

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

FACTORS AFFECTING GENDER REPRESENTATION IN SCHOOL  
EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF THE AMANSIE EAST DISTRICT

VICTOR ACHEAMPONG

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BY

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Dissertation submitted to the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration of the Faculty of Education, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for award of Master of Education Degree in Educational Administration

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## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

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

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

Name: Victor Acheampong

### 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.*

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

Name: Professor George K. T Oduro

## ABSTRACT

The study sought to investigate the impact, both negative and positive, of the factors that affect female participation in Senior High School education in Ghana. Using a case study method, three Senior High Schools from the Amansie East District of the Ashanti Region were selected for the study. Questionnaires were distributed to tutors, parents and students. Using bar chart and frequency distribution methods, results from the 96 respondents of the study were analysed.

The study revealed that majority of the parents will educate their girl child than the boy giving reasons that, educating the girl child means educating the nation and the whole household, but educating a boy means educating an individual. Again, it was found out that classroom participation has an impact on the girl child's ability to participate in school. It was revealed that teachers didn't have confidence in the girl child and thereby will prefer to engage the boys in class activities and programmes than the girls.

Finally, even though most parents will prefer their girl child to attend school, they won't give them the opportunity to study programmes of their choice and that is negatively affecting the interest of the girl child in education. In the light of the findings it is therefore recommended that the legal framework should be strengthened to include proper monitoring, and enforcement of the law that supports more female participation in schools. Just writing it down is not enough but there must be action taken against those pulling down the idea of enrolling more girls in schools than boys

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## **DEDICATION**

To my dear sister Theresah Oppong

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

BED: Basic Education Division

CRDD: Curriculum Research and Development Division

EFA: Education For All

ESP: Education Strategy Plan

FCUBE: Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education

GER: Gross Enrolment Rate

GES: Ghana Education Service

GEU: Girls Education Unit

GNCC: Ghana National Commission on Culture

GPI: Gender Parity Index

GPRS: Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy

GSFP: Ghana School Feeding Programme

JHS: Junior High School

JSS: Junior Secondary School

MDG: Millennium Development Goal

MOE: Ministry of Education

SHS: Senior High School

SPIP: School Performance Improvement Plan

SSS: Senior Secondary School

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

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

All over the world, education has been accepted as the process by which individuals acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes which enable them to develop their complete abilities. It has also generally been accepted that a benefit of good education is the ability of an individual to contribute to the development and improvement in the quality of life of a community. It is on the account of good education that successive governments of Ghana have sought to use education as the vehicle for accelerating the implementation of policies and programmes.

Peters (1965) identified education as central to the development of a better life and better world. Thus, one cannot properly be called educated unless one develops the capacity to see one's knowledge, skills, attitudes and activities in relation to a coherent pattern of life. The perception about equal opportunities for both boys and girls did change much with the coming of the Christian missionaries. McWilliams (1975) stated that by 1981 the Basel mission schools in Akwapim area had as many girls as boys. Moreover, they went further to indicate that taking all Basel Mission schools in the country into consideration, the ratio of boys to girls was 3:1. This state of affairs has not changed.

On the contrary, Mills (1995) lamented that females constitute 51% of the population of Ghana but available information proves that enrolment figures of girls in basic schools drastically reduce at the secondary level and further decrease at the tertiary level. This is a situation that is discouraging and is totally unacceptable in a country that needs to tap fully its human resources, the girl-child inclusive. Owing to this, almost all successive governments in Ghana even before 1909, but especially since 1919 when Sir Gordon Guggisberg was governor of the Gold Coast have made efforts to regulate education. Various education review committees emphasized this fact and proposed remedies. Among these was the Dzobo Report of 1973 which set the pace for new thinking about Ghana's education system.

In 1987, a new structure and content of education for Ghana became operational with the focus on the Junior Secondary School (JSS), now Junior High School (JHS) programme. Under this new structure, the six to three and three to four system was adopted. The country had six years of primary school education, three years of Junior Secondary School, and three years of Senior Secondary School (SSS), now Senior High School (SHS), and a minimum of four years of tertiary education.

The 1987 reform became necessary as a result of the virtual collapse of the education system. This was due to reasons which included insufficient supply of trained and qualified teachers. Others were inadequate funds, textbooks, furniture, equipment and deteriorating classroom buildings which had made people lose faith in the educational system. By 1990, the focus of the reforms exercised had shifted to the Senior Secondary School programme. It was not until the first batch of the Senior Secondary School students

graduated in 1993 that the weakness in the implementation of the reform came to the fore. The reform failed to achieve quality targets and exposed the education sector to public criticism.

The government's response to the public criticism of the programme led to the setting up of the Education Reform Review Committee of 1993/1994. The work of this committee led to the National Education Forum of 1994 with emphasis on basic education to the year 2000. The 1992 constitution also subsequently enshrined the right for Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education. The Ministry of Education (MOE) developed a large-scale, comprehensive reform plan called the Free, Compulsory, Universal Basic Education, fCUBE (Ministry of Education, 1996). The FCUBE programme has a focus on primary education and seeks to improve upon the 1987 reforms by addressing the shortcomings identified in the implementation process to ensure quality. The programme also aims at increasing the participation of primary school children in education delivery so as to make its success close to 100%. Additionally, FCUBE seeks to address a particular policy on the enrolment of girls in basic education.

Although most governments have tried to provide for equal opportunities in education, especially at primary level, in practice the educational system discriminates against girls who are unable to compete equally for the various programmes offered in schools, colleges, polytechnics and universities and other training institutions. Access of basic education to girls must be singled out as one of the greatest challenges facing governments in achieving universal basic education. It is as a result of this that successive governments of Ghana had pursued policies on education, creating a free and

fair environment for universal education. In 1997, the Ministry of Education established the Girls Educational Unit (GEU) within the Basic Education Division of the Ghana Education Service (GES). The GEU was mandated to address issues related to ensuring that girls, who have been lagging behind boys in education at all levels go to school, remain in school and continue schooling at higher levels within the overall context of the fCUBE programme (Atakpa, 1998). The GEU identified a number of targets to be achieved by the year 2005.

The education reforms initiated in 1987 raised the issue of gender equity by removing gender streaming in subjects in Upper Primary and Junior Secondary School. The reforms also set norms for attaining equal participation of males and females throughout the educational system up to the tertiary level. In 1990, the world conference on Education For All (EfA) in Jomtien, Thailand, set targets for adults, which went well beyond providing universal access to education to improving educational quality and distributing educational resources more equitably (UNESCO, 1990).

Equity in access to quality education by girls is not only of primary concern in Ghana, as evidenced in the Dakar Framework for Action (World Education Forum 2008). In Dakar, the vision of the World Declaration of Education For All in Jomtain in 1990 was re-affirmed that all children, young people and adults, have human rights to benefit from education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term, an education that includes learning how to know, to do, to live together and to be (World Education Forum, 2000).



In spite of these policies and conferences, in Ghana, it was realized that between 1987 and 1995, girls were still lagging behind boys despite the educational reform. Thus the MOE, the World Bank and the United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) have organized a conference on girls' education. An outcome of the conference was an agreement that the education of girls in Ghana should be emphasized. This was formalized in the Accra Accord on Girls' Education for 1995 -2005.

Internationally, the Beijing Conference affirmed the need to empower women through education for national development. However, statistics from the MOE data revealed that in the 1999/ 2000 academic year, there were 991, 587 girls and 1,123,394 boys (46% and 53.1% of the total respectively) in primary schools. These improved slightly from 1997/1998 when there were 927, 990 girls and 1,059,819 boys (45.5% and 54.5% respectively). However, when disaggregated by gender and region, the data make it apparent that the gender gap is wide and deep in certain areas.

In the Greater Accra Region, girls' enrolment in primary schools is equal to that of boys, (50%) in primary one to primary five and (49%) in primary six. In contrast, in the Northern Region, girls' enrolment is 44% of the total in primary one, decreasing to 36% by primary six. Within regions there are differences among districts with pockets of lower girls' enrolment even in regions with higher overall enrolment. These data imply that there is a gap between males and their female counterparts with respect to education in some of the regions in the country. A number of studies in Ghana (Acheampong, 1992; Owusu-Darko, 1996) on female participation in education have revealed the following:

1. High opportunity cost of education for girls.
2. Parents' perception of boys' superior returns to education.
3. Socio-cultural effects and early marriages.
4. Inability of parents to pay for the education of all children, leading to prioritizing.

On the other hand, studies have shown that investing in girls' education is probably the most cost-effective measure a developing country can take to improve its standard of living (Acheampong, 1992). Educating girls produces considerable social and welfare benefits such as lower infant mortality and fertility rates (Bruce, 1997). In a study of maternal education and child survival in Ghana, Owusu-Darko (1996) found that the higher the educational level of the mother, the greater the survival rate of her children. Similarly, since the nation benefits from the education of its citizenry, there is the need to ensure that all children of school going age, especially girls, attend school so as to reduce poverty, high infant mortality rate and social vices that have become rampant in the country. For better information on the subject under study, it will be wise to survey the factors influencing gender participation in education so as to provide systematic solutions to these problems.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

Much effort and numerous resolutions have been made by policy makers concerning gender participation in schools especially to encourage girls in particular to go to school in order to promote gender parity in education. One of such policies is the FCUBE which makes it compulsory for all children of school going age to go to school without paying fees at the basic level. Some District Assemblies have also made it a policy of awarding

scholarships to brilliant but needy students to enable them to complete their education.

In spite of the numerous efforts and resolutions put up by policy makers to encourage girls to go to school, enrolment statistics of boys and girls at all levels of education point to the fact that there is disparity between male and female enrolment ratio (MOE, 2005). These policies which seek to promote girls' participation in education have achieved little in the Amansie East District of the Ashanti Region of Ghana. In fact, there are few well-educated women who come from the district. Apart from these, most young girls in the district find themselves in apprenticeship occupations such as dressmaking, hairdressing and petty trading.

Statistics at all levels of education in the district show that there is disparity between males and females. The total enrolment for boys in the district is 23,838 whilst that of girls is 20,916. At the JHS level, enrolment for boys is 5,398 and that of girls is 4,108. At the SHS level, all the three schools investigated in this study show disparity between male and female enrolment. At SDA Secondary school, boys' enrolment is 863 and that of girls 761. Wesley High School has 477 enrolments for boys and 405 for girls. At the Opong Memorial Senior School the enrolment for boys is 627 and that of the girls is 497 (Ministry of Education Science and Sports, 2009).

The above statistics clearly suggests that there are some factors that militate against females in their bid to go to school. The question that one may ask is: Are these factors as the result of poor methodology of teachers which favours boys more than girls or, are sexual harassments faced by girls' schools

have a great influence on their participation? Again, could it be as a result of the school environment contributing to poor attendance of girls to school?

### **Purpose of the Study**

Despite enormous efforts and sacrifices over the past 30 to 40 years to extend access to schooling with the view to achieving universal basic education for all, many districts are far from achieving this goal. The great majority of children of school going-age especially girls in the rural areas are not in school. The number of out-of-school children keeps increasing year after year.

The right to education can only be given practical meaning if it is translated into minimum packages of attitudes, knowledge and skills for all without any barriers. Despite the emphasis of the 1987 educational reforms on the girl-child and laws enacted in the 1992 constitution on the rights of the girl-child to education, girl-child participation in education still remains very low. The purpose of the study is therefore to study the factors influencing gender representation in education in the Amansie East District of the Ashanti Region.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The broad aim of the study is: To assess the impact (negative and positive) of the factors that affect female participation in SHSs education in Ghana. The specific objectives are:

1. To examine how teachers' methodologies tend to favour boys and girls in the classroom,
2. To analyse the effects of school-environment conditions on female access and participation in Senior High School education,

3. To examine the nature and extent of policy intervention in education and the outcomes of policy initiatives on female access and participation in SHS education and
4. To suggest appropriate measures to address the challenges that militate against female participation in Senior High School education.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions have been formulated to guide the study:

1. How do teachers methodologies of teaching favour boys than girls in the classroom?
2. How do school environments influence girls' attendance to school?
3. To what extent does policy intervention in education affect female access and participation in school?
4. How can the girl-child participation in education be improved in the Amansie East District?

### **Significance of the Study**

The study is important because it will serve as reference material on the factors influencing gender participation in education and the remedies to these factors and help uncover whatever gender bias people have for boys and girls education. Again, the study is important because it is hoped that, its findings will help uncover the common notions, understandings, opinions and misconceptions about girls' education in the Amansie East District. It also will help to enlighten parents on the appropriate roles they are expected to play in order to help girls go to school. Furthermore, the study will be an instrument for use by the MOE and the GES in the formulation of policies and programmes on girls' education as copies will be made available to them.

In addition, it will prove useful to all colleges of education which need such information in planning course content and running courses on girls' education. Finally, the Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) and the Teachers Education Division both of the GES will find the findings of this study very useful in designing and running in-service training courses on methods of teaching for teachers already engaged in teaching in various schools and colleges in Ghana.

### **Delimitation of the Study**

The study was confined to three selected SHSs in the district out of the eight public and private SHSs in the district. These schools namely, Opong Memorial SHS at Kokofu, Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) High School, and Wesley High School both at Bekwai were selected to represent the schools in the district. They are all mixed schools. It is envisaged that since both the teachers and students of these schools are of similar characteristics as teachers and students in all other SHSs in the district and again, since all the schools in the district belong to the same administrative district, the study will yield valid and reliable results from which a degree of generalization could be made to all other schools in the district.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This research has several limitations that will restrict its applicability and its findings. First, the study is associated with the usual limitations of cross-sectional survey research, namely data collected at a single point. Second, the analysis of the data obtained was based on descriptive statistics. This limited the study in the sense that they provided a simpler analysis of the factors influencing gender representation in education in the Amansie East

District of the Ashanti Region. Better results might have been obtained if use had been made of inferential statistics such as regression and variance analysis.

Finally, the study covers only one area and region and may not be a true representation of larger samples of SHS students in Ghana. Consequently, whilst the findings may be used as a guide for future research efforts, it cannot be applied to other settings equally. It is envisaged that since both the teachers and students of these schools are of similar characteristics as teachers and students in all other SHSs in the district and again, since all the schools in the district belong to the same administrative district, the study will yield valid and reliable results from which a degree of generalization could be made to all other schools in the district.

### **Organisation of the Rest of the Study**

Chapter Two deals with the review of related literature concerning some of the factors that impede males and females in their effort to participate in education and the various roles played by government to remedy the situation. The chapter ends with a definition of terms used in the study. Chapter Three is devoted to a discussion of the research techniques and methodology. It examines the population and sample, the instruments for data collection and the administration of the questionnaire. Chapter Four deals with the analysis and presentation of the data collected. It also deals with responses from teachers, students and parents. Finally, Chapter Five presents the summary, conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter is designed to acquaint the reader with existing studies as the researcher is aware that, a lot of studies have been carried out on this field. The literature review is drawn from previous scholarly works, various institutional reports and academic journals. The literature is organized into four main sub-topics:

1. Millennium Development Goals
2. Access, Equity and Quality Education
3. Cultural Barriers to Girls' Education
4. Government Strategies to Promote Equity in Education.

#### **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**

The MDGs are eight goals to be achieved by the year 2015 that respond to the world's main development challenges. The MDGs are drawn from the actions and targets contained in the Millennium Declaration that was adopted by 189 nations and signed by 147 heads of state and governments during the United Nations Millennium Summit in September, 2000. The goals range from halving extreme poverty to Universal Primary Education by all by year 2015.

For the purpose of this study, goals 2 and 3 will be discussed; goal two aims at achieving Universal Primary Education to ensure that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls, will be able to complete a full course of their



primary education. Goal 3 has to do with the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. That will be the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2015 and at all levels of education not later than the year 2015. Compliance of the MDGs 2 and 3 is considered very important as governments have taken important steps for the reforms of policies and for the empowerment of the girl- child.

Ghana, as a member of the international community, has used different strategies to show her commitment towards achieving Universal Primary Education by ensuring that all children of primary school age enrol and complete school by the year 2015. The government has shown this commitment through policy directives and interventions like the Education Strategy Plan (ESP) for 2003 -2015, the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) and the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) strategies used to operationalize the policies which include the introduction of capitation grant (school fees abolition) and the introduction of nutrition and school feeding programmes for Ghana to achieve Universal Access to Equality in Primary Education, which is equally necessary for the country to achieve gender parity in education. Considerable strides have been made towards increasing the number of girls attending school. For example, in 1997 Girls' Education Unit was established as part of the Basic Education Division (BED) of GES to co-ordinate the implementation of activities related to girl- child education.

All the above have resulted in significant progress in the educational sector especially in the past years. For instance, primary school enrolment has increased significantly. Primary school Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) rose

nearly 10% thus bringing the total enrolment which increased from 62% to 69%. Every region experienced a rise in enrolment: Northern Region (where rates were lowest) experienced the largest increase. For instance the overall enrolment in basic schools had increased by 16.7% in the 2005/2006 academic year (UNICEF Ghana, 2006). Progress has also been made towards achieving gender parity through significant increase in girls' enrolment.

After stagnating the previous years, Gender Parity Index (GPI) which is a measure of the level of girls' participation in formal education also showed some improvements in the 2005/2006 academic year. For example, enrolment of girls increased slightly more than that of boys, 18% and 15.3 respectively with the GPI in most regions in Ghana experiencing significant gaps between the numbers of boys and girls in school. The situation is not different in the Amansie East District. Though there has been much improvement in the GPI, there has been no sufficient increase in the MDGs 2 and 3 in order to achieve gender parity by the year 2015 in the district. The major challenges in the area are the ignorance of the benefit of education and discriminatory practices.

### **Access, Quality and Equity Education**

The World Bank defines access as "the ability of children to progress through basic education cycle without delay or drop out". This means enrolling in primary school at age six and completing a three -year JHS at age 14 (Chao & Alper, 1998). This section covers a range of topics linked to educational access: health, households, migration, educational costs and child labour which have direct and indirect effectson children's access to school.

## **Health and Nutrition**

Many studies have looked at children's health in Ghana and many health problems identified have potential implications on schooling (Pridmore, 2007). Ghana National Commission on Children (GNCC) (2000) asserted a little over (16%) of school age children surveyed suffered from recurring health problems. Fentiman, Hall and Bundy (2001) conducted research on malnutrition among school-age children in the Eastern Region and found out that (70%) of all primary school age children were anaemic.

Similarly, Sarris and Shams (1991) studied malnutrition among school-age children in Ghana and found out that about (36%) of children surveyed were malnourished. The research indicates that in general, malnutrition is higher in Northern Ghana (Sarris & Shams, 1991) where socio-economic indicators are low. In these regions enrolments, attendance and completion rates tend to be lower. The study by Fentiman, Hall and Bundy (2001) indicates the importance of livelihoods to nutrition with young children from farming communities being significantly more undernourished than children from fishing communities.

Health has the potential to affect access to schooling. Various studies indicate that a child's health can be influenced as he/she goes to school and how he/she functions in school. Similarly, the health of teachers is an important factor in determining teachers' attendance to school and the type of interactions which take place in classrooms. Research in Ghana indicates a correlation between malnutrition, stunted growth and delayed enrolment in school (Fentiman, Hall & Bundy, 1999, 2001; Glewwe & Jacoby, 1995). A child's health status affects how they function at school. "Children who suffer

from malnutrition, hunger or who lack certain micro nutrients do not have the same potential for living as compared to healthy and well-nourished children” (Pridmore, 2007, p. 21).

Seidu (2003) investigated the impact of aid intervention on girls’ enrolment attendance and attendance ratio in schools in the East Gonja District of Northern Ghana. He found out that although respondents perceived food aid as an incentive for girls to enrol, attend and remain in school till completion, the most important factor was the awareness of the importance and benefits of girls’ education. The study found no statistically significant difference in enrolment before and after food aid. This finding raised questions about the wisdom of investing heavily in school feeding programmes as a way of improving access without attending to other factors, especially health-related ones.

According to the Ministry of Health (2001), more than (90%) of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) cases are found among the 15 and 49 age group. HIV/AIDS affects both teachers and students and has direct influences on educational access (Bennell et al., 2002). Children who are orphaned from AIDS may drop out of school to care for sick household members. There might be cost implications around access where family members are unable to work and some children might be infected with the virus themselves.

Tamukong (2004) suggests that infected teachers might experience long and frequent absence from school, low productivity, financial hardship and non-completion of curricular. Avotri (2002) on the other hand, claims that

the prevalence rate for Ghanaian teachers is higher than the national average at around 9.2 percent.

### **School Costs and Access**

Public basic education in Ghana is tuition-free. However, a high non-tuition cost of schooling has been known to discourage some poor households from sending their children to school. Several studies have shown that indirect costs of schooling including school levies are one of the major causes of non-attendance to school (Oduro, 2000). According to Oduro (2000), the high cost of schooling is often the most frequent reason cited for non-attendance. The three largest expenditure items facing households are the cost of providing food, clothing, school levies and registration costs (Oduro, 2000).

Similarly, Canagarahaj and Coulombe (1997) point out that high cost of schooling push children into the labour market to enable them afford school or pull them away from school as they cannot afford it. Hence the official and unofficial fee charged for schooling is negatively correlated with school participation. This increases child labour which leads to termination of their education. Avotri (2000) noted that direct and indirect costs are main factors affecting access to schooling (especially in rural areas and for girls who are required to do more household chores). Although officially there may be no fees for entrance, cost of textbooks, uniforms, exercise books, stationery, furniture and transports are required. Faced with affordability constraints, parents tend to send boys to school over girls.

### **Schools Supply and Facilities**

Supply of schools in some districts and for some communities in Ghana is problematic. This is especially the case of post-primary education

and communities living in poor, rural areas. A study by CARE International (2003) describes distance to school and supply of schools for small settlements as key challenges facing education access in rural areas in Northern Ghana. Access to schooling can also be problematic for fishing communities, with schools 'inaccessible' and some can only be reached with the aid of the canoe (Fentiman et al., 2001). In Northern Ghana, sparsely populated communities 'scattered across the regions' make school supply problematic. The core welfare indicators report (CARE International, 2003) states that the Upper West and Upper East Regions (34.95% children in the Upper West) and (32.6% in the Upper East) have the highest percentage of children walking over (30) minutes to school each day.

Often distance to school was cited by these communities as one of the main reasons for non-attendance (CARE International, 2003). In communities where children are required to provide support within households at particular times, the formal schooling system which is based around rigid and set times might not always be appropriate (Avotri, 2000). This might particularly be the case for girl- students (FAWE, 2001). The CARE International (2003), study describes schooling as often incompatible with the time needed for household chores and farming duties.

### **Migration and Educational Access**

Migration is linked to issues of fostering and orphan-hood but also includes the movement of household units. In Ghana the latter might include pastoralist, nomadic and fishing communities. Available studies on migration and educational access in Ghana will be explored. Hashin (2005) looks at the independent migration of children from farming households in rural Northern

Ghana to urban households in Central and Southern Ghana, and the relationship with educational access. In the Northern village (Tempane-Natriga) where the Northern study originated, the study describes how in the year 2001, 77 out of 447 of children representing 17% had independently migrated out of the village (48 children were also within the village, but not living with their immediate families). Children frequently drop out of school before the completion of education to migrate to cities, although earnings of these migrants might be used to pay for education of siblings.

Fentiman et al. (1999, p. 334) allude to “the gendered aspects of child migration and the sense that girls seemed to be migrating more than boys.” A CARE International (2003) study describes how a significant proportion of girls between the ages of 12-18 migrated from districts in the North to urban areas to find employment and earn for dowry (e.g. provision of cloths, pots etc.) in order to prepare for marriage.

### **The Gender Equity Goals in Education and their Importance**

The road to those goals began the Education for All (EFA) conference in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. It drew world attention to achieving Universal Primary Education and closing the gender gap in education. The goal five (5) of education for all (EFA) Dakar, 2000 calls for the “elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in basic education. The Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 3 is to “promote gender equality and empower women” and its Target 4 is to “eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by the year 2015 and at all levels of education not later than 2015. There are some obstacles that are quite visible on the road to achieving gender equity, parity

and ultimately equality in education as the review will cover some of these blocks in detail.

### **Teachers' Behaviour and Pedagogy in Relation to Girls' Performance in Education**

This literature confirms that teachers' behaviour towards girls is a major factor which acts as an obstacle in achieving equity in education. Evidence from Guinea, Malawi and Zambia indicates that both male and female teachers believe that boys are academically superior to girls. In Ghana Fawe (1996) and Osei (1991) mentioned poor teachers' behaviour as a factor which impedes gender in their quest to achieve educational goals.

Osei (1991) writes that, teachers, just like parents, perceive girls to be different for them. Thus some teachers tend to give harsher punishments to boys than girls. In this way they indirectly make boys realize that more is expected of them, while girls who may have nobody to guide them or role models to aspire to may think they will always be favoured and as such may not work as hard. Barimah (1984), in a survey, revealed that Togolese High School girls are seen as neither intelligent nor successful; whereas male students passed positive social and personal goals and abilities.

A pattern of systematic discouragement and discrimination in teacher behaviour was displayed toward girls' classroom observation in Tanzania which showed that teachers pay more attention to boys than girls. The school environment is described as an authoritarian "Macho" environment where corporal punishment is frequently meted out and where the popular teacher-centred pedagogy creates a competitive classroom environment which is not conducive to learning, particularly to girls (Mbilinyi & Mbughumi, 1991).



Paecheter (1998), in citing the studies of other researchers in the US and UK indicated that teachers discriminate against girls in calling pupils to participate in teaching and learning activities. This marginalizes girls from benefiting from collaborative learning and denies them opportunities to work with their ideas.

According to Osei (1991), in Ghana, the main textbooks used in basic schools contain a number of pictures and information which can indirectly influence the thoughts and aspirations of females. In the English Language for Ghanaian schools for instance, stories and pictures about people whose occupation demand high education such as statesmen, lawyers and doctors are all mostly depicting men while females are shown as either mothers in the home caring for babies, selling in the market or at best primary school teachers and nurses. These hidden messages convey or contain norms which can influence the choice of subjects of girls and ultimately influence their careers.

Stromquist (1989) confirms that textbooks in developing countries are remarkably consensual in their portrayal of women in obedient, submissive and unselfish roles. The study of children's textbooks also found that the central figure in a story was usually male. More so the characters in these stories that displayed ingenuity, creativity, autonomy or self-respect were boys four times as often as they were girls. The study concludes that such biases do not stir up the enthusiasm of girls for greater educational heights. This negatively affects the effort to achieve equity and parity in education.

## **Sexual Harassment and Female Equity in Education**

Sexual harassment acts as a barrier to achieving gender equity in education. The problems surrounding sexuality has always been perpetuated by both teachers and male students which influences girls' educational outcome negatively. Paludi (1990) stated that one area that is receiving greater attention is sexual harassment of women students. Dziech and Weiner (1984) reported that 30% of undergraduate women suffer sexual harassment from at least one of their instructors during their four years of college. Sexual harassment is thus a major form of victimization of women in our system of higher education even though it is still largely a "hidden issue." Women students who have been harassed often change their entire education programme as a result. When this happens performance in course work suffers and many women drop out of school altogether.

Bortei-Doku Aryeetey and Kuenyehia (1998) stated that sexual harassment is believed to occur widely in Ghana, but not widely acknowledged or reported, partly because of problems of this definition of proof (Tsikata, 2001). Categories of women mostly affected by harassment are subordinates in offices and students in schools. Nortey (2000) reported that in the Edina-Eguafo Abrem District of the Central Region, some JSS female students had to drop out of school due to sexual harassment meted out to them by their teachers. According to a UNICEF (1995) report, there is a trend for men to seek out younger sexual partners in Zimbabwe. This affects young girls as they are forced by their parents to marry rich men and sometimes become pregnant at school-going age which leads to termination of their education.

Anderson-Levitt, Blooh, Soumare and Cortina (1994) reported that a student in Guinea indicated that boys are very aggressive towards girls and that they used physical force, threatened and teased girls to silence them in class. This means harassment occurs within and outside the classroom usually on their way to school. Teachers often collude with pupils in verbal harassment of girls in the classroom either directly or by omission.

Gordon (1994) noted that girls at school face an impossible conflict of roles. On the one hand, they are chided by teachers for being more assertive but on other hand, they are treated as hunters of men. Most teachers consider that as the main reason for poor performance of girls academically. In short, sexual harassment, under-age sex indicates that females face an extremely hostile and uncomfortable learning environment in school. The lack of redress by authorities and the abuse of female students within educational institutions serve as a block in achieving equity and parity in education.

### **Quality Education**

The concept of quality is evasive. It is perplexing to define and often conflicts with one another. Dare (2005) observes that all the elements associated with educational quality are interrelated; a serious defect in one element is likely to have implications for quality in another. Systems that embrace change through data generation, use and self-assessment are more likely to offer quality education to students (Glasser, 1990).

### **Early Childhood Psycho-social Development Experiences**

Positive early experiences and interactions are also vital to preparing a quality learner. A study in 12 Latin American countries found that attendance at day care coupled with higher level of parental involvement that include

parents reading to young children is associated with higher test scores and lower rates of grade repetition in primary school (Willins, 2000). Effective and appropriate stimulation in a child's early years influences the brain development necessary for emotional regulation, arousal, and behavioural management. A child who misses positive stimulation or is subject to chronic stress in the pre-school years may have difficulty with psycho-social development later in life (McCain & Mustard, 1999).

When children reach school age, research demonstrates that to achieve academically, children must attend school consistently. A child's exposure to curriculum comes from being in school (Fuller et al., 1999). Parents may not always have the tools and background to support their children's cognitive and psychological development throughout their school years. Parents' level of education for example has a multifaceted impact on children's ability to learn in school. Children whose parents had primary school education or less were more than three times as likely to have low test scores or grade repetition than children whose parents had at least some secondary schooling (Willins, 2000).

Parental education not only influences parent-child interactions related to learning but also affects parents' income and needs help in the home or field-help that often comes at the expense of keeping children in school (Carron & Chau, 1999). In sum, the home curriculum seems to play a vital role in preparing quality learners for school.

### **Quality School Facilities**

The physical learning environment or the place in which learning occurs ranges from relatively modern and well-equipped buildings to open-air gathering places. The quality of school facilities seems to have an indirect

effect that is hard to measure. Some authors argue that extent empirical evidence is inconclusive as to whether the condition of school building is related to higher student achievement after taking into account students' background (Fuller & Dellagnello, 1999).

Many countries significantly expanded access to primary education but the building of new schools has not kept pace with the increase in the student population. Some researchers argue that measures such as pupil-teacher ratios are reasonable approximations of actual class sizes especially at primary schools (Lockheed & Verspoor, 1999)

### **Teacher Quality**

The highest quality teachers are those capable of helping their students learn, because they have deep mastery of both their subject matter and pedagogy (Darling-Hammond, 1997). A study in Guinea found out that teachers of too little preparation before entering the profession were observed to master neither the subject matter they taught nor pedagogical skills required for good presentation of the material (Carron & Chau, 1996). This affects educational quality since students' achievement especially those that go beyond basic skills depend largely on teachers' command of subject matter (Mullens, Murnane, & Willett, 1996) and their ability to use that knowledge to help students learn. Good teachers are skilled not only in instructional methods but also in evaluation and assessment practices that allow them to gauge individual student learning and adopt activities to students' needs.

Achievement in literacy in general and numeracy in particular represent key educational outcomes. Teaching students to write, read and calculate is often considered as the main purpose of primary education.

Investigations into literacy levels in recent years have shown that children in developing countries had lower levels of literacy than children in high income countries who have received similar amounts of schooling (Willins, 2000).

### **Cultural Factors**

Socio-cultural threats act as one of the factors that affect girls in their bid to go to school. These are household chores as the domain of women and girls, early marriage and lack of parental encouragement for girls. Mbilinyi et al. (1991) pointed that female domestic labour is a key factor that militates against girls' achievement at school and is also sizeable opportunity cost for parents when they make a choice about whether to send a child to school. In other words the need for female domestic labour affects decisions about whether to send a daughter to school in the first place and once at school, how long she should stay. Not only do women in sub-Saharan Africa undertake the major tasks in agriculture production but they also perform tasks associated with biological and social reproduction such as pregnancy, cooking, caring for the sick, and other household chores.

The African Centre for Women (1997) stated that girls are exploited in terms of unequal household and agricultural work load as compared to male siblings and usually, her spouse after marriage. In Africa, especially in rural areas where most of the population lives, girls are expected to help with all domestic chores such as caring for younger siblings, walking great distances and carrying very heavy loads of firewood, wastes, doing agricultural work and food processing, all of which require a great deal of time and physical energy.

Additionally, when compared to boys in many households, girls are routinely given less food or less nutritious food, less rest and less opportunity for self-development. The number of house work in a typical day by average African girls and women surpasses that of men and boys by far and women and girls supply 70% of the labour for food production. However, they receive only 10% of African income (African Centre for Women, 1997).

Opong and Abu (1987) in their studies carried out on women's workloads show that women work longer and hard both in and outside the home than men. On average women spend more than ten hours a day on their activities (Tsikata, 2001). Tsikata (2001) noted that female time loads are 15-25% higher than those of males and the main factors accounting for this is women's heavier responsibility for social production. Heady (2000) in his study said, even where the girls are allowed to attend school, the impact of working can lead to a decline in enthusiasm for schooling. Using data gathered in Ghana, a study on the effect of child labour on learning achievement found that the day-to-day impact of child labour on those in school leaves children especially girls too tired to learn and child labour robs children of their interest in learning.

### **Religion, Early Marriage and Female Participation in Education**

“If a girl's main role in society is to be a wife and a mother, then it may be felt that the sooner, the better off she is let to achieve her recognition in the community in the capacity” (African Centre for Women, 1997). The practice of betrothal and early marriage are among factors that negatively affect female participation in education, especially among the Muslim communities in Northern Ghana (Ministry of Education, 1995). Abubakar

(1996), in his study of the cause of low level of education among Muslim girls in the Nanumba District, confirmed that majority of parents withdraw their daughters from school for marriage purposes at ages between 15 and 20 years.

Hyde and Kadzamira (1994) are of the view that there is always conflict of roles with regard to initiation and the practice is often seen as depleting financial resources which could have been devoted to schooling. Prah (2002) argues that, there are serious gender inequalities in Ghanaian education. The nature of women's education is often more oriented toward teaching women to be better wives and mothers than equipping them with skills and training they need to enable them to hold their own beside men in a rapidly changing economy. This socio-cultural barrier affects women and girls' achievement and constrains their full potential.

According to Abambila (1994) people in the Kusanaba circuit of Bawku in the Upper East Region of Ghana view girls as the "saving accounts" of parents due to the strong value they attach to early marriage of their daughters. As a result of this it has led to a fall in the level of female educational participation in the area. Bride wealth is considered very important to many families particularly the poor ones. Such families encourage early marriage of their daughters so as to improve family finances, but this also results in the loss of the net benefits of daughters.

Haldane-Lutterodt (1995) said cultural values, which cause females to be seen as important primary tools for procreation have 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 societal expectations by aspiring towards what society expected of them. This often leads to early marriage, an act that very



often leads to termination of education. Again, Pomtsey (1994), who studies the institution of “Fiasidi-vestal” virginity, and its effects on the education of “Fiasidi” girls, in Afife, Volta Region of Ghana reports that, the most serious problems facing the girls who are virgins of gods is the denial of access to formal education. This denial is mainly feted with the strict application of the institution of “fabois”, rules and the formal education of girls. They fear that should the girls be exposed to western civilization and religion, they may consequently cease to be “fiasidi”.

Dolphyne (1991), attributes the sex differential in education to the fact that, women’s major role is to ensure continuity of the lineage. Women are to be provided for by their husbands. Again, girls with no formal education can engage in retail trade to make a living or sell snacks to workers. Girls also serve as social security benefits for their aged parents and also the risk of a girls’ dropping out of school because of early pregnancy is very high.

### **Lack of Parental Encouragement for Girls**

In the 1970’s researchers documented the fact that Americans prefer male children, especially as first born due to the prime beneficiaries of family assets (Abbott, 1992). Tsikata (2001) opines that most parents believe the returns on educating a girl do not come to them directly but rather to the husband’s family and therefore do not see the need to educate girls because they think the boys are more likely to return the educational returns whereas girls do not concentrate because they are pre-occupied with being mothers and getting married.

According to Nortey (2000) Christian missionaries and the colonial administration who brought formal education into the country and oriented

women education has reinforced traditional beliefs, value and attitudes. Our traditional beliefs, values and attitudes were prejudiced against education and hard stereotyped education in as much that teachers, counsellors with educational background foster gender aspiration and career choices.

Parental attitude concerning girls education are clearly a key factor since they often help influence which children go to school and how long they stay there. Clearly, the attitude of parents reflects those in society at large and is deeply embedded in prevailing cultural norms and values. However, the role parental attitude plays in shaping the educational aspirations of children is unevenly documented for Africa.

Also, parents worry about wasting money on the education of girls who are likely to get pregnant or married before completing their schooling. There is a strong belief that once married, girls become part of another family and parental investment is lost (Davidson & Kanyuka, 1992). Bappa (1985) observed that some illiterate parents still think that education is a waste of time and almost all parents agree that education of girls leads to pregnancy, laziness, fancifulness and girls' inability to do good cooking. Some mothers also often think that their daughters may be spoiled by adopting new ways from the school. Parents tend to judge the value of education by the returns of the labour market. It seems prudent for families to invest in the formal education of boys because they will always be better placed to explore the formal labour market. This reinforces this parental and community bias (Dundar & Haworth, 1992).

In a study by Mensah (1992) on attitude towards female education, a correlation was made between levels of attitudes towards girls' education. It

was found that parents with little or no education tend to be appreciative of the importance of schooling for female children. Hyde and Kadzamira (1994) noted that attitudes reflecting gender structuring are equally present at home and school, serving to circumscribe the opportunities available for girls compared to boys for education. Mothers seemed to recognize that perhaps their own attitudes towards education in general and towards educating girls especially might negatively impact on their daughters' persistence at school.

Historical analysis of female education shows that it has usually not measured up to the standard of male education not because girls are not capable of being educated to levels men attained, but because of society's attitude towards women folks in general. But through the ages, as societies developed, revolutionary changes in attitudes and beliefs about women and their education occurred for the better. It has been asserted historically that educational ideas which emanated from England and Germany exerted an important influence on the development of women's education.

### **Strategies to Promote Girls' Education**

This section explores some of the strategies that are being used to promote girls' education. The section also examines some of the practices being made towards reaching MDG 2015. To achieve this goal, various organizations, governments, communities, donors and international institutions have adopted various interventions at different levels to promote girls' primary education. According to ISSER (2004) there are some government and civil society initiatives, such as the school feeding programme and FCUBE. In spite of the numerous efforts towards achieving Universal Primary Education, Ghana failed to achieve the Millennium

Development Goals in 2005 and studies have shown that unless something is done now, Ghana may not be able to achieve primary education for all by 2015.

### **Free Compulsory Universal Education (fCUBE)**

In 1996, the Basic Education Policy document emphasized the government's commitment and political will to strengthen Free Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) by the year 2005. The FCUBE is a comprehensive programme derived from the 1992 Constitution of Ghana and designed to provide quality basic education for all Ghanaian children of school going-age by the year 2005. The government of Ghana in 1996 embarked on a major donor-funded reform programme. Academic standards, support for teachers, instructional material, school buildings, classroom and equipment had declined as a result of lack of finance and management. The FCUBE impacted on all levels of education and attempted to address the persistent problems of access, retention, curriculum relevance, teacher training provision of physical structures and financing (Ministry of Education, 1996).

### **Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy**

FCUBE was followed by the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRSI) in 2002 which concentrated on the education sector review and meeting the challenges of education in the 21st century. In 2003, the Education Strategy Plan (EPS) came out, focusing on the period 2003-2015, based on the Poverty Reduction Strategy and operates within the framework of Sector Wide Approach (SWAP) for education which is partly situated within the Multi-Donor Budget Support (MDBS) framework. The framework and road map for achieving the education-related MDGs is provided by ESP based

on four core areas namely, equitability, access to education and quality of education.

### **The Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP)**

The pilot phase of (GSFP) was launched in 2005 under the NEPAD “Home Grown” SFP concept and argued that it is one thing getting school children in school but another keeping them in school and making sure that they learn. School health and nutrition status of children are key in this respect and are interventions that enforced the initial success of the abolition of school fees, thus the introduction of the FUCBE programme. The SFP seeks to promote increase in domestic food production, reduce hunger, improve school enrolment and ensure school attendance and retention among the target group of school children in deprived communities in Ghana (MOE, 2005).

The government introduced this programme with the aim of contributing not only to the improvement of the education service delivery but also to improving agricultural development and the reduction of malnutrition among school-age children which seems to be working quite well. The school feeding programme thus contributes to the improvement of education, increase of farmers’ incomes and the development of local agro-processing markets. The daily menu of the school shows that locally produced food is used to feed school children.

### **Capitation Grant**

The Capitation Grant scheme was introduced in 2004 as part of a wider strategy to decentralise education provision. It was designed to meet MDG goals for education and national target established in the 2003-2015 Education Strategic Plan (ESP). The programme was first piloted (with World Bank

support in Ghana's (40) most deprived districts in 2004). Overall enrolment rose by an impressive 14.5 per cent; enrolment gains for pre-schools were particularly significant (over 36 percent). This success led to the nationwide adoption of what is known as "The Capitation Grant System." Every public kindergarten, primary school and JHS receives a grant per pupil every year. Schools are therefore not permitted to charge any fees to parents. After a year of implementation of the Capitation Grant scheme, total enrolment in the forty (40) selected districts increased by (15%) (MOE, 2008)

Within its introduction, the capitation was on average GH¢ 3 per enrolled child but has currently been increased to GH¢ 4.50 per enrolled child which became effective from the 2009/2010 academic year. The grant is used for minor repairs and recreational activities such as furniture repairs, sports and games, stationery and management, health and sanitation, in-service training, transportation and teaching and learning material. A School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP) is prepared together with teachers, heads and ParentTeacherAssociation (PTA) chairmen, and sent for approval before the grant is spent.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter is on the research methods used to generate the empirical data on the research topic. After a brief description of what constitutes the study area. An overview of the research design is provided. A description of the sampling techniques and procedures, which include identification of the target population, sample selection and sample size, the instruments used for the data collection exercise, data collection methods and data sources are then presented.

The data handling procedure and the ethical issues considered are also included in this section. The research problems and issues that were addressed in the study were the following: how do methodologies of teachers favour boys and girls in the classroom; to what extent does the cost of education affect girls' education; how do school environments influence girls' attendance to school and how can the girl-child participation in education be improved in the Amansie East District?

#### **Study Area**

Site selection forms an important component of the research process. According to Berg (2004), an inappropriate location could “weaken or ruin findings. The researcher must be careful to identify an appropriate population, not merely an easily accessible one,” to obtain the most relevant data (Berg, 2004, p. 86). The study was carried out in the Amansie East District. The

Bekwai Municipal is one of the 30 administrative districts in the Ashanti Region. Ashanti Region was chosen for the study site for a number of reasons. Besides being familiar to and within convenient reach of the researcher, Obuasi hosts the biggest mining firm in the region.

### **Research Design**

The research activities undertaken in this study are cross-sectional in character. The study used a descriptive and exploratory research design which not only explored the factors influencing gender representation in education but also gave a clear description of the extent of the poor female participation in education within the area of study. Both the quantitative and qualitative research strategies were used. The rationale is that it offered a better way to understand the research problem, combining the research strategies.

As methods of data collection, the quantitative research employed distribution of questionnaires whilst the qualitative strategy made use of key informant interviews. The researcher tries to describe, analyze and interpret the factors influencing gender representation in education, in the three selected schools in the Amansie East district. The researcher used descriptive sample survey method. Osuala (1991) on his part declares that descriptive surveys are versatile and point to present needs. He adds that descriptive research is basic to all types of research in assessing the situation as a pre-requisite for conclusions and generalization. The research is non-experimental because it studies the relationship between non-manipulated variables in a natural setting.

As Gay (1992) noted, “the descriptive sample survey involves collecting data in order to test hypothesis or to answer questions concerning the correct status of the subject of the study” (p. 187). Babbie (1990)



recommended that the descriptive sample survey is for the purpose of generalizing from a sample to a population so that the inferences can be made about same characteristics, attributes, or behaviour of the population. Since it is the purpose of the researcher to collect Information and facts from parents, teachers and students on factors influencing gender representation in education in the Amansie East district the survey design was found appropriate to be used.

### **Population**

The population is made of teachers, students and parents of the three selected schools in the district. The total number of teachers in the first school; Seventh Day Adventist Senior High school is (75). The student population is (1624). The population of students, teachers of the second senior high school, Wesley High School is (882), and (44) respectively. The third school which is Oppong Memorial Senior High school has students' population of (1124); the teachers' population is (69). The parents' population will be the parents who will attend Parents and Teachers Association meeting in their respective schools. Both illiterates and literates will be sampled for the study.

### **Sample and Sampling Procedure**

In determining the sample size for a survey it is necessary to take into account the resources available. It is important that in designing the survey, the sample size has to be manageable operationally for all the survey activities. The sample size should also be representative enough of the total population in terms of the characteristics of the target population. Taking all these into consideration, at the end of the sampling process, there was a sample total of 96 (21 Teachers, 40 Students, 35 Parents). Use was made of

both primary and secondary data in the study. Secondary data were obtained from desk review of available documentation from the Ghana Education offices and from published articles from newspapers on the subject.

Primary data were obtained from responses from and questionnaires interviews. The sampling technique adopted was the simple random sampling. The forty students and (21) teachers were simple randomly selected from each of the three schools. At their respective schools, the names of the teachers were written and put into a bowl and reshuffle. The teachers' were asked to randomly pick from the bowl. The students were simple randomly selected in the same way as the teachers. The total was (21) teachers and (40) students. In the case of the parents, 35 were simple randomly selected from the three schools at their Parent-Teacher Association meeting. This implies that, the number that was selected represents those who attended the Parent-Teacher Association meeting and the number that attended the meeting is a representative of total parent population.

### **Instrument**

A questionnaire and a key informant interview guide were designed for data collection. A questionnaire was used because not only does a questionnaire require less skill to administer, it is also an inexpensive way to gather data from a potentially large number of respondents. The major factors influencing gender representation in education were identified following the review of related literature. The questionnaires were designed by the researcher following the procedures outlined by Babbie (1990), Moser and Kalton (1992).

The initial items were constructed to identify factors which lead to school drop-out and ideas frequently found in the literature and observed in schools. Some of these items were suggested for the purpose of the study, while other items were modified or selected from scales constructed by (Moser & Kalton, 1992). In all there were three main separate sets of questionnaire, for Parents. Teachers and Students, The reason was to get different views from respondents to make the study more representative, reliable and valid. The questionnaires were developed after intensive review of the literature.

In designing the questionnaires, 41 items were constructed to elicit responses for parents, 21 items were constructed for the students and 20 for the teachers to respond to. The questionnaires (Refer to Appendices A, B and C) were divided into six sections for the students and parents. The teachers' questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A of the students' and teachers' questionnaire consists of personal data of the respondents such as age, sex and the type of locality the respondent lives. Section B con of specific school facilities and female education .Section C consists of household labour and female education. (See appendixes for details).

The questionnaire for students has 10 closed items, 11 open ended questions. Those for the teachers have 6 open ended and 12 dosed ended, and 2 combined open ended and close ended items. The parents' questionnaire had 16 open ended and is closed ended. There are 9 items which are both open and closed ended. The different types of item that are included are in order to obtain a variety of responses related to the topic. The varied nature of the

questionnaire items is also to give respondents the freedom and opportunity to express their views freely and candidly as possible on the issues.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The research took into consideration the following ethical consideration in the process of collecting the data for the study. The respondents for the study were allowed to participate voluntarily in the research without being coerced. The reason for the observance of this is that if they are not allowed to participate out of their own volition they would give false information that would mar the objective of the research. The respondents for the study were told the objectives of the study, the possible implication and the effect of the research. As a result of this, the information given was based purely on informed consent. The confidentiality of the study participants was observed by the researcher. The data collected were managed in such a way that the identities of the respondents were protected and that no information was directly traced to or associated with any individual respondent. All references were duly acknowledged to avoid plagiarism.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher conducted the survey in person. In administering the questionnaire, the researcher first contacted the headmasters and the department heads of the selected schools and explained to them the purpose and significance of the study. The heads introduced the researcher to teachers and the students. The researcher explained the questionnaire to the teachers and the students and asked them to complete the questionnaires within three days. The researcher went round personally to retrieve the questionnaire

administered to the parents. The questionnaires were retrieved, screened thoroughly for missing information.

### **Data Analysis**

Data checking involved checking the correct responses of the items and separating incorrectly responded questionnaires from correctly responded ones. The data were then coded and input into the computer for analysis after which errors due to the data entry were checked. To check the accuracy of data 96 entries, after all records had been entered, every tenth record was compared to the corresponding questionnaire. No errors were found in the records that were checked. The data were then analyzed using computer software such as Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 18) and Microsoft Excel 2007.

Since this was an exploratory study, the statistical analysis was mainly composed of descriptive. The descriptive approach involved the use of tools of percentages, frequency, mean, standard deviation, cross tabulation and simple analysis of perception. Frequency counts were provided and reported as percentages for assessment of all the questionnaire items. In addition, the data were summarized and presented using various statistical analysis tools such as the use of charts, graphs, frequency tables and the various measures of central tendency. The responses from the interview schedule were used to corroborate the responses gathered from the questionnaire.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSION**

In this chapter, the procedure for analysing the data collected and results obtained are reported and discussed. Prior to the analysis of the data collected, the questionnaires were checked for consistency of responses. The method of coding was to facilitate identification and to make the analysis less complicated. The objectives of the study were the basis upon which the analyses were done. The results obtained have been presented under the following research questions:

1. How do methodologies of teachers favour boys and girls in the classroom
2. How do school environments influence girls' attendance to school?
3. To what extent does policy intervention in education affect female access and participation in school?
4. How can the girl-child participation in education be improved in the Amansie East District?

#### **Background Characteristics of Respondents**

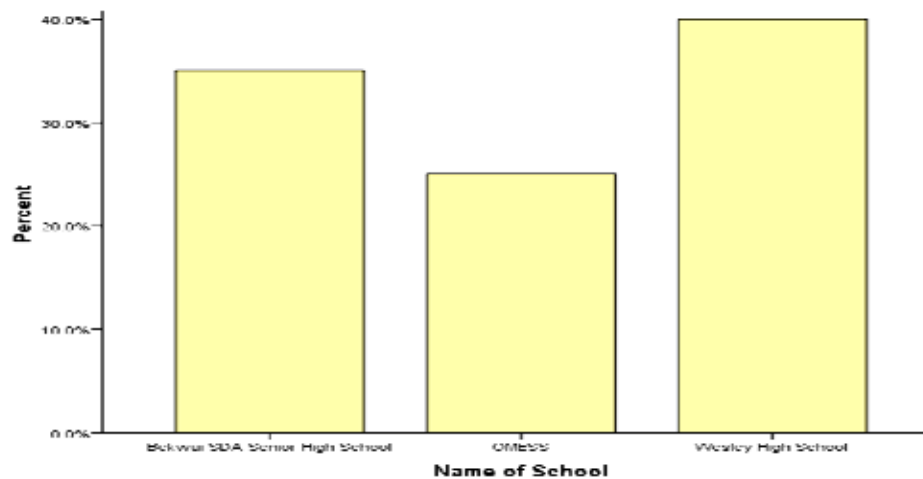
The present study surveyed teachers, students and parents from three SHSs in the Amansie East District namely, Oponong Memorial SHS, Kokofu, Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) High School and Wesley High School both at Bekwai. Twenty one parents were sampled comprising 15 Males and seven females. The average age for students ranged between 16-18 years.

Respondents who are parents were either married (66.7%), single (20.0%) or divorced (13.3%). The educational levels of parents were Secondary (13.3%) and Tertiary (86.7%). From these two schools, 10 teachers were also sampled, representing 20.41% of the total data.

**Table 1: Percentage Participation of Respondents**

		Students	Teachers	Parents	Total
Male	Count	18	20	15	53
	% of Total	45.00%	57.14%	71.43%	55%
Female	Count	22	15	6	43
	% of Total	55.00%	42.86%	28.57%	45%
Total	Count	40	35	21	96
	% of Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100%

The Bar Chart in Figure 1 shows a distribution of the three SHSs sampled and the age ranges of students sampled.



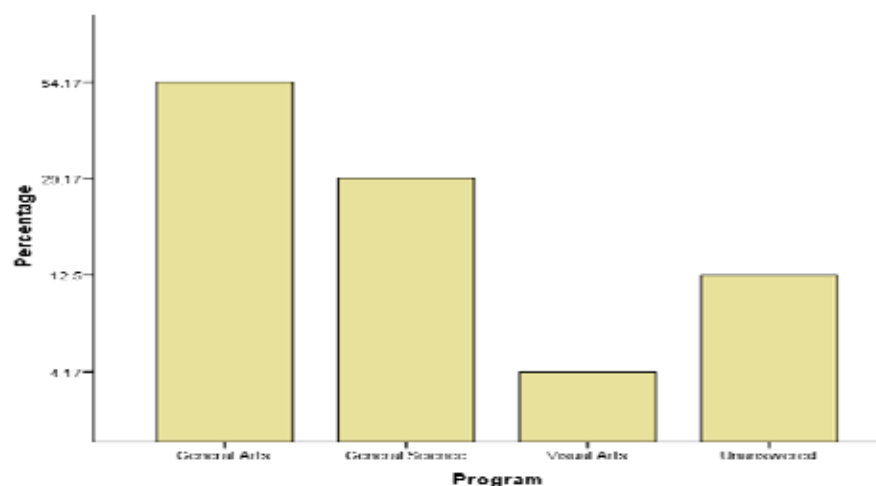
**Figure 1.** Distribution of the three (3) Senior High Schools

### **Choice of Programme of Study**

It was assumed in this study that parents usually have an influence on their children on the kind of program they must study in school. Choice of a

program has likelihood to affect a child’s dream of a particular career and must be dependent on both the parent and the prospective student. There is this perception that there is a higher tendency for male students to perform better in certain subject areas than their female counterparts. This study collected data on what informs the choice of a particular subject at the SHS level.

Students from two separate schools namely, Oppong Memorial SHS, Wesley High School at Bekwai and, Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) High School (SHS 1-4) constituted the respondents and though majority of the respondents from the various schools were not able to participate in the survey, the sampling technique used makes the sample a true representation of the population. In order to confirm that the right people are captured in this survey, a question was asked, “What programme are you offering?” Out of the 40 students sampled, General Arts was 54.17%, General Science 29.17%, Visual Arts 4.17% and 12.50% of the remaining respondents did not answer that question. Figure 2 represents the frequencies of respondents and the programs they offer.



**Figure 2:** Percentage frequency distribution of respondents and programmes offered



Which of the two sexes will you invest much in when it comes to education? The attitude of parents to educating their children will depend on the benefits they hope to obtain. In order to obtain a complete picture of factors affecting gender representation in education, respondents (parents) were asked, “Which of the two sexes would you invest much in when it comes to education?” The responses in Table 2 show that, out of the 35 parents sampled, twenty representing 57.14% will prefer to invest in their girl child education more than they will do for the male child.

According to Hyde and Kadzamira (1994), girls who come from socio-economically advantaged families are much more likely to enter and remain in secondary school than are girls from disadvantaged families. Hertz and Sperling (2004) cited the factors influencing girls’ education and indicate that the cost of education might influence the house hold decision of sending a child to school. Thus direct fees (tuition), indirect fees (Parent Teacher Association fees), indirect cost (transportation, collecting, and safety) and opportunity cost (chore time, contribution to family income).

While 42.86 % will also prefer to educate their male child than a female child, 35% of the parents sampled explained that they will educate their girl child because, female education is valuable, and that if you educate a man, you educate an individual but if you educate a woman, you educate a nation, 13.4% of other parents too believe that educating the male child is the best because a male child will grow to take up responsibilities at home, comprising taking care of the younger ones. Meanwhile, all the 35 parents sampled who represent 100% of respondents also respond that their children

whether male or female must attain the highest level of education which is tertiary education.

Sutherland-Addy (2002) posits that in Ghanaian classroom, there are ways teachers adversely influence the performance of girls. They argue that girls are discouraged and intimidated by teachers due to their failure to cultivate a sense of independence and trust in their abilities, sexual harassed and are abused and exploited at school level for instance sending them on errands during school hours.

Casely-Hayford (2008) asserts that if teachers pay more attention to boys or embarrass students in front of the class, then girls become less motivated to participate in class activities. Rugh (1999) indicates that teachers' low expectation of girls, compared with boys, contribute to the amount of attention teachers pay to girls in the classrooms. Watkins, Watt and Buston (2001) notes that interaction of teachers and students were more positive towards boys than girls, especially in the upper primary. Also, teachers were found to spend more time helping boys than girls.

**Table 2: Participation of Respondents by Gender**

Gender	No.	%
Male	15	42.86
Female	20	57.14
Total	35	100.0

### **How do school environments influence girls' school attendance?**

Associations between academic achievement and characteristics of the school environment can result from direct environmental influences of the school, or from placement of children into particular school environments

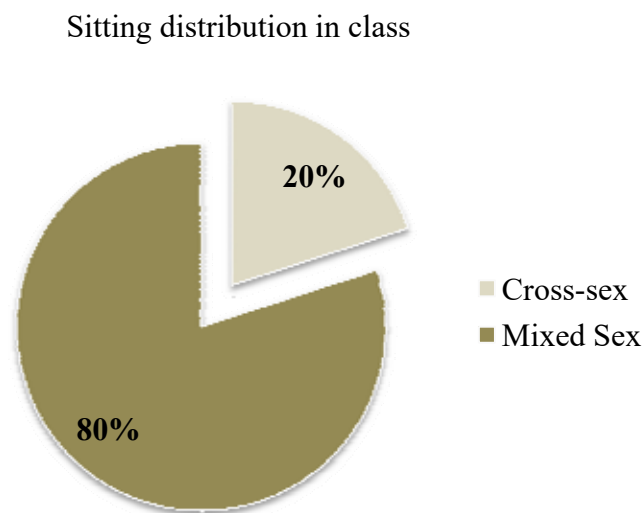
based on prior ability. As part of this research, twenty-one (21) teachers were sampled from these three (3) schools, Oppong Memorial SHS, Wesley High School and Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) High School both at Bekwai. Also, 21 teachers were sampled with equal representation from the three schools. The 21 teachers sampled were asked the question, “What type of sitting arrangement do you want your class to have?” 17 of them representing 80% of the sampled data responded that they will prefer a mixed sex sitting arrangement to a cross-sex sitting arrangement.

CARE International (2003) comments that many schools in Ghana have poor and inadequate toilet facilities for girls and that the pit latrines used by schools are dirty, poorly serviced, and maintained, lack the privacy girls need, especially during their menses. Girls therefore feel embarrassed to use these toilets. The findings contradicts the study by FAWE (2000) which revealed that lack of water and adequate bathroom facilities have discouraged girls from going to school when they are in their “periods”. This implies that lack of separate urinals and toilets for girls at school serve as a threat to female participation in education

Mixed sex sitting arrangement is defined as the integrated education of male and female students in the same environment in no order while cross sex sitting arrangement is that which puts either of the sexes in the middle of other two sexes and with that, 4 representing 20% of the sample responded they will prefer the cross sex sitting to the mixed sex sitting. The respondents who were sampled thought mixed sex sitting arrangement is the best and explained that it helps in male and female discussions, ensures gender sensitivity and that both

sexes help each other by sharing ideas. Figure 3 presents the distribution of respondents and sitting arrangement.

According to Seidu (2003), in many countries distance to school has a bigger impact on girls than on boys for a variety of reason in some places young girls are not considered to be ready for travel, older girls may not be subject to harassment and even if the trip is safe, the direct cost may be high and the time lost on travelling would be more costly to girls work than to that of boys. Nikoi (1998) states that the majority of parents wanted to use the nearest school for girls if possible; a criterion they also called proximity, however, he also felt that there was a range of factors, including happiness and discipline, which interacted to make a nexus. So the closer the school is to their home, parents are less likely to worry about girls.



**Figure 3:** Distribution of respondents and sitting arrangement

### **How can the girl-child's participation in education be Improved in the Amansie East District?**

There are several factors that affect the education of most Ghanaian children and categorically, female education has been on the low side in the

history of Ghana due to a number of challenges. The male to female ratio in the history of Ghanaian education has not been better than 70% to 30%. What's the way forward or the better ways of addressing that challenge?

This research was also conducted to provide answers to the question, how female participation in education can be improved in the Amansie East District. 96 persons, making up the underlining sample were picked from the following categories: teachers (21), parents (35), and students (40). Each of these respondents was asked how they think the education challenge in their district, Amansie East District, can be improved. For parents, they suggest that the girl child needs educational workshops for awareness and scholarships that can help brilliant but needy students.

Some parents also proposed that policies should be put in place, monitored and enforced to educate the public on the importance of girl child education. Role model outreach programmes must be instituted to impact on both parents and the girl-child. The second set of suggestions which the students think can help restore higher numbers for the participation of the girl child in education is that instead of making education free and compulsory, girl child education must rather be made free and compulsory. Finally, the teachers also are of the view that, female participation in education can be improved by making education more proactive since female students will be more comfortable with a more practical form of education than it is now.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Overview of the Study

The primary aim of this study was to study the factors influencing gender representation in education in the Amansie East District of the Ashanti Region. In the field of education, women have come a long way; many of them are now in the highest spheres of society. However these are quite few compared to the massive proportions of women and girls who are still facing challenges in accessing schooling. The evolution of communities towards modern lifestyles has not been able to pull the majority of women out of the ignorance, especially in the rural areas of Ghana.

The Government of Ghana has taken steps to decrease inequalities in accessing education. One such step was the establishment of free primary education for all. The work does not end here. Women in Ghana are still taken out of school to focus on domestic duties at home. Retention of female students in secondary and tertiary institutions in Ghana remains a problem. There are still areas of study that are dominated by a specific gender, and students wishing to break down these gender barriers experience discrimination from their fellow students, teachers, and academic administrators.

Sexual exploitation of women within academic institutions has in some settings become almost normal. Exchanging sexual favours for grades, and

pressures from teachers on female students to be sexually available or face academic punishment is unfortunately only becoming more common. This project carefully identified the factors influencing gender representation in education in the Amansie East District of the Ashanti Region. The research study determined whether or not school methodologies of teachers favour boys or girls or both in the classroom, and to what extent the cost of education affect girls' education and how school environment influences girls' attendance to school.

In pursuance of the study's outlined objectives, questionnaires were administered to total of (96) respondents comprising mainly 40 students, 35 teachers from three (3) selected schools and 21 parents in the Amansie East District of the Ashanti Region. In this chapter, the findings from this study are summarized and conclusions and recommendations made.

### **Key Findings**

#### *Teaching Staff*

The gender representation of the teachers showed an 80.0% male and 20.0% female distribution. Also the ages of the teachers varied very much from 25-44 years with 60% of the teachers within the 35-44 age brackets. Teachers taught subjects within the circles of Business Management, Chemistry, Economics, English Language, Financial Accounting, Mathematics, Physical Education and Social Studies. Most of the respondents were also married and have been teaching for almost two years.

#### *Students*

Total of (40) students were sampled from Oppong Memorial SHS, Kokofu, Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) High School and Wesley High School

both at Bekwai all in the Amansie East District. The age range of the students was between 12 and 21 years. Students either read General Science, General Arts or Visual Arts.

### *Parents*

Total of (21) parents were sampled giving a breakdown of (15) males and six females who were either married (66.7%), single (20%) or divorced (2%). About 13.3% of the parents had secondary education as their highest level of education while 86.7% had tertiary education as their highest level of education. Among the fifteen (15) parents sampled, 73.3% were civil servants, 20.0% traders and 6.7% farmers.

### **Conclusions**

1. In summary, this study established that majority of the parents will educate their girl child than the boy giving reasons that, educating the girl child means educating the nation and the whole household but educating a boy means educating an individual.
2. Secondly, classroom participation has an impact on the girl child's ability to participate in school. It was revealed that teachers didn't have confidence in the girl child and thereby will prefer to engage the boy child in class activities and programs than the girl child.
3. Finally, even though most parents will prefer their girl child to attend school, they won't give them the opportunity to study programmes of their choice and that is negatively affecting the interest of the girl child in education.



## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations require urgent attention:

1. The GES, which has responsibility for awareness, education and support for female students, should be resourced to be able to reach out to all parents and young girls in the various communities. District Assemblies, NGOs, female leaders, and other stakeholders, must be brought in to assist in disseminating relevant information on the benefits of supporting female students.
2. Overall capacity building of teachers to equip them with the necessary know-how to manage the girl child, the need to take care and be patient when dealing with or handling the girl child.
3. On the choice of programme, there must be career fairs organised to give the girl child the opportunity to identify what programme will be useful to their dreams.
4. The legal framework should be strengthened to include proper monitoring, and enforcement of the law that supports more female participation in schools. Just writing it down is not enough but there must be action taken against those pulling down the idea of enrolling more girls in schools than boys.

## **Suggestions for Further Research**

In view of the findings and results from this study, I believe that further studies can be done in order to improve and benefit the knowledge base in academia. The following are therefore my recommendations to future researchers:

1. The impact of interventions made by government to support the girl child's education programme could be extensively studied to establish the link between support for the policy and results.
2. Again, an inter-regional selection of schools and a larger number of schools than has been used, could be taken into consideration to find out whether results are different for various regions and various schools, especially those perceived as "better schools."

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## **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A

### Questionnaires for Tutors

The purpose of this questionnaire is to assess the factors affecting female participation in senior high school education in Ghana. You are assured of the confidentiality of your responses, so I would be most grateful if you could response to the items as candid as possible. Thank you.

#### SECTION A: Background Information of Teachers

Sex

(a) Male  (b) Female

Age (a) below 25 years (b) 25-34 years (c) 35-44 yrs (d) 45 yrs and above

Marital status (a) Married  (b) Single  (c) Divorced  (d) Separated

Which subject area do you teach.....

#### **SECTION B: Teachers Perception and Attitude towards the Sexes in Class**

What role can female education play in national development efforts of this country?

Kindly explain: .....

How satisfied are you with the level of female participation in education at SHS level in your Municipality/ metropolis?

(a) Not Satisfied  (b) Satisfied  (c) Very Satisfied

If your answer is "Not Satisfied", explain the constraints to female participation in education at SHS.....

(i) Which of the sexes do you think contribute meaningfully to classroom discussion?

(a) Male  (b) Female

(ii) Why do they always contribute?.....

(i) What type of sitting arrangement do you want your class to have?

Sex segregated  (b) cross- sex  (c) mixed sex

(ii) Give reasons for your response(s) to item  
.....

How do you elect your class representative?

Election  (b) voluntary  (c) appointment

(i) Which of the sexes do you prefer to be class representative?

(a) Male  (b) Female

(ii) Kindly state your reason(s).....

(i) Which of the two sexes do you mostly direct your questions to in  
classroom?

(a) Male  (b) Female

(ii) Give reasons for your response.....

From your personal experience, indicate the personal traits of female students  
you handle. (Tick where appropriate)

Passive  aggressive  ambitious

Active  submissive  argumentative

Others.....  
.....

Indicate the personal traits of male students

(Tick where appropriate)

Passive  aggressive  ambitious  active

Submission  argumentative

**SECTION C: Nature and Extent of Policy Intervention in Education**

(i) How would you rate government in her educational policies and reforms in supporting girl-child education?

(a) Excellent [ ] (b) Good [ ] (c) Poor [ ]

(ii) If Excellent, Good, Poor kindly explain your proposition

.....

What has been the impact of the Education Reform Programme on female participation in education at SHS level here? ( Please kindly Explain with specific examples: )

.....

(i) What weaknesses do these Educational Reform Programmes have?

(ii) Kindly explain .....

**SECTION D: Measures to Address Challenges Militating Against Female Participation**

Kindly suggest means stakeholders can effectively use to address the issue of female participation in education School authorities Government:

.....

Thank you. God Bless you.

## APPENDIX B

### Questionnaire for Parents

The purpose of this questionnaire is to assess the factors affecting female participation in senior high school education in Ghana. You are assured of the confidentiality of your responses, so I would be most grateful if you could response to the items as candid as possible. Thank you.

Sex

(a) Male  (b) Female

Type of locality

Rural  (b) Urban

(i) Marital status:

(a) Married  (b) Single  (c) Divorced  (d)

Others.....

(ii) If married, how many wives do you have? (Applicable to male parent only)

(a) One  (b) two  (c) three  (d) more than 4

(i) How many children do you have? (a) One  (b) Two  (c) three

(d) others, kindly state.....

(ii) Number of boys and girls,

Kindly state.....

What is the highest level of education?

(a) Basic  (b) secondary  (c) Tertiary  (d) others...kindly specify

What is your occupation?

Civil servant  (b) Trader  (c) Farmer  (d) Others kindly specify



**Section B: Parents Perception and Attitude towards the Sexes In Class**

(i) Which of the two sexes would you invest much when it comes to education?

(a) Male [ ] (b) Females [ ]

(ii) Kindly give reasons for your choice above.....

Can any of these factors influence you in the education of your daughter and why. (Kindly tick where appropriate)

(a) Marriage [ ] (b) Religion [ ] (c) Traditional beliefs

Indicate the kind of support that you provide towards the education of your girl-child (Tick as many as possible)

(a) Provision of school uniform [ ] (b) Payment of school [ ]

(b) Guidance and Counselling [ ] (d) Financial assistance to needy girls [ ] (e) others, kindly specify.....

Indicate the kind of support that you provide towards the education of your son. (Tick as many as possible)

(a) Provision of school uniform [ ] (b) Payment of school [ ]

(d) Guidance and counselling [ ] (d) Financial assistance to needy girls [ ]

(e) Others,

kindlyspecify.....

Which level of education must your girl-child attain and why?

(a) Basic [ ] (b) Primary [ ] Secondary [ ] (e) Tertiary [ ]

**Section C: Nature and Extent of Policy Intervention In Education**

(i) How would you rate government in her educational policies and reforms in supporting girl-child education?

(a) Excellent [ ] (b) Good [ ] (c) Poor [ ]

(ii) If Excellent, Good, Poor kindly explain your proposition  
.....

(i) As a parent, what is the level of satisfaction with female participation in education at SHS level in your locality?

(a) Excellent [ ] (b) Good [ ] (c) Poor [ ]

(ii) If Excellent, Good, Poor kindly explain your proposition  
.....

How fair has government been in terms of giving special privileges to girls when it comes to education?

(a) Excellent [ ] (b) Good [ ] (c) Poor [ ]

(ii) If Excellent, Good, Poor kindly explain your proposition  
.....

(i) Which of type of school do you find convenient for the girl-child and why?

(a) Single sex school (b) mixed sex school

(ii) Give reasons for your response(s) to item 15 (i)  
.....

**Section D: Challenges Militating Against Female Participation in Education**

What are some of the factors militating against female participation in education and why?.....

Kindly suggest means stakeholders of education can effectively use to address the issue of female participation in education at the SHS level.

.....

Thank you, God Bless you.

**APPENDIX C**

**Questionnaire for Students**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to assess the factors affecting female participation in senior high school education in Ghana. You are assured of the confidentiality of your responses, so I would be most grateful if you could response to the items as candid as possible. Thank you.

**Section A: Background Information of Students**

Age: (a) 12-15 [ ] (b) 16-18 [ ] (c) 19- 21 [ ] (d) Others.....

Type of locality (a) Rural [ ] (b) Urban [ ]

Name of School.....

**Section A: Attitude and perception sexes have among themselves**

(i) Which of the sexes does the teacher often direct questions during teaching and learning activity?

(a) Males [ ] (b) Females [ ]

(ii) Give reasons for your response.....

(i) Which of the sexes do you think teachers' behaviour make them feel more important?

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(ii) Give reasons for your answers

(i) Which of the sexes does teachers attitude negatively affect their studies?

(a) Male [ ] (b) female [ ]

(ii) Kindly give your reasons.....

(i) Which of the two sexes do you think perform better in class and why

(a) Male [ ] (b) female [ ]

(ii) .....

What program are you offering and how did you choose that course?

(a) Bycounselling  (b) myself  (c) by compulsion

Which of the following of the following subjects do females think are more important for them?

English  management in living  catering  Home science

clothing and textiles  Social Studies  technical drawing

wood work

(i) Which subjects do you think are more difficult for female than males' student?

(ii) Kindly give reasons for response.....

Which subjects do you think females can perform better than males?.....

### **Section C: Nature and Extent of Policy Intervention in Education**

(i) Has government done enough in her educational policies and reforms in supporting girl-child education?

(a) Yes  (b) No

(ii) If yes or No, kindly explain your proposition .....

(i) are you satisfied with the level of female participation in education at SHS level in your locality?(a) Yes  (b) No

(ii) If yes or No, kindly explain your proposition .....

Has the government been fair giving special privileges to girls when it comes to education?

(a) Yes  (b) No

(ii) If your answer is "Yes", kindly explain .....

(i) Which of type of school do you find convenient for the girl-child and why?

(a) Single sex school (b) mixed sex school

(ii) Give reasons for your response(s) to item 15 (i).....

**Section D: Challenges Militating Against Female Participation in Education**

What are some of the factors militating against female participation in education and why?

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Kindly suggest means stakeholders of education can effectively use to address the issue of female participation in education at the SHS level.

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Thank you, God Bless you.