary schooling were not enough without secondary schooling.

Rugh stated that for parents to have a favourable disposition towards their children’s education they must come to believe that the benefit of education including the quality of the education their children receive outweigh the costs of schooling. A factor that in some areas draws educational, economic and socio benefits tighter is the fact that education is a major marker of class status. In Egypt and India, for example, the easiest way for motivated

individuals of the lower classes to make the transition upward is to acquire degrees that lead to higher class occupations. Rugh (2000).

The duration of schooling

The length of children's schooling is related to parents' expectations about the benefits of each stage. Most parents recognize two qualitatively different levels of efforts and benefit in formal education. The first – primary or basic education – confers basic literacy and numeric skills. A parent may withdraw a child from primary school when functional skills seem well-enough developed if there is little expectation that the child will continue to higher stages. Encouraging a child to complete primary school may indicate commitment to completing higher levels of education and the added efforts and expense (tutoring, fees, etc) of passing national promotional exams. A parent may also withdraw a child before the end of the primary level because “education didn't take” Rugh (2000) – that is no apparent learning went on – either because the programme was poor or the child lacked the capability to succeed in the system. To Rugh(2000) community resistance can sometimes be overcome by costing the benefits of education in terms of its contribution to the well-being of all family members rather than to the well-being of the educated girls only. One of the significant constraints recognized in the literature has been the lower private returns on the investment in girls' education. Girls and their parents in many cases do not see their opportunities measurably expanded by education. Argument about the important social return to the country in improved development indicators are not convincing to family members who care more about immediate as opposed to hypothetical future benefits.

Norms and practices of the community

Community norms and practices, according to Rugh, also influence communities' expectation of sex roles. As with cultural belief, beliefs about social roles are assimilated from childhood. Parents are especially affected by local views of how education affects the marriage chances of girls and may not be interested in keeping girls in school. Rugh's caution against the use of religion notably Islam and Christianity on the education of girls differs from place to place.

The writer continued that there is a strong association between education and employment and this has made it difficult for rural parents to see why girls would benefit from schooling beyond the primary level. Employment occupies a central place in parents' mind when considering the benefits of education. In many contexts it means that boys are automatically considered to be in need of the skills of education more than girls do. The discussion so far, reveals that both Odaga & Heneveld on one hand and Rugh on the other hand, offer useful insight into parental attitude towards girls' education. However, Rugh's is more suited to this study. An adaptation of the major assumptions of Rugh's framework will, therefore guide the study. This framework has been adapted to suit this study. The new framework is different from the old one because the new one did not take into consideration the cost of education as a reason for non-enrolment and non-attendance. The main assumption is that girls' participation in education largely depends on positive parental attitude. Though parental attitude is on its own, it is also influenced by a number of factors, some of which are immediate while others are remote. Socio-cultural and socio-economic factors may consequently influence parental attitude and, hence, the enrolment, retention and transition of

girls in school.

Rugh's framework is relevant for this study in so far as it isolated parental attitude with respect to parental perception, gender roles, parental aspirations and parental/community support are crucial elements in promoting girls' education. In addition, parental background characteristics such as education, occupation and place of residence also influence parental perception, aspirations and support to girls education. These are the major elements which will be used in the study.

Factors that influence school enrolment

In Ghana, children are expected to help in household chores. The majorities of the non-school-going children, especially girls, are burdened with household chores or are earning an income which they add to the meagre income of the family. Children begin to share in adult tasks at an early age, sometimes as early as the age of seven or eight.

It is established in "Children and Women of Ghana" (Government of Ghana, 1990:60) that the most significant cause of non-enrolment is poverty (that is, inability of poor households to pay for education or, in the worst cases, provide food and shelter to their children). The economic dimension of school enrolment has been explored in a number of small-scale studies which give an idea of the extent of the problem. A survey by Owusu (1987) in Kumasi in the Ashanti region "the socio-economic factors that push juveniles into early employment" indicated that 44% needed money for various school expenses (textbooks, fees and school uniforms) while 27% had engaged in trading to supplement the household budget.

Attitude of parents to the education of girls

In reviewing researches on girls' education in Ghana, Boakye (1997), states that the most fundamental factor affecting girls education in Ghana is the rather low parent / community attitude towards educating girls. The literature shows that while the low attitude may be a factor on its own, it may itself be the product of other factors which may be social, economic, cultural and religious.

Literature on parental attitude towards girls' education shows that most of the causes of non-enrolment, low enrolment, high dropout rates and low achievement among girls in schools are socio-economic and cultural and underneath is gender roles. Culturally, many parents have a gender preference for the boy-child than for the girl-child. They believe that the economic returns on the boy-child are higher since he will grow up to look after them in their old age, whereas the girl-child will eventually get married and belong to the husband's family. Consequently, the boy-child is sent to school while the girl-child is made to stay at home and learn skills like housecraft or cooking; skills she will need to support her husband when she eventually becomes a housewife. Even where such parents have gainful employment and income and support all their children in school, they are very often apathetic in sending their daughter to school (Boakye, 1997; CAMFED, 1996; Agyeman-Mensah 1994; Odaga & Heneveld 1995).

Socio-cultural beliefs define gender roles for males and females. These make females responsible for childbearing and caring and home keeping as well. Males are supposed to work and take care of the wife and children financially. Males are also supposed to care for their parents in their old age. Hence from early ages in life, girls are taught and trained in how to take care of babies and the home (Agyeman-Mensah, 1994). As a result of socio-cultural influence

when the family's income is inadequate, it is the girl-child who is used to make extra income to supplement in order to take care of the boys. If any member of the extended family needs help in the home, it is the girl who is released by parents for such chores because she already has the skills. Agyeman-Mensah (1994), documents that cultural values which cause females to be seen as important primarily for procreation has a part to play in how society in general views girls education. This is ingrained in the minds of girls and causes them to fulfil the prophecies of society by aspiring towards them. She continued that studies have found that girls worry about their capacity to fulfil their role as women and as mothers. They worry about whether or not they will be able to have children if they prolong their schooling beyond a certain point. Societal preference is early child-bearing and this affects the education of girls. For the Ghanaian society in general, it seems that teenage child bearing is not a problem as long as the father is identifiable. It becomes even more acceptable if the father is a man of 'means'.

Agyeman-Mensah (1994) further states that parents who are themselves illiterate and especially illiterate females tend to see little value in education, especially for their girls. It is these same parents who are often without economic means to cater for even the basic education needs of their children such as uniforms, sandals or transportation. They also tend to be same parents who require the services of their girl children to raise money for family's needs. Children of such parents are likely to have poor school attendance which consequently results in dropout. When dropout rate is high the nation loses all the benefits associated with education and literate people. Studies in other countries have demonstrated the importance of parental involvement and motivation for pupil's achievement and, therefore, their retention and subsequent advancement (Odaga & Heneveld 1995). A survey in Ghana which looked into educational background of parents of students interviewed concluded that female students who

had mothers with higher level of education were themselves given opportunities and funding to promote their own education to higher levels (Swainson 1995). These research findings do not prove significant across countries, is nevertheless significant for the Ghanaian situation (Swainson, 1995). Boakye (1997) reports that religious barriers also contribute to low parents' attitude. Religious values concerning the need to protect female leads Moslem parents to disregard girls education where it involves girls leaving home, particularly, after primary school, to stay in places where parents loose their control over their girls' supervision (Agyeman-Mensah, 1994).

Parental aspiration for girls

According to Nyagura (1994) most parents have low aspirations for their daughters. Most of them wish their daughters to marry and become good wives. This emphasis on marriage is detrimental to the educational development of girls. As a result, the expectations of many teachers and parents about the academic performance of girls are lower than those for boys, and girls internalize these expectations and have poor self-regard and low expectation (CAMFED, 1996). Poor attitude of parents in sending their daughters to school may originate from the rather low opportunities opened to girls in the job market. In her work "gender inequalities and access to the labour market in Ghana", Osei in Boakye (1997), uses employment data from the 1984 population census to demonstrate that though a greater percentage of the Ghanaian labour force are female, majority of the females are illiterates, mostly self-employed and concentrate in the sectors that command weak rewards in terms of wages, authority and prestige. She concluded that parents know this and may not be very enthusiastic to send their daughter to school. This is also confirmed by Odaga & Heneveld (1995) in their work on schooling and girls in sub-Saharan Africa. The research concluded that across the region formal education had historically been

linked to employment opportunities in the labour market, particularly in the civil service. As a result of this, families tend to judge the value of education on the basis of the returns from the labour market. Since historically, girls have been excluded from education and the formal labour market, many families find it prudent to invest in boys because boys are always better placed to explore any formal labour market opportunities.

Gender roles affect parental aspirations for girls because the girl is prepared for somebody as a wife who will be taken away from the family forever. Understandably, why would a parent want to invest in such a person whose labour and toil will only benefit the husband? Parental aspiration for girls tends to be low, affecting their attitude towards girls' education and ultimately girls' participation in education Boakye (1997).

Cost of educating girls

Though the parents may be living below the poverty line, the boy child, rather than girl child, stands the chance of being financially supported if possible. This is because according to Odaga & Heneveld (1995) studies show that in Ghana, Guinea, Malawi and Zimbabwe the costs associated with schooling are higher for girls than boys. This is due to in part to the higher cost of girls' uniforms. For modesty reasons, girls are less likely to go to school in torn or fitting uniforms. Because of safety reasons, parents tend to spend more money on transportation costs for girls. It was further noted that a major problem for girls' school attendance (rarely mentioned in research findings) is their lack of underwear and sanitary protection when menstruating. Girls also need clothes in good condition to protect their modesty.

Secondly, girls are very capable in agricultural and domestic work because they are taught from an early age the skills of running a rural household and are a help to parents at home, whereas boys are less skilled and often become increasingly difficult for their mothers to control

CAMFED (1996). Parents, especially mothers, therefore rely more on girls to help in domestic and agriculture work which do not allow time for schooling. Parents who cannot afford to provide fitting uniforms for their daughters may not enrol them at all or will let them drop out of school.

According to Odaga & Heneveld (1995) child labour is indispensable to the survival of several households making the opportunity cost of sending children to school high. They also concluded that despite the importance of child labour for agricultural, domestic and marketing tasks, when it comes to child care, girls are more likely to be involved than boys and children in the rural areas spend more time working than those in urban areas. Generally in Ghana, girls are used as free labour by parents to provide services like cooking, washing, fetching water, looking after small children and helping on the farm. This practice militates strongly against the full participation of girls in education. The pattern is strongest in the deprived areas. Also the fostering culture in the country allows parents to give their girls to relatives in urban areas as house helps (Davison, 1993).

The literature above shows that apart from the direct cost of educating girls, the loss of the girls', labour at home due to gender roles (for example, fostering and household chores) constitute an indirect cost to the family and, therefore, parents become reluctant to release girls to go to school. The CAMFED experience has also shown that where scholarships are provided, parents willingly release their girls to go to school. It can be inferred from the literature above that the issue of girls' education is largely due to parental perception and attitude and if this is not changed or modified, the gap between boys and girls in education will remain forever. The solution to this problem lies in the community and with the parents.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The chapter presents the methodology employed for the study. It describes the procedures that were adopted in conducting the study. The chapter deals with the research design, choice of sample for the study, instruments used in the data collection, pilot testing and analysis of the data.

The research design

The method used for this study was the descriptive survey. Survey research in education involves the collection of information from members of a group of students, teachers or other persons associated with educational issues. (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight 1996, p.17)

A descriptive survey is concerned with the present situations and describes it. Descriptive research utilizes a wide variety of methodologies in collecting data; they include interview, questionnaire and observational techniques. The descriptive survey was considered the most appropriate design for this study since it deals with questions concerning things as they currently are.

Instrumentation

The instrument for data collection comprised questionnaires (see appendix A, B, C, D) and documentation. Questionnaire is a series of questions or statements on paper Baumgartner, Strong & Hensley (2002). There are three main ways in which questionnaires are administered

and they are self-completion, face to face interview and telephone interview. A common questionnaire was given to the school leavers and dropout girls. The parent answered a common questionnaire and the head of the JSS and second cycle institutions also answered a common questionnaire. The questionnaire was constructed by the researcher and the supervisor helped with the face validity. The choice of questionnaire was to aid the generation of data and the calculation of percentage for clarity and assessment. Some questions demanded “yes” or “no” answers while others were open-ended questions which gave the respondents the chance to express their opinion on the topic.

The documentation data which covered the period between 1995/96 to 2000/01 were meant to find out the extent of participation in education, particularly at the secondary school level of girls as compared with their male counterparts in the Berekum District of the Brong-Ahafo Region. The data was collected from schools in the six circuits of the district. Two schools, primary and a JSS were selected from each of the circuits, this totalling to twelve schools, four second cycle institutions were also contacted in three circuits. These were Jinijini and Berekum Secondary Schools, Presbyterian Secondary School and Methodist Secondary Technical School in Berekum and Biadan respectively.

Pilot testing

Pilot testing is an important part of research; this is to find out if a particular instrument measures what it purports to measure and it involves small – scale testing of the procedures that are planned for the main work.

According to Wilson and Maclean (1994), piloting is able to help in establishing the reliability, validity and practicality of the questionnaire because it serves among others, to check

the clarity of the items and also to make sure that the data required will answer the research questions. A pilot study was undertaken at Anyinasu, a village five kilometres from Berekum during the first week in May 2005. Anyinasu was used because it has similar qualities to the selected school for the actual study. The responses obtained led to the restructuring of some items on the questionnaire schedule.

Population and sampling procedure

The target population for the study was made up of JSS leavers and dropout girls, parents of the girls, heads of JSS and second cycle institutions.

Out of the eight (8) circuits in the district, six (6) were selected. These were Berekum, Biadan, Kato, Jinijini South, Senase and Mpatasie circuits. These circuits were purposively selected because of their nearness to the researcher; there is also available transport, and also have many schools. Kato for instance was chosen for the fact that it is the gateway to Berekum and extends very far, the remotest town in the district is also located in the circuit. For a circuit to be selected it must have at least three (3) primary and three (3) JSS to qualify for selection.

The sample size was 136 made up of 90 parents, 30 female dropouts and leavers and 16 heads of JSS and second cycle schools. The JSS leavers and dropouts were randomly selected from the environment list collected from the school. Parents of the girls automatically formed part of the respondents.

Head teachers and masters from the JSS and SSS were randomly chosen from schools in the district selected. Baumgartner et al (2002) explain that with purposive sampling, the researcher knows that specific characteristics exist in a certain segment of a population, since those traits are extremely critical to the results of the investigation; the researcher using

purposive sampling selected those subjects who possessed the characteristics.

In order to obtain a more detailed, accurate and unbiased information from the girls, simple random sampling methods were adopted in the selection of the girls from the list obtained.

Administration of instrument

A letter of introduction was obtained from the Department. This was shown to the heads of the schools. This letter ensured smooth and healthy interaction with the respondents. The researcher collected the various enrolment lists on students disaggregated into sex and covering the period was collected using the guide for documentary data.

A second visit was made to each school to arrange for a convenient time to administer the instrument. The girls were contacted from house to house. The researcher enjoyed the cooperation of each of the respondents.

For the purpose of further comparison between prevailing situations in the Berekum District and elsewhere, enrolment figures were collected from secondary schools selected from a different district in the same region, namely Sunyani District. Sunyani District was chosen due to its nearness and easier accessibility to the researcher from her abode, Berekum Training College. The schools contacted within the district were Sunyani Secondary School and Twene Amanfo Secondary School both in Sunyani. This was done in order to obtain comparable data on both sexes of the students as in the Berekum schools and to know the enrolment situation as it prevails in Berekum District and what prevails in the Sunyani District; an urban district.

The period in which the research was undertaken coincided with the transfers of three head teachers from the schools involved in the study, namely Kato L/A JSS, Berekum Roman

Catholic JSS and Senase Methodist Primary. As a result of this, the first two schools mentioned were without head teachers, and the acting head could not give all the information needed at that time. They said they could not trace some of the records required. The head teacher who had just then been posted to the last mentioned school, Senase Methodist Primary, had just reported, and said he could not furnish the researcher with the information she was looking for, since she had not settled by then. Also, one of the schools the researcher visited, by name Berekum L/A Mixed Primary, had had its roofs ripped off following a recent rainstorm, and as a result of that, all their record books had been destroyed. In view of that the researcher had to go to the District Education Office to seek information on the said school.

Again, more than one visit had to be made to some Basic schools, contrary to the original plan, since some heads were absent during the first round of visits by the researcher and had locked up the places where the required records were kept. This situation resulted in the researcher spending more number of days than was planned in visiting the schools in the rural areas involved in the study.

Data analysis procedure

Since the questionnaire was administered and documentary figures collected personally by the researcher, the completed questionnaire schedules and the other data collected were all used for the purpose of analysis. The statistical method adopted in analyzing the data was mainly descriptive. The main method applied was the calculation of percentages.

The analyses were started by tallying the responses to various items on the completed questionnaire sheets. Frequency tables of responses to items were drawn, one for each category of respondents. Similar items appearing on schedules for all categories of respondents were later

summed up to produce common frequency tables. Percentages were then computed for the items. With regard to the documentary data, the various figures were summed up and percentages and ratios computed. Sex ratios which refer to the number of males per every hundred females in each instance were calculated by expressing the enrolment figures for the male as a percentage of the figures for the females. This is mathematically expressed as $\frac{f}{m} \times 100$ where 'm' refers to the enrolment figure for females and 'f' refers to the enrolment figure for the males.

Dropout rates between classes were calculated by taking the difference between the populations enrolled in a particular year and the year preceding it, expressed as a percentage of the enrolment of the preceding year. The rates between the lowest and the highest forms in the schools were computed by taking the difference in number between the pupils enrolled at the lowest forms and at the highest forms, expressed as a percentage of the enrolment of the lowest forms. For instance at the secondary schools the rate is calculated by taking the difference between the enrolment of SS1 and SS3 expressing the difference as a percentage of the enrolment of SS1.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents the data and discussion of findings that emerged from the study. Data collection was specifically carried out by administering questionnaire to parents, JSS leavers and dropout students. Another group of people who answered questionnaire were headmasters of JSS and second cycle institutions.

Documentary data which covered the period between 1995/96 and 2000/01 was collected from the selected schools to find out the extent of female participation in education, particularly at the secondary level of education.

The biographic data of the respondents namely headmasters, parents and dropout girls are presented below

Table 1: Age distribution of headmaster respondents

Age	No.	Percentage (%)
40 – 45	4	25
46 – 56	8	50
57 and above	4	25
Total	16	100

Survey data: (2006)

In all, 16 headmasters of SHS and JHS were used as respondents. Out of the number, 25% were aged between 40 and 45. Fifty percent were between the ages 46 and 56, and the remaining 25% were aged 57 and above.

Out of these, 87.5% were males and 22.5% were females.

Table 2: Experience acquired by the headmaster respondents

Number of years as heads	No. of head teachers	Percentage (%)
3 – 5	9	56
6 – 10	5	32
11 – above	2	12
Total	16	100

Survey data: (2006)

By way of experience, 56% had been headmasters for a period between 3 and 5 years. Thirty one percent had been headmasters for a period between 6 and 10 years, while the remaining 12% had been on the headship for a period of 11 years and above.

Table 3: Qualification of the headmasters

Qualification	No. of head teachers	Percentage (%)
Teachers' Cert. 'A'	12	75
First Degree	4	25
Total	16	100

Survey data: (2006)

Out of the 16 headmaster respondents, 75% had a minimum of qualification of Teachers'

Cert. 'A', while 25% had a minimum qualification of first degree.

Table 4: Age distribution of parent respondents

Age	No.	Percentage (%)
35 – 40	15	16.7
41 – 50	35	38.8
51 and Above	40	44.4
Total	90	100

Survey data: (2006)

Table 4 shows the age distribution of parent respondents. Of the 90 parent respondents, 17 percent were between the ages of 35 and 40. Thirty nine percent were between ages 41 and 50, while the remaining 44 percent were 51 and above.

Table 5: Distribution of occupation of parent respondents

Occupation	No.	Percentage (%)
Farming	40	44.4
Trading	15	16.6
Teaching	10	11.1
Nursing	3	3.3
Self-employed	22	24.4
Total	90	100

Survey data: (2006)

Out of the 90 parent respondents, 44.4% were into farming 25% were into commercial farming, while the remaining 75% were into subsistent farming. Sixteen and half percent were into trading. 11.1% were teachers while 3.3% were nurses. The remaining 24.4% were self-employed people.

Table 6: Qualification of the parent respondents

Qualification	No.	Percentage (%)
S.H.S. & Above	13	14.4
Basic School	30	33.3
Dropouts	22	24.4
Never attended	25	27.7
Total	90	100

Survey data :(2006)

Out of the 90 parent respondents, 14.4% had obtained education above Senior High School, 33.3% had finished Basic education. Twenty four percent had dropped out, while the remaining 28% never attended school at all.

Table 7: The number of children the parent respondents had

No. of Children	No. of Parents	Percentage (%)
5 or more	50	55.6
4 or below	40	44.4
Total	90	100

Survey data: (2006)

Out of the 90 parent respondents, 56% had 5 or more children while 44% had 4 or below.

Table 8: Age distribution of the JSS leavers and dropout girls

Age	No.	Percentage (%)
19 – 21	8	26.6
22 – 24	15	50
25 – 27	7	23.3
Total	30	100

Survey data: (2006)

Of the 30 female JSS leavers and dropouts, 27% were between the ages of 19 and 21. Fifty percent were between 22 and 24 years, while 23% were between the ages 25 and 27.

Table 9: Educational background of the girls

Background	No.	Percentage (%)
Leavers	12	40
Dropouts	18	60
Total	30	100

Survey data: (2006)

Out of the total number of girl respondents, 40% completed basic education, 60% dropped out, 44.4% dropped out at JSS 1, 22.2% ended at JSS 2 and the remaining 33.3% dropped at JSS 3. Of the 18 dropouts, 10 had come from families of large size, ranging between 7 and 10, whilst the other 8 had come from an average family size of 6 and below. A good

number of them had more female siblings than males.

Analysis and discussion of main data

Six main research questions were addressed to accomplish the purpose of the study. The discussions were as follows;

Tables 10, 11 and 12 answered the research question one, “Do the economic resources of families influence the decisions of parents in the Berekum District on the pursuit of secondary education by their daughters?”

Tables 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 answered research question two, which read “Do most parents in the Berekum District have very low educational background, and which situation adversely affects the decision of the parents for their daughter to receive further education?”

Research question 3: “Do people in the Berekum district cherish the conditional notion that females do not need further education as males do?” was handled by Tables 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22.

Tables 23 and 24 answered research question four: “Do the parents and girls themselves have limited knowledge about females in modern sector employment due to the lack of reference groups of such females in the Berekum District, and which tend to reduce the source of motivation for the participation of girls in secondary education?”

Tables 25 and 26 answered research question five: “Does the environment readily offer economic opportunities for female self-employment requiring little education if at all, which tend to attract girls early in life and hostile the desire in them for further education?”

Finally, the following tables answered research question six: 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31 “Is the time of girls over used by parents and guardians during the former's school life which has

resulted in their poor performance, leading to cases of failures and dropout among the girls and their eventual inability to continue after junior secondary school?”

Research Question 1:

Do the economic resources of families influence the decisions of parents in the Berekum District in the pursuit of secondary education by their daughters?

Table 10: Views given by girls for not continuing their schooling after basic education

Reasons	Number	Percentage (%)
Parents’ lack of interest in further schooling of girls	15	50
Pregnancy	2	6.6
Academically poor	2	6.6
Financial constraint	8	26.6
Flair for travelling outside the country	3	10
Total	30	100

Survey data: (2007)

According to the above table, parents’ lack of interest in the further schooling of their girl children (50%) constitutes the single most significant reason for their inability to further their education after completing JSS. This lack of interest has been occasioned by several circumstances. One of such circumstances is that a good number of the parents entertain the fear

that investment in their girl children by way of further education might come to nothing as a result of possible cases of pregnancy. The next important factor which prevents the girls from furthering their education is financial constraint faced by their parents (26.6%). Pregnancy and academically poor performance accounted for (7%) each, with parents lack of interest in further schooling of girls accounting for three percent (3%)..

At age 6, every child is expected to be in school but Table 10 exhibits the reasons given by parents as to why their children of school going age are not in school.

Table 11: Views of parents on why their children of school going age were not in school

Reasons	Number	Percentage (%)
Financial constraints	40	44
Children's own lack of interest	15	17
Maid servant	10	11
Weak health	5	6
Lack of concern by guardian	20	22
Total	90	100

Survey data: (2007)

Financial constraints, as shown in the Table 11 ranks the highest (44%) among the reasons given by parents as to why their children were not receiving formal education. This is buttressed by Akuffo (in NCWD Seminar Report, 1978) on causes of wastage in female

education. In that Report, it was found among others that the poor economic background of parents significantly contributes to the situation. This is followed by the children’s own lack of interest in education (20%). In 15 percent of the cases, the guardians lacked concern for their wards, 10 percent was due to poor health of the children and in 5 percent, the girls were serving as maidservants elsewhere. It can thus be seen that financial constraints constitute the single major reason for children of school going age not attending school at all.

Table 12: Views of some parents for not sending their children to continue their schooling after JSS

Reasons	No.	Percentage (%)
Poor academic performance	5	8.3
Financial constraints	35	58.3
Children’s own lack of interest	10	16.6
Protracted ill health	2	3.3
Apprenticeship to trade	5	8.3
Pregnancy soon after graduating from JSS (in the case of girls)	3	5
Total	60	100

Survey data: (2007)

Table 12 above indicates that financial constraints (58%) constitute by far the major reasons for children not being able to pursue further education after JSS 3. This might be due to

the fact that some of the parents were not in gainful employment. In the face of this financial difficult, some parents will opt for spending on their boy children than on their girl children. Other reasons worth noting are children's own lack of interest for further schooling (17%), poor academic performance (8%), with apprenticeship to trade also taking a significant proportion (8%). Apprenticeship has become popular among some parents as they think the girl child will eventually get married and therefore need just some trade to be able to help her family in future. This point reflects the view of Atakpa (1992) that apprenticeships continue to provide practical entrepreneurial skills to several young people across the region. Such programs are popular with parents who often want to ensure that their daughters acquired some practical skills before they got married. Sowing and trading are particularly popular activities for young girls (Atakpa, 1992; Odaga & Heneveld, 1995)

Thus, according to both parents and girls interviewed economic constraints constitute the single most significant factor that militates against the pursuit of further education by children. More girls than boys are likely to suffer from the constraints against the pursuit of further schooling listed in Table 10, since there are more girls than boys who have completed JSS but are not continuing further studies as given by parents.

Research Question 2:

To what extent does parents' educational background affect their decision to assist their daughters to receive further education?

Table 13: Age distribution of parent respondents

Age group{years}	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
35 – 40	15	16.7
41 – 50	35	38.8
51 or above	40	44.4
Total	90	100

Survey data: (2007)

Table 13 dealt with the ages of the respondents which ranged from thirty five to fifty one and above. The data in Table 13 show that 44.4 percent of the 90 parent respondents were 51 years or above. Such people if they are government workers might be burdened with a lot of responsibilities because they may have large families. For this reason the parents might not be able to send both boys and girls to school. In a circumstance, a lot of them will send their boy children to school at the expense of their girl children. The others majority of who are farmers were not too strong to do commercial farming to gain the needed resources which will enable them to educate both their boys and girls to the highest level. They therefore choose to educate the boys at the expense of their girl children.

Table 14: Educational background of parent respondents

Educational background	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
SHS and above	13	14.4
Basic school	30	33.3
Dropouts	22	24.4
Never attended	25	27.7
Total	90	100

Survey data: (2007)

Table 14 indicates that out of the ninety (90) parent respondents, 33.3% had basic level education while 27.7% never attended school. Twenty four percent of the parent respondents dropped out of school, with fourteen percent attaining SHS and above level of education. The data indicate that most of the parent respondents themselves had little or no education. This therefore might possibly affect their attitude towards formal education. In a similar research conducted by Rugh, (2000), she observes that another important characteristic of parental background is educational status. To the writer, though most studies dealing with this factor report that it is the education of the mother that is an important predictor of whether a girl-child goes to or stays in school, the educational background of fathers may also have some effect on their daughters' education.

Table 15: Occupation of parents

Occupation	Number	Percentage (%)
Farming	40	44.4
Trading	15	16.6
Teaching	10	11.1
Nursing	3	3.3
Self employed	22	24.4
Total	90	100

Survey data: (2007)

It is observed from the Table 15 that a significant proportion of parents (44.4%) were engaged in farming as their occupation. Seventeen percent were engaged in trading, 11.1 percent in teaching, 3.3 percent in nursing while the remaining 24.4 were self-employed. Going by the respondent parents' occupations, it is found that the single biggest group is made up of farmers. Most of them have little or no formal education. For this reason, they do not seem to realize the essence of education. This adds to the view expressed already by Agyeman Mensah, (1994) that parents who are themselves illiterate and especially illiterate females tend to see little value in education especially for their girls.

Table 16: Educational background of respondent parents

Level of education of parents as given by parents			Level of education of parents as given by girls		
Level	No.	%	Level	No.	%
None	45	50	None	15	50
P1 – P6	27	30	P1 – P6	5	17
M1 – M4	10	11	M1 – M4	4	13
Above M4	8	9	Above M4	4	13
			Not aware	2	7
Total	90	100	Total	30	100

Survey data: (2007)

Table 16 shows 50% of the parent respondents being non literates, 30% had primary school education, while 11% had middle school education. Only 9% had education above middle school.

Out of the parents mentioned by the girls, 50% said their parents had not received any formal education. Of those who had attained some level of education, 16.6% had only primary school education, while 13% had up to middle school education. Thirteen percent had above middle school education whereas 7% said they were not aware of their parents' educational background.

The responses of both the parents and the girls interviewed show a very high illiteracy

rate among parents in the Berekum District. These revelations are indicative of the fact that illiterate parents are themselves a barrier to their children's education as they usually lack self motivation to enable them to send their children to school. This is seen in Swainson's, (1995) assertion that a survey held in Ghana which looked into the educational background of parents of students interviewed concluded that female students who had mothers with higher levels of education were themselves given opportunities and funding to promote their own education to higher levels.

The conclusion from this table is sufficiently supported by the data in table 14 which establishes that parents with high educational level are more willing to send their girl-children to school than their counterparts who have little or no education at all.

Table 17: Parents' awareness of MOEs measures to promote girls' education

Respondents' response	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	36	40
No	54	60
Total	90	100

Survey data: (2007)

The survey results in Table 17 show that most respondents were not aware of any measure the MOE intended to take or had taken to promote girls education.

When the awareness issue was asked as shown above, it came to light that the community members had scanty or less knowledge about the formulation and implementation of programs to

get more girls to participate in secondary education. This also implies that information flow from the top to the field level is either too slow or does not happen at all. Respondents who showed awareness of MOE's strategies mentioned scholarships, increasing admission quota for girls, advising parents and girls and the introduction of the free education.

Research Question 3:

Do people in the Berekum District cherish the traditional notion that females do not need further education as males do?

Table 18: Performance of pupils in B.E.C.E. according to gender

School	1996/97		1997/98		1998/99		1999/2000		2000/01	
	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B
Kato L/A	43	44	50	69	30	35	70	40	75	65
Kato Methodist	10	50	40	81	80	75	100	85	100	80
Berekum R/C	85	83	70	70	60	55	19	30	82	60
Berekum Presby	65	60	75	60	62	68	60	50	80	56
Senase Methodist	50	52	55	51	100	88	88	90	85	60
Senase R/C	42	80	60	70	83	100	90	90	80	72
Biadan L/A	0	0	60	65	40	60	49	45	60	55
Biadan Methodist	0	0	55	50	100	90	100	95	80	70
Jinijini Presby	70	50	70	65	70	55	70	75	60	50
Jinijini S.D.A.	50	-	45	75	60	80	100	80	45	40
Mpatasie D/C	0	0	17	0	15	0	80	75	56	60
Mpatasie Presby	10	22	20	75	60	55	65	70	80	60
Average	35.4	36.4	51.4	60.9	63.5	63.4	75.3	68.7	73.5	54.0

Zero (0) in the above table indicates that all the candidates (i.e. both boys and girls involved) failed in that particular examination, while a dash (-) shows non-participation in the examination. It is evident in the above table (9) that generally the rates of success are very close among the sexes. For all the schools and years combined, the rate of success for girls is slightly higher than that of the boys, with 59.8 percent for girls as against 56.7 for boys.

This indicates that in the first cycle schools in the Berekum District of the Brong Ahafo Region, both the girls and the boys perform on equal basis so long as academic achievement is concerned, and that the rate of retention of girls in the district as well as their receiving further education after JSS is not caused by any low level of performance peculiar to their sex as against that of boys.

Table 19: Parents' reasons for their preference in boys education

Reasons	No.	Percentage (%)
Boys are more intelligent than girls	10	11
Education of boys is more profitable	19	21
Girls need no higher education since they will end up marrying	41	46
Girls may become pregnant and dropout	10	11
Girls may not be serious in school and thus, fail	5	5.5
Education of girls is too costly	5	5.5
Total	90	100

Survey data: (2007)

Table 19 captures the various reasons for which parents' further the education of their male children rather than females. Out of a total of 90 parent respondents, 11 % were of the view that boys were more intelligent than girls. This therefore defeats the assertion that girls are unable to further their education as a result of academic weakness. Twenty one percent of the respondents affirm that boys' education is more important than that of girls. This is in line with the view of Boakye, (1997) that education of boys is more profitable. A big chunk of 46 percent parents agreed that the girls needed no further education as they would end up in marriage. This is supported by Nyagura, (1994) who states that most parents have low aspiration for their daughters. Most of them wished their daughters to marry and become good wives. Boakye, (1997) states that the girl child will eventually get married and join her husband's family. This emphasis on marriage is detrimental to educational developments of girls in the Berekum district. On the issue of girls getting pregnant and consequently dropping out of school, 11 percent of the parents had the fear that the girl child could possibly become pregnant and waste whatever investment made in them. Six percent of the parent respondents had the conviction that the girl child might not be serious with her academic work and thereby drop out of school. Six percent again claimed that the girl child's education was more costly hence parents' unwillingness to further the girl child's education. This falls in line with the assertion made by Odaga & Heneveld, (1995) that though the parents may be living below the poverty line, the boy child rather than the girl child stands the chance of being financially supported if possible because studies have shown that in Ghana, Guinea, Malawi and Zimbabwe, the costs associated with schooling are higher for girls than for boys.

Table 20: Parents' choice of the child to be given further education

Sex	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Both	45	50
Boy	30	33
Girl	15	17
Total	90	100

Survey data: (2007)

The main argument of 50 percent of parents' respondents was that education is a right for everyone, both boys and girls. The next group of 33 percent who viewed the education of boys as more important than that of girls thought that boys need better preparation for future life which is provided by education, and that boys do not drop out as often as girls. They again thought that educating a girl was a waste of resources since they were likely to drop out and end up in the kitchen. On the other hand, 17% who perceived the education of girls as being more important than that of boys believed that an educated girl would become a role model in future and this would benefit her children too.

The group discussions revealed that even though most respondents thought that the education of both boys and girls was equally important, a sizeable minority also believed that educating girls was risky and an uncertain venture. According to them, many girls did not stay in school long enough to complete their school programs due to pregnancy or low intelligence. When respondents were asked which gender they would want to give further education to, it came to light that to the majority (50%) of the respondents agreed that both boys and girls

needed further education.

When the respondents were grouped according to their educational background and their responses analyzed, the results showed that 42 percent of the respondents with secondary education and above claimed that they would further the schooling of both boys and girls. Thirty one percent would give further education to boys while 27 percent would give girls further education. Eighty two percent of those with no formal education would further the education of boys and girls while the remaining 18% would rather further the education of boys. For respondents with basic education, 51 percent would further the education of both sexes, 37 percent would go for boys while the remaining 12% would further the education of girls.

When the responses were further analyzed along the lines of sex of respondents, the results showed that a large majority of both male (78%) and female (65%) would rather further the education of the boy child when there was a limited resource. It can be seen from the analysis that both male and female respondents put boys' education first.

Table 21: The need for girls' education

Reasons	No.	Percentage (%)
Brightens chances in securing better jobs	40	44.4
Access of getting good husband	10	11.1
Brings up her children in a more refined way	5	5.5
Enhancement of social prestige	24	26.6
Provision of greater enlightenment to girl	5	5.5
Decent and improved living standard	3	3.3
Better enjoyment of life	2	2.2
Chances to offer meaningful contributions in family matters	1	1.1
Total	90	100

Survey data: (2007)

An examination of the reasons offered by the ninety parents reveals their awareness about the benefits that girls could derive from education. Leading among the reasons is the bright chances the girls stand in securing good jobs to support their families and their parents (44%). It is followed by enhancement of social prestige of the girls in society (27%) and the possibilities of getting good husbands follow (11%). Only one percent (1%) gave the reason that furthering girls' education offers them the chance to offer meaningful contributions in family matters. Six percent of the parent respondents said an educated woman can train a child better than her

uneducated counterpart. This is true to a large extent as the educated woman would be knowledgeable in health care as well as other issues related to child care. Three percent of the parent respondents thought that the educated girl can live decent an improved life because they are taught management skills in school.

Research Question 4:

Does the lack of reference groups of females in modern sector employment reduce the source of motivation for girls’ participation in secondary education?

Table 22: Parents with female relatives who have higher education

Reasons	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	61	67.8
No	29	32.2
Total	90	100

Survey data: (2007)

More than half of the parents responded that they have relatives who had furthered their education. About 32% of them did not have any such relatives. This does not offer them any motivation to want to further their girl child’s education. Out of the 61 parents who had female relatives who had further their education, 79% reported that those educated relatives of theirs were engaged in various occupations in the modern sector of the economy.

Table 23: Employment of educated female relatives

Type	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Teaching	30	49
Journalism	1	2
Midwifery	5	8
Nursing	6	10.
Dressmaking	1	2
Accounting	2	3.2
Typing	2	3.2
Price evaluation	2	3.2
Hairdressing	10	16
Uncertain	2	3.2
Total	61	100

Survey data: (2007)

The responses show that the majority of the educated female relatives of parents are employed as teachers (49%). The other occupations engaged in include journalism, midwifery, nursing, dressmaking, accounting, typing, price evaluation, and hair dressing, whereas the work engaged in by 3.2% of them was not known. Apart from teaching which was the major

occupation that employed majority of the educated relatives of the respondents, the other occupations were in such minute numbers that they were insignificant.

Table 24: Types of employment of educated relatives of girl respondents

Occupation	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Teaching	11	30.5
Nursing	6	16.8
Midwifery	4	11.1
Bankers	2	5.5
Trading	4	11.1
Military	1	2.7
Price evaluation	1	2.7
Telephone exchange	2	5.5
Revenue collection	1	2.7
Agricultural worker	1	2.7
Uncertain	2	5.5
Matron	1	2.7
Total	36	100

Survey Data: (2007)

Out of the 36 girls having female relatives in modern sector employment, 31% report that those relatives are in teaching while 17% have theirs in nursing. This shows 47 percent for teaching and nursing alone. The remaining 53 percent have their educated female relatives in ten other areas of occupation.

The leading job areas in the responses of both the parents (table 23) and the girls (table 24) give an interesting picture of the type of secondary education the female often pursue. These are mainly teacher training, nurses training, business studies and girls' vocational courses.

Research Question 5:

Does the environment readily offer economic opportunities for female self-employment?

Table 25: Opportunities open to girls as given by parents, girls and heads of schools

Occupation	Parents		Girls		Headmasters of Schools		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Trading	30	33	10	33	4	25	44	32.3
Dressmaking	8	31	5	17	6	38	39	28.6
Hairdressing	20	22	8	27	2	13	30	22
Farming	3	3.3	1	3.3	-	-	4	3
Teaching	2	2.2	1	3.3	-	-	3	2.2
Ward assistant	1	1.1	2	6.6	-	-	3	2.2
Food processing	5	5.5	2	6.6	3	19	10	7.3
Uncertain	1	1.1	1	3.3	1	6.2	3	2.2
Total	90	100	30	100	16	100	136	100

Survey data: (2008)

It is shown from the table that the most significant economic activity that girls often take to in the Berekum District is trading. This is exemplified by the fairly large percentage share of 32.3. Next to trading is dressmaking which had 28.6 percent. Thirty one percent parents, 16.6 percent of girls and 37.5 percent of headmasters of schools mentioned dressmaking as an activity in which girls often engaged in the Berekum District. Other job opportunities mentioned were hairdressing, food processing, etc. The reason for trading being mentioned as the major economic activity for females in the area might be that with the presence of big markets in the locality, people engage in selling or economic activities.

Table 26: Occupational distribution of all three categories of respondents

Occupational background	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Occupational/seeking employment	20	15
Self-employed/farming	70	53
Salaried workers	46	32
Total	136	100

Survey data: (2008)

Of the one hundred and thirty six respondents, 15 percent were either unemployed or seeking employment. Fifty three (53%) percent were self-employed/farmers while the remaining 32 percent were salaried workers.

It is expected that respondents' background characteristics like place of residence, education and employment will influence their perception of girls' education and employment

aspirations. These variables will also influence parents' preparedness to take actions to promote increased participation of girls in education, and for that matter secondary education.

The field survey showed that the 90% of the respondents either had children in school or that their children had ever attended one. According to the few respondents whose children were neither in school nor ever attended, their children were either too young to be in school or there was no money to send the children to school. Since about a third of the respondents had a minimum of basic education, all things being equal, majority of the respondents should have a positive attitude towards the education of girls.

Research Question 6:

Do parents engage girls in child labour, which results in their poor academic performance?

Table 27: Presentation of sex ratio of 12 selected Junior High Schools in six circuits in the Berekum Districts

School	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01
Kato L/A	102	144	197	199	182	212
Kato Methodist	212	132	190	179	178	195
Berekum R/C	162	184	201	225	223	301
Berekum Presby	154	169	190	209	249	297
Senase Methodist	141	162	176	198	262	201
Senase R/C	140	133	132	143	162	171
Biadan L/A	98	138	126	139	156	161
Biadan Methodist	145	141	153	152	190	199
Jinijini Presby	159	165	162	179	188	201
Jinijini S.D.A.	136	197	179	146	151	188
Mpatasie D/C	101	105	111	103	102	106
Mpatasie Presby	121	112	144	161	169	165
Average	132	149	163	169	184	200

GES Data: (2006)

It is noted from Table 27 that the sex ratios are more than 100 in all but one case, which is the ratio for Biadan L/A JSS in 1995/96. That ratio is over 300 in one case, which is Berekum R/C JSS in 2000/2001. The distribution shows that except in one case or instance of Biadan L/A JSS mentioned earlier on, there were always more boys than girls in all the schools covered throughout the six year period. Mpatasie D/C JSS had the lowest sex ratios over the period 1995/96 to 2000/01, indicating that relatively the girls there were favourably rubbing shoulders with the boys.

The sex ratios show fluctuations over the period in almost all the schools, falling and rising over the years, except Berekum Presby JSS which showed consistent increase from 154 in 1995/96 to 279 in 2000/01. The ratios for all the twelve JSS show an increase in the ratios for the last year of study period from those of the base year. The trend shows, on the average too, an increase in the ratios from the base year to the final year of the period under study.

Two sets of dropout rates were calculated for the period, Category A, starting at JSS 1 in 1995/96 and completing at JSS 3 in 1997/98 and Category B, starting at JSS 1 in 1996/97 and completing at JSS3 in 1998/99. In Category A, the attendance registers for Kato L/A JSS could not be traced for working out the rates since the head was on transfer. But in Category B, all the registers were intact; consequently, only Category B is presented and discussed.

It is noted that in the table on dropout rates, zeros (0s) indicate that there are no dropout cases between the years concerned. In this and subsequent tables in the chapter, B refers to Boys and G to Girls. This distribution of the dropout rates in Table Two shows that the rates are generally higher among girls than among boys during the three-year period. The averages for all the schools together indicate consistently higher dropout rates among girls than among boys throughout the JSS course. The rates between the lowest and the highest forms in JSS (i.e. JSS 1

and JSS 3) are higher for girls in 9 out of the 12 schools.

In five out of the twelve schools, namely Kato L/A JSS, Kato Methodist JSS, the rates are higher for girls throughout the JSS course. In two of the schools, namely Mpatasie D/C and Mpatasie Presby, the table shows equal dropout rate in boys as in girls. While in one of the schools, Biadan Methodist the dropout rate for boys exceeds that of the girls. While the dropout rates in the JSS are generally higher among girls than boys, they do not indicate any regular pattern of increases or decreases for either sex over the years.

Table 28: Success of pupils at B.E.C.E according to gender

School	1996/97		1997/98		1998/99		1999/2000		2000/01	
	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B
Kato L/A	43	44	50	69	30	35	70	40	75	65
Kato Methodist	10	50	40	81	80	75	100	85	100	80
Berekum R/C	85	83	70	70	60	55	19	30	82	60
Berekum Presby	65	60	75	60	62	68	60	50	80	56
Senase Methodist	50	52	55	51	100	88	88	90	85	60
Senase R/C	42	80	60	70	83	100	90	90	80	72
Biadan L/A	0	0	60	65	42	60	49	45	60	55
Biadan Methodist	0	0	55	50	100	90	100	95	80	70
Jinijini Presby	70	50	70	65	70	55	70	75	60	50
Jinijini S.D.A.	50	-	45	75	60	80	100	80	45	40
Mpatasie D/C	0	0	17	0	15	0	80	75	56	60
Mpatasie Presby	10	22	20	75	60	55	65	70	80	60
Average	35.4	36.4	51.4	60.9	63.5	63.4	75.3	68.7	73.5	54.0

GES Data: (2006)

Zero (0) in the above table indicates that all the candidates (that is, the sexes involved)

failed in the particular examination, while a dash (-) shows non-participation in the examination. It is evident in the above table that generally the rates of success are very close among the sexes. For all the schools and years combined, the rate of success for girls is slightly higher than that of the boys, with 59.8 percent for girls as against 56.7 percent for boys.

This indicates that in the first cycle schools in the Berekum District of the Brong Ahafo Region, both the girls and the boys perform on equal basis so long as academic achievement is concerned, and that the rate of retention of girls in the district as well as their receiving further education after JSS is not caused by any low level of performance peculiar to their sex as against that of boys.

Table 29: Enrolment ratios in SHS from 1995/1996 to 1999/2000 academic years

School	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000
Jinijini Secondary School	592	602	516	482	365
Berekum Secondary School	612	621	642	663	680
Presby Secondary School Berekum	560	580	699	690	702
Biadan Methodist Sec. Tech. Sch.	522	449	401	301	285
Average	571	564	564	534	508

GES Data: (2006)

Averagely, the ratios for the schools range between 300 and 700, the lowest being 285 for Biadan Methodist Sec. Technical School in 1999/2000 and the highest, 702 for Presby

Secondary School in the same year, 1999/2000. The rates indicate a very high under representation of girls in the school, with about five boys to every one girl averagely. The rates fluctuate over the years in two schools namely Jinijini Secondary School and Presby Secondary School. Biadan Methodist Secondary Technical has a consistent decrease of sex ratios from 522 in 1995/96 to 285 in 1999/2000. Berekum Secondary School on the other hand shows consistent increase over the period under study, that is, 1995/96 to 1999/2000. This shows a consistent improvement in the enrolment of girls over the years in the school.

Table 30: Reasons responsible for girls' dropout of school

Reasons	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Poor academic performance	1	3.3
Financial constraint	6	20
Pregnancy	1	3.3
Lack of interest in schooling by girls	3	10
Protracted ill health	2	6.6
Parents' lack of interest in girls' education	15	50
Teasing, due to overage	2	6.6
Total	30	100

GES: (2006)

The four leading reasons for the incidence of basic school dropout among girls in the Berekum District are first, parents' lack of interest in girls' education (50%) following by

financial constraint (20%) with lack of interest in schooling by girls themselves coming next with protracted ill health and teasing due to overage having equal percentage 6.6 each. These four reasons accounted for about 93.2% of the dropout situation among girls in the basic schooling in the Berekum District. It can be noted from the list of top reasons that there is one particular factor (parents' lack of interest in girls' education) which stands out clearly as the leading factor for the incidence of dropout among girls in the Berekum District. Financial constraint which is the next also stands out taking 20 percent with poor academic performance 3.3 percent being the least among the reasons given for girls dropping out of basic school.

Table 31: Level of education of dropout girls

Level of Education	In Elementary School 100		Sec. School 100%		Completed JSS 100%		Dropped out 100%		Never attended 100%	
	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G
None	26.7	24.7	46.1	10.1	34.5	35.4	19.7	30.3	53.3	47.1
P1 – P3	10.0	5.2	12.2	5.5	4.4	7.8	5.3	17.1	0	17.6
J1 – J3	16.7	11.5	10.4	4.5	5.3	9.2	9.2	17.1	0	0
Above J3	2.0	3.0	7.3	3.5	1.5	1.9	0	1.3	0	0
Average	55.4	44.4	76.0	24.0	45.7	54.3	34.2	65.8	35.3	64.7

Survey data: (2007)

The data as given by Table 31 indicate that, the incidence of girls dropping out of school

occurs at different levels of their schooling. Within the first three years of schooling, (Basic 1 to 3), more girls drop out of school than boys. This is shown by a dropout rate of 7.8 percent in the name of girls as against that of boys which is 7.3 percent.

Above the JSS level too, the rate of dropout on the part of girls is still significant. The figures from the data buttress this fact. The data provided that 5.5 percent of girls end their schooling after JSS 3 while 1.9 percent of their male counterparts dropout at the same level. This is occasioned by the fact that some parents see their girl children at this stage to be ripe for marriage and hence find further education to be less relevant. Some other parents would also prefer directing their girl children to learn various trades which they consider to be useful to them in their [girl children] future marriage lives. Some of the girls also unfortunately become pregnant around this same level making it impossible in most cases for them to continue their education.

Table 32: Dropout rates by gender from 1996/1997 to 1998/1999 academic years

	J1 – J2		J2 – J3		J1 – J3	
	B	G	B	G	B	G
Kato L/A	6	8	2	3	8	11
Kato Methodist	4	5	3	5	7	10
Berekum R/C	2	2	1	4	3	6
Berekum Presby	3	2	0	2	3	4
Senase Methodist	2	6	3	1	5	7
Senase R/C	0	1	2	4	2	5
Biadan L/A	3	1	1	4	4	5
Biadan Methodist	1	0	2	2	3	1
Jinijini Presby	2	3	1	4	3	7
Jinijini S.D.A.	3	5	1	3	4	8
Mpatasie D/C	1	3	2	0	3	3
Mpatasie Presby	1	2	2	1	3	3
Average	2.3	3.1	1.6	2.6	4.0	5.9

GES: (2006)

Two sets of dropout rates were calculated for the period, Category A, starting at JSS 1 in

1995/96 and completing at JSS 3 in 1997/98 and Category B, starting at JSS 1 in 1996/97 and completing at JSS 2 in 1998/99. In Category B, all the registers were intact, consequently, only Category B is presented for discussion in Table 2.

It is noted that in table 32, on dropout rates, there are zeros (0s) which indicate that there are no dropout cases between the years concerned. The distribution of the dropout rates in table two shows that the rates are generally higher among girls than among boys during the three-year period. The averages for all the schools together indicate consistently higher dropout rates among girls than among boys throughout the JSS course. The rates between the lowest and the highest forms in the JSS (i.e. JSS 1 and JSS 3) are higher for girls in 9 out of the 12 schools.

In five out of the twelve schools, namely Kato L/A JSS, Kato Methodist JSS, the rates are higher for girls throughout the JSS course. In two of the schools, namely Mpatasie D/C and Mpatasie Presby, the table shows equal dropout rate in boys as in girls. Whiles in one of the schools, Biadan Methodist the dropout rate for boys exceeds that of the girls.

While the dropout rates in the JSS are generally higher among girls than boys, they do not indicate any regular pattern of increases or decreases for either sex over the years.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The study investigated the participation level of girls in secondary education: A case study of the Berekum District in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. The main objective of the study was basically to find out the extent of female participation in secondary education in the Berekum District. Research questions were formulated to guide the study.

Purposive sampling and simple random techniques were used to select the sample for the study. A questionnaire and interview guide was used to collect data from parents, headmasters of institutions and dropout girls. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents by the researcher. All questionnaires were returned and interview successfully conducted. Quantitative and documentation analysis were adopted. The data from the questionnaire were presented in frequency and percentage tables and used to answer the six research questions.

Summary of findings

The findings and conclusion drawn on the main issues have been presented below. Results from the study showed that,

A good number of potential girls opt for trading in the early stages presumably because they find the majority of people in that sector or they find most of their relatives in that business.

Few or no female role-models in the Berekum Municipality have been established to be a great hindrance as far as higher education on the part of girl child is concerned. The study shows that out of the four secondary schools visited, there was only one that had ever been headed by a

female. This scenario presented buttresses the fact that there is a serious lack of role-models in the Berekum District. Averages for all schools together indicate consistently higher dropout rate among girls than boys throughout the JSS course.

It was evident that the four leading reasons for the incidence of basic school dropout among girls in the Berekum District are first; parents' lack of interest in girls' education, followed by financial constraint with lack of interest in school by girls coming third while pregnancy and poor academic performance having equal percentages.

Reasons given by parents for their children dropping out of JSS have financial constraints ranking highest, followed by children's own lack of interest as well as poor academic performance and apprenticeship to trade. Also a sizable proportion of school going-age children, especially girls were not in school, it was noted that there were 173 girls as against 126 boys who were out of school.

Also majority of parents show preference for boys' education than that of girls. The interesting reason offered to buttress their assertion is that girls will eventually end up in the marital home, a job they can perform with little or no education.

The study revealed that nearly eighty-five percent of the responding parents had received little or no formal education and therefore did not see the need of education.

Conclusion

The intention of this study was to investigate into the level of girls' participation in secondary education in the Berekum District of the Brong Ahafo region. In accordance with this JSS leavers and dropout girls, parents and headmasters of institutions were contacted through questionnaire and interviews. Among the critical issues that were focused in the study were

reasons why more girls are not able to enter and complete SSS, whether the environment readily offers economic opportunities for females that require little or no education and whether most parents in the Berekum District contacted for this study have very low educational background, which have adversely affected the decisions of their daughters to receive further education.

It was revealed that there is a higher dropout rate among girls than boys throughout the SHS in the Berekum District. Results from the study also indicated the following reasons as a hindrance to girls participating in secondary education.

First, most parents lack interest in the education of their girl children. To add to this, most parents complain of financial constraint thereby not being able to support their girl children through secondary education. Also, lack of interest in schooling by the girls themselves came to light as another cause of dropout among girls.

To add to the above, most parents report of financial constraints thereby not able to support their girl child through secondary education. Also poor performance in academic work came to light as a minute cause of dropout cases among girls. Moreover, most girls of school going age are asked to stay home and help parents rather than going to school.

Again, some parents prefer their boys to climb the educational ladder rather than girls, with the intention that girls will end up in the marital home which needs little or not education and parents are deprived of direct benefit from the girl. Absence of role-models in the Berekum District has also adversely affected the girls to aspire for higher education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. The government should intensify its sensitization program aimed at getting more girls to enter higher institutions
2. Individual schools should endeavour to offer motivation packages to girls who perform well in schools by offering them educational materials to serve as a booster.
3. Girls who have aspired for higher education in the district should come together as a team to encourage the upcoming girls.
4. Special counselling section for girls should be organized frequently by the girl child coordinators in the Ghana Education Service to enlighten them (girls) on various occupations and courses or programmes they need to pursue.

Suggestions for Future Research

- i. The study was limited to six circuits in the Berekum District in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana; therefore findings may not be generalized to the whole country. It is therefore recommended that the topic should be investigated in a larger sample in a wider scope.
- ii. Follow up studies should be conducted to find out how the dropout girls could be officially enrolled into various apprenticeship programs.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Topic: Female Participation in Secondary Education: A Case Study of the Berekum District in the Brong Ahafo Region

Questionnaire for Parent

1. How many children do you have at present?
2. How many are boys? How many are girls?
3. How many of your children are at the elementary school?
4. How many of your children are pursuing further schooling?
5. How many are boys? How many are girls?
6. Do you have any children between 10 and 12 years who are not pursuing any schooling?
Yes/No
7. If “Yes”, how many boys and how many girls?
8. Why are they not pursuing any schooling?
9. Never attended at all. Number of boys and number of girls.
10. Dropped out of school. Number of boys number of girls
11. Completed JSS only. Number of boys..... Number of girls.....
12. If never attended at all, why?.....
13. If dropped out why? Because she was not clever in school.....
14. If completed JSS why did they not pursue further schooling
15. Because she is weak at school.
16. Have you ever attended school? Yes/No
17. If “Yes”, up to what level?
18. What is your occupation? Farming/Trading/Government Worker/Other
19. If farming, what type? Cocoa/Maize/Other
20. How do you find your annual yield in comparison with your family expenses these days?
21. Supposing you have one son and one daughter and you were to send only one of them to secondary school, which of them would you send? Son/Daughter

22. Why this preference?
23. If you had a daughter who is clever enough and you could afford it, would you let her have further education after JSS? Yes/No
24. If “Yes”, what type? Secondary School/Commercial School/Nurses Training/Teacher Training/Other
25. Why that type?.....
26. Do you think it is necessary at all for a girl to continue education after JSS 3? Yes/No
27. If “Yes” why do you think so? She can become top person in the state
28. If “No” why do you think so?.....
29. It is more profitable to let a boy rather than a girl have further schooling. Do you agree? Yes/No/Not Sure
30. What financial help do your boys in school give you?.....
31. What type of economic activity is involved?.....
32. If you encouraged them to do so what prompted you to do so?.....
33. What do you think is the importance of further schooling after JSS 3?
34. Do you think it is worthwhile to be engaged in modern sector employment at all these days? Yes/No
35. Give a reason for your answer.
36. Do you know of any girls from your family or the village receiving further schooling? Yes/No.
37. Have you any daughter or female relative who has completed some level of further education? Yes/No
38. If “Yes”, what type(s) of work is she engaged in?.....
39. In what economic activities can females easily engage in this locality?.....

Appendix B

Questionnaire for Female J.S.S. Leavers and Dropouts

Town/Village.....

1. How old are you?.....
2. What level of schooling did you attain?.....
If dropped out, what was the cause?.....
If you completed J.S.S. why did you not pursue further schooling?.....
3. At what age did you start school?.....
4. (a) What level of schooling did your father attain?.....
(b) What level of schooling did your mother reach?.....
5. (a) What is your father's occupation?.....
(b) What is your mother's occupation?.....
6. (a) How many sisters do you have?.....
(b) How many brothers do you have?.....
7. (a) What economic activity do you engage in?.....
(b) If selling, what items are involved?.....
8. Who was your guardian while you were in school?.....
9. Was your guardian able to supply your basic needs like school fees, dress, underwear, pens, books, and etc. while in school? Yes/No
10. If yes, were they regular? Yes/No
11. If Not regular what were the reasons?.....
12. If he/she was not able to supply all, how did you make up for the rest?.....
13. What do you think is the importance of further schooling after J.S.S.
3?.....
(a) Do you think it is worthwhile to be engaged in modern sector employment at all these days? Yes/No
(b) Give a reason(s) for your answer.....
14. (a) Have you any female sibling who has completed some level of further education?
Yes/No

- (b) If yes, what is she doing now?.....
15. Are you aware of any lady (ies) from this locality engaged in modern sector employment?
Yes/No
If yes, what type(s) of work?
16. In what economic activities can females easily engage in this village/locality?
17. Could you name any five (5) jobs that a girl can engage in after pursuing further education after J.S.S. 3?
18. (a) When you were a school girl, what duties did you perform daily after school?
(b) Were you able to have enough time to study after performing those duties? Yes/No
19. (a) Did you sometimes stay out of school during school days to perform some duties?
Yes/No
(b) If yes, what type of duties was involved?
20. What do you think is the importance of somebody continuing his/her schooling after J.S.S.?
21. (a) Do you think it is necessary for a girl to have further education? Yes/No
(b) Give reason for your answer.....
22. Who do you think should have more schooling, a boy or a girl? Boy/Girl
- 23 (a) Would you continue your education if you were given the chance to do so? Yes/No
(b) If yes, up to what level?.....
24. What were some of the problems you faced when you were attending school?.....
25. Were those reasons the cause of your dropping out? Yes/No

Appendix C

Questionnaire for Headmasters of Second Cycle Schools

- (1) In your view, which of the sexes perform better in academic work in this School?
Boys/Girls
- (2) Who often leave school before completion, boys or girls? Boys/Girls
- (3) What do you see as some of the main reasons that make girls leave school before completion?.....
- (4) Do girls face any common peculiar problems in the school? Yes/No
If so, mention any of them (up to 4) commuting over long distances to school, stereotyping teachers' non-payment of fees, leaving school to work for parents.
- (5) What is the general attitude of parents in this locality to their children's education?.....
- (6) In your view in which of the sexes do parents show greater interest in their education in this locality? Boys/Girls
- (7) What is the general attitude of girls to school work?.....
- (8) What job opportunities are there in this locality that normally attract girls away from further schooling?.....
- (9) What type of economic activities do parents mostly engage in this locality?
If farming, what type of farming in relation to size?
- (10) Do you think the participation of girls in further schooling in this locality has any connection with their parental background? Yes/No
If yes, in what ways?.....
- (11) In your view, is there any connection between the overall performance of girls in this locality and their parental background? Yes/No
If yes, in what ways in reference to this locality?.....
- (12) In what ways do you think improvement could be brought into the participation of girls in further schooling, and their performance in school work in this locality?.....
.....

Appendix D

Questionnaire for Junior Secondary School Headmasters

- (1) In your view, which of the sexes perform better in academic work in your school?
Boys/Girls
 - (a) Who are more regular in school attendance, boys or girls? Boys/Girls
 - (b) What reason(s) could you assign for the irregular attendance?.....
.....
 - (c) The sex concerned?.....
 - (d) Who often leave school before completion? Boys/Girls
 - (e) What do you see as some of the main reasons that make them leave before completion?.....
- (2) During which days do pupils often stay away from school?.....
- (3) Which sex is mostly involved?.....
What are the main reasons for such occurrence?.....
- (4) Do girls face any common peculiar problems at school? Yes/No
If so, mention any of them (up to 4)......
.....
- (5) What is the general attitude of girls towards school work?
.....
- (6) What is the attitude of parents in the locality towards children's education?
.....
If indifferent or not interested, give possible reasons.
.....
- (7) In your view, in which of the sexes do parents show greater interest in their education in this locality? Boys/Girls
Give possible reasons for that attitude of parents.....
- (8) What job opportunities are there in this locality that normally attract girls away from schooling?.....
- (9) (a) Is there a big market in this locality? Yes/No
(b) If yes, does it interfere with school activities? Yes/No

(c) Which sex is mostly involved? Boys/Girls

(10) In what type of activities do parents engage in this locality?

.....

If farming, what type of farming in relation to size?.....

(11) Do you think the participation of girls in schooling in this locality has any connection with their parental background? Yes/No

If yes, in what ways?.....

(12) In your view, is there any connection between the overall performances of girls in this locality and their parental background? Yes/No

If yes, in what ways ?.....

(13) In what ways do you think improvement could be brought in girls' participation in further education ?

.....

.....