

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

Gender Inequality in Secondary Education in Ghana

Being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Hull

By

Florence Naah Bamora

B' ED (Social Studies) (Honours)

March 2010

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
Lists of Tables and Figures	v
Abstract	vi
Acknowledgments	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Gender and Education	10
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2 The Construction of Gender	10
2.3 Understandings of gender, cultural practices and development.....	12
2.4 Femininity and Masculinity	16
2.5 Gender Inequality	17
2.6 Understanding Gender Inequality in Education.....	19
2.7 Discriminatory Socio-cultural and Religious Practices	20
2.8 Socio-economic factors	22
2.9 Young people’s work roles and schooling in Africa.....	24
2.10 Urban-Rural Residence and Distance to School	26
2.11 Gender violence and child abuse.....	27
2.12 Pregnancy and Sex education	30
2.13 The Role of Education in Addressing Gender Inequality	33
2.14 Conclusion	36
Chapter 3: Gender Issues in Society and Education in Ghana: Socio-Economic and Political Context.....	38
3.1 Introduction	38

3.2 Ghana: Geographical Background	38
3.3 Ghana: Socio-economic, Cultural, and Gender Issues.....	40
3.4 Women and Politics	46
3.5 Women’s Health Situation	49
3.6 Prevalence and Impacts of HIV/AIDS in Ghana	52
3.7 Legislation, Violence and Women’s Rights.....	53
3.8 Ghanaian education and reforms since independence	58
3.9 The Education System in Ghana.....	65
3.10 Conclusion	71
Chapter 4: The Research Methodology.....	72
4.1 Introduction	72
4.2 The Rationale for a Qualitative Approach	73
4.3 Methodological Position and Identity of the Researcher	77
4.4 The Field and the Fieldwork	80
4.5 The Research Methods and Approaches to data collection	82
4.6 Interviewing	85
4.7 Teachers’ Interviews	87
4.8 Students’ Interviews.....	88
4.9 Parents’ Interviews.....	91
4.10 Educational Officials’ Interviews	92
4.11 Life History Interviews with School dropouts	92
4.12 Observation	93
4.13 Confidentiality and Informed Consent.....	96
4.14 Data Analysis	98
4.15 Limitations of the study	99
4.16 Conclusion	100

Chapter 5: Gender Inequality: Schoolgirl’s Experiences of Home.....	101
5.1 Introduction	101
5.2 Socio-economic background of students and parents	102
5.3 Parents’ and students’ perceptions of gender roles and girls’ education	104
5.4 Impact of Social norms and Traditions on Girls’ Education.....	113
4.5 Conclusion	125
Chapter 6: Schoolgirls’ Experiences of the School Environment.....	127
6.1 Introduction	127
6.2 Gender Inequality and Schooling: Inadequate School Facilities	127
6.3 Teachers and daily school practices	132
6.4 Gendered School Environment	134
6.5 Teachers’ expectations of students’ behaviour	139
6.6 Reward, Punishment and School Based Gender Violence.....	142
6.7 Conclusion	151
Chapter 7: Gender Discrimination in the Teaching-Learning Process	153
7.1 Introduction	153
7.2 Unequal attention in the classroom	153
7.3 The influence of gender on students’ choices of subjects.....	160
7.4 Gender and occupational aspirations	169
7.5 Conclusion	172
Chapter 8: Factors Affecting Female Dropout Rates in School.....	173
8.1 Introduction	173
8.2 Gender, poverty and school dropout	174
8.3 Pregnancy, poverty and school dropout	177
8.4 Poor Academic Performance and Dropout	181
8.5 Family Break up, Death and Dropout	184

8.6 Present occupation of dropouts and their future Career Aspirations	186
8.7 Conclusion	190
Chapter 9: The Role of Government in Promoting Girls' Education in Ghana.....	192
9.1 Introduction	192
9.2 The role of Girls' Education Unit	192
9.3 School Lunches and Free Monthly Dry Food Take-Home Ration	194
9.4 The Free, Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) and the Capitation Grant Scheme (CGS).....	199
9.5 Conclusion	202
Chapter 10: Conclusion.....	204
10.1 Recommendations	214
References	222
APPENDIX	263
APPENDIX 1	263
In-depth interview schedule for individual male and female students and, focus group discussion.....	263
APPENDIX 2	265
In-depth interview schedule for parents.....	265
APPENDIX 3	267
In-depth interview schedule for educational officials.....	267
APPENDIX 4	268
In-depth interview schedule for teachers	268
APPENDIX 5	270
Life history interview guide for school dropouts.....	270

Lists of Tables and Figures

Table 1 Reported Child Abuse (2002-2006).....	29
Table 2: Political Situation since Independence	47
Table 3: Women in Parliament	48
Table 4: Status of Progress towards the MDGs in Ghana.....	51
Table 5: Enrolment figures after the capitation grant (as at October 2005).....	64
Table 6: Selected statistics for Primary Education in Ghana (2001)	66
Table 7: Participation in lower and upper secondary education in Ghana (2001).....	68
Table 8: Number of students in universities in Ghana in 2005/2006.....	70
Table 9: Table of Research Methods Employed and number of Participants.....	85
Figure 1: Map of Ghana	39

Abstract

This thesis examines some of the issues surrounding extensive gender inequalities operating within the school, family and the wider society which affect girls' rights to education. It reveals that institutional culture within the home, community and school reinforces gender inequality and continue to limit girls' access to school and in performing equally to boys, especially in science and mathematics subjects. It is based on interviews, focus group discussions, observations and life history interviews I conducted with students (girls and boys between the ages of 15 and 22), school dropouts, teachers, parents and education officials in a secondary school in Ghana. Following a brief review of the literature on the construction of gender in general and femininity in particular, as well as literature on gender and education, focusing mainly on factors and causes of girls' unequal access to, and performance in schooling in Ghana and Africa in general, I analyse the differential experiences of schoolgirls and how these gendered experiences impact on their performance, achievements, choice of subject and future aspirations from a gendered perspective, using the social construction of gender as a theoretical framework. It explores the ways in which teachers' and parents' attitudes discriminate against girls on gender lines and help to perpetuate particular perceptions and expectations about the appropriate education of boys and girls.

This thesis also examines the factors and situations which contribute to the incidence of high dropout rates among girls in the study area with an emphasis on household factors such as poverty, pregnancy and gendered cultural practices. It analyzes how leaving school without adequate skills and qualifications impacts negatively on the career prospects of school dropouts, especially girls. It evaluates the successes and challenges of Girls' Education Unit (GEU) and government policies at improving girls' educational attainment and opportunities with emphasis on how educational officials perceive government policies in achieving gender equality in the study area and suggests gender sensitive strategies and policies that would help bridge the gender gap as well as provide guidance for educational policy makers in the Ghanaian education system.

Acknowledgments

I should start by thanking God for giving me a healthy body and mind to complete this study. I would like to express the deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Suzanne M. Clisby, whose encouragement, guidance and support enabled me to develop an understanding of the research. Without her frequent comments, feedback and encouragement to me throughout my studies this thesis would not have been possible.

I would also like to acknowledge the Ghana Scholarship Secretariat for the funding to undertake this exercise, without which none of it would have been possible.

I am extremely grateful to my friends and loved ones, especially Mr and Mrs Hooko who in diverse ways gave generously of their time, knowledge, support and prayers throughout the duration of this study.

I owe my deepest appreciation to my mother, sisters and brothers for being there for me. Especially, my twin sister Veronica Bamora deserves a lot of thanks and she is exceptionally unique in my life and I am indeed proud of her.

My deepest appreciation and gratitude also goes to my dear children, Shelby Yelpien, Tunno Vugu and Benchog Vugu, you are the source of my inspiration in life; to my husband, Joseph Vugu for his immense support and taking care of our children whilst I concentrated on my studies.

And finally, my heartfelt thanks to all those who participated in this study, without whose contribution the study would not have been possible.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Gender inequality in schooling has received considerable attention worldwide and many developing countries, including Ghana have been struggling with the issues of achieving gender equality for several decades. At the 1990 World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, particular emphasis was placed on female education not only as a fundamental right, but also as an important means for economic and social development (UNESCO, 2003). Education is central to the achievement of greater equality in society, including between men and women. Also, the Millennium Development Goals 2 and 3 underscore the importance of ensuring equal access to education for boys and girls, eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education, developing non-discriminatory education programs and curricula, and allocating sufficient resources for monitoring and implementing equitable education reforms (UNESCO, 2003, United Nations Millennium Declaration, 2000). Yet, questions of gender equity have received relatively little attention in localised education reform efforts in Africa and most developing countries. Unfortunately for most developing countries, girls seem to suffer more discrimination in terms of access and retention at all levels of education, particularly in secondary and higher education (UNESCO, 2007). Lack of education has been identified as a major obstacle to women's employment and development in society. According to the *2007 Education for All Global Monitoring Report*, out of the 77 million children who were not enrolled in either primary or secondary school Worldwide in 2004, 57% were girls. Sub-Saharan Africa alone accounted for 38 million (about 50%) out of the 77 million out of school children while South and West Asia accounted for 16 million and East Asia for 9.3 million in 2004. Available data indicate that countries with the largest numbers of out-of school children in 2004 were in Nigeria, Pakistan, India and Ethiopia. They were followed by Saudi Arabia, the Niger, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Ghana and Mozambique (UNESCO, 2007).

During the 1980s, the trends of school enrolment and quality in Ghana were declining due to the negative effects of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) structural

adjustment programmes which led to a remarkable reduction in government expenditures for education (MoES, 2006). In the last decade, gender equity has become one of the most prominent issues in Ghanaian educational reform efforts. Throughout the 1990's, Ghana increased its investment in public schooling with about 35% of the national recurrent budget being allocated to the education sector, 60% of which went directly to promoting primary education (Care International, 2003). The Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) 2002 – 2004, Vision 2020 and the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2003-2015 clearly state that high priority would be given to girl's and women's needs and targets, with objectives to provide quality education and health for all and to increase the access and participation of girls at all levels of education.

Other measures taken to promote Universal Primary Education (UPE) and to fight gender inequalities in education in Ghana were the introduction of the Free Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) in 1997 and the establishment of the Capitation Grant in 2005 to abolish school fees to make education more accessible. Additionally, the government of Ghana undertook some gender specific initiatives such as the creation of the Girls' Education Unit (GEU) in 1997 and the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC) in 2001, the introduction of food rations and scholarship schemes for poor girls, especially at the primary and secondary levels in its effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. The Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs is charged with the responsibility of mainstreaming gender throughout the government ministries and departments while GEU has the following objectives; (1) increasing the enrolment rate of girls in Basic Education to equal that of boys; (2) reducing the dropout rate of girls in both Primary and Junior Secondary School; (3) increasing the transition rate of girls from Junior to Senior Secondary School; and (4) exposing as many girls as possible to Science, Technology and Mathematics Education (STME) (Sutherland-Addy, 2002).

The above efforts made by government have resulted in significant progress in all levels of the education sector, especially at the basic level. For example, the national gross primary school enrolment rate increased from 74% in 1999/2000 to 86.5% 2003/2004 and to 92.1% in 2005/2006 while the net enrolment rate increased from 59.1% in

2004/2005 to 69.2% in 2005/2006 (Adamu-Issah et al, 2007). There was also considerable progress in girls' enrolment, narrowing the gap between girls and boys gross enrolment figures. Boys' primary school enrolment rate increased from 89.5 to 95.3 while that of girls increased from 83.1 to 88.8 for the same period. In general, these have resulted in an increase in retention and completion rates while the Gender Parity Index (GPI) which is a measure of the level of girls' participation in primary education increased from 0.93 in 2004/05 to 0.95 in 2005/06. A close look at the statistics show that regions with the least girls' enrolment experienced more progress, for example girls' enrolment figures in Upper East and Upper West regions, Ghana (which is my research area) increased by 31.4% and 26.1% respectively whereas the national average was 12.8% (Adamu-Issah et al, 2007; Care International, 2003; Sutherland-Addy, 2002). At the secondary level, gross enrolment increased from 37.4% in 2000 to 46.4% in 2006 and net enrolment increased from 31.8% in 2000 to 37.0% in 2005 (Higgins, 2009). University enrolment rate for women and girls increased from 21% in 1991/92 to 26% in 1998/99 and to 34.3% in 2005/2006 academic year (Morley, 2007).

Despite the considerable progress made in the country towards improving educational access and retention for girls in the education sector, girls' schooling still lags behind that of boys at all levels, particularly at the secondary and tertiary levels of education. Ghana thus failed to meet the MDG 2 target of achieving gender parity by 2005 and many children drop out of school before completing their primary education. More than one million children of school going-age in Ghana are not enrolled in primary school (Adamu-Issah et al, 2007).

As the above statistics indicate, generally in Ghana the net and gross enrolment rates in secondary school are much lower than those for primary school, with higher transition rates among boys than girls. In fact, from 1997 to 2003 secondary enrolment had declined from 40 percent to 38 percent (Ghana Gender Profile, 2008), suggesting an increase in the dropout rate of students at the secondary school level. Though many developing countries, including Ghana, have introduced the capitation grants scheme to eliminate the payments of all forms of fees and levies at the basic education level, many

poor parents are still unable to send their children to school due to other costs such as transportation and school uniform. Within the context of national levels of poverty, structural adjustment and 'cost-sharing' in the health and education sectors, poor families in Ghana are under considerable pressure, and increasing numbers of children, especially girls, do not gain access to school. Parents' decisions to enrol their children in school have been in the favour of boys in most cases, resulting in a wide gender gap in educational participation in Ghana. Women's and girls' participation in education decreases with each successive level. Gender inequality in education is therefore one of the most persistent challenges facing the Ghanaian government in its development efforts.

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana guarantees equal educational opportunities to boys and girls and prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender; however socio-cultural beliefs and practices, inadequate educational facilities, hostile school environment as well as unequal gender relations have hindered the full participation of girls in formal education. As a result, Ghana's commitment to achieve the MDGs appears to be out of reach within the time frame set. The discrimination against girls is especially marked in northern Ghana where patriarchal cultural norms overtly favour investment in boys' education at the expense of girls. The consequence of the bias against girls is the low literacy rate of about 42% of women compared to the 66% literacy rate of men in Ghana (Sutherland-Addy, 2002). The high illiteracy rate among women and girls affects their participation in many aspects of public and private life such as decision-making in the household, employment, health and politics. Also, the low participation of women and girls in education undermines government efforts to improve living conditions, reduce poverty and enhance national development. The reduction of poverty and progress towards sustainable national development will only take place with increased and improved levels of education, especially for girls. Education enables people to use and extend their abilities, develop skills and increase their earning potential. The exclusion of most women and girls in education has resulted in women being concentrated in low-paid and gender stereotyped jobs in the labour market, thus increasing their vulnerability to poverty. For example, only 9% (less than one-tenth of employees in the upper level) of women occupy administrative and managerial positions in Ghana while

75% (over two-thirds of employees in the lower level) of women are concentrated in the in the lower level of the public sector (Sackey, 2005).

Though women's participation in politics has improved over the past decade, their representation at the parliamentary level and the district assemblies is still low. The Ghanaian political sphere is predominantly male. In the recent 2008 general elections women secured only 19 seats as at July 2009, representing 8.7 percent of the 230 seats in Parliament which is a decline from the 10% they secured in the previous one held in 2004 (Daily Guide, 2009). The *Daily Guide* news paper noted that out of the 75 ministerial appointments made by the President (John Evans Atta Mills), only 15 were women and out of the 25 members on the Council of State, only 3 are women (ibid.). These statistics show the real status of women in positions of power and decision-making in Ghana.

Through the advocacy of women's organisations at both national and international levels such as the Ministry of Women and Children (MOWAC), Ghana has initiated several legal reforms and enforcement of existing legislation for the protection of women's and children's rights. Some of the recent achievements include the approval of the Domestic Violence Act (2007) and the criminalization of harmful traditional practices such as child marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Despite these achievements, women and girls still remain discriminated against for a variety of cultural, traditional and economic reasons. Women and girls continue to experience gender-based violence and inequalities within the home, work places and school environment. A review of the literature in Ghana as well as several other countries like Botswana and Tanzania show that the school environment is especially unfriendly to girls (Mirembe and Davies, 2001; Shumba, 2001; Dunne et al 2003; Brown, 2003; Afenyadu and Goparaju, 2003; Leach, et al, 2003; Dunne et al 2006; Leach and Humphreys, 2000) There can be no gender equality when sexual violence and harassment exists in schools, when teaching materials are biased and when teachers are not sufficiently cognisant of gender issues (UNICEF, 2007).

Statistical evidence of gender inequality in terms of access, retention and performance in the Ghanaian educational system, particularly at the secondary school and tertiary level, remain a significant problem. There are a few in-depth qualitative studies in developing countries, including Ghana that sought to explore the extent, nature and reasons why gender inequalities in education have persisted despite several reform efforts by governments to improve girls' opportunities in formal education. In their ethnographic study to explore how schooling is gendered in 12 African junior secondary schools (six in Ghana and six in Botswana) Dunne and Leach et al (2005) observed that the widespread empirical research into the gendered experiences of schoolgirls in Western countries has not been matched in the developing countries despite glaring gender inequalities in educational access in Africa. They call for more qualitative research in this direction to provide greater understanding of the gendered experiences of girls in education. My thesis is therefore, an attempt to contribute and build upon the findings of other studies carried out in Ghana and elsewhere and to achieve a fuller understanding of the daily experiences, aspirations and the career choices of schoolgirls and boys in the Ghanaian educational system.

In this study I analyse the differential treatment secondary school students, and particularly girls' experience within both the household and the school environment, and how these experiences impact on their school participation, subject choices and career aspirations from a gendered perspective, using the social construction of gender as a theoretical framework. It is based on qualitative research, which was conducted in a secondary school in the Upper West Region of Ghana between 2005 and 2006. The initial focus of this study was to explore the gendered experiences of schoolgirls and boys but this was extended to include that of school dropouts after teachers and educational officials repeatedly mentioned dropout as a major challenge towards the progress of girls' education in my first fieldwork in Ghana. In order to explore this aim, I consider the impact of traditional practices, beliefs, values and socio-economic factors on schoolgirls' access to and participation in education in poor communities. I illustrate how students' lives are characterised by the discriminatory attitudes of parents at home and that of teachers at school in Ghana. The study also aims to examine the reasons for high dropout rates among girls through life history interviews with school dropouts. Through my interaction with students, school dropouts, parents, teachers and

educational officials, I was able to gain a unique insight into understanding the ways in which the school and social processes work together to perpetuate gender inequality in education. By understanding the problems girls experience, efforts can be made to provide a girl friendly environment for greater participation and better performance of girls.

The second chapter examines some concepts and theories on gender in general and femininity in particular. The chapter briefly reviews the literature and uses the concept of social construction of gender to analyse the experience of schoolgirls and girls' disadvantage discourse and how the gendered school environment impacts on the quality of the schooling experience for students, particularly for girls, as discussed in the literature. I explain the importance of ensuring educational equality, which is critical to maternal and child health, poverty eradication and economic growth. The chapter also examines some of the issues surrounding deep-seated inequalities operating within the school, family and the wider society which affect girls' rights to education.

Chapter three provides the contextual background by giving an overview of the socio-economic, cultural and political context in Ghana, analysing the existing patterns of gender inequality of the country which allows the reader to understand the current position of women and girls in Ghana. The chapter also examines women's positions in the labour market and their health status through the lens of gender. I examine efforts made by the government and other women organisations such as the Ministry of Women and Children (MOWAC) in addressing the problem of gender inequalities in the country. Additionally, I explore the educational system, reforms, policies and practices initiated by the Ghanaian government in its efforts towards making education accessible to all and to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) goals.

Chapter four describes and justifies the methodologies that were used in this study. It examines the procedure and processes that were followed in choosing the participants, data collection and analysis. I discuss the techniques employed for sampling, interviews

and focus group discussions, life history interviews and observation. The chapter also discusses the key issues of ethical consent in empirical research methodologies with school children such as informed consent, and confidentiality.

Based on findings of the qualitative research, chapters five, six, seven and eight explore students' views, teachers' and parents' perceptions of girls' education and more specifically of girls' experiences of school and home, based on group discussions and interviews with students and school dropouts. Chapter five thus explores girls' experiences at home such as the burden of household chores, the low expectation of girls' education as a result of their perceived future roles as mothers and wives, as well as the discriminatory traditional practices and beliefs that hinder human development and progress, especially with regards to girls' opportunities to education. Chapter six focuses on the gendered school environment, daily school practices and corporal punishment. It also examines the quality of the school infrastructure in terms of providing a gender friendly environment for effective teaching and learning and the general wellbeing of girls in particular. In chapter seven, I investigate the gendered experiences of girls inside the classroom in relation to the teaching-learning process, choice of subject and future aspirations and how these experiences impact on their performance and achievements.

Chapter eight focuses more specifically on school dropouts' narratives of why they left school. The chapter examines the reasons for high dropout rates among girls with an emphasis on household factors such as poverty, pregnancy and gendered cultural practices. It also analyzes how leaving school without adequate skills and qualifications impacts negatively on the career prospects of school dropouts, especially girls. Chapter nine analyses the in-depth interviews I conducted with Girls' Education Officials both at the national and regional levels and the District Assembly gender desk officer to evaluate the successes and challenges of the Girls' Education Unit (GEU) and government policies at improving girls' educational attainment and opportunities in the study area. Particular emphasis is placed on how girls' education officers perceive government policies in achieving gender equality, and the steps that have been taken to ensure that programs and activities initiated by the government are sustainable in the

long-term. The study therefore provides a critical gender analysis of the various dimensions of gender related barriers students face in their educational experiences at school in the Upper West Region of Ghana.

Following the discussions in the previous chapters, chapter ten presents conclusions derived from the findings of the study. The chapter thus synthesises the key findings from the empirical study, re- assesses the concept of differential treatment of schoolgirls, and raises some questions for further research. The chapter concludes by presenting recommendations which aim to address the gender discrimination and socio-cultural inequalities faced by schoolgirls in Ghana.

While the study focused on a single school in the Upper West region, it is likely that the findings will have relevance in other parts of Ghana and beyond as they reflect socio-economic, political and cultural developments which cut across national boundaries. It is my hope that information generated by this study will be of immense help to government, educational policy makers and non-governmental organizations that are committed to promoting girls' education and eliminating gender disparity in education, especially the glaring gender inequalities at secondary and higher education levels. It is also hoped that this exploratory study has promoted qualitative research approach to data collection and analysis, which is limited amongst the educational research community in Ghana on gender equality issues in schools.

This research study has thus provided me with a unique insight into schoolgirls' experiences in Ghana as well as drawing attention to the challenging situations and inequalities facing many schoolgirls. Moreover, it has equipped me with critical gender analysis skills over my period of study to analyze and understand gender issues in social life and helped me question what I had previously taken for granted as natural and unchangeable.

Chapter 2: Gender and Education

2.1 Introduction

The first section of this chapter examines the concepts of gender and femininity. Although developed in Western contexts by predominantly White academics, as would be demonstrated in subsequent chapters, these theories are relevant to the Ghanaian context because commonalities exist in the ways gender is constructed and performed in Ghana as in the Western world in which these theories were developed. As Wharton (2005) asserts, gender is relevant in social life and is one of the organising principles of societies worldwide. Similarly, Mannathoko (1999) study of the perspectives on gender in education in Eastern and Southern Africa has argued that these western concepts and theories of gender are significant in describing and explaining why and how education is gendered and how the gender practices in education leads to gender inequality. The second section of the chapter briefly reviews literature on gender and education, focusing on the main factors and causes of girls' unequal access to, and performance in education.

2.2 The Construction of Gender

In order to study the issues of gender in education, it is important to define the meaning of gender itself. Gender is a social construction which is used to describe those characteristics of women and men (Connell, 1987, 2002; Connell, 2002; Wharton, 2005). The theoretical framework of this study is based on this social constructionist standpoint. There are many different social constructionist perspectives on gender, depending on the discipline and the methodology involved in its study. However, all social constructionists share the idea that becoming female or male is a social process that is learned through culture within the family, in school and in social interactions more generally (Connell, 1987, 2002; Connell, 2002; Wharton, 2005). The social construction of gender theory asserts that women and men are actively involved in constructing their own gender identities, accepting, rejecting or modifying the various

models and messages that society provides (Connell, 2002). Connell asserts 'that gender is not fixed in advance of social interaction, but is constructed in interaction, is an important theme in the modern sociology of gender' (1995: 35). From this viewpoint one's actions construct one's femininity or masculinity, rather than the other way round. I agree with this social constructionist perspective when it comes to my understanding of gender. Social constructionist standpoint provides us a lens into how society has constructed certain regulatory conceptualizations and understandings, such as gender (Connell, 1995; Sowell, 2004).

Another approach to studying gender was sex role theory. Sex role theory acknowledges the impact of society on gendered identity. The underlying idea behind sex role theory was that sex roles were obtained through socialisation (Eagly, 1987; Connell 1987). Various socialisation structures such as the family, the school, peer group and the mass media influenced the growing child through numerous interactions. These agencies transmitted to the girl and boy what were the social norms or expectations for her or his behaviour (Connell, 1987, 2002; Wharton, 2005). Compliance with the norms would attract rewards while nonconformity would attract negative sanctions. This process involves an individual being socialized into one of the two roles: 'thus feminine character is produced by socialization into female roles, masculine character by socialization into the male role' (Connell, 1987: 49 cited Sowell, 2004). Therefore, the main emphasis is on socialization experiences of individuals into gendered selves; a series of events to which the individual is rather passively subjected (Sowell, 2004). Connell explains sex role theory as using an 'additive conception of society and nature' (Connell, 1987: 73). This notion is opposed to the strictly essentialist perspective in which nature influences gender, sex role theory sees society as adding to what nature has already provided, 'tracing out the ways society improves on nature's handiwork in shaping little girls and boys' (Sowell, 2004).

Although sex role theory enhances our understanding of gender and its dualistic structure, it does not give a complete picture. The theory does not allow for more than one form of femininity and one form of masculinity, thus reducing the spectrum of gender to a false and absolute dichotomy (Connell, 2002; Sowell, 2004). Not all women

are equally feminine nor are all men equally masculine, not to mention the differences across cultures or throughout time. Sex role theory has thus been accused of simplifying reality by promoting a binary distinction based on 'feminine' and 'masculine' roles and not considering the behavioural practices of men and women in everyday life (Stromquist, 1998; Sowell, 2004). In addition, this theory fails to account for conformity and resistance to specific gender roles (Thorne, 1993; Connell, 2002; Sowell, 2004; Arnot and Mac an Ghail, 2006). In Thorne's (1993) study of American schools, in situations where gender learning is going on, boys and girls negotiate their own gender patterns, imitate gender divisions provided by adults, and sometimes accept or reject them. In addition, in his influential study of working class groups of boys in secondary schools, Willis (1977) showed that the societal roles of the boys were not perpetuated by the school in a uniform way, but rather were actively negotiated by the boys, usually in resistance to the regulation of the school. Similarly, Dunne and Leach et al (2005) study of 12 junior secondary schools in Ghana and Botswana show students involved in gender learning, actively protecting gender boundaries.

2.3 Understandings of gender, cultural practices and development

As explained earlier, though these Western concepts and theories of gender are significant in enhancing our understanding of the situation of women and their position amid unequal gender relations in the social world, they have come under serious criticisms from different theoretical and geographical backgrounds (Mohanty, 2003, McEwain, 2001). Significant among them are some feminists from developing countries. Third World feminism is a form of feminist standpoint which focuses on the notion that women are not only subordinated as the result of unequal gender relations but also as the result of a wide range of oppressive situations that transcend gender relations (Mohanty, 2003). Third World feminists have criticized western feminist constructions of the life experiences of women in developing countries as being too limited and influenced by western values and beliefs systems. They consequently criticize Western feminists for over relying on the social constructions of gender relations to analyse the life experiences of women in developing countries to the neglect of historical and cultural construction of gender. They contend that the majority of women in the third

world suffer injustice in their lives not only as a result of imbalanced gender relations but also as a result of colonialism, class, culture, ethnic identities as well as the position of the particular country in the world economy system (ibid). They argue that Western feminists often tend to construct women from developing countries as a homogeneous group who are oppressed and universal dependents without appropriate consideration to their specific, historical, economic, religious, political, or cultural background (Mohanty, 2003, McEwain, 2001). Peter Bruyneel, in his overview of the 2008 State of world population notes that:

Cultural customs, norms, behaviours and attitudes are as varied as they are elusive and dynamic. It is risky to generalize, and it is particularly dangerous to judge one culture by the norms and values of another. Such over-simplification can lead to the assumption that every member of a culture thinks the same way. This is not only a mistaken perception but ignores one of the drivers of cultural change, which is multiple expressions of internal resistance, out of which transitions emerge (UNFPA, 2008: 1).

To speak of all women as being oppressed equally in feminism theory is to deny the fact that there is difference among women. Since the 1990s post-modernist feminist scholars have argued that Universal claims about "women" often fail to present an accurate picture of women's experiences worldwide and tend to conceal the fact that women from different classes, cultures, ethnicities and religions face very different challenges and can experience gender relations in different ways (Weedon, 1999; Hirschmann, 1997; Brydon and Chant, 1989). They argue that it is important to define feminism to include the struggle against all systems of oppression for the total development of women worldwide. According to Mohanty (2003) each developing country is distinct and is shaped by its cultural tradition, religion, social norms. She therefore suggests a better theoretical analysis involves constructing the group of "women" in 'a variety of political contexts that often exist simultaneously and are overlaid on top of one another' (p.61). Such an analysis is context-specific and politically focused, aware of connections between women and groups of women without falling into false generalizations, and recognizes the contradictions as well as the shared experiences of

women (ibid). Difference has become an important issue in social, cultural and political theory, because of changing compositions of societies and the increasing diversity of the postmodern market place (Weedon, 1999). However, differences in the viewpoint should not undermine the struggle against gender inequality which is still relevant among other forms of oppression.

Gender and culture has become particularly important issues within the field of development. However, like Western feminist theories, similar criticisms have been levelled against Western development approaches such as the capitalism and modernization theory, rooted in Western institutions and beliefs exported to developing countries (McEwain, 2001; Soetan, 2001; Parpart, 1993; Mukhopadhyay, 1995). Two key feminist approaches to development are the Women in Development (WID) and Gender and Development (GAD) perspectives. Western feminist approaches to development, though aimed at improving the welfare of women in general were initially influenced by such Western development theories (Mohanty, 2003; Razavi and Miller, 1995). WID approach to development focuses on the importance of women's contribution to economic development and identifies women's limited access to economic resources as the reason for their subordination without considering the unequal gender power relations that limit women's economic choices and opportunities (Barriteau, 2000; Razavi and Miller, 1995; Young, 1997; Bunch and Carrillo 1990). This limitation in WID led to a shift from WID to GAD. Unlike WID, GAD appreciates diversity among groups of women and recognizes that women's progress requires understanding and restructuring of institutional structures, processes, and gender relations that constrain women active participation in the development process (Razavi and Miller, 1995; Wilkins, 1999). Development experts in both developing and developed countries assumed that the universal adoption of Western development policies and projects would lead to economic progress of developing nations' economies which would benefit all classes, races as well as women and men equally. However, Boserup's (1970) study of *Women's Role in Economic Development* seriously challenged the argument that economic progress from western development interventions would certainly benefit women and other disadvantaged groups in developing countries. One such example is the structural adjustment programs imposed by the World Bank and the IMF on Third World countries. The cuts in government

expenditure and social services as a result of the structural adjustment led to increases in women's unpaid labour and reinforce the traditional gender division of labour (Barriteau, 2000; Razavi and Miller, 1995; Boserup, 1970). Consequently, scholars from Third World countries increasingly advocated for a new approach to development that would take into account the diverse realities of their own societies, rather than being based on western theories and assumptions and this is where GAD tried to come in (UNFPA, 2008; Soetan, 2001; Razavi and Miller, 1995; Bunch and Carrillo 1990). It was developed by both western and non-western feminists to address the limitation of WID noted above. In his review of the 2008 State of world population, Peter Bruyneel cautions that:

International development agencies ignore culture – or marginalize it – at their peril. Advancing human rights requires an appreciation of the complexity, fluidity and centrality of culture by intentionally identifying and partnering with local agents of change. Culturally sensitive approaches investigate how variables such as economic status, politics, law, class, age, gender, religion and ethnicity intersect and lead to divergent understandings and manifestations of power (UNFPA, 2008: 7).

He therefore suggests that it is important to incorporate culture as an essential dimension of the development process. Thus, development policies and initiatives should be responsive to the local people by gaining a better understanding of their various religious, historical, economic and cultural backgrounds in order to promote gender equality and achieve sustainable development (UNFPA, 2008; Soetan, 2001; Barriteau, 2000; Mukhopadhyay, 1995). These criticisms of Western Feminist theories and development approaches are important in revealing that there are differences, particularly among women in developing countries which require careful theorizing, researching and developing policies and interventions leading to genuine social change and economic development (Barriteau, 2000).

2.4 Femininity and Masculinity

Femininity and masculinity or one's gender identity refers to the degree to which persons see themselves as masculine and feminine given what it means to be a woman or man in society (Stets and Burke, nd; Connell, 1995, 2002). Femininity and masculinity are rooted in the social rather than the biological. Correspondingly, the gender identities of masculinity and femininity can be seen in terms of a mutually defining relationship. In this respect the relational aspect of gender categories produces and sustains binary opposites which may be invoked in stereotypical ways (Connell, 2002). Thus masculinity is associated with strong, active, hard and rational while femininity is weak, passive, soft and emotional. Such ideas of gender and sexuality affect the behaviour of teachers and students in school. Connell (1987, 1995, and 2002) explores gender beyond its dualistic conception as one form of masculinity versus one form of femininity. 'Often it is assumed that there is just one set of traits that characterizes men in general and thus defines masculinity. Likewise, 'there is one set of traits for women, which defines femininity' (Connell, 1987: 167). This type of assumption is found in sex role research where differences between women and men are seen as already constituted and something that socialization builds upon to create masculine and feminine individuals. However, such a conceptualization of gender is an oversimplification of what pertains in reality (Wharton, 2005; Connell, 2002, 1995&1987). It is important to recognise that the two created categories of femininity and masculinity are not equal. Masculinity is not equal and opposite to femininity, it attracts a higher value (Connell, 2002; Wharton, 2005; Anort and Mac an Ghail, 2006). However, society frames gender as being either female or male which is rarely questioned and plays a significant role in our daily interactions with others. Barton (1998) argues that the teacher plays an important role in the processes of identity formation within the school and possesses a great responsibility in shaping how knowledge is presented to the students. Therefore, through an understanding of gender as a social construction, rather than something that is naturally or biologically fixed, this research explores the differential experiences of girls in both the home and school environment and how this impacts on their performance. Exploring this issue with teachers, students, dropouts, parents and educational officials, I believe that gender

sensitive reform efforts should be made to better address the gender inequality issues in both education and society as a whole.

2.5 Gender Inequality

Wharton (2005), Connell (2002) and Arnot and Ghail (2006) assert that gender distinctions are strongly linked to gender inequality. This link is evident in all structures of society. At the individual level, traits and characteristics associated with men and masculinity are accorded more value than those associated with women and femininity (Connell, 2002). From an interactionist perspective, the production of difference simultaneously involves the creation of gender inequalities (Wharton, 2005). Even at the level of organisations and institutions, worth, status and resources are differentially assigned along gender lines. Hence, irrespective of the angle from which gender distinctions are examined, they provide the basis of inequality (Wharton, 2005, Connell, 2002). Gender distinctions and inequalities produced at one level of the social world are often reinforced by social processes operating at other levels. For instance, the discrimination against girls in the educational system (which is the main focus of this study and will be discussed later in subsequent chapters) is often reflected in the low status jobs and low incomes they are restricted to in the job market.

In order to eliminate discrimination against women and girls, it is important to understand how gender inequality is perpetuated. According to Wharton (2005) gender inequality is reinforced through processes of institutionalization and legitimation. Wharton defines institutionalization as ‘the processes through which social relationships take on the qualities of an institution’ (2005: 220). Highly institutionalised relationships seem to persist without conscious interventions and efforts and are more difficult to change than to reinforce them, consequently making participation appear voluntary and valid (ibid). ‘The harm of gender is first and foremost in the system of inequality that produces a patriarchal dividend, a system in which women and girls are exploited, discredited, and made vulnerable to abuse and attack’ (Connell, 2002: 143). Supporting Connell’s view, Wharton (2005) points out that;

This may be true both for the subordinate group and for those who benefit from the inequality. Dominant group members not only may fail to acknowledge that inequality exists, but are also unlikely to feel personally responsible or guilty. Subordinate group members may also experience institutionalised inequalities as 'just the way things are'. ... This long term stability provides dominant groups with a strong vested interest in maintaining unequal arrangements. ... in such a way that subordinate groups feel relatively powerless to challenge their position (Wharton, 2005: 221).

Connell (2002) argues that men benefit from gender inequality as a dominant group and as a result have an interest in maintaining it, while women who bear the cost of the inequality as a subordinate group have an interest in dismantling it. However, Wharton cautions us that:

We should not underestimate the difficulties associated with deconstructing gender and reducing gender inequality. At the same time, devoting too much time and energy to issues of reproduction may create the opposite problem: a tendency to downplay the possibilities for individuals and groups to make real change and to be unduly pessimistic about the prospects for gender equality (2005: 225-226).

Despite the difficulties that are associated with deconstructing gender, I believe that as teachers, parents, students and educational officials we can play a significant role in reducing the gender discrimination against girls in our educational institutions. Available evidence shows that gender inequality at the individual and institutional levels has been reduced, particularly in the developed world. For example, women are found in higher educational institutions and some are found in professions considered to be the preserve of men. However we are still a long way from a society where gender inequality has been eliminated. In the next section, I briefly review the literature on gender and education, focusing on the main factors and causes of girls' unequal access

to, and performance in education. These educational inequalities are both a cause and a consequence of deep-seated inequalities operating within the school, family and the wider society. I also discuss the role of education in addressing gender inequality.

2.6 Understanding Gender Inequality in Education

Over the past two decades the persistence of gender inequality in education has been the concern of many African countries, including Ghana. This is because girls' education has been acknowledged globally to have a positive impact on national economic development process. Ghana as well as other African countries has ratified several human right treaties concerning children and discrimination. The international concern for human rights in education is reflected in the 1948 UN universal declaration of human rights, the Dakar Framework for Action of 2000 and the Millennium Declaration (UNESCO, 2003). Similar commitments are reflected in Ghana's constitution, which grants every person the right to education (Government of Ghana, 1992). Education is essential for the achievement of gender equality in particular and human rights in general (Wilson, 2004; Subrahmanian, 2005). Since the launch of Education For All Campaign in Dakar in 2000 and the United Nation adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) many African countries, including Ghana have initiated several policy reforms and interventions to achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2015, and to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary schooling by 2005. Ghana's commitment to the promotion of girls' education is also shown in the creation of a special unit within the Basic Education Division for girls and most recently, by appointing a Minister of State for Primary, Secondary, and Girl- Child Education. Though these measures have improved girls' access to education, gender equality in education is still very far from being a reality for many children, particularly at the secondary school level, where girls' enrolment, completion and achievement rates are lower at all levels of education, especially their performance in subjects such as Mathematics and Science (Evans & King, 1991; Evans, 1995; Odaga, 1995; World Bank, 1996). Available statistical data on gender inequality in education indicate that globally, 77 million children were not enrolled in either primary or secondary school in 2004 and out of this number 57% were girls. Sub-Saharan Africa alone accounted for 38

million out of the 77 million out of school children while South and West Asia accounted for 16 million and East Asia for 9.3 million in 2004 (UNESCO, 2007). Although in some developing countries gender parity in enrolment has been achieved in primary and secondary education, girls' access to higher education is still at a very low level (UNESCO, 2007; 1998; GSS, 2000).

In Ghana a report by Care International (2003) shows that only 75% of children gain access to primary education nationwide. Out of the 75% of school children who attend schools, 25% drop out before completing grade six of basic education, and another 20% drop out after completing grade nine of basic education (Care International, 2003). The report indicates that about 60% of the children less than 14 years do not complete nine years compulsory basic education, majority of whom are girls. An impact assessment study of Girls Education Programme in Ghana observed that the Gross Admission Rate (GAR) of girls in the Upper West Region (the study region) from 1996/97 to 1999/2000 academic years ranged from 60.3% to 74.6% while that of boys was 75.6% to 80.8% (Sutherland-Addy, 2002). Thus, within the same period, between 25% and 40% of girls were not enrolled in school and for boys the figure is 19% to 24%. These figures reflect the very high illiteracy rates found among girls and women in many developing countries. The literature on gender and schooling in Africa provides a number of insights about the reasons and causes of gender differences in enrolment patterns of secondary school students. Most of these studies link the disadvantage position of women and girls to factors such as gender, poverty, culture, religion and socio-economic barriers (Tanye, 2008; Casely-Hayford, 2000; Chapman et al, 2003; Colclough, 2000; Stephen, 2000; Odaga & Heneveld, 1995), which continue to create and perpetuate gender inequality in educational access, participation and achievement.

2.7 Discriminatory Socio-cultural and Religious Practices

Discriminatory cultural practices factors that serve as barriers to girls' education at the household and community levels are closely interrelated (Rose and Al-Samarrai, 2001; Colclough, 2000; Stephen, 2000; Logan and Beoku- Betts, 1996; Odaga & Heneveld,

1995). In their study of the enrolment patterns of girls' education in Africa, Logan and Beoku-Betts (1996) observed that the low participation of girls in education results from a combination of socio-economic and cultural forces outside the school, as well as traditional gender roles. These factors, they pointed out, directly or indirectly affect policy and interventions initiated by government to promote girls' education. Thus, the existence of discriminatory cultural practices such as early and forced marriages restricts girls' right to education. For example, girls are encouraged or are forced into early marriages, either to protect them from pre-marital pregnancy, which is considered shameful and illegitimate in most African societies or to reduce a family's economic burden (UNICEF, 2001, Rose, 2003; UNESCO, 2003/4). Whatever the reasons for early and forced marriages, they hinder the educational progress of girls and violate their human rights to education. Rose and Al-Samarrai's (2001) study of household constraints on girls' education in Ethiopia also found that girls as young as 8 years old were married off to avoid pregnancy outside marriage. They noted that schoolgirls were frequently abducted on their way to school, or even from within the school compound itself, by the parents of boys, for marriage to their sons. Being mindful of this risk, some parents refuse to send their daughters to school.

Other issues affecting girls' education are traditional practices associated with adolescence and the rites of passage, which are related to the construction of sexuality of young boys and girls (UNESC, 2003/4; Akweongo et al, 2001). In most cases these traditional practices limit, particularly the freedom of girls to participate in education. For example, several studies have suggested that Female genital mutilation (FGM) is harmful to the wellbeing of women and girls and contributes to the low enrolment of girls in education (Save the Children, 2003; WHO, 2008; Adongo et al 1998; U.S. Department of State, 2001; Akweongo et al, 2001). FGM is commonly practiced among African communities and about 100 to 140 million girls and women worldwide have experienced it (WHO, 2008). The practice of FGM is also widespread in northern Ghana, particularly among Muslim communities and reasons for the practice are related to cultural norms.

Another factor which also acts together with culture is religion. According to Chimombo (2005) the pattern of transmitting and gaining of religious knowledge and power has been influential in determining access and exclusion to formal education. Similarly, King's (1987) study of religions and women education found that religion, gender and social class were important determinants of schooling. He argues that religious privileges of access have often been restricted to certain classes and to men and boys. Though historically, religious education has played an important part in promoting education in many African countries, including Ghana, especially in the colonial period by schooling children from deprived communities and improving school infrastructure, they tend to reinforce stereotypes of women as passive and dependent (UNESCO, 2003/4; King, 1987). Despite the fact that most religious educational institutions do not textually discourage girl's education, many do so in practice by persuading girls' to take different subjects to those offered to boys (UNESCO, 2003/4). Religious schools are therefore more likely to encourage gender differences than eliminate them. In some traditional African religions, for example, in Ghana and Nigeria girls can be enslaved by a fetish priest to atone for the alleged crimes of male family members or ancestors or to protect their family against certain curses placed upon it at a shrine (Tanye, 2008; Owusu-Ansah, 2003; UNESCO, 2003/4). In Volta region of Ghana, the practise is known as 'trokosi' which means 'slaves or wives of the gods', and it involves families offering their young virgin girls, sometimes as young as 5, to serve village priests at shrines in compensation for the sins of family members (Tanye, 2008; Owusu-Ansah, 2003; UNESCO, 2003/4). Girls who serve at these shrines are denied access to education, which is a violation of their right as children.

2.8 Socio-economic factors

A number of studies in several African countries also suggest that poverty is one of the major factors preventing children from getting access to education in Africa (Okumu et al, 2008; Coulombe and Wodon, 2007; Otu-Danquah, 2004; Heady, 2003; Cockburn, 2001; UNESCO 2001; Oxfam, 2000; Colclough et al, 2000; Oxaal, 1997; Patrinos and Psacharopoulos, 1995). In a narrow sense, poverty refers to a condition of not having sufficient resources to secure a minimum acceptable standard of living (Ruggle, 1990;

Spencer, 2005). Agyei-Mensah (2006) provides a more elaborate definition by looking at poverty as deprivation in respect of things necessary for life (food, water, health, shelter) and other essentials to life such as education, security, opportunity and freedom. In Ghana, as it is in many parts of Africa, households whose earnings are hardly enough to pay for basic needs may also be responsible for school fees and other educational needs that may be beyond the means of the majority of parents. In a recent study exploring the link between poverty and poor educational access and attainment in Ghana, Higgins (2009: 3) found that ‘there is a strong correlation between poverty and low primary and secondary net and gross enrolment rates’. She observed that the three regions in northern Ghana with the highest levels of poverty recorded the lowest enrolment and achievement rates in the country. The study further found that:

In 2005/06, at the secondary level, net and gross enrolment was 36.1% and 44.2% in poor urban households compared with 57.7% and 72.6% in non-poor urban households. In rural areas, net and gross enrolment was 22.3% and 39.1% in poor rural households compared with 25.6% and 45.0% in non-poor rural households (Higgins, 2009: 3).

According to the UNESCO 2003/4 reports national statistics often conceal strong regional patterns of inequality and that the gender gap in rural areas is often two to three times higher than in urban areas in many low income countries. In Africa and Asia, the educational participation and attainment of girls tends to be less than that of boys. Poverty combines with gender to limit the educational opportunities of girls more than boys due to the entrenched imbalance power relations as well as unequal gender roles in many cultures worldwide (Oxaal, 1997). The opportunity costs of sending girls to school also tend to be expensive, particularly from the perspective of poor households in developing countries (Heneveld, 1994; Hyde, 1996; Coeyman, 2000; FAWE, 2000; Rose & Al- Samarraï, 2001). Opportunity costs include the loss of children’s work or income foregone as a result of attending school (Oxaal, 1997; Patrinos and Psacharopoulos, 1995). In these ways, household poverty combines with socio-cultural attitudes to deny girls their right to education (FAWE, 2000).

Other studies observed that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank sponsored Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) that were implemented in Ghana and many other African countries, in the early 1980s introduced user fees for education, health and other services (Shabaya, and Konadu-Agyemang, 2004; Assie-Lumumba, 2000; Obasi, 1997; Stromquist, 1997). Shabaya, and Konadu-Agyemang (2004) noted that the Structural Adjustment Programs have had negative effects on girls' school enrolment by reducing government spending on education without considering the impacts on poor households (Shabaya, and Konadu-Agyemang, 2004). The cuts in the provision of social services by government increased the economic burden and workload of women and their daughters due to the unequal gender division of labour in households. The structural adjustment prevented many African countries, including Ghana from providing free education to all children (ibid). Even, in countries where government abolished the payment of school fees parents may still be responsible for providing school uniforms, learning materials and even furniture. For example, in rural primary schools in Malawi, Guinea and Zimbabwe where school fees were abolished in 1992, parents were still burdened with provision of books and furniture for their children (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995). The costs of these items could be too expensive for some poor households. Consequently, parents who are poor are less likely to consider sending them to school.

2.9 Young people's work roles and schooling in Africa

Another common reason for children not attending school is that parents usually depend on their labour for household survival (Heady, 2003; Anderson, 1988; Lavy, 1996). Recent estimates suggest that about 18% (211 million) of children aged between 5 and 14 worldwide are involved in work for their families in 2000, and about 50% of this number were girls. Moreover, about 25 million of these children were estimated to be involved in work which was consistent with their development, while some 186 million of them were involved in some form of child labour which was harmful to their health and development (UNESCO, 2003/4). According to a recent report on child labour in Ghana, children between the ages of 5 – 17 represents 35% (6.4 million) of the Ghanaian population. Out of this number, about 39% (2.5 million) undertook economic

activities and 20% (1.27 million) were engaged in work that is considered as child labour. The report revealed that about 80% of child labour in the country took place in the rural areas with 57% working in the agriculture sector (Amoo, 2008). It is argued that in countries where the government has limited authority to enforce compulsory education for all children, families take decisions over children's access to the educational resources made available by the state (Chimombo, 2005; Bhalotra, 2000; Lloyd and Blanc, 1996). Finally, studies of child labour show that the number of children engaged in work reduces with economic development in the long run (UNESCO, 2003/4; Heady, 2003). Recent work has also shown that the incidence of child labour can be expected to be lowest where power is equally divided between husbands and wives (Basu, 2001). Given the high opportunity costs, especially in the form of farm labour, of education, most rural parents are particularly concerned with the relevance of education to their children and to their livelihoods (UNESCO, 2004). Parents are more willing to send their children to school if they find the quality and benefit of education relevant to the demand of work and to their community.

Chimombo (2005) observed that since education is often considered to be useful in gaining employment, especially in the formal sector and because girls and women often have less access to employment in this sector than boys, parents perceive that education is not relevant for the economic roles of their daughters in the household. In addition to low expectations about future employment in the formal sector, it is also argued that in many cultures, parents decide that education is not important for their daughters who will be married into another family and the benefits of their education will go to their husbands' families rather than to them (Chimombo, 2005; Colclough 2000; Anderson et al, 1998; Lockheed, Jamison and Lau, 1980). Women, by virtue of their lack or low education, experience discrimination in the job market. They are thus concentrated in lower status and poorly paid jobs in society, an issue closely linked to poor access to education and training. The low value attached to girls' education is said to be related to some deep rooted imbalanced gender relations in society. Colclough (2000) observed that gender division of labour as well as patrilineal property and inheritance rights tend to reduce the perceived benefits of female education. In many African societies, girls are socialised to play the role of mothers, wives and care providers at a very young age. The responsibilities of a girl may include helping parents with income generating

activities, cooking, fetching firewood, and taking care of siblings. A study of poor rural families in northern Ghana found that girls were often the sole breadwinners in their extended families, and had to cope with the difficult household chores and school work, which often have negative effects on their school participation and performance (Stephen, 2000).

2.10 Urban-Rural Residence and Distance to School

Gender differences are particularly evident when classified by urban-rural residence (Chimombo, 2005). The family's place of residence plays a crucial role in the type and quality of education children receive. Most rural areas lack nearby schools and adequate transportation which may have more negative impacts on the retention of girls, especially for their secondary school enrolment than boys. Female students in urban areas tend to stay longer in the school system than those in rural areas. Several studies assert that safety concerns explain why parents from rural communities have lower educational expectation for their daughters, given the distance and poor transportation (Chimombo, 2005; Colclough et al, 2000; Stephen, 2000; Bendera, 1999; Brock and Cammish, 1998; Swainson et al, 1998). A UNESCO (2003/4) report shows that, in sub-Saharan Africa, 88.4% of urban children are in school, compared to only 65.4% of rural children. A study about primary school enrolment in deprived areas of northern Ghana found that 'one particular difficulty of providing education for children in the north is the nature of community settlements, which tends to be small, sparsely populated and widely scattered' (Casely-Hayford, 2002: 18). The study noted that as a result of the dispersed nature of small settlements in the north most communities that do not have schools within 5 kilometres (km) of their locality. Consequently, children in these communities walk 5-10 km or more to the nearest primary school and the nearest junior and senior secondary school even a greater distance, which constitute one of the major reasons for non-attendance. Additionally, Anderson (1988) observed that girls' participation in education is more sensitive to distance. Even where the cost of schooling does not serve as a barrier, it is well acknowledged that the distance from the home to school has more negative effects on girls' school participation than boys', as parents are particularly more concerned about girls' safety on the journey to school due

to sexual harassment (Gertler and Glewwe, 1990; Lavy, 1996; USAID, 1994; Colclough, 2004; Anderson-Levitt et al., 1994).

2.11 Gender violence and child abuse

Other studies on girls' experiences of schooling indicate that girls are often disadvantaged by their school experiences as a result of the gendered practices perpetuated in the school environment (Dunne and Leach, et al, 2005; Driessen, 2007; Smith, 2004; Boyle, 2004; Skelton, 2002; Kakuru, 2006; Magno and Silova, 2007; Kadzamira and Chibwana, 2000). These studies observed that the gendered nature of school curriculum had different educational outcomes for girls and boys which consequently influence their academic and career choices in Africa. For example, Dunne and Leach et al (2005) research in Ghana and Botswana found that daily school practices such cleaning of the school, assembly queues, classroom sitting arrangement, leadership positions, reward, punishment and violence were all influenced by gender. Gender violence is widespread in African schools. It is a significant factor which has implications for the educational participation of girls and has generated a number of studies (Gordon, 1995; Leach and Machakanja, 2000; Shumba, 2001; Dunne et al, 2003; Human Rights Watch, 2001; Mirsky, 2003; Robinson, 2005). According to Robinson (2005) sexual harassment involves any physical, visual or sexual act experienced by a person from another person who makes them feel embarrassed, uncomfortable and humiliated, which further reduces a person's self-confidence. Sexist harassment on the other hand involves sexist remarks and behaviour, which express insulting, degrading, or sexist attitudes (Dunne et al, 2003). Dunne et al (2003) study of gender violence in Zimbabwe, Ghana and Malawi found that both teachers and students often used sexual harassment and corporal punishment as a major means of controlling and regulating students' behaviour. The findings in Ghana show that:

Abusive behaviour by male pupils, teachers and sugar daddies did exist in the Ghanaian school context. The greatest threat to girls came from older boys in

the school, but there was also evidence that some teachers were guilty of sexual misconduct with female pupils (Leach et al, 2004: 2).

Several studies have observed that gender influences the way female and male teachers use corporal punishment as a means of discipline in schools as it is also received differently by both boys and girls (Humphreys, 2008; Dunne, 2007; Dunne and Leach, 2001; Dunne, Leach et al., 2003; Gordon, 1995). Dunne et al. (2003) observed that fighting between boys or their harassment of girls may be ignored by teachers as unimportant or as a joke, rather than being tackled seriously. Widespread sexual violence against girls by boys and in some cases by male teachers has been observed in some junior secondary schools in Zimbabwe, Ghana and Malawi (Leach and Machakanja, 2000; Dunne et al., 2003; Gordon, 1995). Similarly, statistics provided by Domestic Violence Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service indicate that sexual violence against girls is on the increase.

Table 1 Reported Child Abuse (2002-2006)

Case	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Rape	181	150	259	267	345
Defilement	820	755	671	670	1427
Indecent assault	106	90	75	116	138
Incest	20	17	13	29	7
Abduction	153	175	192	237	320
Attempted rape	23	33	17	23	52

Source: UNICEF Ghana (2008)

The above table shows that between 2002 and 2006 there have been an increase of sexual harassment against girls, especially with regard to defilement. Men and boys see sex as their right and perceive having many sexual partners as a way of asserting their masculinity. This attitude of men and boys makes it very difficult for young women and girls to protect themselves against unwanted sexual intercourse, pregnancy, HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases. Not only do these incidences go unreported because students fear victimization, punishment or ridicule (Human Rights Watch, 2001; Dunne et al., 2003) but also because they are socially accepted and not recognized by men as violations. Casely-Hayford's (2001) study on the retention of female teachers in rural areas of Ghana suggests that female teachers are as much at risk

of sexual harassment as female students. The prevalence of gender violence in schools presents serious challenges to the achievement of gender equality in education in developing countries. Poor performance, low participation in class, low self-esteem, irregular attendance and dropout for both boys and girls have all been associated with gender violence (Dunne et al., 2005; Leach et al., 2003; Afenyadu and Goparaju, 2003; Humphreys, 2008).

2.12 Pregnancy and Sex education

Another factor that relates to sexual violence and serves to limit girls' participation in education is pregnancy. The education of most schoolgirls in Ghana and other countries worldwide is cut short by unwanted pregnancies as many of them are expelled from school the moment their pregnancies become visible (Grant and Hallman, 2006; Hallman, 2004; Mensch, 2001; Meekers and Ahmed, 1999; Kaufman et al., 2001). Other studies on teenage sexual activity and health status in Ghana and elsewhere show high rates of teenage pregnancies, child bearing, abortions complications and HIV/AIDS (Forum for African Women Educationalists, 2000; KELLER, et al, 1999; Awusabo-Asare et al, 2004; Kofi, et al, 2003; Afenyadu & Goparaju, 2003). These studies link schoolgirls' pregnancy to institutional and structural discriminatory practices both within the school and home such as poverty, sexual harassment, normative gender roles and expectations and traditional practices such as early and forced marriages. According to the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) (2000), about 21% of Kenyan adolescents have had at least one child by the age of 20 and that 8,000 to 13,000 girls dropped out of school due to pregnancy. The same report revealed that in Ghana 1,068 students dropped out of school between the period 1990 and 1994. Of these 638 were girls and 172 representing 27% dropped out due to pregnancy, making pregnancy the highest cause of dropout among girls. In Uganda, the report indicated that 60% of patients who died as a result of abortion complications were girls below the age of 20.

Traditionally, sex education has been intended to protect young boys and girls from danger (Diorio and Munro, 2000; Awusabo-Asare et al., 2004; Njau and Wamahiu, 1996). Presently, sex education programmes are being encouraged in schools worldwide in response to concerns about high rates of teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections and the emergence of HIV/AIDS, sexual abuse and abortion among both adolescent and adult women (Rosen, Murray and Moreland, 2004; Thorogood, 2000; Thomson, 1994; Reiss, 1993; Diorio, 1985). Rosen et al (2004) observe that;

Sexuality education is the lifelong process of acquiring information and forming attitudes, beliefs, and values about identity, relationships, and intimacy. It encompasses sexual development, reproductive health, interpersonal relationships, affection, intimacy, body image, and gender roles. Sexuality education addresses the biological, socio-cultural, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of sexuality (Rosen et al, 2004: 4).

An analysis of teenage sexual activity (including that of schoolgirls) in different parts of Africa show that much of the activity occurs in the absence of adequate sexual information or of knowledge of contraceptive use (Awusabo-Asare et al., 2004; Rosen et al, 2004; Meekers, 1994; Ahlberg, 1994; Gage and Meekers, 1994; Djamba, 1997). As a result, schoolgirls rely heavily on potentially inaccurate or harmful information on sexual matters from peers and the mass media which expose them to the risks of early pregnancy and its associated risks. There are limited sex education programmes that acknowledge the fact that positive experiences of sexual desire and pleasure are important to young people's sexual health and well-being (Allen, 2004; Fine, 1988). Allen's (2004) study argues that the absence of discourse of desire and pleasure in sex education is not beneficial to the promotion of sexual health of young people and calls for sex education to include issues about sexual desire and pleasure. Adding to this argument, Aggleton and Campbell (2000) contends that, sex education associates young people's sexual health with the lack of sexually transmitted infections and the avoidance of unplanned pregnancies. Sex education is therefore not taught to introduce young

people to issues regarding the nature and meaning of sexuality, or to improve their performance or enjoyment (Epstein and Johnson, 1998)

Although school-based sexuality and reproductive health education has been noted to be one of the most essential means of providing young people with important information on their sexuality and reproductive health, it has come under intense criticism by some parents and religious groups due to fears that sexuality education will encourage children to become sexually active (Rosen et al, 2004, Aggleton and Campbell, 2000). Consequently, most sex education programs tend to emphasise abstinence from sex and have limited sex education to the dangers and risks that students, particularly girls experience in their sexual life (Rosen et al, 2004; Thorogood, 2000). In fact, the engagement in sex outside of marriage, particularly in African traditional culture has generally been perceived as shameful and illegitimate and a main reason contributing to students shying away from the support they will need to practice safe sex. Rosen et al (2004) observed that sex education programs that emphasised abstinence do not provide students who already are or may become sexually active adequate information on sexual practice and thus have failed to eliminate or reduce unintended pregnancies and abortion thus resulting in high dropout rates for girls.

The use of sex education to prevent teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) is supported by the belief that sexuality is basically heterosexual with the purpose of having children rather than the satisfaction of pleasure and desires (Diorio & Munro, 2000; Scholer, 2002). By focusing on the dangers and risks of sexuality, teachers protect themselves against criticisms of encouraging sexual activity among their students (Reiss, 1993). However, the more school-based sexuality and reproductive health education focuses on the risk and dangers of sex, the more it risks harming students by providing them little or no information on sexual practice (Rosen et al, 2004; Diorio & Munro, 2000; Allen, 2004; Mirembe and Davies, 2001). To provide students with adequate information, sex education programmes should include the recognition that all young people, whatever their gender and sexual identity are sexual subjects who have a right to knowledge about the body as related to sexual practice.

This information is important not only for practicing safer sex, but also in terms of improving interpersonal relationships (Rosen et al, 2004).

2.13 The Role of Education in Addressing Gender Inequality

There is strong international consensus that gender equality in society can be achieved by promoting gender equality in education (UNESCO, 2003/4). This is the reason why more than 180 countries, including Ghana have pledged to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary schooling and to ensure that every boy and girl will receive a quality basic education by 2015 (Herz and Sperling, 2004). Girls' education has an important means for economic growth and human development (Oxfam, 2000; Klasen, 2002). Similarly, Kofi Annan in his foreword to The State of the 'World's Children Report' (UNICEF, 2004) proclaimed that:

To educate a girl is to educate a whole family. And what is true of families is also true of communities and, ultimately, whole countries. Study after study has taught us that there is no tool for development more effective than the education of girls. No other policy is as likely to raise economic productivity, lower infant and maternal mortality, improve nutrition and promote health – including helping to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. No other policy is as powerful in increasing the chances of education for the next generation (UNICEF, 2004).

In view of the importance of human resources development to the national economy, girl's education has been a central framing discourse of education policy, resulting in considerable policy concern about girls' education as an important tool for national development and economic growth (Subrahmanian and Jha, 2005; UNESCO, 2003/4). As indicated by Chimombo (2005), the significant point of such belief dates back to the 1960s when the human capital theory of development was systematically articulated by Theodore Schultz. He argued that population quality and knowledge constitute the most important determinants of the future wellbeing of individuals and that countries that fail to educate its people cannot achieve economic development. He further noted that

‘education is widely regarded as the route to economic prosperity, the key to scientific and technological advancement, the means to combat unemployment, the foundation of social equity, and the spread of political socialization and cultural vitality’ (p.130).

The significance of girl’s education, especially in the developing countries, cannot be over emphasized. From a more global perspective, promoting girls’ education has been shown to have more positive implications for all other measures of development (UNICEF, 2004; Shabaya and Konadu-Agyemang, 2004). Educated women have the capabilities and skills to increase their earning potential, which is essential for the welfare of the many female-headed households in developing countries. For countries with higher levels of poverty, increasing the education levels of girls has a favourable impact on economic growth (Dollar and Gatti, 1999). Therefore, it is no doubt that countries with higher levels of schoolgirls’ enrolment have higher levels of economic productivity, lower fertility, lower infant and maternal mortality, and longer life expectancy than countries that have not achieved as high enrolment levels for girls (UNICEF, 2004). One of the advantages of girls’ and women’s education is its positive impacts on levels of agricultural and industrial productivity. Studies have indicated that the gain in productivity from education was higher for women farmers than for men (UNESCO, 2003/4; Ford, 2002; Quisumbing, 1996; Jamison and Lau, 1982). The 2003/4 UNESCO report reveals that the importance of women’s education in the area of agriculture had been known for several years and more recent evidence of its impacts for the productivity of women continue to be positive. Axinn (1993) has also argued that education leads to positive attitudinal and behavioural changes in women. He notes that:

As woman become educated, she gains motivation to forge ahead on her own. Her enlightenment about all avenues of life is increased and she obtains the skills to pursue meaningful employment and become a discriminating consumer of mass media. She becomes aware of the biology of reproduction and what she may do to prevent or postpone conception as well as her children’s health (Kasarda et al, 1986 cited in Axinn, 1993: 481-493).

As the above quotation implies education can influence fertility by delaying the time of marriage, it enhances women knowledge of contraception use, thus lowering fertility rates and therefore important in reducing the rates of population growth in developing countries (Schultz, 1989, 1993, 2002; Benavot, 1992). By its impact on demographic processes such as family size, women's education becomes an important condition for sustained economic growth (Benavot, 1989; King & Hill, 1993; World Bank, 1993). Studies indicate that children of mothers who have themselves been to school are more likely to attend school than those of mothers who have never been to school. Moreover, educated women tend to take better care of their children's physical well-being as well as their performance in school (Shabaya and Konadu-Agyemang, 2004; Glewwe and Jacoby, 2004). A recent UNICEF analysis of household data from 55 countries indicate that children of educated women are much more likely to go to school, and the more schooling the women have received the more likely it is that their children will benefit from education, thereby passing the multiplying benefits for both themselves and society (UNICEF, 2004). Several other studies have emphasized increasing awareness of the relationships between maternal educational achievement and child health. The children of educated women tend to be better nourished and are most likely to receive immunizations, and therefore experience much lower child mortality rates than children born to women with little or no education (Shabaya and Konadu-Agyemang, 2004; Schultz, 1989; Summers, 1992; Weale, 1992; World Bank, 1993; UNICEF, 2000). In their study of the gender gap in Ghana, Zimbabwe and Kenya with regard to gender equity and access, Shabaya, and Konadu-Agyemang (2004) observed that both primary and secondary schooling significantly reduce the probability of child death, and that investments in women and girls' education decrease the probability of child mortality.

An additional advantage of promoting the education of girls and women is the changes brought about in household behaviour and practice (UNESCO, 2003/4). For example, the improved sustenance of children has been shown to be more strongly associated with increased levels of education and income of the mother than of the father (ibid). Studies have shown that women and girls have fewer household resources than men and boys because their influence over decision making in the heterosexual household is usually weaker (Haddad and Reardon, 1993; Agawal, 2004). It appears that resource allocation decisions within the households are inconsistent with the 'unitary household

model', which assumes that all resources in the household are pooled and that members share in these pooled resources in equal measure (Quisumbing and Maluccio, 1999). However, an increasing number of studies argue that in many instances this is rarely the case, and increasing women's share of cash income in the household increases the share of the household resources allocation to health, education and general household consumption (Agawal, 2004; Ulph, 1988; Haddad, and Rajiv, 1990; Kabeer, 1997; Moore, 1992). These studies confirm that by contrast, men are found to retain part of their income and spend some of their income on goods for personal consumption.

2.14 Conclusion

I have explained that gender is not something that is fixed naturally, but is a social construction that we create in our daily activities as we interact with others. Femininity and masculinity are gender identities also rooted in the social. However, Femininity and masculinity are not valued equally, masculinity attracts a higher value and is associated with strong, active, hard and rational while femininity is weak, passive, soft and emotional (Connell, 2002; Wharton, 2005; Anort and Mac an Ghail, 2006). The understanding of these gender concepts thus help us to analyse the gendered experiences of schoolgirls and how their experiences in education leads to different educational outcomes for them.

Again, I have argued that girls' unequal access to, and performance in education is both a cause and a consequence of deep-seated inequalities operating within the school, family and the wider society, yet not many current qualitative studies exist that inform us about the nature of the problem in the developing countries. Efforts by governments and many donor agencies to bridge the gender gap in schools in the developing countries, especially for girls, and to improve the quality of the school experience have tended to assume that the school setting is universally neutral (Dunne et al, 2005). However, investigation has shown that the school environment to be marked by unequal gender relations (Mac an Ghail, 1994; Connell, 1996; Heward, 1996; Skelton, 2001). The power imbalance between girls and boys is reflected in the sexual harassment of

girls. A review of the literature shows a variety of complex and inter-related issues such as socio-cultural factors, religion, extreme poverty, political factors, child labour, and established perceptions on gender roles that hinder female education in Africa leading to the persistent of gender inequality in education (Colclough, 2004; Odaga & Heneveld, 1995). The benefits of girls' education are immense whether we examine it from a social, political, cultural or economic perspective. Increasing the education level of girls has a favourable impact on economic growth. Despite numerous benefits, most developing countries, including Ghana have not yet eliminated all the institutional and cultural barriers that have long hindered girls from attending school. Chapter three discusses the background context of this research.

Chapter 3: Gender Issues in Society and Education in Ghana: Socio-Economic and Political Context

3.1 Introduction

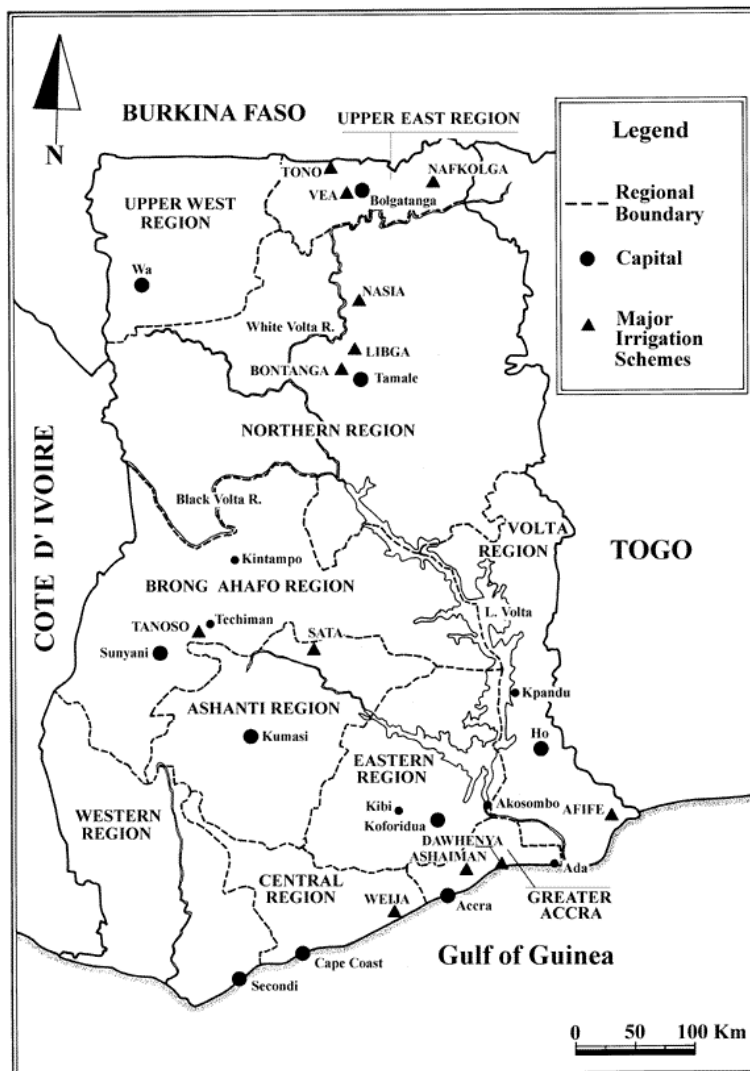
In this chapter I provide an overview description of the socio-economic, cultural and political context of Ghana, analysing the existing patterns of gender inequality in the country. I also examine women's positions in the labour market and their health status through the lens of gender. Next, I critique efforts made by the government and The Ministry of Women and Children (MOWAC) in addressing the problem of gender inequalities in the country. Additionally, I explore the educational reforms, policies and practices initiated by the Ghanaian government in the educational system over the past decades in its efforts towards making education accessible to all and to achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) goals. The aim is to provide information that enables the reader to understand the geographical, historical, political as well as the socio-cultural context in which teachers' and parents' attitudes reinforce gender inequalities in education in Ghana as many of the difficulties that girls face in the course of their education are related to and reinforced by gender relations in society.

3.2 Ghana: Geographical Background

Modern Ghana is situated on the west coast of Africa, just north of the equator on the Gulf of Guinea and located between Togo and the Ivory Coast. Burkina Faso borders on the north. Ghana covers a total area of 239 305 square kilometres and for administrative purposes the country is made up of 10 regions and 137 district assemblies. The ten regions are Western, Ashanti, Greater-Accra, Eastern, Central, Brong-Ahafo, Northern, Upper West, Upper East and Volta (Ghana Statistical Service et al., 2004; Songsoore, 2003). Northern, Upper West and Upper East regions constitute Northern Ghana. There are significant differences between the north and south of Ghana. The land and climate are different as are the ethnic groups. In terms of development and infrastructure the

north lags behind the south due to bias in development policies (Songsore, 2003). The regions extend over a range of climatic conditions ranging from savannah belt in the north, to forest and coastal environments in the southern parts of the country. Ghana has a tropical climate and two distinct seasons: wet and dry. The wet season occurs between April and September, and the dry between October and March (Dickson and Benneh 1988).

Figure 1: Map of Ghana



Source: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/X5598E/Ghana.GIF>

Ghana's total population in 2002 was about 20.5 million with females constituting about 52% and growing at 2.7 percent per year (UNDP, 2002, Palmer, 2005) however, a

recent estimate by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the United States World Fact Book was at 23,382,848 in 2008 (CIA, 2008). Accra is Ghana's capital and largest city with a population of about two million. About 3.2 percent of the total population is aged 65 years and above and 41.4 percent below 15 years, putting a high dependency burden of about 45% on the working population (Ghana Statistical Service et al., 2004). The country has on average a population density of about 52 persons per square kilometre. Most of the population is concentrated in the southern part of the country, with the highest densities occurring in urban areas, which puts considerable pressure on social services and infrastructure (Ghana Statistical Service, 2005b). Rapid population growth is one of the main reasons of increasing poverty in Ghana (Government of Ghana, 2003c).

The official language of Ghana is English, but there are other commonly spoken Ghanaian languages such as the Akan, Ewe, Dagomba, Dagaare and Ga with varied socio-cultural practices. About 60 percent of the people are Christians, who live mostly in the south and the major cities. Muslims constitute about 25 percent of the population and they are mostly concentrated among the ethnic groups in northern Ghana. The remainder 15 percent of the people are divided among traditional faiths and other religions (Ghana Statistical Service et al., 2004). This religious segregation has resulted in different social-cultural patterns and structures across the country; particularly between those of the Christian population in the south and the Muslim population of the North. Women in northern Ghana, particularly Muslim women, for example, are less encouraged to participate actively in public life due to strong patriarchal family structures (Sibbons and Seel, 2000).

3.3 Ghana: Socio-economic, Cultural, and Gender Issues

Ghana is a low-income country. At independence in 1957 Ghana's economy was one of the strongest in sub-Saharan Africa. However, there was a sharp economic decline in the following 25 years, particularly in the late 1970s and early 1980s which led to deep problems of inefficiency, high inflation and unemployment, declining output and

exports, and deteriorating infrastructure (Rai, 2002; Nti, 1997; Bofo-Arthur, 1999). The economies of many less developed countries including Ghana were crippled by a marked deterioration in terms of trade of primary products, which made prices of primary products drop drastically in spite of rising energy prices (Rai, 2002, Potter, 2000). Given that Ghana is predominantly an agricultural country with cocoa as its major export; the crisis left the nation's economy in serious disarray (Europa, 1982; Rimmer, 1992). This was also worsened by a prolonged drought in 1982/3 and the repatriation of about a million Ghanaians from Nigeria. Between 1983 and 1990, the government undertook two major Economic Recovery Programmes (ERP I and ERP II), in conjunction with the World Bank and IMF to stabilise the economy (Rai, 2002; Sowa, 1993; Pearce, 1992). The first programme (ERP I) ran between 1983 and 1986 and was mainly designed to stabilise the economy and reduce inflation. ERP II was initiated in 1987 to continue the economic reforms initiated under the first programme and was more focused on restoring growth. However, these reforms have had a negative effect on areas such as employment, health and education systems and the number of Ghanaians suffering poverty. Organisations, such as Oxfam, argue that the IMF and the World Bank did not consider the negative impact on the welfare of the average Ghanaian, particularly on women and rural communities, hence broadening inequities between and within regions and gender disparities in access to resources, social services and infrastructure amenities (Rai, 2002; Potter, 2000; Awumbila, 2006). Consequently, the government initiated several economic policies such as the Program of Action to Mitigate the Social Cost of Adjustment (PAMSCAD), and the Ghana- Vision 2020 which advocates for a curriculum which is sensitive to gender issues at all levels of the education system. The policy identifies an unbiased education as an important tool for achieving the goals of equality of access to and achievement of educational qualifications for boys and girls. The Ghana Poverty Reduction strategy (GPRS), being the latest initiative, has clear policy statements relating to poverty reduction and gender equality to support economic growth (GOG, 1987; GoG, 2003; GoG, 2005a).

The growth of the Ghanaian economy during the 1990s led to a reduction in national poverty rates from 52 percent to 40 percent (Haddad, 1991; GSS, 2000; Razavi, 2000; GoG, 2003; Canagarajah and Pörtner, 2003; Awumbila, 2006; Palmer, 2005). Though general poverty levels declined, about one-third of the population is poor and unable to

access basic social services in terms of health, water and education. ‘The impact of poverty differs according to geographical location, place of residence, life cycle stage, occupation and gender’ (Awumbila, 2006:150). Poverty is exceptionally high in the three northern regions with 57.4 per cent of people in the Northern region, 68.3 per cent in the Upper West and 79.6 per cent in the Upper East still living in abject poverty (Adjasi and Osei 2007; Ghana Statistical Service, 2000); GoG, 2003). Poverty is three times higher in rural areas than in urban areas with Accra, the national capital, registering as low as 10% as poor compare to 80% of the rural communities (Canagarajah and Pörtner, 2003; GoG, 2003; Whitehead, 2004; Awumbila, 2006). This makes it difficult for the rural poor to educate their children despite the free basic education policy in Ghana.

The economy continues to be heavily reliant on agriculture which accounts for about 40% of GDP, 70% of employment and more than 55 % of foreign exchange earnings (World Bank, 1985; Dzorgbo, 2001). Traditional exports such as cocoa, gold and other natural resources still account for almost half of GDP. Employment in Ghana is predominantly in the informal sectors, particularly for those without formal education, women and rural dwellers (Duncan, 2004; Heintz, 2005). The informal sector in the Ghanaian economy is made of three basic sectors; agriculture, services and industry. Ghana’s agricultural sector is said to have a huge potential for improving its productivity and reducing rural poverty, but it has not received the needed attention from government (Heintz, 2005; Duncan, 2004; Appleton, and Collier, 1990; World Bank, 1985). Although past governments have attempted to improve agricultural productivity, these efforts have concentrated on large-scale capital intensive modes of farming over small scale farm units (Duncan, 2004; GoG, 2003; Heintz, 2005; Sarris and Shams, 1991) The growth of the agricultural sector is constrained by obsolete farming practices, gender inequities, poor roads, land tenure problems, lack of markets, lack of finance and other infrastructure (Duncan, 2004). Consequently, ninety percent of farm harvest is head-loaded at the village level mainly by women and children putting considerable risk and burden on them (Duncan, 2004; Manuh, Songsore, & Mackenzie, 1997; Appleton, and Collier, 1990; Benneh, Kasanga and Amoyaw, 1995). The sector is also characterised by post harvest losses and low productivity because many of the

women farmers are denied the necessary supports such as access to land and financial resources (Duncan, 2004).

Women are economically very active and engage mainly in agriculture where they usually cultivate crops for subsistence, often on less fertile land while men grow cash crops on more fertile land (Awumbila, 2001; Ghana Statistical Service, 2000, 2005a, b). Customary law which was developed by the colonial governors in consultation with traditional rulers gave land title deeds to men as heads of household and as a means of controlling and subordinating women (Gedzi, 2009; Fenrich and Higgins, 2001). On family farms, while women can influence decisions, the male head of household has final decision-making power and controls the proceeds of the land, including the products of women's labour which women traditionally controlled. Writing on gender and poverty, Awumbila (2006) notes that;

In Ghana [...] women's access to resources has been substantially less than men's. Women's limited access to productive resources has been suggested as key to understanding women's subordinate position in society and to explaining gender inequality in Ghana. [...] gender inequalities in access to land as a critical factor predisposing women to poverty. Less than a third (31%) of households headed by women own land compared to 40% of households headed by men, with a greater gender gap in rural communities. Furthermore, studies indicate that women's access to productive resources tends to be indirect and contingent on their relationships with men, either by kinship or through marriage (Awumbila, 2006: 153-154).

Northern and southern Ghana constitutes different cultures and climatic conditions. Northern Ghanaian societies are characterised by patrilineal systems with entrenched patriarchal family structures, with women having little or no direct control over resources. However, women in the matrilineal south have greater access to resources and more independence than women in patrilineal systems (Baden et al, 1994). Lack of access to land and land rights have discouraged women, especially those in the north,

from undertaking long-term investments (Awumbila, 2001, 2006; Duncan, 1997; Kotey and Tsikata, 1998). The consequence is that agricultural investment is less than 2% of GDP, and less than 2% of arable land is under irrigation (World Bank, 1985). Generally, Ghana's economy is not constrained by land availability but by the insecure nature of tenure, and this coupled with poor administration systems have worsened land tenure insecurity with implications for national development (Benneh, 1987; Manuh, Songsore, & Mackenzie, 1997). Like their counterparts in many countries of the world, most rural Ghanaian women combine agricultural activities with petty trading, food processing, marketing food crops and small business enterprises to enable them to meet their daily needs and supplement their earnings from farming (Awumbila 2001; Manuh 1993; Duncan, 1997; Kotey & Tsikata, 1998; Ghana Statistical Service, 2000). In his study of the Ghanaian informal sector, Palmer (2005) notes that;

74% of the farm households in Ghana have at least one member engaging in some form of non-farm work.... Hence, where a household is classified as 'a farming household', or an individual classified as a 'farmer', the diversity of the livelihood for the household or the individual is masked (Palmer, 2005: 20).

Despite their important role in sustaining their families and communities, women face severe discrimination in accessing economic resources such as land and finance. Access to financial resources for smaller farmers is more difficult for women than for men who usually control large cash crop farms which can attract more credit facilities (Benneh, Kasanga, & Amoyaw, 1995; Benneh, 1987; Bassett, 1993; Manuh, 1989). Women also face challenges in accessing bank loans due to their low socio-economic status and lack of economic assets as collateral to secure loans. Hence women can usually only access very small loans which do not facilitate the expansion of their businesses. A growing body of literature shows that a country's agricultural productivity could increase by up to 20% if women's access to resources such as land, seed and fertiliser were equal to that of men's (Morton, 2004; DFID, 2007: 13). Women's ability to participate successfully in the labour market is constrained by cultural, educational and economic barriers which are often socially imposed (Awumbila & Momsen, 1995; Awumbila, 2001; 2006). Most potential women entrepreneurs are constrained by lack of business

information and further hindered by time constraints responsibilities such as child care, cooking, washing, and collecting fuel-wood, water and home maintenance. The multiple natures of their roles, both productive and reproductive, means that women have less time for business training programs and networking activities which can enhance their performance. Moreover, there is also a common cultural belief in Ghana that women's enterprises should not be as big or successful as men's enterprises (Oppong & Abu, 1987; Clark and Manuh, 1991; Awumbila, 2001; 2006).

The labour market in Ghana is highly sex-segregated in both the informal and formal wage sectors (Awumbila, 1997; Date-Bah, 1986; Coulombe, 2004). The informal makes a significant contribution to real GDP and can provide a means of acquiring useful skills for the youth who do not make it through education. However over the past 50 years, no proper government policy framework has been planned for its development (Gladwin, 1991; Palmer, 2005, 2007). Women make up about 90 per cent the informal sector where the risk of poverty is high. The informal sector is characterized by self-employment, small-scale businesses, and reliance on local resources, family ownership, labour intensity and low income (Ghana Statistical Service, 2000, Awumbila, 2001, 2006; Teal, 2001; Haddad, 1991; Bortei-Doku A. E. 2001; GoG, 2003). Usually, incomes and conditions of work in the informal sector are far less secure and stable, relative to formal sector employment. Employees in the informal sector are usually not protected by labour laws and have no basic rights such as minimum wage or health care (Palmer, 2005, 2007; Mensah-Kutin, 2008).

Formal sector employment constituted between 14-18 percent per cent of total employment in 1984, of which around 60 per cent was in the government sector (GoG, 2003c). Comparatively women are under-represented in formal sector activities, comprising only one quarter of wage employment (Manuh, 1988; Awumbila 2001). Within the public sector, women are highly concentrated in certain professions perceived as feminine, such as teaching and nursing and are usually concentrated in the subordinate positions due to lack of higher education (Manuh, 1988; Awumbila, 2006). There are significant differences between men's and women's educational attainments. According to the Ghana Living Standards Survey in 2000 (GLSS 4), 44.1% of women

as opposed to 21.1% of men have no formal education. Given that formal sector employment now requires secondary or higher levels of education, it follows that only 5.7% of women compared to 15.8% of men can officially work in this sector (UN Millennium Project, 2004). ‘This has significance for the gendered nature of poverty, as very few women are in formal sector employment’ (Awumbila 2006:155). Furthermore, promotion in the civil service is dependent upon having higher education, and given that only 20 per cent of graduates are female, women are at a clear disadvantage in terms of achieving managerial positions (Gregory et al, 1992; Manuh, 1988; Awumbila, 2007). Women are also found in low status positions in banking as telephone operators, secretaries and shop assistants. Women are again underrepresented in formal sector business with only 11 per cent of modern sector commerce in 1984 (Manuh, 1989). Consequently, they earn on average lower incomes than men and ‘the existing gender gap in earnings found in the early 1990s has been increasing considerably as the increase in earnings was much larger for male workers (from 5.8 to 10.5 millions cedis) than for female workers (from 4.9 to 7.1 millions cedis)’ (Coulombe and Wodon, 2007: 50). Like the informal sector workers, many of the formal sector employees, especially women, have other occupations, usually some form of trading, in addition to their main profession (Palmer, 2005: 21).

3.4 Women and Politics

As a former British colony, Ghana was the first country in tropical Africa to gain independence from colonial rule on March 6, 1957 and according to Ayelazuno (2007) is regarded as a model of democratic peace in Africa. Ghana has seen several political regimes after gaining independence, changing between civilian and military governments with the change often brought through military coups (see table 2).

Table 2: Political Situation since Independence

From	To	Type of government	Leader and Party
1957	1958	Democracy	Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's Convention People's Party
1958	1964	Restricted democracy	
1964	1966	One party state	
1966	1969	Military regime	Gen. Ankrah's National Liberation Council
1969	1972	Democracy	Dr. Busia's Progress Party
1972	1979	Military regime	Col. Akyeampong's National Redemption Council
1979	1981	Democracy	Dr. Hilla Limann's People's National Party
1981	1992	Military regime	Chairman Rawlings' National Provisional Defence Council
1992	1996	Emerging democracy	President Rawlings' National Democratic congress (NDC)
1996	2000	Democracy	
2000	2008	Democracy	Kuffour's National Progressive Party
2008	To date	Democracy	President Attah Mills' NDC

Source: African Elections Database (2006) Elections in Ghana.

<http://africanelections.tripod.com/gh.html>

In 1992, a new constitution was approved by referendum and multiparty presidential and parliamentary elections were held. Since 1992 there have been five multiparty democratic elections in succession, the most significant being a transition from one political party to another in the year 2000 (African Elections Database, 2006). The elections held under the 1992 Constitution have been generally considered free and fair by an independent electoral commission and international observers, though the

opposition parties complained about some irregularities. The recent elections conducted in December 2008 were also declared free and fair and were won by the National Democratic Congress (NDC) with John Atta Mills as the president (Zounmenou, 2009). Besides the regular election of the president, Members of Parliament and the District Assemblies, the constitution guarantees the right to fundamental human rights and freedoms. It also establishes very important state mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights, including the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice and the National Commission on Civic Education (Constitution, 1992; APRM, 2005). The protection of human rights has improved since Ghana's return to constitutional rule in 1992

Table 3: Women in Parliament

First Republic	1960	10
Second Republic	1969	2
Third Republic	1979	5
First Parliament of the Fourth Republic	1992	16
Second Parliament of the Fourth Republic	1996	19
Third Parliament of the Fourth Republic	2000	19 women, 181 men
Fourth Parliament of the Fourth Republic	2004	25 women, 205 men
Fifth Parliament of the Fourth Republic	2008	19 women, 211 men

Source: *Daily Guide* (2009); Abantu for Development (2004) <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/ghana/02983.pdf>

However, since the introduction of constitutional rule in 1992, there has been a little progress in women's participation in governance (as shown by table 3 above). While improvement has been seen in women's involvement in politics, they tend to be underrepresented at all levels in decision making (Crook, 1991; Abantu for Development, 2004). This is clearly related to unequal power relations between the sexes in both the traditional and formal modern structures as well as the socialisation process that creates awareness among men rather than women to be at the helm of public affairs (Abantu for Development, 2004). For example, out of the 953 contestants in the parliamentary election held in December 2004, only 100 were females and only 25 of them won seats in the 230-member parliament representing just a little below 11% of the parliamentarians. This was a small increase over the previous elections in 2000 in which 19 women representing 9.5% won their seat in the 200-member parliament. Moreover, a woman was appointed as Chief Justice for the first time in the country's history in June 2007 (GNA, 2007). However, in the recent 2008 general elections women secured only 19 seats as at July 2009, representing 8.7 percent of the 230 seats in Parliament, which is a decline from the 25 seats (10%) they secured in the previous legislature in 2004 (*Daily Guide*, 2009). Also, only eight out of the 38 ministers appointed by President Mills are women, despite the fact that in 1998, the government issued a White Paper on Affirmative Action aimed at ensuring at least 40 per cent female representation in public service and decision-making institutions (Sibbons and Seel, 2000; Abantu for Development, 2004; Zounmenou, 2009).

3.5 Women's Health Situation

There has been great improvement in the area of health since independence. Total fertility rate (TFR) declined by two-thirds from 1988 to 2003, from 6.4 to 4.4 lifetime births per woman with variations in the regions, from a high of 7.0 births in the Northern region to a low of 2.9 births in Greater Accra (DFID, 2005a; Benefo and Schultz, 1994). Contraceptive use increased twofold among married women to 25.2% and the practice of family planning methods has more than tripled to 18.7% within the same period, particularly among couples with higher education (DFID, 2005a; DeRose, 2004; Green street, 1990; Arko, 2001; GoG, 2003c). Average life expectancy in Ghana

increased from 45 to 58 years and is now one of the best in Africa, though low compared to most Western industrialised nations. Women's life expectancy is 60.3 which is higher than that of men at 56.6 years (UN Millennium Project, 2004; Mensah-Kutin, 2008) but in line with physiological sex ratios.

Despite these significant improvements, health status indicators in Ghana continue to be poor (as shown by table 4 below). About 61 percent of the population have access to sanitation in 1990 and this improved to 72 percent in 2000, access to good drinking water was 53 percent in 1990 but improved to 73 percent in 2000 (UN Millennium Project, 2004). Though improvement was made in the access of potable water and sanitation, about 1 out of 3 persons do not have access to safe water which has wide implications for women and girls because they have to walk long distances to fetch water with consequences on their time and health (Palmer, 2005; Mensah-Kutin, 2008). Infant mortality rates declined from 126 in the same period to 100 per 1,000 live births. Available statistics indicate that about 80,000 children under the age of five die yearly from avoidable diseases such as malaria, child malnutrition and diarrhoea (GoG, 2003c; Ghana Health Service, 2003; DFID, 2005a; Wak, 2002). Child malnutrition is common and accounts for about 60 percent of cases of child death, especially in the three northern regions of the country where the experience of poverty is also highest (GoG, 2003c; Benefo and Schultz, 1994). Also the maternal mortality rate is high in Ghana increasing from 214 to 740 deaths per 100,000 live births due to lack of access to adequate health facilities and services (Ghana Health Service, 2003). Again, the situation is worse in the three northern regions with the Upper East Region reporting as high as 800 per 100,000 live births (Ghana Health Service, 2003; Mensah-Kutin, 2008).

Table 4: Status of Progress towards the MDGs in Ghana

Indicator	Earliest	Most recent	MDG Status
Proportion below national poverty line	31.4% (1992)		
Prevalence of Child Malnutrition (weight for age)	27.3% (1994)	24.9% (1999)	Off track
Primary net enrolment rate	56.8% (1998)	58.3% (2000)	Off track
Ratio girls/boys in primary and secondary education	85.8% (1998)	88.2% (2000)	Off track
Under-five mortality rate (per 1000)	126 (1990)	100 (2001)	Off track
% with access to improved water supply	53% (1990)	73% (2000)	On track
% with access to improved sanitation	61% (1990)	72% (2000)	On track

Source: UN Millennium Project, 2004: 129 Table 9, (also in Palmer, 2005: 18)

In Ghana, marriage is considered as an essential and desirable social status in society within which men have absolute control over women's sexuality. Women also face strong opposition from husbands and in-laws in the practice of family planning and they may face punishment if caught, sometimes with physical violence (Awusabo-Asare et al, 2004). This undermines women's ability to negotiate safe sex. Research has shown that the fear of resistance and punishment has resulted in women using modern contraceptives in secret or resorting to those that cannot easily be detected, particularly injectables (Ezeh, 1993; Bleek, 1987; Awusabo-Asare et al., 2004). The current service provision is inadequate for the growing demand for these services, thus limiting the choices on fertility control among poor families (Ampofo, 2000; Awusabo-Asare et al,

2004). Fertility decreases with increasing wealth, from 6.4 births among poor families to 2.8 births among wealthy families (Tettey, 2003).

3.6 Prevalence and Impacts of HIV/AIDS in Ghana

Another area of deep concern to the Government of Ghana is the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS among the population. Available statistics indicate that about 1.7 % (98,306 males, 137,845 females) of the adult population between the ages of 15-49 were infected with HIV/AIDS in 2008 and in 2009 the estimated adult prevalence increased to 1.9 % (100,228 males and 140,574 females) (Ghana Aids Commission, 2010; WHO/UNICEF/UNAIDS, 2008; USAID/Ghana, 2008). Women form the majority of HIV/AIDS cases, accounting for 64% of cases in Ghana, though the percentage is declining (Ghana Health Service, 2003; Agyei-Mensah, 2006). According to UNAIDS (2008) prevalence among pregnant women ranged from 1.2 % in the northern region to 4.7 % in the eastern region. The report reveals that only 15% of HIV-Infected People in Ghana were receiving Antiretroviral Therapy in 2007. Consequently, during that period 21,000 deaths were recorded as a result of the disease and 160,000 children became orphans due to AIDS. However, some of these reports on HIV/AIDS caution that the figures do not give the accurate number of people affected by the disease considering the fact that the majority of Ghanaians, especially those in rural areas where 60 percent of the population do not have access to hospitals and rely mainly on traditional medicine whenever they fall ill. Also, in view of the stigmatization associated with the disease, people are not willing to check their status while those affected tend to try and hide their HIV/AIDS status (Kates and Leggoe, 2005).

Women are particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and other STIS due to their biological nature, lack of education, especially on reproductive health and socio-cultural, economic and unequal gender relations (Ellis, 2000; Smith, 2002; Temah, 2007; Awumbila, 2006; Mensah-Kutin, 2008). In her study of gender discrimination and susceptibility to HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa, Temah (2007) suggests that:

The economic vulnerability of women makes it more likely that they will exchange sex for money or favours, less likely that they will succeed in negotiating protection, and less likely that they will leave a relationship that they perceive to be risky. Women have greater susceptibility than men to infection due to biological, social, cultural and physiological reasons. The pattern of women's and men's roles and relationships in Africa puts women at greater risk. In this sense, polygamy, sexual coercion and violence against women all contribute to the distressing gender gap in HIV/AIDS (Temah, 2007: 5).

HIV/AIDS broadens the existing gender inequalities because women have limited access to economic opportunities reinforced by cultural practices, thus creating a situation of high dependence of women on men, limiting their ability to protect themselves from HIV infection. Women also incur more social cost of the disease than men in many areas of sub-Saharan Africa due to imbalanced power relations (Temah, 2007; Ellis, 2000), thus exacerbating the growth of poverty among women (Barnett and Whiteside, 2002; Haddad and Gillespie, 2001; Whiteside, 2003; Bennell, nd). For the rural poor, especially women who depend on subsistence farming, their illness extends to the constraints on the successful performance of productive and reproductive roles. Studies have shown that in the event of prolonged illness and death girls are more likely to be withdrawn from school to take care of sick parents or relatives (Temah, 2007; Bennell, 2005; Kates and Leggoe, 2005, Evans, 2002). The emergence and spread of HIV/AIDS in Ghana as well as other developing countries, particularly among women and girls is a major challenge to the participation of girls in education and the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Whiteside, 2002; Barnett, 2004a; Mirembe, 2006).

3.7 Legislation, Violence and Women's Rights

After Ghana gained independence in 1957 the government introduced deliberate policies to empower women through enactment of numerous laws. The most significant

is the 1992 Constitution which recognizes equality of all persons before the law and prohibits discrimination on the grounds of gender, religion, ethnicity and geographical location. Thus, women in Ghana are recognized under law as having equal rights with men in all spheres of life. To strengthen equality for women Ghana ratified three international agreements on women's rights; the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights in 1986. Ghana has also endorsed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and efforts are being made by Ghana to gradually transform the provisions into concrete practices (MOWAC, 2004). Additionally, Ghana has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and established the Ghana National Commission on Children (GNCC) to oversee issues relating to children's rights and development (GoG, 1998). The National Council on Women and Development (NCWD) was established by the government as a requirement by the first United Nations Conference in 1975 to serve as the official national machinery for promoting the advancement of women in Ghana. In January 2001, the Government merged the two former institutions (GNCC and NCWD) to create a new Ministry for Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC), elevating it to a cabinet status (MOWAC, 2004; CEDAW, 2005). The new Ministry for Women and Children's Affairs aims to pursue gender mainstreaming within all government ministries and district assemblies as clearly spelt out in the National Poverty Reduction Program and the Vision 2020 (GoG, 2003; CEDAW, 2005). The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs collaborates with other Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and professional agencies such as the Ghana branch of the International Federation of Women lawyers (FIDA), the Federation of Ghanaian Women (FEGAWO) established in 1982, the 31st December Women's Movement (DWM) started in 1983, and the All Women's Association of Ghana (AWAG) established in 1984 to promote women's interests (MOWAC, 2004; Bortei-Doku, 1990; Tsikata, 1989). The Ministry has since 2001 led a dynamic national drive to overcome the challenges of gender inequality and to ensure that gender issues continue to receive attention at the highest levels of decision making. Consequently, both the Health Ministry and the Education Ministry have appointed Gender Desk Officers (GDOs) to ensure that gender concerns are incorporated into all sector policies and programmes at local levels (CEDAW, 2005; MOWAC, 2004). In addition, MOWAC has established a

Women's Development Fund (WDF) to offer credit assistance to women, about 200,000 women have benefited so far from a total of (150) billion cedis (about US \$20 million) worth of micro credit to improve their socio-economic status (Sibbons and Seel, 2000; MOWAC, 2004).

By way of legal and policy reforms, MOWAC and other women's organisations have been successful in influencing government to bring about some positive changes to some discriminatory legislation and the introduction of new laws to provide additional rights or protection for women and children. For instance, according to the customary law, widows and their daughters have no right to inherit property from their husbands in time of divorce or death even if the property was acquired during the marriage. However, the introduction of the Intestate Succession Law (PNDC Law 111) by the PNDC Government in 1985 provides women and their children, irrespective of the form of marriage, some degree of economic security after the death of a husband / father (Ertürk's, 2008; Fenrich & Higgins, 2001; Ocquaye, 1993; Awusabo-Asare, 1990; Sarris and Shams, 1991; Baden et al, 1994). Moreover, harmful traditional practices such as widowhood rites, early marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) have been banned and the Children's Act of 1998 increased the minimum age of marriage from 16 to 18 years through Parliament (Manuh, 2007; Manuh, 1984; Kuenyehia, 1991, 1992). One most successful recent achievement of MOWAC and other gender advocate groups towards addressing gender violence in Ghana has been the passage of the Domestic Violence Bill in February 2007, after a lot of campaigning by women members of Parliament, gender advocates and civil society groups (Ertürk's, 2008; GNA, 2007; Manuh, 2007). The law focuses on the two different forms of domestic violence that constitute a sizeable majority of all cases of violence against women and children. It has also established "Victims of Domestic Violence Support Fund" for the support of victims of domestic violence. However, study carried out by Sibbons and Seel (2000) on gender mainstreaming in Ghana indicates that:

Much of the [MOWAC and other women agencies] work is devoted to 'women' and not 'gender'. There is little in what they do which firmly addresses issues of power relationships and they concentrate on women's practical gender needs

rather than their strategic gender needs. The academic community is critical at a rather more sophisticated level. The failure to move from WID to GAD along with the international community is, for the researchers, a failure to tackle the root causes of the problems (Sibbons and Seel, 2000: 24).

In spite of this valid criticism there has been slow progress. Their initiatives seem to raise the awareness of the Ghanaian public and politicians in particular to the issues of severe imbalance in power relations existing in all institutions that hinder the development of women, and particularly in the educational sector. Although their initiatives have advanced the course of women and enhanced their economic status, Ghanaian society as a whole tend to regard the role of women as subordinate to men (UNECA, 1984; NCWD, 1994; Ampofo, 2000). The continuous practice of harmful and humiliating traditions like Trokosi, polygamy, cruel widowhood rites, early and forced marriages, and widow disinheritance reinforces the inferior status of women (Kuenyehia, 1992; Ampofo, 2000). For example, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is still prevalent in the three Northern Regions of Ghana (CEDAW, 2005; Ampofo, 1993; Baden et al. 1994). According to the 2006 Ghana Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS Survey), polygamy is commonly practiced among most ethnic groups and about 40 per cent of women live in polygamous marriage in Ghana (MICS Survey, 2006). Men pay expensive bride wealth as compensation to the bride's family for the loss of labour. The payment also signifies the transfer of the woman's rights and labour to the husband's family. For this reason some men even seem to consider their wives as their 'property' and mistreat them (Baden et al, 1994). Also, in most parts of the country the belief in witchcraft is prevalent, especially in poor rural areas and particularly in northern Ghana where settlements designated as "witches' camps" have been setup for women believed to be witches (Adinkrah, 2004; CEDAW, 2005; Ertürk, 2008). Most accused witches are widows, childless, disabled and elderly poor women. They are often chased out of their own communities through violence, threats and in extreme cases are murdered. They are usually blamed for causing illness, death, crop failure, or financial hardship to some individuals and the community. Around 80 women, aged between 40 and 70 live at the Gambaga Outcast Home, which is a settlement of thatched huts located close to Gambaga. Many women do not return home and live their entire life in "witches' camps" for fear of being beaten or lynched (Adinkrah, 2004; Ertürk, 2008).

Available statistics show that gender violence such as wife beating and murder, rape, defilement, cruel widowhood rites and sexual harassment are widespread at the work places, schools and within communities (Manuh, 2007; CEDAW, 2005; Baden et al., 1994; Ampofo, 2000). According to a report by CEDAW (2005) one in three women experienced domestic violence at some time in their lives, and many women do not complain openly about their sufferings (Manuh, 2007). In support of the growing advocacy to protect women from violence, the Ghana Police Service set up a Women and Juvenile Unit (WAJU) with a mandate to deal specifically with cases of abuse of women and children in 1998 (CEDAW, 2005; Manuh, 2007). In 2005 WAJU was reconstituted as the Domestic Violence Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) to respond to the increasing reports of abuse and violence against women and children (Manuh, 2007). DOVVSU works in collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare, the Legal Aid Board, FIDA, and other NGOs to tackle domestic violence. With about 40 offices spread all across the country, DOVVSU is still under-equipped to deal with the increasing volume of reported cases of domestic violence. Out of the 335 cases received by DOVVSU in Accra alone between 1998 and 2004, merely 19 percent of cases were heard in court and less than 3 percent led to convictions from charges of assault (ibid). In many cases, victims were deterred under family and public pressure from reporting or follow up abuse cases. Recent statistics from the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police service indicate that 708 defilement and 227 rape cases were recorded from January to December 2008 in Ghana. In the upper west region (study area) within the same period, nine women suffered compulsory marriages, 36 girls were abducted and 26 defilement cases were recorded (*Ghana News Agency*, 2009). Violence against women in Ghana is a complex issue to deal with in a culture that promotes female sexual submissiveness and largely ignores the unrestrained expression of male sexuality as well as the legal practices of ignoring the problem or considering it a private affair (Manuh, 2007).

Although women's organisations and the Ghanaian government have made appropriate legislature changes to women's advancement, patriarchal structures continue to exist and women continue to be marginalized. A major challenge for the Ghanaian

government is to move away from paying lip-service to gender issues and begin to act in a gender sensitive way at all levels, particularly in the area of education, employment and politics to improve women's participation in decision-making in both domestic and in public sphere.

3.8 Ghanaian education and reforms since independence

Formal education was introduced in Ghana by the British colonial administration and early Christian Missionary activities in the early nineteenth century and was meant to train a few men in basic literacy and numeracy skills to prepare them for clerical jobs in the colonial administration (Antwi, 1990; Quist, 1994). Formal education started in Southern Ghana in the early 1800s, while the first primary and secondary schools to be opened in the Upper West was in 1917 and 1951 respectively (Association of Church Development Projects (ACDEP), 2007; Quist, 2003; Bening, 1990). Thus, formal education and economic development were not extended to northern Ghana until the mid twentieth century. Bening (1990) observed that:

The continuing disparities and contrast in educational development between northern and southern Ghana have their origins in the colonial period when official policy deliberately limited the number of government and mission schools in the Protectorate of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast while allowing the churches considerable freedom of action in the south (Bening, 1990: 251).

The colonial administration deliberately discriminated against the northern regions of Ghana in terms of education and economic development, because unlike southern Ghana it lacked natural resources such as exportable minerals and cash crops to merit any economic investment. Lack of adequate educational facilities and deficient economic activities resulted in the people of northern Ghana becoming economic migrants, serving as labourers for the mines and the cocoa plantations in the south (Bening, 1990). Being influenced by universal patriarchal relations in the colonial era,

early colonial education excluded women and girls from schools and even when girls were later sent to school, they were often geared towards domestic subjects that would make them good housewives and mothers. To emphasise the point of how colonization and societal patriarchy perpetuate gender inequality in education, Aidoo (1995) notes:

Most women now are not equipped educationally and technically to play prominent roles in Ghana's industrialization process. The colonial system saw to it that women were either excluded from schools or else were given a fifth-rate imitation of the education of the poor in Europe. . . . On their part, African men exploited their traditions to support the colonial system which kept women "in their place" (Aidoo 1995 cited in Prah, 2002: 6).

Women's experience of inequality in education restricts their participation in economic, decision-making, and social and political roles in the public sphere (Prah, 2002; Gadzekpo, 2001; Ghana-Country-Gender-Profile, 2008; Aidoo (1995). Boys' education on the other hand was designed to train boys as workforce for the labour market. The influence of the British colonial administration is not only observed in the current Ghanaian educational and economic systems but also in other aspects of the society, such as language, culture and legal systems (Prah, 2002; Gadzekpo, 2001). In light of the colonial experience it is relevant to note that the gender and regional inequalities in Ghana after independence in 1957 are largely a reflection of the patriarchal institutional structures initiated by the British colonial government. Many African countries, including Ghana, initiated several educational reforms to address the problems of quality, relevance and gender inequality and to accelerate economic and social development immediately after independence (McWilliams and Kwamena-Poh, 1965). The search for relevant education led to a number of policies initiated to improve education. Significant among them were the 1951 Accelerated Development Plan (ADP), the Education Act of 1961, the Dzobo Report of 1973, the Education Reform Programme of 1987 and the New Educational Reform recently initiated by President Agyekum Koffour in September, 2007 (Graham, 1971; Palmer, 2007; Akyeampong, 2007).

After independence Ghana's educational system was considered one of the best in Africa (Ahadzie, 2000). However, it was not long before the progress of post-independence educational reforms began to decline as a result of political and economic instability. These changes in government caused by military interventions resulted in the abandonment of educational policies which led to disruption in the educational system. Again, the economic instability in 1970s and 80s noted above forced governments to make drastic cuts in educational budgets which retarded the progress of education greatly (Rai, 2002). A World Bank source reported public expenditure on education to have fallen from 230.0 million dollars in 1975 to 80.9 million dollars in 1983 making the percentage of actual public expenditure to drop from 21.5 per cent to 15.2 per cent 1983 (World Bank 1996). Consequently, schools received inadequate supplies of equipment, teaching materials and textbooks while class size doubled. Many classrooms were without furniture and this was serious in the northern part of the country due to the neglect of successive governments to initiate any development program. The periods also witnessed a mass departure of qualified teachers from Ghana and a lack of community confidence in the education system (Antwi, 1992; Dei, 2004). Furthermore, dropout rates were increasing and about 57% of females were illiterate, showing that a lot remains to be done to ensure gender equity in educational provision (McWilliams and Kwamena-Poh, 1975; MOE, 1987; World Bank, 1990). Young people saw no point in remaining in school only to be unemployed after they had completed their courses. Indeed, by the 1980s Ghana's educational system was in sharp decline and it had become relatively more lucrative to engage in petty trading than to undergo schooling that promised no future.

It was against this background that the Rawlings' PNDC government which had come into power through a military coup implemented the educational reform programme of 1987 with assistance from the World Bank to reform Basic Education as part of economic reform (World Bank 2004; Akyeampong, 2007). In fact, the Ghanaian educational system witnessed the major reforms during the period 1986 to 2004. The 1987 reform was based on many of the recommendations of the 1973 Dzobo Report. The objective behind the reform was to provide equitable education for boys and girls at all levels of education and the abolition of gender-streamed curriculum at the basic level. Gender-friendly teaching and learning materials were also introduced and specific

programmes were developed for girls in science and mathematics (Osei, 2004; World Bank, 2004). It was also to improve quality and make education more relevant to the country's development and manpower needs, with emphasis on vocational and technical subjects for all children up to junior secondary. Palmer (2007) observes that the Ghanaian government made repeated attempts to make education more relevant to the 'world of work' to solve unemployment problems (Palmer, 2007). This was to help the youth develop attitudes that would make them gain confidence to pursue self-employment where the state cannot offer enough jobs in the public sector. The 1987 educational structure based on the US education system abolished the old educational system of six years primary, four years middle school, five years secondary school, two years sixth form and three years university, replacing it with the new JSS concept of six years of primary education, three years junior secondary, three years senior secondary and four years university education, thus, reducing the duration of pre-tertiary education from 17 years to 12 years, thus cutting down costs in education (Foster, 1965a: 200; Akyeampong, 2007; Osei, 2004; World Bank, 2004a). Also, as a condition for World Bank support for the reforms, the government introduced cost-sharing at all levels of education except in basic public schools. Although there were no fees for the basic schools, parents still had to bear a high cost of charges in respect of textbooks, uniforms and furniture. The introduction of fees impacted negatively on resource-poor students' participation in education, particularly girls (World Bank 2004).

By 1990, reports indicated that the Ghanaian educational system was encountering countless problems with the educational reform programme, similar challenges as previous reforms faced (Yeboah, 1990; Akyeampong, 2007). Many schools were alleged to be without textbooks, teachers and other teaching materials. There was also inadequate infrastructure, poor salaries for teachers, educational mismanagement and lack of funding for education, high drop-out rates and low enrolment rates (Konadu, 1994; Ahadzie, 2000). Between 1990 and 1992, over 280,000 JSS leavers could not proceed to second cycle institutions (Quist, 1999). Also, the Conference of Heads of Assisted Secondary Schools (CHASS) had felt that the duration of the SSS course was too short and pleaded with the government to extend the course from three to four years. The Ghana Education Service was reported to have turned down the request and appealed to parents to "voluntarily provide motivation" for the teachers to do extra

teaching in order to cover the syllabuses (GES, 1996). Despite these shortcomings enrolment in basic schools increased from 12,997 in 1980 to 18,374 in 2000, and attendance and completion rates improved, but stagnated later in secondary school (World Bank, 2004). Critics and analysts of Ghana's educational development observed that; although school enrolment improved under the 1987 reforms, the quality of education at all levels deteriorated (World Bank, 2004; Cobbe 1991; Palmer, 2005).

In an attempt to address the problem of educational quality and other concerns such as persistent problems of access and retention, especially for girls, teacher training and financing, the NDC government launched the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) programme in 1995 (GoG, 1995; GoG, 1995b; GoG, 1996). It was planned for implementation within a ten-year period, beginning in 1996 and running through 2005 and guaranteed free tuition for all children at the basic level in public schools across the country (GoG, 1996). With the FCUBE programme the government shifted emphasis from tertiary to basic education so as to increase the participation in primary school to as close to one hundred per cent of the population as possible (World Bank, 2004a; Akyeampong, 2007). It must be noted however that between 1987 and 1996, there has been a lack of commitment on the part of government to strictly enforce the 'free' aspect of the programme such that at the beginning of the FCUBE in 1996, about 700,000 children representing 30% of children of school going age were still not in school (Palmer, 2005). During the latter part of the 1990's, between 30 - 35% of the national recurrent budget was allocated to education, 60% of which went directly to improving primary education (Ministry of Education (MoE, 2002). Despite all these efforts, access to and participation in basic education in Ghana are far from the hundred per cent predicted (Ghana Statistical Service, 2000). Ministry of Education data indicates that of the 75% of school children who attend schools, 25% drop out before completing the first six years of basic education, and another 20% drop out after completing the nine years of basic education (Akyeampong, 2007). Though the FCUBE programme succeeded in increasing the general enrolment of pupils at the basic schools and a continuous increase in girls' enrolment, there are still gaps between boy's and girl's enrolment, lack of teaching and learning materials and lack of teachers in some schools in the country, particularly in the three northern regions Ghana (World Bank, 2004a).

Though it has been the aspiration of successive governments to improve systems of education in the country, changes realised since independence continue to draw from the existing patriarchal structures in society, resulting in women's and girls' under enrolment and performance at all levels in education, particularly at post-primary levels. For example, a situation analysis of girls' and boys' education in Ghana conducted by Casely-Hayford et al (2004) revealed that only 52.6% of girls admitted into primary one in 1991/2 continued schooling to the last stage of JSS in 1999/2000, compared to 60.6% of boys. As a commitment to improve girls' enrolment, the government established a Girls' Education Unit (GEU) within the Basic Education Division of Ghana Education Service (GES) in 1997 with the following as its objectives to be achieved by the year 2005.

1. Increase national enrolment of girls in primary schools to equal that of boys and develop and maintain strategies aimed at ensuring the continuation of girls into junior secondary.
2. Reduce the dropout rate for girls in primary from 30 to 20 percent, and of girls in secondary from 21 to 15 percent.
3. Increase the transition rate of girls from junior to senior secondary school by 10 percent.
4. Increase the participation of girls in science, technology and mathematics (STM) subjects by improving the quality of teaching and enhancing the perception of these subjects (Sutherland-Addy, 2002).

Girls' Education officers (GEO) were appointed in all regions and districts to encourage girls to go to school and continue schooling at higher levels throughout the country (Sutherland-Addy, 2002; NDPC, 2004). Ghana also supports Millennium Development

Goal 2 and 3, which call for the achievement of universal primary education and gender equality at all levels of education (World Bank, 2003; GoG/UNDP, 2003; UN Millennium Project, 2004). In 2001, the government appointed a female Minister of State for basic, secondary and girl-child education to the Ministry of Education at the highest political level and as a sign of political will, to address the persistent gender gap in educational participation (MOWAC, 2004; Sutherland-Addy, 2002). A major progress was the abolition of compulsory school fees for basic education and the introduction of a capitation grants programme nationwide in the 2005/6 academic year, hence making primary education more accessible to the poorest (GoG, 2002; Taylor, 2005). Table 5 below shows that the capitation grants programme has increased primary school enrolment nationwide, especially for girls.

Table 5: Enrolment figures after the capitation grant (as at October 2005)

Sex	2004/5	2005/6	Increase	Percentage
Girls	1,754,539	2,075,864	321,325	+ 18.31%
Boys	1,934,909	2,239,023	295,114	+ 15.18%
Total	3,698,448	4,314,889	616,439	+ 16.67%

Source: Ghana Education Service (2006)

Moreover, the government introduced a school feeding program in some of the poorest areas of the country in the same period leading to great expansion in school enrolment at the basic level (Government of Ghana, 2003c). The creation of the Ghana Educational Trust Fund (GETFund) (of which I am a beneficiary) in 2000 to strengthen the human resource development of all the sectors of education but specifically for universities and the polytechnics in the country is one of the success stories in educational financing in Ghana (Effah, 2003). As a result of the introduction of these policies and programmes girls' education, particularly at the primary level is receiving more attention in Ghana today. While a lot of efforts have focused on primary education,

it is significant to come up with realistic policies for secondary and tertiary education where there is glaring gender imbalance and inequality.

Despite these efforts by the government, available data indicate that girls continue to be underrepresented in the education system, especially at the secondary and tertiary levels of education (Sutherland-Addy, 2002). They also continue to perform poorly in national public examinations and have higher dropout rates due to repetition at primary school as well as pregnancies in the upper primary and junior high schools. In September 2007, the Ghanaian government introduced yet another new educational reform following the recommendations of the Anamuah-Mensah's Committee. The new reform proposed eleven years of Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) and four years of Senior High School (SHS) previously known as Senior Secondary School (SSS) (Government of Ghana, 2004a; Palmer, 2005; Akyeampong, 2007). The recent Presidential Commission on Education Reforms in Ghana examined the reasons why most JSS students were unable to access senior secondary, and blamed this on factors such as inadequate school facilities and infrastructure, parents unable to afford secondary fees, a lack of alternative pathways for students with different interests and abilities, an inability of students to meet the minimum requirements for further education (Government of Ghana, 2002). The new reform forms part of the current educational system in Ghana and is discussed in the next section.

3.9 The Education System in Ghana

Basic education in Ghana is made up of both Primary and Junior Secondary School (JSS). It consists of the six years primary and three JSS. Ghanaian children start first grade at the age of six completing JSS by the age of 15, thus spending nine years in basic education (GES, 2004). Based on the recent recommendation made by the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms, the government made two years pre-school education part of the formal education system bringing the total of years in basic education to 11 at present (Government of Ghana, 2002). However, two years pre-school education is not compulsory for every Ghanaian child since conditions

vary from one district to another. Typically, primary schools and JSS share the same compounds. At the end of the compulsory 9 years basic school course JSS, now Junior High School (JHS), ninth grade students take the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), which is administered and evaluated by West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) (GES, 2004). At this level, both boys and girls study the same subjects from primary to JHS. Students from JHS who obtain between aggregate 6 and 30 in their best six subjects normally qualified for admission into SHS; but those with better aggregates always stand better chances of transition to SHS. One of the main constraints emerging in education is related to the restricted access created by the tremendous increase of graduates from junior secondary schools seeking admission into senior secondary schools in rural and small urban centres (MOESS 2007; Akyeampong et al., 2007).

Table 6: Selected statistics for Primary Education in Ghana (2001)

School population (in 1000s)	Total (in 1000s)	Enrolment % female	GER (%)			NER (%)			Out of School children (in 1000s)		
			M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
3177	2586	48	85.0	77.7	81.3	61.4	59.0	60.2	617.1	647.8	1264.9

Source: Palmer, 2005: 46

According to the 2007 Ghana Joint Assistance Strategy (G-JAS) report, the country almost attained gender parity (0.95) in 2005 and is considered to be on track to achieve MDG2 (Universal Primary Education) as well as MDG3 (gender parity in primary enrolment) by 2015 (G-JAS, 2007). In spite of this achievement in enrolment, there is still great concern about the education of girls as factors such as early marriage, pregnancy, poverty, lack of support, inappropriate as well as gender-segregated curricula, gender discrimination and hostile school environment affect their retention (Sutherland-Addy, 2002). Moreover, parity in education is only one factor of an

approach to achieve gender equality. Gender equality in the context of education is not only about getting equal numbers of boys and girls in school but also about giving them equal opportunities to learn at school and home as well (UN Millennium Project, 2004). Table 6 above illustrates that, in 2001, gross enrolment rate (GER) was about 80% while the NER was about 60%. This high GER comparative to the NER suggests there are over-age children attending primary school in Ghana, possibly because of repetition or due to starting primary school at a later age than is required. The table also indicates that about 1.2 million children of primary school age were still out of school in 2001 (Palmer, 2005). Enrolment rates in the three northern regions of the country were significantly lower as a result of the discriminatory colonial policies which favoured the south. The GER of girls in the Upper West Region (my study area) increased from 60.3% in 1996/97 to 74.6% in 1999/2000 academic year while that of boys' increased from 75.6% to 80.8% in the same period (Sutherland-Addy, 2002).

Secondary education in Ghana comprises senior secondary school (SSS) and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). The SSS now Senior High School (SHS) course covers a period of three years and the course structure has now been grouped into programmes, specifically; agriculture, general science, general arts, business, and vocational and technical education (GoG, 2002; GES, 2004; MOESS 2007). The Senior High School Certificate Examination (SHSCE), like the BECE, is organised by the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) nationwide for all final year SHS students after the three-year course. The Senior High School (SHS) level of education starts to become more restricted, with about 30% of JHS graduates gaining access to SHS. Successful SHS students receive a Senior High School Certificate (SHSC) (MOESS 2007). SHS students who qualify continue to the University for Degree programs or to any of the other tertiary institutions such as the Polytechnics for Higher National Diploma (HND), teacher training, agricultural and nursing training colleges to train for careers of their choice. Others may also go to technical institutions for technician courses. Besides the first batch SSSCE examination in 1993 in which only 13% of 42,106 students who wrote the exam passed, subsequent results have continued to show some improvement and performance has now been stabilised. Pass rates increased from 13% to 23% in 1998, to 40% in 2004, while the results released in

2007 by WAEC increased to 46% (UNDP/ISSER, 2001; Government of Ghana, 2002a: 11; GHP, 2004; 2002; Government of Ghana, 2002; GNA, 2007).

Table 7: Participation in lower and upper secondary education in Ghana (2001)

Secondary education enrolment		Secondary education GER GER (2001)			Secondary education NER (2001)			
Total (1000)	% Female	male	female	GPI F/M	Total	male	female	GPI F/M
1107	45	41.2	34	0.82	32	34.3	29.7	0.87

Source: Palmer, 2005: 47

Table 7 shows the enrolment rates in secondary school (both lower and upper secondary) in Ghana (2001). At both secondary levels there are fewer girls in school than boys, seen by the Gender Parity Index (GPI) of about 0.87. The expansion of second cycle education has been a major challenge for the Ghanaian government. During the past decade enrolments in second cycle education have increased but are not comparable to that of basic education. Enrolments in SHS increased from about 146,000 in 1987/1988, to 195,000 in 1997/1998 and 204,000 in 2000/2001. The gender gap begins to widen greatly from this level, with girls constituting only 33% of the Senior High School (SHS) students (MOESS, 2007, Akyeampong, 2007). SHS has usually served as the point from which students often move into careers of their choice to make a living. Consequently, there has been an increased demand in secondary education and enrolment increased by as much as 60 percent while the completion rate in 2006 was 34 percent (MOESS, 2007) which suggests that dropout is still high, implying that despite the relative increase in enrolments, the secondary education system has not been very efficient in equipping students for further education and the employable skills for the job market (MOESS, 2007; Palmer, 2005, 2007). Quist (2003) attributes the poor

transition rate of girls to secondary school to the gross gender inequality in the establishment of secondary schools in Ghana. He argues that most girls fail to gain admission into secondary school due to inadequate dormitory facilities for girls at that level. The Ghanaian government thus face a huge challenge to meet with the demand for SHS education to improve the transition rate from JHS to SHS, particularly for girls.

Tertiary level education constitutes mainly universities and polytechnics. It is the tertiary education that prepares the student sufficiently for the middle level manpower requirement of the country. According to the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) Ghana has six public universities, thirteen private universities and ten polytechnics, one in each of the ten administrative regions of Ghana (NCTE, 2006a and b.; Sedgwick, 2000) The University for Development Studies (UDS), established in 1992 in Tamale, the capital city for the Northern Region is the only University in northern Ghana. The rest are concentrated in the southern parts of Ghana, particularly in Accra (Effah, 2003). The duration of University Education is normally three years for first degree courses for those who hold G.C.E. "A" Level passes, Diploma or those who enter as mature students but for qualified SHS applicants, it is 4 years. However, courses like Medicine, Architecture and Professional Law require more than four years. Available statistics indicate that Ghana's tertiary education registered an increase in enrolments of 31%, from about 67,000 in 2001 to 88,000 in 2004 (Effah, 2003; Morley et al., 2007). This increasing demand for tertiary level education has led to an expansion in private tertiary institutions, mainly in Accra, giving increased opportunities for a large number of qualified applicants to have access to tertiary education. However, the expansion of tertiary institutions has not been able to meet the growing demand for tertiary education in the country. For example, the participation rate of the age-group 18-21 years in tertiary institutions in the country is as low as 2.5% compared to 30-40% for the corresponding age group in some developed countries (UNDP/ISSER, 2001; Morley et al., 2007).

Table 8: Number of students in universities in Ghana in 2005/2006

Public universities	M	F	T	%F
Students enrolled in certificate and diploma programmes	1074	923	1997	0.46
Students enrolled in degree programmes	50820	27008	77828	0.35
Students enrolled in post-graduate programmes	2835	1128	3963	0.28
Total students enrolled in public universities	54729	29059	83788	0.35
Private universities				
Students enrolled in private universities	5582	3915	9497	0.41
All universities				
Total students enrolled in public and private universities	60311	32974	93285	0.35
% at private universities	9	12	10	

Source: Morley et al. (2007)

Table 8 shows the participation rates in tertiary education in Ghana (2001). The table above also shows that female enrolment lag behind male enrolment rates in tertiary education in Ghana as indicated by the enrolment figures of 19,000 and 49,000 respectively and the GPI of 0.4 at this level.

Female students' participation in university education increased from 21 per cent in 1991/92 to 26 per cent in 1998/99. In the same period, their participation in polytechnic education was 16 per cent for 1993/94 and 21 per cent for 1998/99 (Effah, 2003). Statistics for 2005/2006 academic year shows a slight increase in the participation rate for both male and female in tertiary education. For the universities the male to female enrolment ratio was 65:35 and 70:30 for the polytechnics which is far lower than the

national affirmative action policy of 50% males to 50% females aimed at doubling the number of girls entering into tertiary education (NCTE, 2006; NCTE, 2006a; (Government of Ghana, 2006a). Though enrolment for women increased, their participation is highest in subjects such as education, social sciences and arts and mainly concentrated in the lower grade programmes (certificate, diploma and degree), whereas men dominate the science, engineering and agriculture as well as the post-graduate programmes. The 1996 the Cost-sharing system introduced by the government for higher education impacted negatively on university enrolment, particularly women and the poor (Sawyerr, 2001; Danso-Manu, 2004; Adei, 2006; Government of Ghana, 2004d; Morley et al., 2007). Furthermore, inadequate classrooms and lecture halls in secondary and tertiary institutions restrict access to most prospective students, particularly girls to university education. The low participation of women in tertiary education can therefore be seen as the consequences of the more general constraints that women face in education.

3.10 Conclusion

In this chapter I have provided a gender analysis of women's situation in Ghana, with particular reference to their social, economic, political, employment and health status and I have explored the efficacy of government and MOWAC initiatives specifically aimed at improving the position of women. I argued that despite the general improvement in women's status the position of women and men within the Ghanaian society remains relatively unchanged, thus gender inequalities still persist in all spheres of life in favour of men. I have also outlined and examined the educational system and reforms introduced by the Ghanaian government from Independence to date and I contend that, though enrolment at all levels in education improved remarkably over the period, the benefits from this expansion were unequally distributed in terms of geographic location and by gender. Girls, thus, continue to lag behind boys at all levels in the education system and a lot still remains to be done to bridge the gender gap. In the next chapter I discuss the procedure and processes that were followed in exploring the differential treatment girls experience at home and in the school situation.

Chapter 4: The Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to find out the perspectives of students, teachers, parents and education officials about the existing patterns of gender inequalities in the Ghanaian education sector, particularly in secondary schools and its effects on girls after leaving school. It also examined the root causes or structural factors that produce gender inequalities. The central purpose of this study was to explore the manner in which educational institutions help to reproduce and perpetuate gender inequalities and the specific forms that these inequalities take at the secondary school level. If we regard gender as a power relation it becomes easier to examine social institutions for the functions they play in defining and reinforcing gender inequalities. The main concern of the research is with the ways gender infuses the daily lives of secondary school students in Ghana. It also explores teachers' attitudes toward students in secondary schools and the ways in which these are influenced by the messages concerning masculinity and femininity. I examined interactions among students themselves and some of the ways they make sense of their experiences in school. Guided by the issues arising from the literature review and interviews I specifically seek to:

- Explore the differential treatment girls experience in schools and the effect that this has upon their academic attainment.
- Examine the institutional structures that encourage these gendered experiences, both within the school and the household.
- Explore the ways in which teachers' attitudes in school help to perpetuate particular perceptions and expectations about the appropriate education of students particularly girls.

- Determine the factors and situations, which contribute to the incidence of dropout among school girls
- Evaluate the successes and challenges of the Girls' Education Unit and government policies in promoting girls' and suggest gender sensitive strategies that would help bridge the gender gap in the Ghanaian education system.

The process of subordinating and differentiating girls on grounds of gender / sex within the educational process has been analyzed, on more than one level, over the past four decades (Skelton, 2001; Clarricoates, 1987; Wolpe, 1983). Two concepts frequently used in such analyses: "sexism" and "sex-stereotyping" are typical of the ways that previous researchers have attempted to understand the manner in which girls are socialized and excluded within and from particular aspects of the educational experiences. Since the main purpose was to determine the nature, causes of any discrimination against girls in school, and connect them adequately with the wider patterns of structural inequality within society, it was also important to identify some of the effects that gender inequalities in schooling have on girls after leaving school. There was also the need to interview officials from the education office, which is closely connected with the formulation and implementation of educational policies in schools. This was to help gain an understanding of their perspectives on policies for addressing gender inequality in education.

4.2 The Rationale for a Qualitative Approach

This research used a qualitative approach, strengthened by feminist research techniques in addition to ethnographic considerations. Bryman (2001) defines qualitative research, as "a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data....it is inductivist, constructionist and interpretivist" (p. 264). An important consideration, which informed the choice of qualitative methodology, is the need to gain an in-depth picture of the perceptions and experiences

of students, teachers, parents, and education officials about gender inequalities in education. This means examining the diverse views and experiences of gender disparities between boys and girls in school, and the factors that contribute to the ways in which they are perceived. Thus, since issues about context and experiences are important to the different perceptions and experiences the research requires the use of qualitative approaches. As Greene (1994) points out:

When... information needs comprise multiple perspectives, contextualised meanings, or the experience of programme participation... then qualitative methods should be employed (Greene, 1994: 539).

This implies the use of naturalistic research approaches (Lincoln and Cuba, 1985; Greene, 1994; David and Sutton, 2004) which has the potential to reveal the influence of context (social, institution, personal etc.) on perceptions and practices. Its goal is to understand social reality on its own terms “as it really is”. Taken in its simplest form, naturalism seeks rich description of people and interaction as they exist and unfold in their natural settings (Gubrium and Holstein, 1999). Thus, it stresses the socially constructed nature of reality. The approach of naturalistic inquiry, as Maykut and Morehouse (1994) point out, requires the researcher to be part of the investigation through observation and in-depth interviewing but also to be removed from the research situation to rethink the meanings of the experience.

It is intended that findings from the research would help to point out changes that would have greater chances of success and be acceptable to teachers, students and educational officials as a means of eliminating or bridging the gender gap in Ghanaian schools. This however would mean paying attention to the perceptions of those involved in using the results to suggest changes that are responsive to actual needs and concerns. In this respect, the research could be described as “responsive evaluation” (Stake, 1994). Since it seeks to uncover and address the concerns of key participants towards the promotion of gender equity in the Ghanaian educational system. Greene (1994) is also of the view that improvements are “more likely if local rather than remote concerns are

addressed...and if local rather than remote values are explicated and used to make judgments (p. 539). In this study for example, it is important to examine specific educational policies and interventions and their effectiveness in addressing gender inequality in the Ghanaian educational set up.

Another consideration for the choice of qualitative approach stemmed from the recognition that a laissez-faire, distant or purely quantitative research approach would not probe below the surface of issues. It is therefore important to be in sufficient contact with research subjects and the settings to understand fully the issues inherent in the system, which the research seeks to unravel. In many African cultures, there is the tendency towards an 'affirmative' view of life as reported by Stephens (1990) in his study of Nigeria. This affirmative attitude often is intended "to minimize points of disagreement and...to harmonise possible conflicting perspectives" (Stephens, 1990:146). To reduce such influence it is necessary to place myself into the study situation where responses could be validated, if necessary, for their truth-value. This calls for a closer association and the use of more open-ended and in-depth research approaches. My decision to adopt a qualitative research approach therefore, was the need for a research strategy that would not only enhance our understanding of gender discrimination against girls in the Ghanaian education sector, but also in response to calls for more qualitative approaches to research into educational problems particularly in developing countries to further understanding (Fuller and Heyneman, 1989; Agyemang, 1991; Akyeampong and Murphy, 1997).

The final consideration stemmed from the lack of adequate research into gender inequalities in education, particularly the discrimination against girls in schools in Ghana, which is sensitive to context and reflects 'insiders' accounts or participant experience of schooling in Ghana. The lack of such research is a problem in a wider educational research culture in Ghana, which seems to place more emphasis and value on quantitative research approaches than on its qualitative counterpart (Agyeman, 1991). Agyeman is of the view that this over emphasis and reliance on quantitative research approaches has contributed to a blunted analysis of education in African societies and has led to policy measures based on misinformation. The result of this, he adds, is the

lack of better understanding of the experience of teaching, learning, and other educational phenomena that constitute the internal system of the educational enterprise in most African societies. Supporting Agyeman's view Griffiths and Parker-Jenkins (1994) writing about the methodological and ethical dilemmas they faced in doing research exploring school attendance and gender issues in schooling in Ghana, argue that quantitative survey-type research will have limited value if ".....high-level qualitative work has not been done to discover what categories, terminology and forms of approach should be employed" (p. 455). My view is that there is lack of this preliminary qualitative work amongst the educational research community in Ghana on gender inequalities in schools. Though quantitative approaches have the potential to establish some existing patterns of gender inequalities in the Ghanaian education sector, nevertheless, they often fail to provide insight into unintended consequences and to address the concerns of those directly affected by gender discrimination in schools (Merriam, 1988).

This research was informed by a feminist standpoint and research process. Feminist research brings gender to the foreground and endeavours to understand the perspectives of women and girls (Scantlebury, 2005; Stanley and Wise, 1983; Reinharz, 1992; Oakley, 1981). Feminist researchers argue that the exclusive use of a quantitative approach does not portray the real situation of women and girls. They advocate for in-depth interviewing as it allows for a more balanced and democratic conversation between researcher and participant than is the case in traditional inquiry methods. Complex and interrelated issues such as the effects of imbalance power relations, societal belief systems, and impact of poverty on girls' schooling require more in-depth study to explore the reasons for inequalities in education in order to identify appropriate measures to reduce disparities. Feminist research also considers ethical issues in research processes as very important and openly accepts the subjectivity of the researcher's and participants' perspectives in the research process (Scantlebury, 2005; Oakley, 1981; Stanley and Wise, 1983).

4.3 Methodological Position and Identity of the Researcher

As stated earlier, researchers like Dunne and Leach et al (2005), Agyemang (1991) and Parker-Jenkins (1994) have advocated for more a qualitative approach to research in developing countries like Ghana to help facilitate a greater understanding of the range of complex and interrelated issues better. Akyeampong and Murphy (1997) supported this position by also arguing for approaches in studying and understanding problems of gender inequality in the Ghanaian educational sector. They argue that:

The problems of education are varied, interconnected and often contextual. The research tools required.....therefore need to be adaptable and flexible.....Great disservice is done to educational development when we attempt to implement new educational strategies and innovations without sufficient understanding of both classroom and school-community contexts. To understand such realities researchers need to become more involved with those they study in order to gain a deeper understanding of how educational phenomena or practice is perceived by them. Only then can research findings be applied to real and relevant issues in education (Akyeampong and Murphy 1997: 5).

These observations obviously influenced me but the theoretical approach employed for this study was influenced largely by my own philosophical inclination to feminist theory and research processes. My philosophical position has its roots in how I have come to view the nature of certain aspects of the educational setting and their needs, as I have become familiar with them. A major contribution of this viewpoint is my professional background as a teacher and my interest in the behaviour and attitude of students, particularly female students, within the secondary school, and thus, their academic and social development in respect to the differential treatment they receive in school.

In this study, my identity was very important because of my previous profession as a teacher in the study area. The interviewer's effect in terms of personality, social

background, gender and age are seen as factors that influence the responses in a study (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Burgess, 1985). For example, my access to conduct research in the study school was facilitated by my previous work as a teacher for six years in the school. This meant that personally I was well known to the head teacher, assistant head teacher and a few teachers who were still teaching in the study school, so I was familiar with the setting and had links with some people within the educational sector, which also facilitated my access to educational officials. Additionally, my position as a former colleague teacher helped me to gain the necessary cooperation from teachers in the study school to conduct interviews and observe practices. This was because most teachers at the school had been through university education and understood what it meant to undertake research as an academic requirement. As a result, they were willing to give me similar support others had given them when they were conducting research exercises. Also, the fact that I grew up as young girl in the study area gave me a particular relation with many of the girls as we share a similar background and thus created a more relaxed environment for the interviews. Furthermore, being a Ghanaian and a native of the area, my fluency in the local language facilitated effective communication as it made the task of gaining access easier and encouraged co-operation from participants in the field.

Cotteril and Letherby (1994) have noted that once in the field “the researcher put himself into different roles which are relevant to the identity of the researcher as a person” (p. 116). Citing evidence from their research and others, they pointed out how personal identity in relation to a research topic can encourage positive effects in research. In their view, being perceived by those studied, as a person who shares similar experiences seems to eliminate fear about the purpose of the research and can pave the way for very informative talk. However, the cases they cite were often dealing with highly emotive topics, such as women’s experiences with miscarriage, and it could be argued these benefited from shared experiences. Thus, although in qualitative research the identity of the researcher in relation to the research topic can be useful, it would appear that the important thing is how the researcher’s identity is managed in the research process to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the data and its interpretations. Since some participants knew me, and I was familiar to the research setting from that point of view I could be labelled as an ‘insider’ (Cotteril and Letherby,

1994). However, being an insider there is the risk of seeing things as normal and taking them for granted. Therefore, I do not deny the fact that I brought with me certain biases into this study, which definitely shaped the way I view and understand the data gathered from the field.

Whilst in the field there were occasions when I was viewed as an “expert” with ready-made solutions to problems (gender inequalities) being faced by both female teachers and female students because of my previous work as a teacher and more so because I was coming from the UK as a PhD student to explore issues of gender inequality in schooling. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) commenting on the role of the “expert” state: the model of the expert often seems to suggest that the social researcher is, or should be, a person who is extremely well informed as to ‘problems’ and their solution (p. 77). This role was sensed from some teachers and educational officials in the region who expected that having returned from Britain, I have some ready-made solutions. For example, they requested that I use my position to lobby philanthropists and NGOs in the UK to assist them. Unfortunately, I was not in a position to assist. On the part of students, because I was able to establish cordial relationships with them, they talked freely about the discrimination and abuses they have suffered from teachers, parents and peers and expected some solutions. In fact, as a female teacher concerned about the disadvantaged position of schoolgirls I felt I had a moral obligation to report the abuses which affect girls’ wellbeing and educational outcome to a higher authority for the appropriate action to be taken. However, I felt reporting the issue about the abuse would be betraying the students who had been promised anonymity and confidentiality of data, as well as also cause harm to the participants involved (Norris, 1993). Alternatively, initiating any action could hinder the success of the research and also spoil the chances of future researchers who may wish to carrying out similar exercises. In her ethnographic research with street children in Tanzania conducted for a PhD thesis Evans (2002) reports how she nearly jeopardised her research when she unintentionally found herself in the role of a whistleblower, by seeking help from a health professional for one of the street girls who reported being repeatedly raped by a street boy. She was accused of breaking confidentiality and spreading negative information about the street children’s shelter organization. Her action also led to the street girl leaving the shelter as well as caused one of the workers involved in the case to lose her job. Similarly, Norris

(1993) recounting incidents of excessive brutality by the police in his research failed to expose the violence for fear of betraying the police trust and risking future access. Thus, to avoid jeopardising the success of my research, I concentrated on the research and reserved comments on the abuse to the end of the fieldwork. For example, before I left the school I encouraged the girls to follow the school procedure for complains to report any future teacher misconduct and abuses to the appropriate school authorities and said that I felt that they should not continue to suffer in silence.

4.4 The Field and the Fieldwork

The northern regions of Ghana have historically been disadvantaged in education and continue to show worst indicators, including the highest gender gap. As a result, there is serious disparity and inequality in the educational participation between the northern and the southern parts of Ghana, particularly for girls. For instance, available statistics show that, as at the 1994/95 academic year, whilst the national percentage of pupils who were girls was 46.6 and that for the south ranged between 46.4 and 49.4, the data for the three northern regions ranged between 37.1 and 43.8. The people of the north and for that matter Upper West region are predominately peasant farmers and relatively poor due to the low level of socio-economic development of the area (District Level Consultation Report, UWR, 2001). According to the 2000 population and housing census, the Wa district has a total population of 224,454, made up of 109,539 males and 114,915 females (GSS, 2000). The density is about 38 persons per square kilometres. The major ethnic groups are Walas, Sissalas, Dagaabas and Chakales (District Level Consultation Report, UWR, 2001). In terms of education Wa district, has 36 pre-schools, 126 primary schools, 81 junior secondary schools, 6 senior secondary/technical schools, 1 teacher training college and 1 polytechnic institution. Many of these institutions are located in the Wa Township to the neglect of the hinterland. Despite the numerous institutions, the literacy rate is still low. The literacy rate in the district is about 29.3% compared to the national average of 49% (ibid). According to the report, the total enrolment figure for secondary schools in the district for the 2000/2001 academic year was 2,634, which was made of 962 boys and 672 girls.

The fieldwork was conducted in WA in Upper West region of Ghana between October 2005 and January 2006. Shortly after completing my first round of fieldwork, drop out emerged as a major theme in my interviews with teachers, students, educational officials and parents which encouraged me to embark on a second fieldwork in Ghana from December, 2006 to February 2007. Approximately seven months were spent in the study area for the two periods of fieldwork. The study was focused on a secondary school in Upper West region which is situated on the north-western part of Ghana. Although this research sought to study gender discrimination in secondary education in Ghana, many schools could not be studied for logistical and practical reasons. I chose to study in the region because it is one of the three northern regions of Ghana that have the lowest enrolment of girls in the country.

As noted earlier, the study school is one of the six senior secondary schools in the Wa district. It is a community day secondary school for the catchment area and has a population of 189, which is made up of 151 boys and 38 girls as at the 2003/2004 academic year (WaSecTech 3rd Quarterly Report, 2004). The school has 6 female teachers and 15 male teachers with the headmaster and his assistant both being males. The school runs three main programmes, which include Technical, Vocational and General Arts. From this target, a smaller and more convenient group was selected for the study based on the limited time and financial resources available. Most studies on gender and educational research in Ghana have tended to draw their sample from a relatively homogenous population made up of mainly girls (Grace, 1991; Acheampong, 1992; Ankoma, 1990). However, this study sought to diverge from this trend by including most of the key players in the education sector, hence giving a holistic approach to issues of gender discrimination in the Ghanaian education sector. The sample population therefore involved both male and female students, teachers, parents and educational officials in the region.

4.5 The Research Methods and Approaches to data collection

In qualitative research of this nature, the question of access was central since the wealth of the data to be collected ultimately depended upon what access was given to what resources of data. In addition, people who granted interviews needed to be convinced that the research was of some value to them and be given assurances of the researcher's integrity so that they offer a spirit of co-operation during the interviews. Hammersley and Atkinson (1993) comments on the importance of access in conducting research point out that:

The problem of access is not resolved once one has gained entry to a setting, since this by no means guarantees access to all data available within it ...not everyone may be willing to talk, and even the most willing informant will not be prepared or perhaps even able to divulge all information available to him or her (p. 76).

I can deduce from this assertion that access therefore has two sides, first, the official permission and once in the field the negotiated aspect of potential subjects. These two-aspects were taken into account in this study. Access to the selected school and educational officials was gained by obtaining letters of introduction from my department explaining the purpose and importance of the research. The headmaster of the school, however, set conditions that I was not to disrupt the classroom activities and take up their time, and requested to be furnished with the final findings of the study. To fulfil his request an executive summary of my research will be disseminated to education officials, parents and students of the study school.

I conducted a pilot study for testing the interview schedules before the main study was undertaken within duration of one week, with a cross section of the respondents (teachers, students and parents). It should be noted that all participants used in the piloting stage were excluded from the main research, to avoid biasing the results due to the advance exposure to interview questions. The purpose of this was to test the

interview questions, and to make any necessary amendments. Powney and Watts (1987), emphasizing the need for piloting interviews point out that:

Running a few interviews focuses the mind woefully on potential data collection problems and gives the interviewer a chance to modify practices, before the investigation proper begins (Powney and Watts, 1987: 125).

The objective of the pilot study was to determine the attitudes and behaviour of respondents towards the structure and wording of questions and to find out whether the interview questions would be able to elicit the required responses. The results of the piloting helped in reviewing the research agenda and modifying the approaches to data collection. I realised in the pilot study that some students were not fluent in the English language even though the medium of instruction in the school is English. Hence, students were given the option to speak either English or the local dialect during the actual interview since the researcher speaks and understands the local dialect. In this study, the piloting also helped to practice the social interactive skills required in interview situation and helped in conducting the fieldwork in a worthwhile manner.

I started the actual research when schools had just been in session for the first term for four weeks. I conducted semi-structured interviews with teachers, students, parents and educational officials, and engaged in observation from October to 18th December 2005 when schools went on vacation for the Christmas break. The fieldwork continued in Accra after the break from January 4, 2006 to January 21, 2006 where I interviewed the national director of girls' education unit and also gathered secondary data from documentary sources. Documentary sources were an important focus of this study. Yin (1994) points out that, documentary information is of importance to every case study topic and therefore should be the object of an explicit data collection plan. Furthermore, it can serve to corroborate or augment evidence from other sources. Documents that were used were policy documents which reflect the incorporation of gender issues in the Ghanaian education sector and highlight the current policy of mainstreaming gender into the education system in Ghana. Specific documents in this category included

educational policy documents, previous studies conducted with schoolgirls at both regional and national levels, academic literature at the University of Ghana and the institute of social work and reports from Ghanaian government and several NGOs on gender equity. These documents helped me to build a comprehensive picture of the key concerns and practical strategies in bridging the gender gap in the Ghanaian education sector since the establishment of the GEU in 1987. They also helped to develop an understanding of the extent to which views and practice reflected policy development in addressing gender inequality in the Ghanaian education sector.

The main instruments for the collection of data for this study were face to face semi-structured interviews, focus groups, life histories and observation (discussed in detail below). I undertook observation on a continuous daily basis for six weeks and I became absorbed into the school routine with its assemblies, playtimes and lessons. I also took the opportunity to incorporate into the study informal discussions with students and teachers. Development of interview protocol was an essential aspect of the research process. The semi-structured approach to interviewing was used mainly to gather descriptive data in the subjects' own words so that insight could be gained into teachers' opinions, values, beliefs, expectations and attitudes towards students from a gendered perspective. The semi-structured interview questions were based on issues identified from the research questions. The different instruments adopted in this study are presented in table 9 and briefly discussed below.

Table 9: Table of Research Methods Employed and number of Participants

participants	Semi-structured interviews	Focus group	Life history interviews	Observation
Schoolgirls	22	15		Y
Schoolboys	10	15		Y
Female teachers	5			Y
Male teachers	10			Y
Education officers	4			
Female dropouts			20	
Male dropouts			10	
Parents	8			Y
Gender desk officer	1			
Total	60	30	30	

4.6 Interviewing

Interviewing involves asking people questions and listening carefully to the answers given. Interviews are direct conversation with a purpose and allow the researcher to have a face-to-face interaction with the researched (David and Sutton, 2004; Bryman and Burgess, 1994; Fontana and Frey, 2000). Face-to-face interviewing is the most commonly used technique for conducting a systematic inquiry and most social researchers regard it as a ‘window on the world’ (Holstein and Gubrium, 1999:105). Interviewing despite all the textbook guidance is admittedly ‘not easy’ (Denzin, 1970: 186). The various texts on methodology inform us of the ‘need’ and dangers between

the interviewee and interviewer. However, Ann Oakley's (1981) account of interviewing women is more to the point when she states "...interviewing necessitates the manipulation of interviewee as objects of the study/sources of data..." (P: 33). I was aware of such ethical problems in the interviewing and made attempts to minimise manipulation.

The most important sources of data were teachers and students. This took a major part of the fieldwork. As stated earlier, the semi-structured approach to interview was used to gather descriptive data in the subjects' own words to help in drawing insight from them. The use of a semi-structured approach also allowed depth to be achieved by providing the interviewer the opportunity to probe and expand the participants' responses (Hitchcocks and Hughes, 1992: 83). During the interview, participants were given considerable latitude to pursue a range of issues, which they considered relevant to the subject of discussion. This was done to ensure that they got the opportunity to shape the content of the interview and to introduce their own agenda regarding the discussion. Semi-structured interviews were also used to encourage participants to relate their responses to research issues or questions (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Merriam, 1988). All participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity at the beginning of each interview session.

Bodgan and Biklen (1992), commenting on the disadvantages associated with the use of semi-structured approach indicated that with the semi-structured interview approach one often loses the "opportunity to understand how the subject themselves structured the topic at hand" (p.79). In this study, it was essential to allow participants to shape the content of the interview to bring out the complex and intricate issues of gender discrimination in the school situation. To achieve this I operated between the semi-structured and unstructured interview mode but attempted to ensure that issues raised by participants were similar to the study agenda even though occasionally other important concerns that I was not aware of might come up. In all, 120 respondents were studied (see table 9 above).

As stated earlier, teachers, students, parents and educational officials were the main sources of data for the study. The interviews were recorded mostly by an audiotape recording, supplemented by note taking. Audiotape recording, in spite of the fact that it provides verbatim documentation on the tape has some recognizable disadvantages. It can develop mechanical or technical problems which can lead to loss of valuable information. It can also have an effect on the interviewees by making them ‘more guarded about what they say (and how they say it); especially when sensitive material is being discussed’ (Vulliamy, 1990: 105). Furthermore, it cannot capture important characteristics, which give additional layers of meaning to spoken words, like gestures, facial expression and postures (Powney and Watts, 1987). To minimize some of these problems associated with the use of tape recording, I made note taking and observation important part of interview engagements, whether formal or informal during fieldwork. To reduce reactivity too because of the use of or presence of the recording machine, I used a digital recorder of the size of a mobile phone, which did not require the use of cassettes, but interviewees were made aware of it and their permission sought before interviews were recorded.

4.7 Teachers’ Interviews

Part of the study consisted of formal interviews with 15 teachers (5 females and 10 males). I gained many invaluable insights into the prevalence of teacher attitude as to “appropriate gender behaviour” (Oakley, 1985), conducting interviews with them, in a formal fashion using semi-structured interviews (see appendices 4). Teachers and educational officials were selected for this study by purposive sampling. Purposive sampling involves selecting respondents who can provide information that answers the research questions of the study. Thus, interviewees were selected on the researcher’s own knowledge and opinion about which individual holds relevant knowledge to the issue in question (David and Sutton, 2004). Teachers play a significant role in the construction of students’ gender identity because through their interaction with students they can perpetuate or change society’s dominant values. To some extent, the gender discrimination in education in Ghana stems from general attitudes of teachers. It is

therefore significant to interview them to identify the extent of their gender sensitivity in their perceptions, and hence also in their profession in general. These findings could help to reveal where and how it is possible to intervene in order to promote gender equality and dismantle gender inequalities in the educational system. Interviewing was thus used to clarify what the teachers say they do in and outside the classroom, whilst observation provided extensive field notes of what they actually did. Whilst interviewing teachers about their interaction with students I declined to venture into the 'pretence of neutrality' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Punch, 1998; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000), and felt that I related to their problems and particularly to the multiple work load that most of the female teachers experienced. In fact, the women saw me as not too far removed from themselves as I openly discussed my own circumstances, with respect to the work/ domestic situation, and found we had many similar 'problems', coping with children, balancing domestic chores with a heavy load paid career and dealing with conflicting emotions that beset so many women in our situation. Ann Oakley suggests, "Where both share the same gender socialization and critical life experiences, social distance can be minimal" (Oakley, 1981: 55).

4.8 Students' Interviews

I interviewed 22 schoolgirls and 10 schoolboys between the ages of 17-22 to explore their experiences of schooling using semi-structured interviews (see appendices 1), on a one to one basis which made it easier to establish rapport. With a one-to-one interviewing, confidentiality could be ensured and the participant was not distracted or influenced by the presence of other participants (Haralambos and Holborn, 2004). Before the start of the interviews I explained to the teachers in the school my purpose to interview a diverse group of students from both genders and all school year groups (first to third year students in secondary school) about their views about home, school, cultural values and gender division of labour. Purposeful sampling was used to select students for individual interviews as teachers selected student they thought were most intelligent and articulate to respond to my questions. Hence, I had little control over which students were selected for the individual interviews. During the interviews however, I found that not all the students were articulate and fluent in the English

language therefore I gave the option to those who wanted to speak in the local language to do so. The students I interviewed were from both poor and wealthy backgrounds. Majority of the participants had parents mainly in low status and low income occupations such as peasant farmers, carpenters, masons, auto-mechanics and petty traders. A few students had parents who were teachers, accountants, police and army officers as well as civil servants. They were therefore representative of the school in general. Most students were day scholars due to inadequate hostel facilities. All students' interviews took place in the absence of the teachers and in a quiet classroom allocated to the researcher by the headmaster, with little possibility of distraction or intrusion. Powney and Watts (1987) point out that being within earshot or eyesight of other people significant to the participant, noisy, and spaces liable to constant interruption can adversely affect participants involved in educational interviews. For this reason, care was taken to locate students' interviews or discussions in a comfortable environment where they were unlikely to have any interference and students could talk freely. With the individual interviews, I conducted more interviews with girls than boys and during the period of observation I spent more time with them since my interest was more on the girls. All interviews were conducted during lunchtime, playtime or before morning assembly and lasted between 20 and 30 minutes.

In addition to one-to-one interviews I conducted three focus group discussions with groups of 10 students between the ages of 17-22 (1 mixed sex group and 2 single sex groups). After the individual interviews many students volunteered to be interviewed and this time round the teachers did not interrupt. I used simple random sampling to select students from the various year groups. A random sample is one where the researcher insures that each member of that population has an equal probability of being selected (David and Sutton, 2004; Chen and Manion, 1994). Students who participated in the in one-to-one interviews were not included in the focus group discussions.

Similar themes were discussed in both individual interviews and focus group discussions (see appendix 1). However, focus group discussions offer a unique occasion to collectively interview participants as well as to observe them interacting while discussing (Suter, 2000). The purpose of this choice was to generate discussion among a group of male and female students about the differential treatment they receive

in school. This form of interaction among the students generated more wide-ranging information than a one-to-one interview; since there was the possibility of giving them greater control and the opportunity to talk amongst themselves, rather than simply with the interviewer (David and Sutton, 2004; Fontana and Frey, 2000; Morgan, 1998). Moreover, the presence of their colleagues helped reduce the imbalanced power relations inherent in adult-child interactions since they felt more relaxed in the situation. It is the expectation of some educational researchers (for example, Vulliamy, 1990) that, in interviewing students in groups sometimes students' true views would be suppressed because they may be contrary to the views of the majority of the group. However, I found that interviewing students in groups of about ten generated healthy discussion and enriched the data. Supporting this view David and Sutton (2004) state that, "Sometimes asking a group of people to discuss a question or set of questions may generate more useful and interesting data" (p.92). The disagreement or agreement within a group about issues served as a useful check. Other advantages of focus groups include their ability to facilitate interaction and give access to informants' attitudes and experiences (Suter, 2000). Rather than providing the best environment for naturalistic observation (as in participant observation) or direct probing (as in life history), they were excellent in combining the two advantages, which is of unique importance (ibid). Focus groups may be relatively structured to generate data that can easily be compared with that from other focus group interviews. This enables strong comparison between groups selected to participate. However, there is the danger that dominant individuals within the group may come to dominate the discussion. This may lead to a discussion in which less dominant individuals either do not say very much or tend to go along with the views of participants that are more vocal (David and Sutton, 2004; Morgan, 1998). To counter this action, I conducted three focus group interviews, one for female students, and another for male students and the third, a mixture of both boys and girls. Although researchers such as Stake (1995) comment that the group might be 'captured' by orators, in this research it was different as I found that both boys and girls seemed to enjoy participating within the groups. Relying on my experience as a teacher I managed each situation to ensure that no individual student dominated the discussions. Boys are said to be active and want to take control of an interaction, however, the gender-segregated focus group discussion held for both boys and girls afforded each group, particularly that of the girls, the opportunity to express views that they otherwise may not have said

in the presence of the boys. Overall boys were much more confident about expressing their views to me than girls, reflecting the conventional gender norms which socialize girls not to express their views and be less confident.

4.9 Parents' Interviews

I visited and interviewed eight parents individually from eight families (four mothers and four fathers) of students in their homes to investigate the types of activities that boys and girls were engaged in at home, since what takes place in the family influences students' experiences of school (Agyeman, 1993; Sharp and Green, 1975; King, 1978). I believe that without knowledge of the home, information on the influences of schooling is incomplete. Access to parents was through some of the students I interacted with in the school. Three of the mothers were involved in petty trading while the fourth one was a primary school teacher. Among the fathers were two civil servants, an auto-mechanic and a farmer. The low occupational status of most parents suggests that their level of education is generally low. Parents were asked about the domestic chores which their children perform regularly. The interviews with parents aimed to discover and describe their perceptions and expectations as to the appropriate gender behaviour of students and the different roles that students perform at home (see appendices 2). It was also an attempt to understand how parents' views on gender relations expressed relate to those of the school. Children form appropriate behaviour and attitudes early from parents and peers at home (Oakley, 1985). The school, it has been argued reproduces these feminine and masculine stereotypes attitudes and behaviour. Interviews with parents were therefore seen as an important part of the study because the influence of the family on students is very important in the analysis of gender inequality in education. Interviews were held with women in the evening during normal routine tasks such as food preparation. However, the men were interviewed in the morning during weekends since several attempts to meet during the evening were not successful. This gave me an insight into the home situation of students and parental attitudes towards gender roles as well as their views concerning their daughters attending school. All eight parents' interviews lasted between 30 and 45 minutes.

4.10 Educational Officials' Interviews

I conducted in-depth interviews with four educational officials and a gender desk officer in their offices at district, regional and national levels. I felt that policies for promoting gender equity in education in Ghana could be understood if the views of those entrusted with developing the policies and laying the guidelines for its operation were examined. The group in this category came from the Girls Education Unit (GEU) of the ministry of education. These meetings afforded the opportunity to discuss issues about the policies and interventions (see appendices 3) they put in place to eliminate or reduce gender discrimination against girls in the Ghanaian education sector. I felt interviewing and holding discussions with a cross section of those either directly or indirectly involved in promoting gender equity in the Ghanaian education sector provided a rich and illuminative perspective on issues under investigation in this study.

4.11 Life History Interviews with School dropouts

Considering many schoolgirls dropping out of school in the study area, it seemed relevant to explore the experiences of school dropouts. There is limited research with dropouts themselves, even though the problem is prevalent. To gain understandings about their lived experiences I conducted semi-structured life history interviews (see appendices 5) with 30 school dropouts (20 girls and 10 boys) between the ages of 17 and 25 years to explore circumstances leading to their dropping out of school. However, participants were free to express their views on particular issues as they developed. Dropouts willingly recounted their life histories in order to develop a complete family history.

I managed to gain access to school dropouts through a former colleague teacher who knew some dropouts during my second fieldwork. She acted as a gatekeeper in introducing me to the dropouts and as I interviewed, other dropouts were recommended. Thus, convenience sampling which involves the selection of the most accessible subjects was employed in selecting school dropouts. Out of the 30 dropouts only 5 were former students of the study school. Most of the schoolgirl dropouts were engaged in

petty trading, selling all sorts of consumables such as groundnuts, yams, tomatoes, fish, ice water, bread and fruits. Some of the girls were also assisting their parents or guardian in household income generating activities such as brewing pito (local beer made from fermented millet or sorghum in northern Ghana) and processing shea butter which are the two most common economic activities for women and girls in the research area. A few of were also in apprenticeship training such as dress making and hair dressing. Life history interview is an effective instrument in a research process employed to capture the unique life experience of an individual as well as the relation she/he has with that situation within the past, present and future context (Jung-ah, 2006; Atkinson, 1998). It enables the researcher to better understand the field in which a person lived as well as the relation a participant has with that situation. Thus, life history interviews provide an individual with an opportunity to speak about the daily activities, explain their experiences and choices and reflect on the consequences (Atkinson, 1998). Life history interviews indeed facilitated my understanding of the circumstances that led to dropping out of school and how dropping out of school had affected their work opportunities and future prospects. By understanding dropouts further, there will be greater potential to formulate appropriate strategies to address the dropout problem and to improve access and retention. Life history interviews were recorded by the use of a digital recorder.

4.12 Observation

Observation is a characteristic of ethnographic research and has been classified as “the fundamental base of all research methods” in social research (Adler and Adler, 1994 cited in Angrosino and Mays de Perez, 2000: 673). Observation techniques enable the researcher to note body language and other body movement that provide meaning to the words of the participants (Becker, 1999; Angrosino and May de Perez, 2000). Observation, according to Bernard (1995), is the foundation of (social) cultural anthropology, which involves getting close to the people and making them feel comfortable enough with your presence so that you can observe and record information about their lives (p. 136). Indeed, since the early twentieth century, social

anthropologists have claimed the method of observation as a defining feature of their discipline (Mead, 1972; Finch, 1984).

Thus, it was my goal to gather qualitative data through observation. The general nature of participant observation has well been described by Becker:

The participant observer gathers data by participating in the daily life of the person or the organization he studies. He watches the people he is studying to see what situation they ordinarily meet and how they behave in them. He enters in conversation with some or all the participants in these situations and discovers their interpretations of the events, which he has discovered (Becker, 1999: 55).

The implications of this involve a number of problems. Some of them are specific to classroom research. For example, where does one stand in the role of the observer, having decided to avoid observing as a teacher? As I wished to gather data on interaction in the teaching-learning process within the classroom, it was clear that the major method of the fieldwork was to be observation. I opted for participant observation as I felt rigid distance between the researcher and the participants can only be maintained in a certain circumstances (David, 2002; Becker, 1999). In addition, I sought to gain a 'teacher perspective' whilst avoiding the actual teacher 'role' and hence the authority that is involved in that position (David, 2002; Hargreaves, 1967). For example, I did not engage in teaching as well as disciplining of students. There were two main advantages to my reluctance to involve myself in teaching and disciplining of students. It meant I extended no authority over the students and was free from the responsibilities of classroom control, which helped to establish a trusting and friendship relationship with the students as well as teachers. A number of studies on teachers who conduct both research and teaching at the same time indicate that combining the two activities limits the researcher's ability to observe, as the teacher's role is a demanding one (Tabach, 2006; Magidson, 2005; Labaree, 2003). However, in order to account for the ways in which teachers and students behave from a gendered perspective, and to suggest interpretations and conclusions, I observed school practices and events as they occurred

and the ways boys and girls were expected to behave toward their teachers and towards each other for six weeks on a daily basis.

My observation was focused on daily school practices, such as interaction between teachers and students and among students during morning and evening assemblies, lunch and play time and, particularly in the classroom setting. My classroom observation focused mainly on teacher–student interaction in mathematics, science, English, home economics and technical lessons, as the literature highlighted significant instructional inequities for both boys and girls in these subject areas, and that these gender imbalances in teachers' interaction patterns in the classroom result in differential learning outcomes for both boys and girls (Maimbolwa-Sinyangwe and Chilangwa, 1995; Tsouroufli, 2002; Kakuru, 2006; Magno and Silova, 2007). I observed teachers' distribution of questions among students, especially between boys and girls, teachers' feedback to students as well as students' behaviour, their responses and initiative to volunteer answers to questions.

Observation generated extensive field notes of what teachers actually did compared to what they said they did. I found, in line with Becker (1999) and David and Sutton (2004), that observational research yielded an immense amount of detailed description, which enhanced my understanding of how the attitudes and behaviour of respondents in the school environment are influenced by gender. Though my observation captured actual interactions in the classroom the observer effects might have occurred because teachers and students were aware that their behaviors were being observed (Blease, 1983, Wragg, 1999). Being aware that my presence in the classroom might influence teachers and indeed students to attempt to behave in a manner that they thought I expected of them, I took steps to minimise my interruption. For example, in order not to draw attention to myself I positioned myself at the back of the classroom where my presence was less likely to affect events. Also, to reduce my interruption, I made contact with teachers before lesson, seeking permission and clarifying the purpose of the observation. I made extensive written notes while I observed from the back, which I discussed with teachers immediately after lessons. Despite taking these measures to minimise my influence on teachers' and students' behaviour I do not deny the fact that

my presence affected both teachers and students. For example, though most students reported being ridiculed and sometimes beaten in the classroom, as well as teachers' reports of students' misconduct in the classroom, I did not witness any such incidence in all the classes I observed. This could be an indication of the influence that my presence had on both students' and teachers' behaviour in the classroom. Despite these observational limitations, the variety of methodological techniques (Tabach, 2006; Garner, 1972) I employed in this study, including some formal and informal interviews, helped to capture a more comprehensive picture of what goes on in classroom. These observations also served as a form of triangulating data obtained from interviews and documents and helped to provide a fuller picture of the attitudes and behaviour of teachers and students, and how these are influenced by gender. By observing the appropriate behaviour applicable to boys and girls and the gendered practices, which controlled and regulated the activities and general behaviour of the students according to notions of "gender appropriateness", I captured actual rather than reported behaviour.

4.13 Confidentiality and Informed Consent

Qualitative research by its very nature besets the researcher with specific problems. One that has been given a great deal of coverage is the continuing debate between 'objectivity' as opposed to subjectivity (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Janestik, 2000; Punch, 1998), and the problem of escaping ethnocentric bias. It is therefore, important to set clear guidelines on how I conducted myself during the research process in order to reduce any unintended influences that might adversely affect the validity of the study. Validity can be explained as the degree to which an instrument is able to measure what it is intended to measure (Bryman, 1991; David and Sutton, 2004). As a researcher I am aware of the ethical questions involved in obtaining 'informed consent', debates over the ethics of disguised research (Davis, 1960; Humphrey, 1970) and over initial promises of confidentiality and eventual decisions about what to publish (Becker, 1999). In order to gain access to the school permission was obtained from the regional director of education. Also, I had to gain informed consent from the headmaster and teaching staff. When asking teachers' permission to record the interview, I stated categorically that no one but the researcher would ever

listen to the tapes, and I would change names and personal details in the final write up. During classroom observation, the teacher from each class introduced me to the children and explained the purpose of the research to students. I did not interfere in the way in which the teachers introduced me in the context of observation because I felt it was not appropriate and that would have undermined their authority, so I was adhering to the school hierarchy. However, during one-to one interview process with students, I did explain the purpose of the research and took deliberate steps to assure all participants, particularly students, that whatever they said as part of the research was meant for academic purposes and completely confidential and would in no way be told to their teachers. Moreover, all participants were encouraged not to answer any question that made them uncomfortable. As a result students volunteered and consented to be interviewed. Researchers are in positions of power, particularly in relation to some groups of subjects who are relatively powerless to decide whether they should be studied. As Barrie Thorne points out:

The doctrine of informed consent does not take account of ethical dimensions of the knowledge a researcher may seek. Informed consent applies to individuals, each of whom is to be treated the same, and ignores social structure and deep-seated differences of power (Thorne, 1980, p. 293).

Being conscious of the power imbalances in the research process, especially one involving school children I made efforts to create a congenial atmosphere for effective interaction between myself and all participants.

Another way by which information gathered in the study was checked for its validity was through triangulation. Lincoln and Guba (1985) commenting on the importance of triangulation in ensuring the validity of research findings state:

Triangulation of data is crucially important in naturalistic studies. As the study unfolds and peculiar pieces of information come to light, steps must be taken to validate each against at least one another source (for example, a second

interview) and / or a second method (for example, an observation in addition to an interview (p.283).

During this early period of my fieldwork, I engaged teachers and students in informal conversations about general issues relating to their school experiences and about the community, which provided an insight into some issues to be further explored in the formal interviews. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) point out the value in doing this by stating that:

Especially in the early days of field negotiation, it may be advantageous to find more ordinary topics of conversation with the views of establishing one's identity as a 'normal' 'regular'; 'decent' person.....they can throw additional and unforeseen light on informants; and yield fresh sources of data (p. 89).

Also, my use of observations and notes taken on the field complemented data gathered in the focus group discussions and interviews. Furthermore, information gathered in the study was checked for its validity through seeking other opinions on issues in which participants seems to contradict each other. For instance, if there were doubts about information being given, I repeatedly raised it in subsequent interviews with participants to help get to the bottom of the issues. Together these various research methods and methodologies provided the means to understand the complex experience of schoolgirls, and to identify appropriate measures to reduce the disparities.

4.14 Data Analysis

I envisaged a serious challenge at the analysis stage of this research as far as data analysis was concerned. Going through the qualitative research literature, it is clear that there is no one exceptional method or 'cookbook recipe' for analyzing qualitative data. Stake (1994) points out, qualitative "method...provides persuasions, not recipes" (P: 77) Approaches thus, differ depending on the purpose and design of a particular research

study. There is also lack of detailed and comprehensive analysis procedures in qualitative research reports to guide one in considering suitable approaches. This situation perhaps is in character with the complex and diverse nature of issues qualitative research addresses, which also renders its data analysis process equally complex and diverse. These problems notwithstanding, there are principles outlined in the research literature, which can provide useful guidelines in developing an appropriate framework for analyzing qualitative data. Watts and Bentley (1985) claim that in developing an approach to qualitative data analysis there is a need for “methodological congruence.” By this they argue that the analysis of data should be consistent or compatible with the general underlying viewpoint of the research. In this study I undertook to ensure congruence between the approach to analysis and the theoretical underpinnings of the research as described earlier in this study.

In this study my interest was to determine the nature and causes of the differential treatment girls receive in schools, in particular, the perceptions, experiences and values attached to its practice. Stake (1994) indicates that with case studies, the main task is to come to understand the case through teasing out relationships, probing issues and aggregating the data categorically. This basically is a thematic approach of data analysis and involves developing themes and patterns from the data (Glasser & Strauss, 1967; Guba & Lincoln, 1985).

4.15 Limitations of the study

The interview method was not without its disadvantages as there was the tendency for respondents to deviate from the topic being discussed, as indicated by Burgess (1984) and Nachmais and Nachmais (1992). This was balanced against the much higher response rate provided by this technique, as compared to other survey techniques. There was inadequate national and regional gender-disaggregated data which made it difficult to examine and contrast the patterns and nature of enrolment, retention and achievement between girls and boys. Inevitably, the national statistics mask contradictory patterns and levels of gender gap even between schools with similar geographical and socio-

economic contexts. Furthermore, data is not always made available by relevant institutions in Ghana, and as a result it was difficult to gather adequate existing information on gender issues in education. Lack of accurate information on critical issues such as gender based violence, might have a negative impact on developing gender-sensitive intervention for the protection of schoolgirls. The research process was also characterized by time and financial constraints. Despite the limitations, this study provided insight and understanding of the experiences of schoolgirls in the Upper West region of Ghana.

4.16 Conclusion

In summary, I have described and justified the methodologies that were used in this study. It examined the procedures and processes that were followed in gaining access to the field and choosing the participants, data collection and analysis. The chapter also explored the key issues of ethical consent in empirical research methodologies with school children such as informed consent, and confidentiality. For example, in addressing the issues of confidentiality in the study, participants were promised that their identity and the information provided would be used for the purpose of the research only and would be treated and maintained as confidential information. Participants were also promised anonymity. The researcher's identity was critical in the research process and therefore, steps were taken to ensure that data collected was an accurate reflection of the views of the interviewees and actual practices. Based on findings of the interviews, group discussions, life history interviews and observation discussed above, I examine in depth students' and views, teachers' and parents' perceptions of girls' education and more specifically of girls' experiences within the home and the school in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 5: Gender Inequality: Schoolgirl's Experiences of Home

5.1 Introduction

In chapter 3, the general background of Ghana, including its geographical and demographic, socio-economy and culture, politics and patterns of gender inequalities were broadly described. The chapter therefore gave a broad overview of the rural economy and its gender issues, which provides the context for this and subsequent chapters. As spelt out in chapter 4 empirical data were gathered from WA secondary Technical school in the Upper West Region of Ghana between 2005 and 2006. The field research involved classroom and school observations, focus group discussions and interviews with 35 students, 10 parents and 15 teachers. Although the main focus of the field research was on girls' experiences of school life, parents were included in the fieldwork phase to provide additional insight into how activities in the home affect students' performance at school. This chapter therefore analyses data based on formal and informal interviews that were collected in the field. It also provides a critical gender analysis of the various dimensions of gender related barriers students face in their educational experiences at home in the Upper West Region of Ghana. Gender analysis is important because it enhances our understanding about how girls' experiences of schooling are shaped by the socio-cultural framework in which they are located. Results in this chapter show that the gender-based issues as well as other social factors form part of the complex networks that determine the differential treatments girls and boys experience at home and in school, leading to a wide gap between male and female school attendance, classroom participation and achievements.

Social construction of gender theory discussed in chapter two acknowledges that the societal structures play a major role in determining the types of attitudes that are adopted, because the social, cultural, economic and gender relations in a society shape its norms and values, which in turn influence the role that a family gives to individuals.

Thus, in this first section, I explore briefly the background features of students and parents, the gender roles at the household level and the impact these gendered roles have on girls' education. In the second section of this chapter, I examine the gendered socio-cultural practices which interfere more with the education of girls than that of boys.

5.2 Socio-economic background of students and parents

Most students I interviewed were aged between 17 and 22, which were above the age range of 15-18 years for forms 1-3, which apparently contradicts the national standard for secondary education in Ghana. This is because at age 18, they should have completed Senior High School (SHS) and progressed into universities or other forms of tertiary education if their schooling had progressed uninterrupted. The reasons accountable for this, as the students explained, were late enrolment, repetition and delayed transition to secondary school due to lack of admission, poor results and poverty. The data shows that the majority of the students from low socio-economic backgrounds had large family sizes with parents mainly in low status and low income occupations such as peasant farmers, carpenters, masons, auto-mechanics and petty traders. A few students come from higher socio-economic backgrounds with parents who were teachers, accountants, police and army officers as well as civil servants. Most mothers were involved in non-farm activities such as the brewing of pito, processing of shea-butter, charcoal and ready-made food. This is due to the fact that in the study area, women traditionally have limited control over productive activities like farming. Additionally, due to the patrilineal inheritance system in the research area, where land is passed on from fathers to sons, daughters are excluded from land ownership, though land forms the major source of rural work. Research suggests that women have resorted to a wide range of non-farm income generating activities in order to provide for the economic and welfare needs of their household members (Manuh, Songsore and Mackenzie, 1997; Dunne and King, 2003). However, the incomes derived from such income generating activities are usually low and irregular which often makes it difficult for most parents to meet the economic and educational needs of their children. Interviews conducted reveal that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds

faced financial problems and parents were unable to pay, or delayed payment of their school fees, to buy exercise and text books, uniforms and other equipment for them to undertake practical lessons in the Home Economics (HE) and Technical departments. Some students were sometimes sent home for non-payment of the fees and other levies imposed by the school. Several girls indicated that in some instances they had to stay out of school for one or two weeks in order to assist their mothers to generate enough income for their school fees and other educational needs before they could return to school. Such girls therefore missed school and lessons during those periods. Ama¹, one of the students commented on her parents' inability to pay her school fees:

'Sometimes I don't get my money early enough to pay my fees. Right now I'm still waiting for my school fees to come. My parents informed me that they sent it through somebody but I have not received it yet. Because I stay with my uncle and he has children to take care of, he is not able to get me all my needs. I, being his niece, he is just trying to help so he cannot afford all my needs' (Female student, 17 years, 08/11/05).

As indicated earlier, most of the students live in large families with siblings ranging in number from three to fifteen. This can be attributed to the extended family relations and the prestige associated with having more women and children in the study area. Supporting up to 15 children places a high demand on household economic resources. A number of studies in Africa and other developing countries show that the effect of large household size on girls' education is that where the income of family is inadequate to provide for the members of the household, girls are denied the opportunity of access to education, thus widening the gender gap in education (Stephen, 2000; Kadzamira and Chibwana, 2000; Rose, and Al-Samarrai, 2001; Colclough et al., 2003).

The low occupational status of most parents in the area also suggests that their level of education is generally low. Most mothers from rural areas have had no opportunity of

¹ Not real name; pseudonymous names have been used in this thesis to protect identity of participants.

attending school, due the British colonial government's discriminatory educational policies which excluded women from benefiting Western education in the early nineteenth century until the mid twentieth century (Graham, 1971; Quist, 1994). The fact that the area is affected by high levels of poverty has also contributed to the high illiteracy rate in the study area. I found that the educational backgrounds and occupations of parents play important roles in the decision-making process as to which of their children will be allowed to attend school. Also, parents, especially mothers' level of education have an impact on children's attendance and performance at school (UNESCO 2003; Colclough et al, 2003). For example, educated parents tend to value their children's education more, buying learning materials and helping them with homework. Help with studies and homework is a complement of schoolwork and those who receive additional help are likely to do better in school. The low educational background of most parents meant that students would not receive the needed support to perform well in their education.

5.3 Parents' and students' perceptions of gender roles and girls' education

Traditional gender roles within the family expect girls to take up the roles of wives and mothers and their socialization at home and school is directed towards providing them with experiences that will prepare them to carry out these roles effectively (Gadzekpo, 2001; UNESCO, 2003; Colclough et al., 2003; Stromquist, 2007). Thus, it is within the family that ideas of gender relations are transmitted from adults to children through the gender roles that parents assign to them. In group discussions with boys and girls exploring the types of domestic chores students undertake at home to help parents, all the students mentioned various household activities which they performed at home. For example, girls indicated that they assist parents with most of the reproductive work in the household, which involves looking after siblings and sick relatives, preparing and cooking food, cleaning the house, washing clothing and dishes and fetching water and firewood. Some girls stated that they had to take care of the house on days that parents were away attending social functions such as funerals, naming, and marriage ceremonies in neighbouring communities. As mentioned earlier, girls were also the ones

frequently engaged in petty trading with their mothers to make extra income for the family. For boys, on the other hand, domestic work centred mostly on more visibly productive work such as farming, gardening, weeding around the house, grazing goats, sheep and cows and looking after chickens (Group Discussions, girls and boys, 17-22 years 12/11/2005). It is important to bear in mind that girls' share of domestic chores are daily routines that occupy their time all year round while boys' activities such as weeding, gardening and farming are seasonal in the research area. This is because gardening and agricultural activities in the research area are rain fed and therefore carried out only during the rainy season from May to October. Hence, in the dry season (November to April) boys have virtually no activities to perform on the farm and therefore have a lot of time to play and study. It has been noted that girls, whether in school or not, spend more time in performing household chores than boys in developing countries, particularly in rural areas (Stephen, 2000; Colclough et al, 2000; Ritchie et al, 2004). Stephen (2000) for example, estimates that school girls under the age of 15 in Northern Ghana spend about 17 to 18 hours per week on domestic chores within the home. It was also observed that these chores were often performed by girls in the morning before school or in the evening after school. Colclough et al, (2000) also observes that girls from lower socio-economic backgrounds tend to do more household chores than those from higher socio-economic backgrounds because poor parents depend more on their children's labour in order to supplement household income. This was seen to affect girls' education in a number of ways. For example poor households may decide not to enrol some or all of their children in school. Girls are often late to school in the morning as a result of having to complete their household chores. Not only would they incur punishment for this lateness but they are likely to miss some of the morning lessons. They were also likely to forfeit school whenever there was demand for their labour. Consequently, girls perform less well than boys in school due to, among other things, gendered divisions of labour at home which place a high demand on their labour, leaving them little or no time to do their home work or study.

It is also significant to note that in the research area, while it is considered inappropriate for boys and men to participate in household chores perceived as feminine, it is however, acceptable for girls and women to assist men in farm activities such as weeding, sowing of crops, harvesting and carting of farm produce to the house and market centres. This is

related to differences in social status between male and female gender roles in society. According to McCreary (1994) and Sirin et al (2004) male roles generally have a higher level of social status and prestige than female roles, consequently men and boys who perform stereotypically feminine roles lose status and prestige, whereas women and girls who engage in traditionally masculine roles elevate social status and prestige. As a result, boys rather than girls are perceived in a more negative light when they diverge from appropriate traditional gender roles. In a group discussion boys mentioned that they only helped with house chores when girls were not around. For example, Kofi, one of the boys remarked:

‘Actually, my mother is a food seller so my sisters help her to cook the food, wash the dishes and all those work. Because my sisters are not many, they are two and one is not staying with us so when she is not around I do the work that girls should do, all sort of work [...]. Usually boys don’t cook and fetch water in the house in this community’ (Male student, 19 years 08/11/05).

The perception of parents regarding gender roles was not different from that of the students when I sought their views. Information gathered from parents shows that there is gender biased division of labour in which school girls performed both productive and reproductive roles. They confirmed that girls spent considerably more time performing almost all household tasks while boys only helped out with work on the farm. They mentioned that boys were only asked to undertake certain domestic chores when girls were not present. In a study of rural women’s reproductive activities in Uganda, Kakuru and Katto (2006) pointed out that it was quite difficult classifying women’s work as only reproductive because women were found to be engaged in both productive and reproductive activities. In an answer to a question whether it is fair for boys and girls to be assigned to different activities at home, a father replied:

‘Definitely yes, because some of the household duties are boys centred and others are girls centred. For example, imagine you have a garden in the house and there is the need to fence and weed, mostly such work is shifted to the boys

but when it comes to household chores like cooking, washing, drawing of water from the pond or any other source, mostly it is the girls who do it. If in the family you keep some animals, they are being taken care of by the boys’ (Father, 35-40 years 24/11/05).

In the research district, though it is accepted that a man may have to do some kitchen chores like cooking, sweeping and washing if there is no woman in the house, most men and boys try to avoid these chores by requesting a female relative to perform them due to the social stigma. Men and boys who participate in household chores considered feminine are usually teased and gossiped about. Girls, however, participate in all types of domestic work. Adomako Ampofo (2001) and Boateng et al, (2006), exploring children’s and parents’ attitudes towards household tasks in Ghana, also found that the gender division of labour between the sexes in households differentiates boys from girls. They mentioned three areas of domestic chores that are considered inappropriate for boys to do, such as cooking, washing and sweeping, as being important indicators of the transition to manhood. Teenage boys, they said, begin to form notions and expectations of their male identity around household tasks and their absence from these activities asserts their masculinity. Parents saw the performance of gender roles by students as an important part of traditional training that teaches children to be responsible adults in the community. A mother pointed out that girls have to be taught how to perform some of these domestic chores to make them complete women so that when they get married, they would not bring disgrace to the family. Some families are therefore reluctant to send their girls to school because of the belief that schooling could influence girls to become less inclined to accept domestic work. However, there is evidence in my study which suggests that some students were not in favour of the gender segregation of domestic tasks for the following reasons.

‘We should do the same work (household chores) so that we can all have enough time to study and become someone in future’ (Esi, female student,18 year, 16/11/05).

‘It is not good not to learn how to cook. In the case of the boys it is not helpful because if you are on your own after school and you are not married, how

would you cook your own food? It would be difficult and buying food outside is very expensive and not good' (Kweku, male student 17 years 18/11/05).

While girls complained about their overburdened and time consuming household chores which made them too tired to study, boys complained that theirs involve heavy and difficult tasks. Some of the girls also complained that despite all their hard work at home parents did not value their contributions to the same extent as that of boys'. Akua, for example had this say:

'Our parents always insult us that we are lazy because they don't consider the house chores we do to be any important work but they always praise our brothers that they are hardworking because they work on the farm to produce food' (Female student, 18 years 18/11/05).

Girls' domestic chores are not valued as highly as boys' in part because most of their activities do not produce tangible products which can be visibly counted as economic activity (Cockburn, 2000; Ray, 2000; Bhalotra, 2000; Bhalotra and Heady, 2000). Though some parents appeared to value their daughters' work less than their sons', they admitted that gender differentiation in household chores affected boys and girls differently. I enquired from parents how they would ensure equal distribution of household chores between boys and girls and they emphasised that gender divisions of labour at the household level are entrenched in the traditional culture of the area and indicated that it would take a long time for change to take effect. The following selected statements show that some parents see the need for gender balance in the performance of household chores but the resistance from boys who benefit from the patriarchal socialisation system makes it difficult for the needed changes to come about.

'It comes from the Dagaaba's culture that is from the beginning our boys are not used to doing household chores that women do. So even though we are literates, we are trying to break that cultural barrier but sometimes it is difficult. So we have not, just as I was saying, the fact that in our traditional homes girls

do household chores, cleaning and cooking and boys only do things when it comes to using the hoe to weed' (Father, 45-50 years; 24/11/05).

'This is the tradition here, that women should do the house chores. So it is difficult for you to convince a boy to go and wash the dishes, but we are trying to let the boys know that there is no work which is specifically assigned to boys. Whatever a girl can do a boy can also do and whatever a boy can do a girl can also do' (Mother, 45-50 years 10/11/05).

Another parent was of the view that to ensure the equal distribution of household chores between boys and girls parents should be educated to understand that girls equally need more time for their studies if they are to succeed as boys in education. She advised that household chores and other activities should be divided equally among boys and girls from early childhood before children begin to form notions and perceptions of gender stratification around household tasks.

Almost all the girls mentioned in a group discussion that in spite of being overburdened with household chores, parents discriminated against them in terms of providing for their educational and other needs. A household's allocation of resources for consumption tends to favour boys due to the nature of the patriarchal household and imbalanced power relations in society as a whole (Agarwal, 1997). Power relations therefore have an effect on the gendered nature of household roles and resource allocation. Girls also complained that boys acquire a larger share of household resources such as pocket money, food and other school materials. Thus, for girls, being overburdened with household chores does not guarantee them adequate provision of household resources. For example, two of the girls complained that their parents sent their brothers to a well endowed private boarding school whilst they were put in a day school (the study school) because their parents could not afford to pay for the high boarding fees for both of them. Sending boys to private boarding school and girls to public school can be interpreted as discriminatory. This is especially so in a situation where sending a child to private school is seen as socially prestigious in the study area. Almost all the girls in a group discussion said that their parents enforced discipline more strongly among girls than among boys. They indicated that their movements and

activities were greatly restricted and more closely monitored than boys because parents saw them to be at risk and therefore in need of more parental control to protect them from what was considered threatening to their physical, sexual and emotional safety. This view was also the reason why many parents were reported to be reluctant to allow their daughters to attend entertainments and extra classes after school as in most cases the teachers involved were men and these activities were usually held in the evenings. Girls expressed their frustration about the social control imposed on them as it limits their participation in several social activities outside home. The following statements were some of the reasons some of the girls gave for the differential treatment they experienced from their parents:

‘My father discriminates against me. He values my brothers more than me. He doesn’t support me in my education. He even told my mother that if a woman gives birth to a girl, it is the woman who should take care of the girl but if she gives birth to a boy then the man should take care of the boy. It is only my mother who has been paying my school fees and also provides for my other needs. My father only takes care of his boys’ (Adwoa, female student, 19 years 26/11/05).

‘Our parents value the boys more than the girls because they say the boys are future family heads, they would take over from our fathers and take care of the family. They say girls would marry and go to a man’s house and whatever they acquire would belong to their husbands but the boy would earn money and take care of them [parents]. Sometimes they even withdraw girls from school and give them out for marriage. They say girls only waste the family resources’ (Afia, female student, 19 years 26/11/05).

Though uncomfortable with their parents’ discriminatory attitudes, the girls were not prepared to question their parental authority because they did not want confrontation with their parents. Interviews with parents confirm the above statements given by girls as reasons for the low regards parents have for their education and contribution to the family. Parents tend to invest more in boys’ education than they do in girls’ due to their perception of benefits which is linked to the cultural expectations concerning children’s

role in the family (Rose and Tembon, 1999; Rose and Al-Samarrai, 2001; Colclough, et al. 2003). In patrilineal descent systems such as in the research area girls are incorporated into their husband's family once married, while boys stay with their parents after marriage. Many parents expressed the belief that boys would take care of them in their old age, thus providing a sense of security about the future, while girls would be expected to take care of those in the families they marry into. Thus, in order to ensure that their sons will be able to carry out this responsibility, parents felt that they should provide their sons with quality education so that they can in turn get good jobs and be able to look after them and their future families. One of the education officials I interviewed pointed out that, in sensitising the community about the need for girls' education they try to demystify the traditional notion that sons provide greater economic benefits to their parents than daughters, albeit with recourse to naturalising discourses, she explains:

'In our sensitisation program we try to disabuse their minds on this, because we rather feel that female by nature is soft hearted. Whether married or not the feeling she has for her parents still remains. So she can marry and still take care of them. Unlike some of the boys who when they grow up and then they travel out, that ends it, they never would think of their parents and they never would send anything to them. So we are trying to let them realise that really marriage shouldn't be any stumbling block to their relationship with their daughters or their daughters' relationship with them. They should allow the girls to go to school, get a good standing and take care of them better' (Female municipal director of education, 50-55 years 24/11/05).

Unfortunately, the perception, however problematic, that sons provide greater economic benefits to their parents than daughters continues to have influence throughout Ghanaian society and beyond. However, such beliefs about gender roles are debunked by women's active labour force participation worldwide and the fact that about 20% of all households globally have women as the sole breadwinners (Pessar, 2005). A study in Toronto reveals that Ghanaian migrant women support their families economically by sending a considerable amount of their earnings as remittances home (Wong, 2006).

The study noted that family members regarded women as more reliable remitters than men because of their greater responsibility for the maintenance and support of more dependent relatives. Additionally, recent research in Ghana reveals that with the current economic situation many women not only work but also share the breadwinner role with their husbands and in instances when they are either single parents, divorcees, or when they lose their husbands, they become the sole breadwinners (Gedzi, 2009). It is important to envisage the fact that most households have multiple breadwinners of both sexes. It is also significant for parents to gain the awareness that the gender of a child is far less important than the opportunities the child is given in life, especially the opportunity to have quality education.

Despite efforts by education officials to create the awareness that girls' education is equally important as that of boys, the majority of the parents interviewed conceded that in a situation of limited resources their priority would be to send their sons to school. For example, the following statements made by parents during interviews show that parents attached more importance to their sons' education compared to their daughters'

'Okay, it is important to send both to school but where you do not have enough money then the boy should be considered since they would take over from us. You know it is the responsibility of man to marry and take care of his wife and children so in the situation of limited resources I would send the boy to school' (Father, 35-40 years 18/12/05).

'A boy; this is because if it is the matter of choice due to economic reasons, I would advise that boys be rather be sent to school. Girls can help, I mean they can stay at home and take care of children, I mean they give birth, take care of children, then the men can also go out and work since the girls already have something to occupy them at home' (Mother, 40-45years 14/11/05).

Interviews with parents and students confirmed research in Ghana and elsewhere (Clocough et al, 2000; Stephen, 2000) in suggesting that one of the major factors that works to the disadvantage of girls' enrolment in school is economic but this is

compounded by socio-cultural norms (as I explore later in the next section). Some parents also believed, evoking patriarchal naturalising discourses, that girls were not as intelligent as boys, thus, sending them to school was considered more likely to be a waste of time and money. Despite girls doing well in school in many contexts, parents continue to hold stereotypical views about their abilities relative to boys. The above low expectations explain the negative attitude of parents towards girls' education in the study district and are indicative that parents in the research district do not value girls to the same extent as boys.

5.4 Impact of Social norms and Traditions on Girls' Education

Apart from barriers posed by gender roles and the lower perceptions of girls' worth and abilities there were other reasons why it appeared harder to enrol or complete school as a girl than a boy in the research area. There are various social, religious and cultural reasons preventing girls from getting to school or causing them to drop out from school. In mixed sex group discussions students mentioned several socio-cultural practices such as early marriages, betrothal, 'elopement'², Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), dowry system, polygamy³, inheritance system and funeral ceremonies as factors that tend to impact negatively on girls' education in the study area. Several studies have showed that these cultural practices have a detrimental effect on girls' education and health (Wolf and Odonkor, 1997; Casely-Hayford, 2000; Chapman et al, 2003, Yakin Ertürk, 2008). Among all the traditional practices, early and forced marriages were commonly cited by all respondents as a major cultural barrier to girls' education and development. Ghanaian traditional culture perceives marriage as a social status and expects all men

² Elopement is a type of marriage arrangement in northern Ghana. It is also practiced among some communities in Africa. In this type of marriage the girl is usually persuaded or may be seized by her admirers' kinsmen /colleague and forcibly brought to her perspective husbands' home. Resistance to elopement marks the beginning of negotiation between the girls' family and the husbands' to complete the courtship and marriage processes (Alenuma, 2002; Rose and Al-Samarrai, 2001; Goody, 1967).

³ The 1992 constitution of Ghana recognizes three different types of marriage: customary marriage, Islamic marriage and civil marriage. Both Islamic and customary marriages encourage polygamy which permits a man to marry more than one wife.

and women to marry and have children by a certain age. From a gender perspective, however the cultural pressure to marry early weighs more on women and girls than men and boys. Lamenting about the practice of early and forced marriages two Girls' Education Unit (GEU) officials remarked:

'We have been having a lot of problems particularly with elopement [abduction] cases in the Balsa area and the Nadowli district. We have a lot of elopement cases; yes a lot of them have been reported to the police. A lot of them are teenage pregnancies and elopement. Sometimes they impregnate a schoolgirl and the moment they impregnate a school girl they go according to the law. Sometimes some of them go in for 6 to 7 years just to deter others from doing it. Many people fear to come out with such cases because of relations. If I'm related to you and I do that to your son, it will not be nice, but we are finding ways, but that is our major problem especially in Wa. In Nadowli, there are a lot of elopement cases and then as for teenage pregnancies, they are everywhere in the whole region, but it is not on the increase, but the increase is the elopement cases' (Female regional GEU officer, 55-60 years 24/11/05).

'When I go round communities and talk to them, in the end they heed to what I'm saying and then they agree to enact by-laws safeguarding the education of girls. In such a case if, a boy impregnates a girl there is punishment issued for that, if he defiles a punishment and if he elopes, a punishment. So, all the communities have prepared their by-laws safeguarding their girls' education. And this is helping a lot because formally almost every day there used to be reports about elopement and then defilement and what have you' (Female municipal GEU officer, 45-50 years 15-11-05).

The Upper West regional GEU officials revealed that the rampant kidnapping of school girls and forcing them into marriage was wide spread in most districts and a source of great worry to educational authorities in the region since it is a hindrance to the promotion of gender equality in education and a violation of the human rights of the girl. They explained that girls, especially at the upper primary and JSS level are often kidnapped by their admirers with or without their consent, from the market place, funeral grounds, street or as they walked to school or home. Also, in a focus group

discussion, Abena, one of the girls confirmed the widespread of elopement reported by GEU officials and clearly explained what it entails;

‘My problem is about elopement [abduction], like boys running away with girls, like if you have a boyfriend he would plan with his friends to come and pick you on your way to the market or on your way to fetch water and run with you to the south [southern part of Ghana]. Sometimes you may not even know the boy and they would just take you and run away and unless you are pregnant or give birth, he would not bring you back. Sometimes your parents would not be aware of it’ (Female student, 18 years 08/11/05).

To avoid any resistance from the girl or her family the abductors usually escape with them to the southern part of Ghana, only to return when they were pregnant or had given birth to a baby. This seems to explain the restrictions being placed on girls’ movement, particularly on their freedom to attend school for fear of their safety. Rose and Al-Samarrai’s (2001) study of household constraints on girls’ education in Ethiopia found that schoolgirls were abducted for marriage and girls as young as 8 years old married off to avoid pregnancy outside marriage. The concern for the plight of the girls led to interventions such as girls’ education officials’ collaborating with traditional leaders to enact by-laws as a punitive measure to safeguard girls’ education and to curb the prevalence of elopement, defilement and teenage pregnancies in the study area. With the enactment of the by-laws those implicated in any of these practices are reported to the police for prosecution and as indicated in the above statement offenders are sentenced to 6 to 7 years imprisonment to deter others. However, the officials noted that *‘though, it is the communities’ members themselves who have set their bye-laws’* (Upper West Regional GEU officer 24/11/05), they were not cooperating in the implementation by shielding culprits or instigating them to run away when the police go to arrest them. Moreover, in situations where they succeed in arresting a culprit with police, his family becomes embittered and threatens the lives of the education officials. Another problem was that these acts were usually perpetrated by family members and people did not want to report for fear of straining family relations. This attitude of the communities, they said, was working against the effective implementation of the by-laws. The

communities' resistance to the enforcement of the by-laws they themselves have enacted is indicative of society's indifference to violence against girls and women. Three students explained the effects of early and forced marriages in a mixed sex group discussion in the following statements;

'Early and force marriages don't allow the girls to stay longer in education, just 16 years and they would be forcing her to marry. Most of these girls are normally primary or Junior Secondary School pupils; this means they cannot continue their education' (Akosua, female student, 17 years 08/11/05).

'Child betrothal is like giving a small girl to elderly man so that when she grows up the man would marry her; this prevents many girls from going to school' (Fati, female student, 20 years 08/11/05).

'Early marriage do not encourage young people to go to school, especially girls, they always say that because they would eventually marry and go to a different family, they encourage them to marry early to cut down cost' (Yaw, male student, 19 years 14/11/05).

With the betrothal system the husbands of girls are sometimes determined at birth which requires the girls to withdraw from school at an early age and be married off to their prospective husbands. All GEU officials interviewed indicated that many parents favoured early marriage for their daughters because they believe marriage will protect them from promiscuity and premarital pregnancy. To avoid the shame of premarital pregnancy, sexual violence and to ensure submission to their husbands many girls who do enrol in school are often pulled out of school as soon as they reach puberty and given out for marriage (UNICEF, 2006). In most of these marriages, the girls have little say in who they want to marry which constitutes an infringement on their human rights (Yakin Ertürk, 2008). According to the officials, another traditional belief that works against the promotion of girls' education was the perception that educated girls are not submissive, not prepared to undertake difficult household chores and may be too old to find a husband. One of the officials explains;

‘Another thing that probably inhibits female education is this idea that the educated females don’t submit themselves to men, some say they don’t accord men respect [laughs] they want the females to bow before them and of course, the educated females know their rights. Once I know my right and you want me to bow before you, kneel before you, squat before you and I don’t do it, you take it as disrespect, you see. So I would like to say that if we are able to get a lot of sensitisation, especially on our male counterparts here, to realise that the female is not a second rate human being but should be a partner so that in partnership we bring better development. But if they continue to think that the female is a second rate being and must always say yes to whatever the male counterpart says, whether right or wrong is not the best’ (Female municipal director of education, 50-55years 18/11/05).

This perception of educated women and girls not only affects girls’ enrolment and retention in school, but also discourages them from pursuing careers that take a long time to accomplish. Women who are empowered through education still face overbearing cultural pressure to marry in Ghana and they continue to endure constant ridicule and embarrassment until such time they find a husband. Some men do not like educated girls, not because they cannot make good wives, but because they fear that her educational prospects and awareness may challenge their authority and threaten existing patriarchal norms. The fact that educated girls are more likely to become aware of their human rights and may be more able to resist discriminatory social, religious and cultural practices can be interpreted within the existing patriarchal socio-cultural framework as ‘disrespectful’. In general, these findings support those of other studies on schooling in Ghana, as well as elsewhere in developing countries (Rose and Al Samarrai, 2001; Srinivasan and Bedi, 2007; Yakin Ertürk, 2008). For example, Ertürk’s (2008) survey in Ghana confirms that cultural practices such as early and force marriages undermine girls’ confidence and ability to negotiate imbalance power relations to their advantage.

All GEU officials including some teachers and parents associated the low enrolment of girls with some religious practices in the study area. They observed that the practice of child betrothal, early and force marriages were particularly widespread among Muslim

communities. The regional girls' education officer explained the situation in the following statement:

'The Moslem communities, they don't like sending children to school. And even when they do, at a certain stage, they would withdraw them and give them to men for marriage. It's really a big problem, especially, in the Wa district [...]. They would just say this particular girl is for this man and if she is educated she may not want not marry the man. If you want to give a young girl after she is educated to an old man about 50 to 60 years, automatically the girl would not want to marry the man. So because of that fear they would not want the girl to be educated, they would prefer to give the girl out for marriage' (Female regional girls' education officer, 55-60 years 24/11/05).

In support of the regional girls' education officer's assertion that Muslim communities do not encourage their children to go to school, the national director of girls' education in the statement below explained that to some extent the prevalence of the Islamic religion in Northern Ghana accounts for the low enrolment and high dropout rate of girls in the area.

'There are so many factors that account for this [low enrolment of girls]. I think especially in the Moslem community where they don't encourage girls' education, even if they do enrol a lot in the beginning at the primary school, as they progress, you know the system about betrothal and early marriages take them out of school. So that by the time they get to the secondary school, you find that some of them had become wives [Laughs]. And even among the non-Moslems, some people think that women should not go too far in education, just enough education is okay for you, settle down and have a family' (Female national director of GEU, 45-50 years 14/12/05).

Most respondents attributed the reluctance of Muslim parents to send their children to school to the fear that formal education would influence the children to reject Islam.

Many Muslim girls are therefore allowed to attend school up to a certain level, at which time, they are withdrawn to marry. Lamba's (1999) study of education for African Muslims confirmed that Muslim parents in Malawi were suspicious that formal education will inculcate Christian values and beliefs into their children and eventually convert them to Christianity. He noted that Muslim parents preferred Koranic schools for their children where only Koranic verses in Arabic were taught as they feared that western education might convert their children to Christianity. Similarly, in the study of child labour and schooling patterns in Ghana, Canagarajah and Coulombe (1997) observed that religious groups have significant influence on the values of education in societies. The authors found that Christian families were more likely to send their children to school than Muslims.

The strong adherence to traditional practices in the study area can also be attributed to the high illiteracy rates among parents. Cultural practices tend to hamper the education of girls more than that of boys because of the traditional belief that a woman's place is the kitchen and that her roles as home maker and mother do not need education to perform. Early and forced marriages violate the fundamental human rights of girls and deny them their rights to education, which is crucial for their personal development and their effective contribution to the future well being of their families and societies (Ertürk, 2008). In Ghana the Children's Act of 1998 criminalizes child marriages and sets 18 years as the minimum age for girls to marry (ibid). However, many girls below 18 years continue to be forced into marriage because the law is not enforced. Available statistics reveal that about 25% of young Ghanaian girls are married before their eighteenth birthday and about 4.5% are married under 15 years (ibid).

Another reason why parents consent to early and forced marriages for their daughters is the expensive bride price system in the region, through which parents of the girl receive cash, livestock (3 to 6 cows in some communities), cowries and other gifts. Commenting on the dowry system the municipal director of education said:

'You know this part of the country there are certain factors that inhibit girls' education, especially in my locality we give items like animals or cows, cowries and what you, for a girl as a dowry, so parents are tempted to give out their girls for the monies and the cows, you know all the drinks they will get, yes they prefer giving out these girls to spending money in educating them' (Female municipal director of education, 40-45 years 18/11/05).

Writing about the marriage systems in northern Ghana, Alenuma (2002) explains that 'in general, the bride wealth received for a daughter is used to get a wife for a son' (p: 8). For this reason poor families who lack adequate economic resources rely solely on their daughter's bride price to pay for a son's wife, thus putting more pressure on girls to discontinue their education and marry early so that their brothers can have wives. Also, some families in the patrilineal northern Ghana see the dowry system is a means to amass wealth which encourages them to marry off their daughters at an early age for wealth. The educational officials noted that the payment of such expensive dowry system gives men the false impression that they bought their wives and thus increase their dominance over them. The bride wealth system somehow contrasts the bride wealth system practised in some countries, such as in parts of South Asia. For example, in some parts of India, it cost families too much wealth to marry off their daughters (Srinivasan and Bedi, 2007). The authors noted that the high cost of dowry is the main reason for the increase in female infanticide and sex selective abortion and that some girls are denied the right to education in order to save money for dowry for her future husband and his family.

As noted in chapter three, a significant proportion of marriages in Ghana are polygamous (44.4% in Upper West Region), which has important implications for the wellbeing and status of children within polygamous families (Yakin Ertürk, 2008). In a mixed focus group discussion, students defined polygamy as a practice of one man having several wives. As illustrated by the responses of two students below, it was mentioned as a factor making it difficult for polygamous families to provide adequately for their children's school requirements, since the current economic situation places

greater pressure on large families and husbands are no longer able to provide for several wives and their children.

'If a man marries many women he would have so many children to take care of and that affects us the girls because when it comes to education they would prefer to educate the boys to the girls, because in our tradition boys are valued more than the girls' (Sala, female student, 19 years 08/11/05).

'I want to contribute on the polygamy practice that is a man marrying more than one wife. For instance when my father married another wife and my mother left, any time my father goes for peace keeping abroad and I go to my step mother to get my school fees she would tell me she has no money. Sometimes I have to come to school and wait until he returns from abroad before I can get my school fees. So if the school were to harass me, by this time I would have dropped out of school' (James, male student, 21 years 08/11/05).

As suggested by the second respondent, his mother divorced his father when he brought in another wife which is an indicative that polygamy is no longer acceptable to some women in Ghana. Polygamy appears to have a significant impact on the stability of many households because it causes jealousy and conflict among wives which leads to divorce and discrimination against step children. The students indicated in the group discussion that children whose mothers stay or are loved are given special attention while those whose mother is divorced or are disliked and maltreated. Some of the students suggested that the maltreatment by step-mothers could affect children's educational performance as illustrated by the second respondent above. Moreover, the difficulty of a husband to provide sufficiently for a number of wives and their children places a huge burden on women who lack control over the household resources thus, making it impossible for them to send all their children to school. As a coping strategy girls in such families may be encouraged to marry early. Polygamy is therefore one of the discriminatory cultural practices that reinforces women's subordination and predisposes them to many problems that stem from poverty (Furusawa, 2006).

Some of the students in a mixed group discussion cited patrilineal inheritance as a cultural and family related barrier that impedes access to education. The patriarchal culture and the patrilineal inheritance system in Ghana as well as other African countries give the right to own and inherit properties only to sons and male relatives (Gedzi, 2009; Fenrich and Higgins, 2002). The subordination and marginalisation of women and girls in the research area can also be associated with the traditional inheritance system. Commenting on some of the negative effects of the discriminatory patrilineal inheritance system Peter, one of the students said:

‘In the northern part of this country we are patrilineal so for instance, if you lose your father your uncle inherits the property, nothing goes to your mother and when that happens your uncle uses the property to rather take care of his children’s education whilst neglecting you’ (Male student, 19 years 14/11/05).

With the patrilineal cultural system in the research area, not only are women and their daughters denied inheritance rights in the event of a husband/father’s death but they are also denied property rights in the event of divorce. Indeed, in the research area the widow herself is seen as a property to be inherited, however the practice is now on the decline. Moreover, the patrilineal cultural system guarantees that the custody of the children remains with the father or his family members in the event of divorce, separation or death. The terrible effects of this discriminatory inheritance and property rights on women and children is that their vulnerability to poverty, violence and exploitation is further exacerbated (Fenrich and Higgins, 2002). As a result of such discriminatory property and inheritance rights, women and their children may be left poor and homeless upon the death of a spouse, making it difficult to provide for themselves and their children. Though there is now a constitutional provision (Intestate Succession Law, PNDC Law 111) that allows a woman to inherit from her dead husband even if he did not state this in a will or died intestate, many women in Ghana still get thrown out of their homes by their spouses’ relatives because customary inheritance law is the most influential law in family matters, especially in rural communities (Fenrich and Higgins, 2002; Gedzi, 2009). For example, Gedzi’s (2009) study of the patrilineal property inheritance system suggests that the PNDC Law 111

has not been successful in addressing the inheritance problems of women and the most affected people are female children, widows and divorced women.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a destructive traditional practice that some respondents noted hinders girls' education as they are considered ready for marriage once circumcised. It involves the excision of a woman's clitoris and surrounding tissue. A number of past studies suggest that FGM is harmful to the health of women and girls and contributes to the low enrolment of girls in education (Adongo et al 1998; U.S. Department of State, 2001; Akweongo et al, 2001; WHO, 2008). FGM is practiced among many societies; especially in Africa and an estimated 100 to 140 million girls and women worldwide have experienced it (WHO, 2008). In Ghana it is particularly common in the three Northern regions and an estimated 15-18 percent of all Ghanaian women undergo FGM as part of the initiation rites preparing girls for womanhood, while the Upper East Region alone has about 36 percent of women and girls who have been subjected to the practice (U.S. Department of State, 2001). In a focus group discussion Ajata, one of the girls explains:

'What is also harming our northern sector is female genital mutilation (FGM) where the girls are forced to have their clitoris cut away. One thing they believe is that if a girl is not passed through the practice she is not really a woman' (Female student. 19 years 08/11/05).

In a focus group discussions and interviews both girls and boys condemned FGM which they said is a harmful traditional practice and mentioned some of the harmful effects as heavy bleeding, infertility, difficulty in passing urine, complications in child birth and painful sexual intercourse. As the above statement suggests, girls who fail to undergo FMG are not considered to be real women. Some girls consent to the practice in order to be accepted amongst their peers and in the community (ibid). Reasons given by the students for the practice were that FGM signified the bravery of womanhood and if a woman was able to endure the pain associated with FGM then she would be able to withstand the pains during childbirth. The students also indicated that FGM is designed

to suppress girls' sexual desire and to remove the temptation to have sex before marriage. All focus groups of students were aware that it was against the law for FGM to be performed in Ghana, and said their parents were against the practice for their daughters. Some of the boys in the group said that they would not like to marry a circumcised girl who was likely to have many health problems as a result and suggested that one way to discourage the practice was for men to refuse to marry them. These findings mirror that of Akweongo et al (2001) which suggest that FGM is harmful and that girls who do not consent to FGM are regarded by their peers and family members as unclean, less attractive and less desirable for marriage. Akweongo et al.'s (2001) study of FGM in Damango Health Research Centre in Upper East Ghana noted that some uncircumcised women lied in the interviews that they were circumcised in order to avoid being stigmatised.

FGM constitutes a serious human rights and health violation against girls. There have been several initiatives undertaken by government, NGOs, District Assemblies, Human Rights activists and many other women's organisations aimed at the total elimination of FGM. For example, the Ministry of Women and Children through its educational campaign in rural communities emphasises the awareness of the harmful effects of FGM to change people's attitudes about the practice. Additionally, in 1994 Ghana abolished all harmful traditional practices that threaten the health and welfare of women and girls and again in 2007 strengthened the law against FGM by increasing the maximum penalty from 5 to 10 years of imprisonment (U.S. Department of State, 2001). Despite the ban and criminalisation, FGM is believed to be secretly performed in some communities in the three Northern Regions. A recent report by the Ghanaian media indicates that as a result of the widespread secrecy about the practice, informants have been recruited in rural communities to report FGM offenders to the police for legal action to be taken against perpetrators (GNA, 2007).

Also in the group discussions, girls reported that the performance of ceremonial funeral rites were a cultural practice that affects girls' school attendance. In the study area, though funerals are occasions to mourn the death, there are festive activities like eating, singing and dancing to celebrate the life of the deceased. The celebration is usually

expensive and involves a considerable display of wealth which lasts for several days. Abiba, one of the girls explained that:

‘Attending funerals can affect our education, our parents always insist that it’s part of our custom to be regular at funerals and you know funerals rites can last for at least a week or two and if one is to stay away from school to attend funerals it would affect our performance at school’ (Female student, 18 years 08/11/05).

The celebration aspect of it is also intended to encourage courtship between unmarried members of the community. As part of the socialisation process the youth are encouraged to attend funerals to learn the rituals that go with the celebrations and possibly, in the case of girls, expose them to potential suitors. Being absent from school for a week or two obviously will have an impact on a student’s performance, especially girls who already have multiple tasks in the household, resulting in poor school performance and drop out (a major theme to be discussed in chapter eight).

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have showed that the opportunity to attend and complete school is lower for girls than for boys in economically constrained households and especially in the case of parents who also have limited or no educational background. The results indicate that the deeply entrenched cultural concept of unequal distribution of gender roles places a heavy demand on girls’ labour, leaving them with less time for study which impacts negatively on girl’s performance and participation in education. The higher value placed on boys’ education as a result of their perceived future role as family leaders and bread winners encouraged parents’ discriminatory attitudes against girls (such as their willingness to allocate more household resources for boys’ education at the expense of girls’) whose future roles were perceived to be that of wife, mother and home maker in another family. Additionally, girls’ education was also found to be more constrained by some discriminatory and harmful traditional practices such as

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), ‘elopement’, betrothal and early and forced marriage. These socio-cultural practices and beliefs in the research area in general do not promote education for all because they marginalize women and girls and reinforce gender inequality in education and society as a whole. Harmful cultural practices constitute serious violence against women and children and violate their human rights. The low value parents give to girls’ education is therefore a reflection of both cultural practices and girls’ perceived traditional roles in the study area. Availability of schools, therefore, does not necessarily imply that girls would have access to education because decisions to send children to school are strongly influenced by the economic, religious, social and cultural contexts in which they find themselves (Clough et al, 2000; UNESCO, 2003/4 ; Clough et al. 2003). Therefore girls in the study area do not have the same opportunity as boys to access education due to the negative perceptions of parents about the overall benefit of girls’ education. These perceptions and expectations, being constantly reinforced within the home environment, certainly influence girls’ experiences at school. Parents’ attitudes therefore contribute to the persistence of gender inequalities in education. Similarly, the UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2003/4 indicates that the persistence of gender discrimination against girls in the family is one of the greatest constraints to achieving gender equality in education. The next chapter examines gendered practices in the school environment.

Chapter 6: Schoolgirls' Experiences of the School Environment

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I explored girls' experiences of home such as the unequal distribution of gender roles in the household, the low expectation of girls' education as a result of their perceived future roles as mothers and wives, as well as the discriminatory traditional practices and beliefs that bestow low status on girls and limit their opportunities to educational access. The problems that confront girls in relation to their education are not confined to the home situation alone; the school, being one of the important agents of gender role socialisation in students' lives, also perpetuates the entrenched gender inequality in society. This chapter therefore provides a critical gender analysis of the various dimensions of gender-related barriers students face in their educational experiences at school in the Upper West Region of Ghana. I examine the quality of the school infrastructure in terms of providing a gender friendly environment for effective teaching and learning and the general wellbeing of girls in particular. I also explore the gendered school environment, daily school practices, reward and punishment.

6.2 Gender Inequality and Schooling: Inadequate School Facilities

As noted in the previous chapter, Wa Secondary Technical School is a community day secondary school with 151 boys and 38 girls as of the 2003/2004 academic year (Wa Secondary Technical 3rd Quarterly Report, 2004). The school has good classroom buildings. However, the school lacked several other facilities such as hostels, furniture, drinking water, proper urinals and toilets and adequate materials to facilitate good teaching and learning. It is the requirement for government to provide quality education for all, but the research revealed that the study school lacked gender friendly facilities to provide a favourable environment for students, particularly for girls to learn.

As a day school, it did not have hostel facilities to accommodate students from the rural catchment communities. Although the study school is located in the regional capital, most students come from surrounding villages. A few students had also travelled from the southern part of Ghana where their parents had migrated to in search of better farmlands due to the poor nature of farmlands in the research area. Such students were required to arrange their own accommodation, pay school fees and other school levies and cook their own meals. Hence, most of the students were staying with relatives, friends or living on their own in rented rooms in compound houses. This situation made girls particularly vulnerable because they could be exploited by guardians or men in the community due to imbalanced power relations between men and women. The assistant head master of the school mentioned that one of the challenges of day school students from rural areas was finding comfortable accommodation in the city and indicated that some of the girls living in compound houses have virtually become second wives to their landlords. Accordingly, the board of directors of the study school made a petition to the District Assembly for the provision of hostel facilities for girls due to their vulnerability in the community. Fortunately, the District Assembly responded by building two blocks of hostel accommodation for the school but argued that boys from distant villages were equally vulnerable and should be assigned one of the hostels. As a result, only about half of the female population stayed in the school hostel supervised by the senior housemistress. One of the female teachers lamented about the problems female students face as day scholars:

‘In this particular school because it is a day school most of the students here stay with relatives and therefore, coming to participate in extra-curricular activities like sports after school is difficult for them. You realise that most at times it is the boys that really want to participate, some of the girls want to, but it would mean they have left house chores behind for those they are staying with to do, and they don’t take it kindly. So me personally I’m happy that they are trying to put up a hostel for them but as at now only a few have been accommodated and they are even living under constraints’ (Female teacher, 45-50 years 20/11/05).

A visit I made with the senior housemistress to the girls' new hostel revealed that the girls were still living in appalling conditions. There was no furniture in the long sleeping hall and girls were lying on very thin mattresses and mats on the floor. The small kitchen provided for them was also not furnished. Girls were cooking on firewood and charcoal outside the kitchen. There were also men loitering around the unfenced hostel which has implications for their safety. The girls complained that they were constantly being harassed by men from the community and were still not secured in their new accommodation which was meant to grant them security. The lack of fenced walls to the girls' hostels and scattered nature of the school facilities such as the toilet and urinals made supervision difficult, therefore students could easily escape to town without permission and not being detected. According to the housemistress one of the girls failed to return to the school after vacation and it was rumoured among the students that she was pregnant.

Most secondary schools in Ghana are boarding institutions which provide more dormitory facilities for boys than girls (Casely-Hayford, 2002; Quist, 2003). Boarding schools provide a more favourable environment and more time for study which is in great contrast to day secondary schools. Students from rural homes who are day scholars, especially girls, face multiple constraints when it comes to studying at home. They study late in the night only after completing their evening chores. Their study is done under poor lighting, provided by a kerosene lamp or candle. Girls from poor homes in boarding schools may enjoy facilities ordinarily absent from their homes such as water, proper furniture, sanitary facilities, and regular meals. Hence, boarding schools overcome many factors within the households and communities that have negative influences on girls' participation and performance in school (Casely-Hayford, 2002). Most of the girls expressed their desire to be in boarding school so as to escape the heavy domestic chores they perform in the house. However, due to the high fees charged by boarding schools most poor parents tend to send children to day schools. Community day secondary schools were introduced by the government in the past two decades to make secondary education more affordable and accessible to students in rural communities (Quist, 2003). In all classes that I observed in the study school there were

clear gender differences in classroom participation as girls made up less than half the number of boys. As stated earlier in the context of Ghana, the education system since the British colonial administration period discriminates against girls by offering them fewer boarding facilities than boys at secondary schools. Lack of adequate boarding or hostel facilities for girls could be one of the reasons for girls' low enrolment in secondary high schools in Ghana and other African countries (Croft, 2000; Casely-Hayford, 2002; Quist, 2003).

For the majority of students who were not staying in the school hostel, time taken to travel to school often made them tired and affected their punctuality and performance at school. The Upper West region is noted to have the highest percentage of children walking over 30 minutes to school each day (*Ghana Core Welfare Indicators Survey Report*, 1998). For example, most students walked 1-3 kilometres from their homes to school daily. Although the length of journey to school affects the attendance of boys and girls, the effects of distance are more severe for girls who have to perform many household chores in the morning. In an interview with the district director of education, she indicated that parents were not comfortable with sending their daughters away from their rural homes to go and live alone in the city without any supervision. Therefore, in most cases distance hinders enrolment and attendance, especially of the girls. Issues of safety and the fear that girls may be sexually harassed are concerns for parents and they are less likely to allow their daughters to attend school if they have to travel long distances (Casely-Hayford, 2002). This could then be noted as one of the many obstacles for girls' enrolment, retention and completion of school especially at the SHS level where most schools are located in towns and cities to the disadvantage of rural communities.

Besides the accommodation problem, the school did not have its own drinking-water facilities and students had to fetch water from a nearby community borehole. This made life difficult for both teachers and students, and students often dodged to town with the pretext of going to drink water. The inadequate provision of water in schools can have a negative effect on the achievement of high learning outcomes. Another uncomfortable situation teachers and students had to face in the school was lack of proper toilet

facilities. There were only two urinals and one toilet provided by the District Assembly near to the school for both teachers and students. These facilities were also made use of by the neighbourhood communities since the school was not fenced. The urinals and toilet were partially enclosed, dirty and in poor state of repair and were particularly unsuitable for the girls to use. Some girls complained of the discomfort they face, for example not being able to clean themselves in school during menstruation. Female teachers similarly expressed the need for separate toilets for girls. The lack of water and inadequate toilet facilities provide further reason for girls to be absent from school, especially during their menstrual period. These findings confirm results of several studies which have showed that girls who experienced menstruations without adequate sanitary facilities were regularly absent or even dropped out of school (Brock and Cammish, 1997; Rose et al., 1997; Tembon et al., 1997; Chowdhury et al., 2002; Kasente, 2003; Tomasevski, 2006; UNICEF, 2008). According to the 2003 UNESCO report, the provision of gender sensitive infrastructure can be extremely important for ensuring girls' full participation in education. The usual embarrassment and consequences of the schoolgirls in schools without water and toilet facilities cannot be over emphasized. Adequate provision of these facilities in schools will go a long way to improve the sanitation and hygiene of students and encourage students' particularly girls', enrolment and retention at school.

Lack of teaching and learning materials was another problem faced by the school. The science laboratory, Home Economics and Technical departmental workshops were not adequately equipped for effective and efficient practical lessons to be undertaken. The supply of text books and exercise books was also inadequate. Inadequate supplies meant that two to three students shared a textbook. In most situations boys sat closer to the book than girls since they tended to be the first to get them from the store room and this hindered most girls' freedom to read and learn comfortably. An interview with the assistant head teacher later revealed that the school actually had adequate textbooks but said the students lost them when the books were given to them for studies at home.

6.3 Teachers and daily school practices

Teaching staff in the study school were predominantly male with a small proportion of female teachers. Out of the sixteen teachers in the school only five were females. The predominance of male teachers in the study school is a common phenomenon in most secondary schools in Ghana. One explanation for this disparity is connected to the cultural beliefs of the people of the study area where girls receive less encouragement to embark on higher education. The low representation of female teachers in senior high school perpetuates gender differences because it does not provide girls with sufficient role models. The educational system at all levels in Ghana and other countries is male dominated except in primary schools where there are more female than male teachers. The global feminization of teaching, particularly at primary education level is related to societal perception that women have better nurturance capabilities which make them better teachers of young children (Driessen, 2007; Smith, 2004; Boyle, 2004; Skelton, 2002; Coffey and Delamont, 2000; Acker, 1994). Unfortunately, the feminization of primary teaching has contributed to teaching's low status and low wages.

Though the number of female teachers has increased gradually in Ghana, the proportion remains extremely low in most rural schools partly due to the lack of social amenities. Female teachers tend to accept posting to urban schools for a range of reasons, but also where travel conditions or accommodation may be more secure. A study investigating the needs of female teachers in Ghana found that many married female teachers want to live with their husbands who most likely have a job in urban areas while the unmarried ones are reluctant to go to rural areas because they worry about not finding a suitable husband (Casely-Hayford with Wilson, 2001). This could have an impact on girls' access to educational opportunities in rural communities. The presence of female teachers is important to provide girls with role models they can identify with and to provide counselling, especially on issues related to puberty and career choice. Also, the presence of female teachers as role models would expand the aspirations of girls, and show that barriers to girl's progress in education are usually socially constructed rather than reflecting their innate abilities or interests. A number of studies have also noted the importance of achieving equal distribution of female teachers as a means of improving

girls' retention, performance and achievements in schools. (Croft, 2000; Casely-Hayford with Wilson, 2001; Hedges, 2002; Casely-Hayford, 2007; Colclough et al. 2003; John Pryor et al., 2003; Sefa Dei, 2004; Akyeampong, 2004).

The data on teacher qualifications showed that all teachers were well trained in teaching, holding undergraduate university degrees with a few of them undertaking part time postgraduate studies. Observations in the study school showed that the relatively high professional qualifications of the teachers was often not manifested in their professional attitudes, as many teachers arrived late and in some cases, where they were punctual to school, some did not teach their lessons at all. Teachers often delegated their responsibilities to students while they engaged in conversations in the staff common room or attended to other private matters outside the school. Students were often seen supervising classes, always with a cane in hand. They were also made to write copious notes on the chalkboard for their classmates to copy without the benefit of an explanation. Most students complained that they were particularly unhappy with the unprofessional attitudes of some teachers such as absenteeism, lateness and not teaching. One of the students remarked: *'Some teachers don't teach when they come to school, they give excuses'*. The senior boys' prefect equally retorted:

'I may say my problem is supervision of teachers in this school is poor. Some of the masters [teachers] are doing their best but others don't do their work. When it's time for them to teach they would be somewhere else and nothing is being done about it' (School boy prefect, 22 years 12/11/05).

Information gathered from teachers revealed that most of them were poorly motivated due to poor conditions of service such as low salary and lack of accommodation. Out of the 16 teachers, only 4 were housed in the teachers' bungalows on the school premises. The staff common room was also too small and inadequately furnished for teachers to relax and go about their work effectively, hence the poor teaching culture which impacted negatively on students' performance and achievements in the school.

I spent six weeks observing the study school. Daily activities began at 6 am with students weeding, sweeping and cleaning the school compound and classrooms, which is the usual practice in many Ghanaian schools. This suggests that girls who usually have many chores to perform had to wake up as early as 4 to 5 a.m. if they were to be in school on time. The cleaning of the school compound was followed by a morning assembly at 7 a.m. and it was compulsory for all teachers and students to attend. Morning assemblies on Mondays were usually supervised by the teacher on duty and the senior boys' prefect and addressed by the head teacher or his deputy, subsequent ones were supervised by the teacher on duty and the school boy prefect. With the exception of the Monday morning assemblies, most teachers often did not attend morning assemblies and usually left the school before the closing assembly at 2 pm. Male prefects were most often left alone to supervise both morning and closing assemblies when the teacher on duty was not around. Queues at assembly were segregated by gender with girls standing in the front while boys stood at the back of the queue. Student attendance and punctuality was strictly checked and punishment given to latecomers in the form of caning. Plots allocated to students for weeding and sweeping to keep the compound clean were also inspected before the morning assembly and those found not to have cleaned their plots punished (punishment is discussed later in this chapter). School uniforms were compulsory and inspected every morning during assemblies and those found not to be in neat uniforms punished while those in tattered uniforms or unspecified uniforms sent home. The colour and style of uniforms were also specified according to gender and authority. While male prefects were allowed to wear brown trousers and white shirts, the other boys were required to wear brown shorts and blue shirts. Unlike the male prefects, female prefects were not allowed to wear trousers; they wore blue skirts and white blouses while all other girls wore blue dresses with gathers at the waist.

6.4 Gendered School Environment

As indicated in the introduction, the differential treatment boys and girls experience at home does not end at the household level. Girls continue to suffer gender inequalities and unequal power relations in education because schools are shaped by the society in

which they are situated (Nussbaum, 2003; Colclough, 2004; Wilson, 2004; Kakuru, 2006; Stromquist, 2007). However, teachers who could play a leading role in dismantling traditional constructions of gender are themselves still playing a major role in socializing children into the normative adult gender roles they will be expected to play in society. Therefore teachers' attitudes and practices in the school environment are important in promoting gender equality as well as reproducing gender inequality in education. This is because teachers' attitudes affect students' performance and therefore can shape students' perceptions and aspirations. My interviews and observations reveal a school culture that was not divorced from the wider social structure. The school administration, duties and responsibilities were differentiated on gender lines. Male teachers dominated the school management and administration; both the headmaster and his deputy were males. Similarly, the senior house master and all head of departments were also males except the home economics department which was headed by a woman. Though a female teacher occupied the position of senior house mistress her authority was limited to the girls. There were also more male student prefects than female prefects. With the exception of the senior girls' prefect, the rest of the female prefects were usually appointed as assistants to their male counterparts with different responsibilities and lesser authority. While male teachers and male prefects seem to exercise control over the whole school, female teachers and female prefects seem to control only girls' and 'feminine activities' in the school. What students see and hear about their environment all affect their perceptions. Thus, students see that men and boys dominate leadership and management positions whereas women and girls play the subordinate role. This is of particular concern because students receive messages about appropriate gender roles simply by the way that leadership positions are allocated in schools. These findings mirror the study of Dunne et al., (2005) in Ghana and Botswana. The gendered structures in school, the household and the larger society therefore, contribute to the subordinate role that women and girls play in the educational system (Dunne et al., 2005; Kakuru, 2006). This clearly has an impact on girls' education and occupational aspirations and their future role in society.

In terms of subjects taught, female teachers were concentrated in the home economics department, teaching food and nutrition, clothing and textiles and management in living perceived as feminine subjects. With the exception of one female teacher who taught

maths and two others who handled English, the remaining subjects, including general science, agricultural science, mathematics and technical subjects, were all seen as masculine and were taught by male teachers. The female maths teacher pointed out that when she had first arrived in the school, she was assigned to teach maths to only first year students while second and third years were taught by her male colleague. Similarly, the two female English teachers taught English to the first year students while their male colleague taught the third year students. Female teachers are usually assigned to teach in lower classes whereas male teachers tend to teach in the higher classes. This reinforces the idea that female teachers are not as intelligent as the male teachers and so were not able to teach in senior classes (Kadzamira and Chibwana, 2000). The gender-based association of teachers with particular subjects strongly communicates to students which subjects are appropriate for their sexes and contributed to the gender differences in students' choices of subject (discussed later in this chapter).

General school activities were also gender segregated. Female students, in particular, were in charge of cleaning classrooms and offices, fetching water for the head teachers' office and the staff common room and washing of the school's sports jerseys. Male students on the other hand took responsibility for activities that were perceived to require greater physical effort such as sports, cutting trees and flower hedges, weeding and digging the school compound. Female teachers were mainly involved in activities such as supervising the cleaning of offices and classrooms and welcoming and entertaining visitors, whereas male teachers were mainly responsible for organising school debates and quizzes and sports activities. Issues of discipline, especially corporal punishment were in the hands of male teachers and male prefects. Dunne and Leach et al (2005) observed that female teachers were not interested in corporal punishment and sometimes asked their male colleagues to cane students for them because boys usually resist female teachers' attempts to beat them. Male students' non-acceptance of female teachers' authority can be seen as a way of defending the gender boundary which is related to the wider patriarchal society where men are perceived to be superior to women. It was also observed that teachers regularly asked students to perform certain activities for them, in ways that perpetuate gender differentiation. For example, girls were often asked to buy and serve food to teachers and wash the dishes when they had finished eating. Some girls reported that male teachers, particularly the unmarried ones,

sometimes ask them to perform chores such as cooking, washing of clothes and fetching water for them in their house. Other studies have suggested that teachers were more likely to give more domestic tasks such as cleaning, washing and sweeping to girls, thus reinforcing commonly held gender stereotypes (Magno et al., 2002; Colclough et al., 2003; Dunne et al, 2005). However, when teachers were asked whether they behave differently towards boys and girls in the school, most of them said that there were no differences in the way they treated students. For instance, one of the female teachers remarked:

‘Personally I don’t discriminate, because [...] I see them as equals. Because in my house, I have children, I don’t discriminate as far as work is concerned, you know anybody at all can do any type of work at any particular time [...] so in school too, if it is sweeping, I don’t care whether you are a boy or a girl, and everyone must do it’ (Female teacher, 45-50 years 17/11/05).

Two other teachers however, admitted that the gender of students was an influencing factor in the manner that teachers behaved towards students and indicated that when students behaved contrary to expectations she or he is reprimanded or cautioned. The following were their responses:

‘Sister [referring to the researcher] you know that one is just normal, sometimes when they [students] do certain things, you say I expected you to behave as a man or a woman to have done it in a better way than you are doing now’ (Female teacher, 45-50 years 08/11/05).

‘Yes, because these are two different sexes, they should be handled differently to some extent but to a large extent we give them equal treatment’ (Male teacher, 35-40 years 15/11/05).

From general interviews and observations, most teachers seem to view gender differentiation as normal and natural and therefore did not appear to realise that their attitudes towards students were discriminatory. They also failed to recognise that female students were more involved in the extra-curricular duties of the school than male students. As teachers saw their attitudes as the accepted norm in the study area no effort was made to address the gender differences in the school culture. The findings of this research are in line with those of a range of other studies which show that teachers' attitudes have an effect on every day practices within schools, influencing students' formation of their gender identities (Walkerdine, 1990; Walkerdine et al, 2001; Colclough et al., 2003; Colclough, 2004; Magno and Silova, 2007; Stromquist, 2007).

Furthermore, teachers' interviews and observations also reveal that students were not passive in the formation of their identities. Teachers indicated that both boys and girls actively defended these gender boundaries in the school environment and those who try to cross these boundaries are most often teased or intimidated. It was observed that boys and girls had little interaction with one another both in and outside the classroom. Teachers detailed several activities that boys do not like doing, for example, sweeping, cleaning and fetching of water. Girls, they said, are not enthusiastic about engaging in sports, weeding and taking leadership positions. The statements below show how active students guided these gendered roles to avoid intimidation or being laughed at.

'The boys normally do not want to sweep, and they feel women are suppose to sweep. When it comes to hooking [cutting grass with a machete], you see the girls standing aside and asking the boys to do it' (Female teacher, 40-45 years 09/11/05)

'Sometimes when you look at certain activities in this school, for example, when it is time for school elections you see more boys vying for more positions than the girls' (Male teacher, 35-40 years 08/11/05).

‘When it comes to things like football, the girls feel that it’s for boys and when it comes to something like keeping the classroom tidy, the boys feel that it should be the work of the girls who should sweep the classroom. That is the perception of the society and even from the homes; because the family feels that a girl should not take part in sports, for instance if a girl wants to go and play football the parents would say what kind of football? They would say that it’s the reserve of boys. If a boy too wants to sweep whilst girls are around the parents would say how, can’t the girls sweep?’ (Male teacher, 45-50 years 19/11/05)

The analysis of students’ interviews suggests that they did perceive the differential treatment from teachers as discriminatory but accepted it as normal and did not seem to consider gender as an important factor in their interactions with teachers. For example, *‘They are fair to us’. ‘I feel that the way they treat us is normal’. ‘As far as the boys are different from the girls, it is normal to treat us differently and I think they are treating us well’* (Group discussion with boys and girls, 09/11/05). In a study by Magno and Silova (2007), examining school-based gender inequities in central Europe and the former Soviet Union, similar results were found. Secondary students did not perceive gender as a significant factor but they did stress the fact that sometimes boys are treated differently from girls for the same actions, which to some extent was justified due to the differences in the behaviour of girls and boys. I would suggest that the students’ belief that gender is not an important factor might be related to the fact that they focused mainly on direct discrimination and not on indirect discrimination.

6.5 Teachers’ expectations of students’ behaviour

In terms of the behaviour of students, teachers expected boys to be less likely to conform to the demands of classroom control. Teachers’ expectations for students’ behaviour seem to be related to gender, with teachers expecting more positive classroom and social behaviour from girls. Both male and female teachers recommended girls for their good behaviour in class and said that girls are easier to control both in and outside the classroom than boys. Like parents, teachers described

girls as being simple, timid, submissive, dynamic, obedient and hardworking. They mentioned that *'girls are not so noisy, arrogant and they more easily succumb than boys'* (Male teacher, 45-50 years 23/11/05). Unlike girls, boys were said to be masculine, aggressive, active, fast, boisterous, strong, rowdy and superior to girls. Pressure from friends to conform to expectations in terms of gender in the classroom was the reason most commonly suggested for boys' misbehaviour. As boys tend to be more disruptive and demanding in classrooms, teachers' attention is generally focused on them at the expense of girls. The assistant head teacher explained that boys behave the way they do because they have a problem of wanting to be recognized. Describing the behaviour of the students some male teachers said:

'I can say [...] the girls actually pay attention but the boys when you are teaching, you see the boys trying to be talking to each others, destructing lessons but as for the girls the moment you say please pay attention, they are very attentive, they fear that they would be punished but the boys don't fear. Girls are easier to control; generally, girls behave better than boys because the boys are robust' (Male teacher, 50-55years 23/11/05).

'From my point of view, it is easier to control girls than boys because girls are vulnerable by nature and they are easily intimidated, put a little threat, the girls can conform, but sometimes you would have to go an extra mile before you can tone the boys down. So in terms of control it is easier to control the girls. In fact, the boys are more rude and recalcitrant than the girls' (Male teacher, 45-50 years 17/11/05).

Teachers' expectations seem to suggest that most of them have stereotypical ideas about the abilities and the behaviour of students. The majority of both male and female teachers explained the differences in boys' and girls' behaviour in terms of biology. Most of them did not see gender as an important factor in children's socialisation and schooling. However, the responses of a few teachers seemed to perceive students'

behaviour as a result of the way they have been socialized in the patriarchal environment. The home economics teacher for instance said:

'The boys, some of the boys are so difficult, I don't know whether it is, they are very difficult, very difficult to control, I don't know why. People come from different houses so it is difficult, may be some training or some behaviour that some of the boys come to school with are from their various houses, they think they can carry it here; therefore some of them are actually very difficult to control. You give them work to do and they don't want to do it and they want to do something else. But with the girls when they are given some work to do, they go straight away to do it without any difficulty. So you can also see again that; you see the girls are more or less in bondage, you know, therefore you can control them. They are not that free to do certain things but the boys are, you know, they are left free in the houses. With that background you cannot control them' (Female teacher, 45-50 years 10/11/05).

As the teacher rightly points out the home experiences of students (highlighted in the previous chapter) shape their behaviour to large extent. In the research area, girls are usually socialised into being more reserved and submissive whereas boys are expected to be assertive and aggressive. There is evidence from this and other studies that students carry to school strong gender notions from family and society (Stromquist, 2007; Francis and Skelton, 2001). The effects of patriarchal socialisation are related to the classroom interaction process and associated consequences for academic potential. Other studies in Western countries have suggested that teachers apply different standards of behaviour to students and often prevent girls from participating in activities that are considered 'natural' for boys (Reay, 2001; Mills, 2001; Francis, 2005b). Teachers' expectations therefore are a reflection of the deeply rooted wider communities' gender biases against girls which impact negatively on their educational prospects.

6.6 Reward, Punishment and School Based Gender Violence

Teachers indicated in interviews that students are rewarded or praised for good academic performance and good behaviour in and outside the classroom. They mentioned that neatness, punctuality and good behaviour were important attributes that attracted praise or reward and that there were not significant differences in the amount of praise that girls and boys received from their teachers. The following statements from two male teachers describe how students are selected for reward in the school:

‘We have a whole lot of reinforcement we use in this school. In terms of neatness, usually the senior house master in particular, at morning assembly, would just come out and look through the students and select from both sexes who are neatly dressed to come out and stand in front of the assembly for everyone to see them and give them praises [...] When they are able to keep their uniforms neat they are praised and when they are punctual, we praise them’ (Male teacher, 40-45 years 15/11/05).

‘We reward students who do well in quizzes and give right answers to questions in class with remarks like, very good, well done, and excellent and so on. If you look at the classroom situation sometimes when a student answers a question nicely, they may clap hands for the student and the master can give all sorts of praises, that is also equally for both sexes’ (Male teacher, 45-50 years 22/11/05).

Data gathered from interviews and observations prove contrary to teachers’ assertion that there was no discrimination in the ways that students were praised in the school. As boys were more active in participating in the teaching-learning process, they were more likely to answer questions correctly and receive more praise or positive feedback than girls. However, reinforcement for a few girls who made efforts and provided correct answers was much more exaggerated as the whole class was asked to clap for them. For this reason some boys thought girls were getting more teacher attention in class than boys. For example, Akwasi, one of the boys stated:

‘Girls get more attention in the classroom by way of motivation, for instance, in terms of exercises being given in class, females are not all that good but they encourage the girls by praising them in certain ways to motivate them to learn’
(Male student, 19 years 17/11/05).

Overall, boys got more praise in the classroom for their active participation in lessons while girls were praised for their good behaviour and neatness. General observations show that teachers were more concerned about students’ misconduct than their good behaviour and tended to punish students more than they praised them.

A range of research confirms that corporal punishment as disciplinary practice in schools makes school environments uncomfortable for students (Dunne and Leach et al, 2005; Leach et al, 2003; Agbenyega, 2006). When students were asked which aspect of school life made them uncomfortable, most of them mentioned corporal punishment, sexual harassment, insults, teasing, favouritism, and gossip as some of the aspects of school life they disliked. The research showed that corporal punishment was commonly used by both teachers and students as a disciplinary measure in the school. Students expressed dislike for corporal punishment and said they were particularly unhappy about being beaten by their fellow students, usually male prefects, for minor offences and sometimes for no apparent reason. It was a common sight as one observes male prefects carrying canes and using them freely on fellow students even for minor offences like lateness, failure to sweep or weed one’s plot, bring a broom or garden sticks to school and clean the classroom. Moreover, students were sometimes punished not only for unacceptable behaviour but for reasons entirely beyond their control such as lacking learning materials, failure to pay school fees or levies and poor academic performance. They complained that giving wrong answers or being unable to answer a question within the classroom sometimes attracted corporal punishment and that sometimes a student who answers a question correctly is asked to cane those who get it wrong. As indicated earlier, although there were sixteen teachers in the school, usually, only the teacher on duty managed to turn up early enough before morning assemblies and needed the support of prefects to maintain order in the school. Male prefects

confirmed that teachers authorised them to use the cane but when teachers were questioned, they totally denied that such a practice exists and promised to carry out an investigation. Appointing prefects to assist school authority to maintain order is a common practice in schools; however, I would argue that the practice that allows students to use the cane on their peers in the name of punishment for breaking school rules or giving wrong answers in the class must be discontinued immediately. This is because learning does not thrive in a hostile environment and students are unlikely to ask questions or challenge the views of their teachers if they live in fear. Students also reported that corporal punishment was a common practice in their homes and that their parents support the use of the cane in school. Some students mentioned that there were instances where some parents came to the school to request teachers to beat their children for misbehaving at home. Some of the students approved of some corporal punishment, provided it was given in proportion to the offence committed and for justifiable reasons. However, it should also be understood that it was the wish of the majority of the students to be treated with respect, to have teachers listen to them, and to better understand the teachers' view of their offence.

I observed gender differences in the way that students were punished. Girls were often punished by being ordered to undertake tasks that relate to domestic chores, such as sweeping, fetching water and cleaning toilets whereas boys were often punished by having to do ground work which usually involved the use of a cutlass or a hoe. With regard to corporal punishment, girls received caning on their hands while boys received a disproportionate share of caning on their buttocks, back and legs. In their study examining children's experience of corporal punishment in Swaziland Clacherty et al. (2005) also found significant gender differences, with boys being beaten more often than girls. When I asked about the differences in punishment, teachers explained that girls ought to be treated more gently than boys because girls have a more delicate and sensitive body. It seems clear to me that the discriminatory use of corporal punishment on the basis of gender stereotypes is unfair. While some teachers confirmed the use of corporal punishment in the school for various offences others denied caning students but mentioned several other ways of punishing them, for example, weeding and digging, sweeping, picking up litter around the school and cutting hedges. The following statements were made in regards to punishment in the school.

'Yes, caning is done though we are not supposed to do it because Ghana Education Service (GES) does not encourage it. But we are compelled by necessity' (Male teacher, 40-45 years 14/11/05).

'Personally, I would like to punish a recalcitrant student by sometimes giving him some manual work to do. From my observation we are individuals, sometimes I see some masters holding canes but when they are caning the boys, they cane the girls too. That is what I see but personally, I don't like caning' (Female teacher, 45-50 years 06/11/05).

'If the offence is the type that involves cheating or stealing, we administer one or two canes to let the person refrain from doing that kind of thing. It would not make an impact if you give him a place to weed because the friends may not even know why he is weeding, but if you give him instant justice in front of the others, that would make an impact. On the other hand, if it is just minor, minor offences we just ask them to do some weeding. In fact, the weeding seems to be more beneficial to the school as a whole because it keeps the environment clean' (Male assistant head teacher, 45-50 years 24/11/05).

Despite the fact that corporal punishment is banned in Ghanaian schools, the law is often not effectively enforced. The common use of corporal punishment violates the Ghana National Education Code of Discipline established in the late 1970s which allowed head teachers or their deputies to administer caning up to six strokes to children as a last resort (Agbenyega, 2006). Additionally, it violates the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (UN, 1989). Excessive caning can deter students from classroom participation and also encourage students to play truant which can eventually result in dropout. These findings are consistent with those of past research such as Brown (2003) study on sexual abuse and Agbenyega's (2006) study on corporal punishment in Ghana. Attempts to abolish corporal punishment in schools must therefore seek to change people's attitudes towards disciplining children at the household and community levels, in addition to reform of the national legislation, which permits corporal punishment in schools, under special circumstances.

Teachers and prefects indicated that there was no differential treatment in punishing students in the school but their claims were contradicted by many boys who complained of favouritism, declaring that girls and school prefects were given better treatment and sometimes escaped punishment that would have been given out had the offender been a boy. As Kwame explained:

‘Some of the senior boys favour their girl friend when they come to school late while punishing others for being late. When students commit the same offence with prefects, for example, being late to school, the student is punished while the prefect is set free’ (Male student, 18 years 21/11/05).

For example, they said both teachers and prefects caned them harder on their heads, hands, backs, buttocks and legs while girls were caned only in the palm of their hands. Additionally, where the punishment involved weeding, cutting of hedges, or any other difficult task, boys received larger portions than girls. Girls admitted being favoured at times by both teachers and male prefects, explaining that teachers treated them differently sometimes because they considered them to be weak.

Most students, especially the junior boys and girls felt that they were not treated with respect in the school. They complained bitterly about the widespread bullying in the school which made school life uncomfortable. In mixed group discussions, girls especially stated that teachers and prefects often verbally abused and insulted them. They mentioned that boys especially tease girls when they make mistakes in class, for example, mispronouncing a word during reading or questioning time in class. Even the most academically able boys were not left out of this; they were also ridiculed for participating actively in class. As Paul lamented:

‘One thing too is that, in class, for instance, if you are fond of answering questions or contributing in class; they would start calling you names like, book

long, too known and all sort of names and that may discourage one from contributing in class' (Male student, 20years 17/11/05).

Other forms of bullying girls said they suffered were being given nicknames, being shouted at, being asked to kneel down, crawl or run. Girls on their period who get their dresses soiled were also mocked. Most teachers and prefects denied the practice of bullying in the school, explaining that it was usually a joke or fun they had with the girls. One of the male prefects responded: *'There is nothing like that, we don't bully juniors; it is only sometimes when they are lazy that we normally punish them'* (Adamu, male student, 22years 18/11/05). Girls stated that they often do not report bullying because teachers do not take them seriously and often fail to take action. Bullying can have negative impacts on student behaviour, performance and encourages some students, especially girls, to drop out of school.

Apart from corporal punishment and bullying, another issue that made girls in particular uncomfortable in school was sexual harassment. The issue came up suddenly in focus group discussions with boys and girls about issues that make the school environment hostile to students' learning. Information gathered suggests that sexual harassment was still prevalent in the school. Several studies on gender violence both in Ghana and several other developing countries show that students, especially girls, experience sexual abuse and harassment by male students and male teachers in the school environment (Humphreys, 2008; Leach and Humphreys, 2007; Mirembe and Davies, 2001; Shumba, 2001; Dunne et al 2003; Brown, 2003; Afenyadu and Goparaju, 2003; Leach, et al, 2003; Dunne et al 2006). Girls are particularly at risk of sexual violence and abuse due to the power imbalance between girls and boys. Girls have been socialised in a strong patriarchal Ghanaian culture to be respectful, obedient and submissive to elders, especially men. This accounts for the passive and apathetic attitude that is common among girls which make them lack confidence to resist abusive situations. This behaviour of girls is exploited by some male teachers who lure them into their houses and sexually abuse them. In the following statements, some girls in the interviews admitted that male teachers sometimes ask girls to carry exercise books or other items to their house, ask them to perform certain house chores for them or invite

them for a visit and when they get to the teachers' house they propose to have sex with them.

'Some masters [teachers] would call you after closing and tell you to come to his house in the evening and because he is a master you can't refuse, if you refuse you are in trouble. Sometimes he would do something to you, which you don't like, but you cannot say it. The next day if you see him in class you can't look at his face, you can't pay attention because you are embarrassed; you never expected that from him' (Falila, female student, 19years 08/11/05).

'Some of the male teachers may propose to you, if you don't accept, they would mistreat you, they would be harsh on you at the least offence, so due to that you would not be comfortable in school' (Mary, female student, 17years 08/11/05).

The girls explained that some teachers take undue advantage of the situation and cane girls who have refused to accept their sexual advances unnecessarily. Some female prefects also reported that girls, particularly the form one girls become the target of sexual harassment and offensive sexual jokes by male teachers, prefects and senior boys in the school environment. As one of them mentioned; *'When the form ones come, there is always a rush by the senior students to befriend them'* (Female prefect, 20years 08/11/05). The girls indicated that both male teachers and male students target them for punishment and insults if they refuse to accept sexual proposals from them. For example, they mentioned that *'during examinations no matter how well you perform, they [teachers] would either fail you or give low marks'* and *'they [teachers] ignore and isolate you during lessons'* (Female student, 18years 11/11/05). They complained that male teachers' and boys' aggressive behaviour is a source of worry which makes them lack concentration in the classroom. The following statements from boys were in response to girls' claims of sexual harassment by male teachers and schoolboys in which they suggest that girls deliberately act in ways that draw male teachers' and boys' attention to themselves.

'I want to oppose some of the points that the girls have made. Like the masters [teachers] cannot just see you and call you to his house, some of the girls when they see a master the way they behave makes the master think that the girl is interested in him, and so they go ahead to propose to them or invite them to his house' (Bawa, male student, 19years 19/11/05).

'Some of the girls if they show interest in you and you don't mind them, they would gossip about you, and some of them would come back and tell you about it, and you know, when you hear it you would be frustrated, so the girls too that is what they do' (Mathew, male student, 20years 13/11/05).

The girls denied all these allegations, explaining that sometimes when they try to be courteous to the boys or teachers, they misinterpret their courtesy to mean showing interest in them. This is a clear example of the double standard often set for girls. As indicated earlier, it is culturally expected that girls should be 'polite' towards people in the study area, yet this same attitude when exhibited towards men and boys is often misinterpreted possibly to mean girls are deliberately seeking sexual favours from men. Even if the girls deliberately seek to have sexual relationship with a teacher, he should not encourage it because of the power imbalance between them as well as the adverse consequences for girls.

Most boys confirmed that some of their peers behave in sexually aggressive/assaulting ways towards girls. As James explains *'sometimes the way some boys do play with the girls is not good; they would be touching their buttocks, breast and some other parts which are not good'* (Male student, 21years 10/11/05). Boys in the group discussions also reported that some teachers were in sexual relationships with girls in the school. They said girls engaged in sex with teachers for favours such as extra tuition, award of higher marks in exams, leakage of exam questions and being spared punishment for misconduct. Additionally, both boys and girls agreed that most girls gave in to sex with male teachers and other men in the community due to economic hardships and their desire for money to buy basic necessities such as uniform, books and for school fees.

However, Peter suggested that boys' and girls' desire to engage in sexual relationships could also be attributed to peer group pressure and the belief that having girlfriends or boyfriends is being 'modern' and raising one's ego among peers. He explained:

'In this school there are a lot of lifestyles, here some students think that following girls is being modern, so if you are not interested in girls they make mockery of you, they give you all kinds of nick names like angel Gabriel but we are not here for that, we are here to study' (Male student, 19years 14/11/05).

Boys indicated that there was always peer group pressure on them to assert their masculine identity and having many girlfriends was a way of affirming ones' popularity and authority among their peers. It is rather unfortunate that some students associate having many sexual partners to masculinity, modernity and civilization. Their desire to be famous among their peers often pushes them into unhealthy competition for girls. In some cases, they clash with male teachers who are also seeking to extract sexual favours from the girls which have serious consequences for them. It was also revealed in the group discussions that boys also become the target of ridicule *'if a male teacher befriends a girl and a boy is also a friend to that girl, the teacher would be punishing the boy unnecessarily, thinking that the boy might have sexual interest in the girl'* (Female prefect 08/11/05). In a group discussion some boys said it was not good for male teachers to befriend girls they were supposed to teach and protect in the school. They added that sexual relationships between teachers and girls usually divert the attention of such girls from studies. A recent study by Plan Ghana (2009) indicates that 100% of girls who suffer sexual abuse do not enjoy school again, 73% become afraid of the perpetrator and 58% are unable to concentrate on studies after sexual abuse in school. Sexual abuse has been found to be a very serious issue that clearly impacts negatively on students' physical and mental wellbeing as well as leading to poor performance, poor participation in class, irregular attendance and dropout (Humphreys, 2008; Mirembe and Davies, 2001; Dunne et al., 2005; Dunne, Leach et al., 2003).

Significantly, all teachers interviewed denied the fact that girls were being sexually harassed or abused in the school but most of them said that they had heard or read about instances where schoolgirls have been sexually abused in other schools from the media. All girls in the discussion said they never reported their experience of sexual abuse to school authorities because they were of the view that they would not be taken seriously. Also, girls risked becoming pregnant and contracting sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS. Afenyadu and Goparaju's (2003) study of the sexual health status of 400 students in Ghana found that premarital sexual activity was common among them. Most of them reported being sexually harassed by boys and teachers. 5% of schoolgirls said male teachers had forced sex with them while 14% reported being raped by boys familiar to them. 24% of boys admitted raping girls. Furthermore, 29% of the female adolescents reported that they had been pregnant at some time. Other studies have linked sexual harassment and abuse to the high incidence of unwanted pregnancy, abortion and STI transmission (Meekers and Ahmed, 1999; Jewkes et al. 2001; Human Rights Watch 2001).

6.7 Conclusion

The discussion about the general school environment in Ghana focused on key issues of concern which reinforce gender inequalities and negatively impact on girls' education. This chapter has shown that the study school infrastructure was not sensitive to the needs of girls, for example, the lack of water and inadequate toilet facilities served as a disincentive to their school attendance. The results also reveal a school environment where the daily school practices and activities were defined along gender lines and where male teachers and schoolboys dominated the administration and leadership positions. Thus, teachers were seen enforcing a binary gender system by encouraging students to take on gendered roles such as girls being responsible for sweeping classrooms and offices, perceived as feminine roles.

Furthermore, sexual harassment, corporal punishment and bullying within the school environment were found to create an oppressive and hostile environment for girls in

particular to learn. This situation is worsened by the unprofessional attitudes of teachers such as allowing students to cane their peers, frequent absenteeism and lack of teaching which impact negatively on students' performance. Sexual violence in schools places girls at risk of HIV/AIDS, unwanted pregnancy, abortion and dropping out of school which is the focus of the next chapter. Despite these serious health implications, the schools tend to normalise gender based violence against girls and play down its effects on them. It is also a violation of their human rights and the lack of action to prevent this is an indictment on school authorities and the Ghanaian government.

Chapter 7: Gender Discrimination in the Teaching-Learning Process

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter examined the quality of the school infrastructure in terms of providing a gender friendly environment for effective teaching and learning and the general wellbeing of girls in particular. It also discussed how daily school practices such as students' dresses, cleaning of the school, assemblies, leadership positions and punishment were organised and controlled on gender lines. In this chapter, I investigate the gendered experiences of girls inside the classroom in relation to the teaching-learning process, choice of subject and future aspirations and how these experiences affect their participation in the classroom.

7.2 Unequal attention in the classroom

Several studies have noted that the behaviour and attitudes of teachers influence students' performance and achievements in the classroom (Francis, 2000; Francis, 2000b; Mungai, 2002; Tsouroufli, 2002; Aikman and Unterhalter, 2005; Kakuru, 2006; Magno and Silova, 2007). Therefore the attention teachers give to students in the classroom is of great significance if boys and girls are expected to achieve on equal terms. When teachers were asked whether boys and girls demand equal attention in the classroom, they responded that girls require more attention than boys and gave several reasons why they thought girls should be given special attention. For example, most teachers said that girls have more problems than boys due to their different body compositions which make them menstruate monthly. They explained that girls in their period worry about abdominal disorders and how to keep themselves clean. Girls, they said, also face a greater risk of becoming pregnant and the consequences of dropping out of school, and therefore needed special attention in the form of *'pieces of advice here and there, so as not to fall into teenage pregnancy or be lured into early marriage*

which could affect the progress of their education' (Male teacher 13/11/05). Some of the teachers also stated that girls need more attention than boys because of the heavy workload parents give them at home which makes them tired, sleepy and less active in the classroom. The assistant head teacher also expressed similar opinion about the need for girls to be given special attention in the classroom:

'They demand different attention because, for example, the girls, the problems of girls are more than the problems of the boys. For example, a girl may be in her menses and that alone, depending on how she feels about it, may not be able to come to class which may not be the same with the boy. Secondly, some of the girls are more sensitive to issues than the boys [...] Therefore [...] the girls need special and more closer attention as you deal with them. Sometimes they find it difficult to tell you their problems, you know [...] they are shy to say it and therefore it is when the teacher gets closer to them that, and talk to them privately or separately then you get to know and, when you realise that they need something special you can deal with it. For the boys, some of these problems that I have mentioned they don't have it, they don't face it. The problem that a boy may face is that perhaps he is hungry; he didn't eat before coming to school. This of course may apply to the girls too, but that adds to the girls' problems and that is it' (Male assistant head teacher, 45-50 24/11/05).

Although most teachers acknowledged the fact that girls face many challenges in their experiences of school life in addition to the inequalities they suffer from their families, there was no evidence in my classroom observation to suggest that they specifically encouraged girls to participate in lessons in the classroom. It was observed that most teachers focused more on boys by calling on them more frequently to perform classroom activities than they did to girls. These activities usually involved reading passages from text books or words written on the chalkboard, solving mathematics problems on the chalkboard, answering questions or asking questions about things that were not clear to them. Boys were found to participate actively in lessons by raising up their hands to answer or ask questions and in most cases they shouted out answers to teachers without the teacher's permission to speak. Girls on the other hand, were less

active; occasionally, a few of them volunteered to answer rather than ask questions. Though most students regardless of gender did not show active involvement in the learning process throughout the observation, teachers did less to encourage both girls and boys who were less active in the classroom. They allowed a few boys to dominate the learning process. For example, in an English Literature lesson, the teacher only called on boys who raised up their hands. In another lesson, a male history teacher, after calling on three boys who raised up their hands but could not get the answer correct, pointed at one of the girls and said '*Yes, they say gender equality, girls also contribute*', the girl reluctantly stood up and answered the question correctly. This is an indication of lack of confidence on the part of the girl which can be attributed to the way girls are socialized in the family. The teacher's attitude also suggests he lacks gender awareness skills to encourage girls' classroom participation, hence, failing to understand the ways in which gender is an influencing factor in classroom interactions.

However, in a few classes teachers tried to involve the whole class but most of the boys and girls they called upon often stood up without uttering a word or just said '*No idea*'. The attention teachers give to boys encourages them to participate actively in the classroom while their lack of attention for girls has serious consequences. Several studies have noted that teachers concentrate on boys by involving them in many teaching-learning activities, which gave boys better learning opportunities than girls (Maimbolwa-Sinyangwe and Chilangwa, 1995; Tsouroufli, 2002; Kakuru, 2006; Magno and Silova, 2007). Also, studies in the more developed world where girls achieve the same or surpass boys in education have confirmed the finding that girls tend to receive less attention in class than boys (Spencer, 1982; Stanworth, 1981; Kelly, 1988; Francis, and Skelton, 2005; Francis, 2002).

In mixed group discussions I asked boys and girls whether teachers give students equal opportunities to participate in the teaching-learning and most girls responded that teachers concentrated their attention on boys more than girls. They contended that in most cases teachers ignore them even when they raised their hands. When I probed why they thought teachers involved boys more than girls in classroom participation, they

explained that teachers thought boys gave more sensible answers to questions and asked more reasonable questions than girls. Afia had this to say:

‘When a question is asked and a girl should raise the hand, sometimes they don’t always call the girl; they always call the boys to be answering the questions and that if they call girls, they don’t always ask reasonable questions. Sometimes they concentrate on the boys, especially when it is maths. Most of the girls don’t know maths and the boys are always ahead, During maths lessons teachers get annoyed with girls when they don’t understand and ask questions but because the boys have understood and we the girls don’t understand, he would just tell you to ask a friend’ (Female student, 19years 16/11/05).

When girls were asked why they do not contribute to lessons in the classroom they explained that both teachers and students usually tease and ridicule them when they make mistakes in their attempt to contribute towards lessons. For example, Alima pointed out that:

‘Some of the teachers if they are teaching and what he is teaching is not clear and you ask for more explanation; he would tell you that we the girls don’t pay attention in class, all we do is to think about our boyfriends and that is why we don’t understand anything, and the boys would be laughing at us and that discourages us from asking questions in class even if we don’t understand what the teacher is teaching’ (Female student, 17years 13/11/05) .

Some girls also complained that teachers caned them if they got the answers wrong, hence, their refusal to participate in class for fear of being punished or ridiculed by teachers and male students. There were also complaints of being called names and made fun of by male students in particular when they mispronounce words in class. Though most students reported being ridiculed and sometimes beaten for making mistakes in the classroom, I did not witness any such incidence in all the classes I observed, except in one form three classroom where a boy was asked to stand at the back of the class for

disrupting the lesson. This could be an indication of the influence that my presence had on both students' and teachers' behaviour in the classroom. However, many studies in both developing and developed countries have showed that girls' experiences in the classroom have been characterised by insult, teasing, ridicule and sometimes beatings (Stanworth, 1981; Mungai, 2002; Kakuru, 2006; Dunne et al, 2005). After each class observation I held a discussion with the subject teacher in which most of them denied focusing attention on boys in class and insisted that both boys and girls were given equal chances to participate in lessons but girls simply refused to get involved. By failing to call on girls simply because they did not volunteer suggests that teachers lacked gender sensitive methods in the teaching-learning process to encourage girls' participation. The responses below indicate that teachers seem not to recognise the fact that their attitudes discriminate against girls and could discourage them from participating in lessons in the classroom.

'I don't give them different attention. I give them equal attention because they are my students under my control. I don't see why I should separate them, if I'm giving orders I give to all of them' (Male teacher, 45-50years 18/11/05).

'No, for me I try to treat them equally because I have taught for so long, I can say since 1969 up to now. I've been teaching them and I try to teach them evenly, expecting them all to achieve greater heights in the same area of aspiration' (Male teacher, 55-60 years 16/11/05).

Information gathered from the interviews suggests also that both male teachers and boys blamed girls for their poor participation in the classroom, accusing them of concentrating on their physical appearances, being materialistic and chasing men for money instead of focusing on their studies. Girls on the other hand attributed their poor performance in school to the heavy demand for their time at home which does not give them enough time to study and the general lack of support for their education. Blaming girls instead of understanding the numerous discriminatory practices they face both at home and in school may suggest that teachers are not aware of how their own attitudes

and that of parents' influence students, particularly, girls' behaviour. These attitudes of teachers and male students often discourage girls from being active in the classroom and their coping strategy of not participating usually has negative consequences on their academic performances. Several girls expressed similar views to the following statement made by Jane: *'some teachers encourage us to be serious with our studies; they advise us not follow boys because they would not be able to solve our problems for us and that they would only deceive us'* (female student, 17years 14/11/05). Teachers in my research seem to have the opinion that paying attention to girls in school means advising them on what is good or bad for them. Though, it may be helpful to advise girls on moral issues, the same could be said for boys but this does not seem to happen. Despite the fact that most often it is boys who sexually harass girls they are not seen as the problem. The fact that girls are subject to constant advice is an indication of the higher moral standards expected of them by society. These social expectations exist because of the significance of the Ghanaian notion of the virtuous woman which calls not only for passive obedience but for living up to higher behavioural standards, with no such expectation existing for men and boys. In fact, some of the girls confided in me that they were bored with the constant advice of teachers and female prefects, which in most instances ended up in insults. Whether knowingly or unknowingly, teachers treat girls and boys differently, by allowing boys to dominate classroom participation simply because they volunteered, teachers not only deny girls opportunities to improve their performance and achievements but also opportunities and the confidence to speak and express their ideas (Tsouroufli, 2002; Magno and Silova, 2007).

During discussions and interviews with teachers they were asked to give their views on students' performance in school. The results revealed that most teachers have low expectations for girls, believing that they are intellectually inferior to boys. Male teachers had more positive views about boys' performance and achievements, whereas female teachers tended to have more positive views about girls than boys. The majority of male teachers held the view that boys were academically more intelligent and were more interested in learning than girls. A female teacher who supported the idea that boys generally do better than girls at school suggested a social reason, explaining that boys do better because they tend to have more time than girls at home for studies. She considers that girls may be as clever as boys but their engagement in numerous

household chores impacts negatively on their school performance. The following statements were their views:

‘Traditionally, we expect the boys to perform far better than the girls and coincidentally in this school; the boys are performing far better than the girls in almost all the subjects except may be Home Economics’ (Male teacher, 35-40years, 06/12/05).

‘Indeed, when you look at the trend of the achievement of boys and girls in the class, it’s not very regular in terms of boys attaining high marks than girls attaining low marks. There are a few shining examples of girls who will do well, but generally, I don’t know what should be the factor but you find the boys achieving more than the girls’ (Male teacher, 40-45 years 28/11/05).

‘People think that boys are more intelligent than girls but that is not the case. With my experience in the classroom, it’s not as that, girls are also, they rub shoulders with the boys. But mostly because girls are shy in the classroom, some of them don’t participate actively, but when you go to them and get them open up, they can be intelligent’ (Female teacher, 30-35 13/11/05).

In an interview with the municipal director of education in the study area, she expressed her disappointment at the behaviour of some teachers who, despite the effort to create gender awareness in the classroom, still undermine girls' confidence by comparing them to boys on academic performance.

‘[...] even though we are giving sensitisation, but we still have some teachers thinking that a girl cannot really perform as much as the boy. We get this through comments that they make, that even a girl too, you have allowed a girl to pass you in exams, I mean, why this statement? Even a girl too, I think this statement discourages a girl. It makes the girl think that yes, even if she is bright she cannot surpass the boy in academic work which is very wrong, very very wrong’ (Female municipal director of education, 50-55 years 24/11/05).

On the general school performance in the various programmes they indicated that the school performed well in home economics and that it was the second highest programme after the Arts programme, which gave the school excellent results at the final West Africa Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE). According to the assistant head teacher boys at the technical department do not achieve good results and attributed their poor performance to the technical nature of the subjects and lack of adequate facilities at the technical workshop. Thus, the poor performance of boys in the technical programme was blamed on the technical nature of the subjects and not on boys' ability. Even though, teachers confirmed that girls' achievements in the home economics programme was better than boys' achievement in the Technical programme they did not perceive them as equally intelligent. Many teachers and parents not only believe that girls are academically less intelligent than boys, they also believe that girls are less interested in academic issues and more interested in unrelated issues like their physical appearance. Past studies reveal a widely held prejudice among teachers that boys are more intelligent than girls, and that girls were only able to do well by working extremely hard (Maimbolwa-Sinyangwe, and Chilangwa, 1995; Colclough et al, 2000; Lackland, and De Lisi, 2001; Magno et al., 2003). For example, Colclough et al.'s (2000) study on teachers' attitudes towards students in schools in Ethiopia and Guinea show that teachers were more positive in general about the participation, interest and intelligence of boys rather than girls in schools.

7.3 The influence of gender on students' choices of subjects

I have emphasized in Chapter Four that the present gender inequality in the Ghanaian education system and curriculum is derived from the early education introduced by the British colonial government whose aim was to educate girls to be good mothers and wives rather than training them for careers outside the home (Prah, 2002). As will be shown in this section, five decades after independence and the Ghanaian educational system still channel girls towards subjects or careers that are perceived to complement their roles as mothers and wives.

As a secondary technical institution, the study school runs programmes mainly in Home Economics and Technical subjects. The home economics programme involves subjects such as clothing and textiles (dress making), food and nutrition (cooking) and management in living. The technical programme includes subjects like woodwork, metalwork and building and construction. The school also admits a few students for a general Arts programme which includes English literature, religious studies, history, geography, economics, French and Dagaari (the local language). All senior high school (SHS) students, irrespective of the programme they pursue, take core subjects which are mathematics, integrated science, social studies, and English. Overall, students are supposed to present eight subjects for the final West Africa Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE). Evidence from the interviews suggests that female students chose English, social studies, economics, biology, religious studies, and home economics (cooking, dress making, management in living) as their favourite subjects. On the other hand, boys' favourite subjects were mathematics, science, geography, economics, agriculture and technical subjects (building and construction, woodwork (carpentry) and metalwork). In a group discussion girls complained that mathematics and science were more difficult, involved a lot of calculations and were less interesting than the home economics and arts subjects, while the technical subjects, they said, were male centred and demanded physical strength and thus they tended to avoid them. Traditionally, mathematics, science, and technical courses, have been perceived as masculine subjects and are associated with high status and income, while the general arts and the vocational subjects such as home economics have been constructed as feminine subjects and are associated with low-status occupations and income (Harris, 1999; Baryeh et al, 2000; Prah, 2002; Francis, 2002). These findings are supported by a number of studies in both developed and developing countries which show that girls are concentrated in subjects leading towards careers in sectors such as education and health, whereas boys dominate in science, maths and technical courses related to engineering, medicine and architecture (Harris, 1999; Baryeh et al, 2000; Prah, 2002; Francis, 2002; Magno et al., 2002).

In the maths and science department teachers, particularly male teachers pointed out that *'most girls, except a few daring ones don't want to go in for maths and science for the fear of the calculations aspect involved in them'* (Male assistant head teacher, 45-50

years 24/11/05). However, one teacher acknowledged that generally, mathematics and science are problems with both sexes in the school, but emphasized that girls show more dislike for mathematics than some boys do. The following excerpts were in response to a question as to why students, especially girls find mathematics and science difficult and less interesting:

'The fear is from the background. If the foundation were not solidly laid definitely it would affect the candidate throughout his or her life. On the other hand, if teaching is not properly done, then that can also be the cause. Sometimes a teacher's attitude can demoralize a student's interest in a subject. So, a teacher's attitude can discourage a girl, you see, sometimes it is wrong to tell a student that you will fail' (Male teacher, 45-50 18/11/05).

'Indeed, it may probably stem from the fact that certain subjects are not well introduced to students from the beginning. I don't want to use the IQ to argue this point, no, far from that, but it is really that sometimes our home situations also make us not get well introduced to certain subjects' (Male teacher, 40-45 28/11/05).

Both teachers and students complained about the way that science and maths were taught in school and felt that many teachers were not properly trained, had a weak subject knowledge base and lacked the motivation necessary to teach these subjects effectively. It is therefore possible that the fear that students, particularly girls, ascribe to mathematics and science may arise out of the perceived difficulty of teachers in teaching it, particularly where schools lack the laboratories and resources needed to teach properly. Several studies have shown that much of the problem with mathematics and science lies in the way they are taught. Teaching usually places emphasis on the abstract aspects of the subject, which may seem easier to teach but which the students often find boring (Harris, 1999; Kitetu, nd; Baryeh et al, 2000; Francis, 2002). Some teachers also ascribed the phobia girls have for maths to the home situation where girls are confined to the kitchen while boys are allowed to explore their environment and indulge in activities that enhance their understanding of maths and science. In his address to the Ghana mathematics society (GMS) Anku (2009) called on teachers to

make maths teaching livelier to enable students to enjoy learning mathematics. He also urged mathematics teachers to demonstrate the connection of mathematics to every facet of life to remove the myth surrounding its learning in the country. The only female mathematics teacher on her part attributed girls' lack of interest in mathematics to societal perception about the subject:

'Some girls are very good in maths but I believe it is the perception, it is the perception people have about maths. Generally people think that maths is difficult and should be for boys, because of that girls shy away from the subject. I see that they all have the ability but as I said, it is the societal perception. You see everything you do it is the interest that makes you put in efforts. But because the society has already created the impression that maths is difficult and should be for boys, the girls also relax...the interest is not there, they don't put in any efforts, and they think they cannot do it so there is no need trying. If they had interest and put in the efforts they could do it' (Female Mathematics teacher, 30-35 years 28/11/05).

Girls live in a situation where they are considered less competent than boys in mathematics, science and technical fields. Teachers and girls themselves do not believe that they are capable of pursuing these subjects. There are often, therefore, deliberate and unintended efforts to discourage girls' participation in these subjects both from home and school. Effah (2003) and Prah (2000), report of a wide gender gap in female representation in mathematics and science programmes in Ghanaian tertiary institutions. In the 1999/2000 academic year the University of Cape Coast admitted 696 students for its Science programme, out of this number only 116 (17%) were girls while the remaining 580 (83%) were boys (Prah, 2000). The phobia for mathematics and science leads to women and girls taking fewer courses in maths and science, which leads to a few girls found in these areas at higher academic levels and acquiring high status careers in society (Croft, 2000). The recent high achievement of girls in maths and science in some developed countries such as the UK and America (Francis and Skelton 2005; Smulyan, 2004) indicate that girls everywhere can equally do well in science and mathematics, if conditions are conducive and the necessary support is given.

In the home economics department there were only two boys undertaking the home economics programme while the technical department had only one girl who, as the wood work teacher explained in our discussion, was wrongly placed in wood work by the new computerized school selection placement system (CSSPS) (which will be discussed later). All the three female teachers in the home economics department lamented the lack of interest boys have in the vocational subjects. The head of the home economics department indicated that boys do not like the vocational programme because they believe it is a feminine subject and a few of them who take it are often teased by their peers. She attributed the gender segregation in the subject choice to the socio-cultural background of the study area. She explained that because it is the cultural belief of the people that *'the place of the woman is the home and the kitchen'* (Female teacher, 50-55years 12/11/05), they perceive home economics subjects to revolve around traditional feminine chores like cooking, cleaning and sewing which they perceive as inappropriate for boys to do. Two of the home economics teachers explained that:

'The boys don't like doing it [home economics], they feel it is a girls' course'. But I personally, I feel it is for everybody because in the university some male lecturers taught us home economics and they were very good. So I think a course like this should be open to everybody, both male and female. Down south, [southern Ghana] the boys are doing home economics but here, you know our background, our northern background, even in our houses the boys don't cook, they don't do anything, they don't sweep, but in the home economics class these activities are there for them to perform. When the other boys see them in the home economics class which they perceive to be female course they laugh at them. Just recently, we have a girl doing technical and she not happy about it' (Female teacher, 50-55years 12/11/05).

'We teachers find problems with the boys in the home science class. Because the interest is not there, they don't pay attention and they try to cause problems,

they don't go for practical lessons, it makes the teaching difficult and they don't participate effectively in the teaching' (Female teacher, 45-50years 12/11/05).

In an interview with the only girl in the technical programme she gave two reasons why she was not comfortable with the course. First, she said boys laughed at her anytime the teacher asked her to undertake a task during practical lessons. Second, she said she had not seen or heard of any female undertaking wood work or a technical programme as a course of study. She was therefore reluctant to cross the boundaries to accept woodwork which she perceived traditionally as men's work because to do so calls her identity and sexuality into question. There is the need for female role models in subjects or careers perceived traditionally as masculine to motivate girls to cross over to accept them. This also applies to the boys too. The school could also consider making the technical and home economic programme compulsory for all as is done at the junior secondary school level where both girls and boys study the same subjects.

Information gathered from the study shows that students' choice of subject was strongly influenced by their occupational expectations. For example, *'I want to do law after school that is why I chose general Arts'*, *'Since from my childhood I had always wanted to be a community health nurse that is why I chose home economics , with the biology I can go into nursing'* (Female students 16/11/05). Beside the occupational interest there were other factors that influenced students' choices of subject. The prospect of being self employed after their studies was one of the reasons many girls and boys gave for choosing home economics and technical programmes respectively. For example, *'I chose Technical so that I can become self employed after school and be on my own and not depend on anybody'* (interview with male students 17/11/05), *'I chose food and nutrition so that I can be self-employed since we learn about food and nutrition I can prepare some food and sell'* (Female students 16/11/05). Additionally, in the home economics department where I observed and interviewed some girls, most of them pointed out that the cost of the various courses were an influential factor in their choices. This view was equally shared by some students in the arts department who had wanted to take science but avoided it because their parents could not afford the high fees associated with it. Similarly, most boys at the technical department preferred woodwork

to metalwork due to the high costs involved in carrying out practical lessons in metalwork. Schools in Ghana often charge subject-specific fees for practical subjects. This amount is intended to be used for purchasing raw materials for practical work. Generally, because technical, vocational and science programmes are practical-intensive, they tend to charge higher subject-specific fees than general arts. This was the case for most students from poor family background. Abiba taking a home economics course explained:

'I looked at my background before choosing my course, like food and nutrition like this; it involves buying many things such as cooking utensils, ingredients and other things but with clothing and textile we don't buy many things. If your parents are not rich they cannot afford to pay more money for your education. That is why I considered that and I chose clothing and textile' (Female student, 18years 15/11/05).

The effect of family background on the choice of subject was significant in that those whose parents could not afford the high fees charged for practical lessons had to go in for programmes that cost lower. Girls are particularly disadvantaged when it comes to the cost of education because of the lower value parents place on girls' education in the research area.

Some students' responses in the interviews show that teachers systematically discriminate against girls according to what they perceive as appropriate subjects for boys and girls. For example, one of the girls reported that; *'When I first came here I didn't know much about these courses and I wanted to offer general arts (GA) but the Senior House Master advised me to do home economics (HE), he said that is good for me'* (Female student 16/11/05). Another important influencing factor of students' choice of subject mentioned earlier in this chapter is the male and female teachers' concentration in particular subject areas, for example, there were neither male nor female teachers in the technical and home economics departments respectively. Students may therefore choose a subject on the basis of what they believe is appropriate

for their gender resulting in gender difference in students' choice of subject. However, there were some students who said they were forced to change their choice of subjects when they realised that the school was not offering the subjects they had wanted to do. Kwabena, for example said:

'Actually my best subject was auto mechanics but after my Junior Secondary School my application came to this school and when I came in I wanted to do auto mechanics, but this school they are not offering it so I was forced to divert my course to General Arts, but it is an interesting course alright' (Male student 18years, 19/11/05).

The above statement suggests that some students did not receive adequate information on which secondary school they could go to, to pursue the subjects or programmes of their interest. Guidance and counselling now forms part of Ghana's teacher training education but teachers scarcely offer proper services to students. In the research school, the senior house mistress and the senior house master were responsible for providing students with guidance and counselling services on various issues but neither of them had specialist training in that respect. Also, due to the imbalanced power relations students may find it difficult to approach teachers for help. There were suggestions by teachers for an improvement in the guidance and counselling services offered to students at the JHS level where students select the courses they want to pursue at the SHS level so that students can make better informed choices. All the above evidence shows that students' choices are the result of expectations of parents and teachers as well as their relations, peers and Ghanaian society in general, about appropriate roles for men and women.

When teachers were asked what part they play in the choice of students' subject, they contended that they did not have any influence in the choice of students' programme of studies at the secondary school level because students already chose their courses or programmes at the Junior High School (JHS) before they even write their final Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) examination for selection into senior

secondary. However, at the senior high school there are subjects listed under each programme as electives and students are expected to choose three or four subjects, in addition to the four compulsory ones mentioned earlier. Therefore, teachers' involvement tended to be in a form of orientation, aimed at guiding students to choose the right subject combination and to discuss the job opportunities available for their course of study. The current selection process into the various programmes at the secondary school level, according to the teachers, is done at the national level by the new computerized school selection placement system (CSSPS). As one of the teachers explained:

'The administration does it, and more so now with the new computerised system, nobody has that influence. Here, it would be difficult to play any part because the subjects are already chosen at the JSS [junior secondary school] level before they come here. At the JSS level they can be guided to choose the subjects and the school' (Female teacher, 40-45years 14/11/05).

As the teachers explained, they used to play a role in the previous manual system of selection and placement of BECE graduates to Senior Secondary Schools or Technical Institutions where students could change their course of study after gaining admission into a SHS. However, due to a number of problems characterized by the old system which included parents and guardians travelling from school to school in search of placement for their wards and the under enrolment and over enrolment in rural and urban schools respectively, the government introduced the CSSPS which is a centralized selection process which places students in schools according to merit to ensure fairness. It was, therefore, the new CSSPS that placed the female student in the technical programme which the teachers thought was a mistake because they perceived technical as a masculine subject and therefore inappropriate for the girl. Hence, there was no effort on the part of the teachers to persuade the girl to accept the wood work. At the time of my survey at the study school, efforts were being made by the head teacher to have the girl transferred from the technical programme to the home economics department. It is important for teachers to encourage boys and girls to pursue subjects perceived inappropriate for their gender. Even though teachers claimed their

influence was minimal, evidence proves that they continue to channel girls towards the arts and home economics subjects while boys are directed towards the scientific, mathematics and technical subjects which in turn leads boys and girls to gender differentiated career paths after school, with girls being concentrated in lower incomes and lower status jobs which contribute to their subordinate position within families and society as a whole. These findings are consistent with similar studies conducted in the UK by Clisby et al, (2007), Smulyan, (2004) and Francis, (2002).

7.4 Gender and occupational aspirations

Data collected from students in the study indicate that most female students chose professions that are viewed as feminine in Ghanaian society. Most girls opted for nursing, catering and petty trading. The reasons for their choices reflected the expectations and assumptions of girls and women's role in society, such as offering services and caring for others: *'I want to become a nurse so that I can help people'*, *'I like to be a nurse so that I can help my parents at the village'* (Female students 16/11/05). When probed further as to why they did not want to be doctors, they replied: *'Okay, as a girl I think nursing is good for us'*, *'If you want to be a doctor, you may end up not succeeding because it takes a long time to finish'*, *'I prefer the lady's own, nursing to doctor [Laughs] because most at times doctor is for men and nurse is for ladies'* (Female students 16/11/05). Among the girls, a career in medicine was the most popular choice, but not necessarily as a doctor. A few girls however, showed interest in other careers such as being a journalist, a lawyer and a fire officer. The majority of the male students on the other hand were interested in becoming medical doctors, engineers, lawyers, architects, police and army officers. Responding to my question as to what they would like to be in future, some of them said:

'I would like to be an architect. In fact I have a friend who is an engineer so he is my role model. I do normally ask him questions about the course and he told me that if I do technical course I can become an architect so when I came to this

school I decided to do building and construction which can lead me to an architecture course at the university’ (James, male student, 21years 11/11/05).

‘For me I’m basing my plan on three places so that if one does not hold I would go to the other. The first one is I’m planning to join the army after secondary school as my father is an army officer. If I don’t get the army I will go to the polytechnic or the university to do mathematics and, become an engineer in future’ (Paul, male student, 20years 14/11/05).

Responses received from boys show that most of them had great ambitions for the future and were more confident in what they wanted to do after school than girls who as a result of their social conditioning and the job opportunities available for them, have lower aspirations for their future. Smulyan (2004) suggests that most women and girls shun careers in science and mathematics because of the worry that they might be too old to marry by the time they complete the long training periods usually associated with such professions. Interestingly, none of the students wanted to be a teacher. Though, teaching is considered a relatively feminine occupation, no girl opted for it and the reasons were that of poor remuneration and the low status of teachers compared to women working in the health sector and other occupations. This does not augur well for future educational development in Ghana. The overall effect of the differential treatments girls experience from both parents and teachers is reflected in their chosen occupations. The gender inequalities identified in the households and schools tend to limit girls’ occupational choices.

Teachers’ expectations of student’s career choices were also gender biased. It was the expectation of most male and female teachers that girls go into professions viewed as feminine while boys go into those considered masculine. The following excerpts were captured from teachers’ interviews.

'OK, girls as being mothers, I think that they should go into occupations or careers like nursing, teaching, then vocational work because this will help them to plan the home well' (Female teacher, 50-55years 16/11/05).

'It is my expectation that the boys should always take up very good and responsible positions such as teaching, medical doctor, engineer, pilot and law because we believe that these fields are so hectic and it is the believe that it is only boys who can do that better, because the chance of boys succeeding is greater than girls' (Male teacher, 35-40 years 07/11/05).

Teachers saw boys' and girls' occupational potential differently, appropriate careers for boys were those that were high status and well-paid, such as doctor, pilot, a politician or soldier whereas low income jobs such as nursing, teaching, nutritionist, cateress, hairdresser or secretary were seen as more appropriate for girls. One of the female teachers even viewed marriage as a career for girls. She suggested that girls who were less academically inclined could go into marriage. Most teachers and parents thought that girls could not go into jobs such as metalworker, carpenter, doctor, lawyer, or piloting which require technical skills because they thought that girls were not brave and strong enough to take up these jobs they considered masculine. They expected girls to go into careers that would help them in their expected future roles as housewives and mothers. These views often arise from deeply held socio-cultural beliefs and perceptions in the society. Students' choices therefore are a reflection of their desire to identify themselves with the presumed gender appropriate careers.

Analysis of students interviews show that their occupational choices had been influenced by teachers, parents, siblings, friends and other relatives. A few students also indicated that they had developed a strong interest in their career since childhood. However, the majority of students said the practical aspects of the vocational and technical subjects influenced their decision on career choices because they believed the practical skills acquired would make them self sufficient to establish small businesses. It seemed, therefore, that students were aware that the dwindling Ghanaian public sector

which employs about 18% of the population may not be able to offer them employment (Ghana Statistical Service, 2005). It was also the view of teachers that students in the Home Economics and Technical programmes would be able to establish independent enterprises if they took their practical lessons seriously. Students' career aspirations are also strongly influenced by expectations of what opportunities are likely to be on offer in the labour market. Teachers' and parents' expectations also channel boys and girls into occupations that are deemed appropriate for their sexes. This expectation goes beyond the borders of Ghana. For example, recent studies in the United States and the United Kingdom indicate that though many girls now choose a wider range of professional jobs, requiring higher qualifications than in the past and even outperform boys in schools, they are still concentrated in the arts and traditional female jobs while men dominate the sciences and masculine occupations due to cultural beliefs and institutional barriers (Smulyan, 2004; Francis, 2002; Clisby et al, 2007).

7.5 Conclusion

Within the classroom, girls received less attention in the teaching-learning process due to the low expectations teachers have about their academic abilities whereas boys' active participation was encouraged because of the higher expectations for their success. These classroom discriminatory practices of teachers limit the academic potential of girls. It is clear also from the discussion that girls were encouraged to choose subjects and careers that corresponded with society's expectations of their future roles as wives and mothers. For example, when a girl was selected for woodwork, which was perceived as inappropriate for her gender, all efforts were made by the school to put her in home economics where they (and she) thought she belonged. Girls' choice of home economics, biology and the arts leads to 'feminine' careers in education and the care professions which are accorded lower status and salaries than those careers and occupations deemed 'masculine'. Boys on the other hand dominated the science, mathematics and technical, leading to higher incomes and professional careers which position them in high statuses in society.

Chapter 8: Factors Affecting Female Dropout Rates in School

8.1 Introduction

In the last three chapters, I explored the differential treatment girls experience both at home and in school, resulting in the persistence of gender inequality in the Ghanaian educational system. The household situation looked at the unequal distribution of household chores, the low value placed on the girls' education as a result of their perceived future roles as mothers and wives, as well as the persistent traditional customs that are biased against girls and women in general which restrict educational access for girls. The school context examined the gendered social practices within the school where teachers encourage students to undertake gendered activities and allow boys to dominate the learning process within the classroom, all of which impacts negatively on girls' participation in education. The school based factors may work together with wider socio-cultural and economic factors to influence retention and dropout of students, especially girls. As indicated earlier in my methodological chapter, dropout emerged as a major theme in my interviews with teachers, educational officials and parents in my first fieldwork which encouraged me to embark on a second period of fieldwork. This chapter therefore focuses on the life history interviews I had with school dropouts themselves (20 females and 10 males) in my second field work period to explore reasons for dropping out. By understanding dropouts further, there will be greater potential to formulate appropriate strategies to address the dropout problem and to improve access and retention.

As mentioned earlier in previous chapters, the Government of Ghana has put in place several educational reforms and introduced new policy interventions in its effort to achieve Universal Primary Education (MDG 2) by ensuring that by 2015, both boys and girls will have access to primary education. These policy interventions and initiatives (as discussed later in chapter 9) led to considerable increases in total Gross Enrolment Rates (GER) in primary education from 74% in 1991/92 to 86.5% in 2003/2004 and then to 92.1% in 2005/2006 nationwide, exceeding even the Ghana Poverty Reduction

Strategy (GPRS II) target of 90.9% in 2006. In the same period the GER for boys rose from 89.5 to 95.3 while the GER for girls rose from 83.1 to 88.8 (MoES, 2006). Primary net enrolment rate which represents the number children enrolled in schools as proportion of total number of children in the relevant age groups also increased from 45.2% in 1991/92 to 69.2% in 2005/06 (MoES, 2006). Available provisional data shows an improvement of the Gender Parity Index (GPI) a measure of the level of girls' participation in education which also increased from 0.93 in 2003 to 0.95 in 2006.

However, despite recording remarkable progress, the overall increase in school enrolment has not been able to meet the MDG target of achieving gender parity by 2005 (UNICEF, 2007). The educational system in Ghana is challenged by problems of late entry, grade repetition, and early dropout (UNESCO, 2003). Many children who enrol in school do not complete the last grade of primary school. Ministry of Education data reveal that of the 75% of school children who attend school, 25% drop out before completing the first six years of basic education, and another 20% drop out after completing the nine years of basic education (Care International, 2003). Nationally, the repetition rate was 6.0% and that of dropout was 3.2% in 2006 (Akyeampong et al, 2007). They are often forced out of school prematurely for one reason or another. The dropout rate tends to be higher for girls than boys, for example, girls' enrolment in the study school was less than half the enrolment of boys, yet between the periods 1999 and 2005 a total number of nine girls dropped out of school while that of boys was only two. As a result, school dropout has become a major concern of the education system, especially at the primary school level where parents' financial responsibility is less. There is, therefore, the need to identify the factors responsible for the drop out of children in the research area.

8.2 Gender, poverty and school dropout

Through life histories of school dropouts and interviews with educational officials several factors such poverty, pregnancy, low academic performance, death of parents and divorce were identified as reasons why most students, particularly girls, drop out of

school in the study district. As will become apparent throughout this chapter, drop out is not caused by one single event but by a range of interacting factors. Though none of the school dropouts interviewed mentioned gender as an influencing factor, my analysis of their narratives indicates that gender intersects with a wide range of these factors that lead to their drop out. Despite the fact that the dropouts were randomly selected, most turned out to be Junior High School (JHS) dropouts which suggests that it is at this stage most girls are taken out of school to assist with household chores and supplement family income. The majority of school dropouts mentioned lack of financial support from parents or relatives as the main reason for dropping out of school. The following excerpts from two female school dropouts indicate that they left school due to their parents' inability to pay for their school expenses.

'[...] My father did not have money to support me to complete and I could not get help from any relative. After dropping out in form one in 2003 I stayed with an aunt as a house help to earn money' (Memuna, female dropout, 22 years 16-01-07).

'[...] My parents were supportive of my education but later on money became a problem for them and they could no longer support me so I had to withdraw in 2003 in my third year' (Amina, female dropout, 20 years 19-01-07).

Most school dropouts reported that their parents were largely subsistence farmers who depended on crop cultivation and animal rearing for food production and income. Many parents therefore, could not earn enough income to pay for their children's education. Interviews with teachers and officials threw further light on the issue of the parents' inability to provide for the educational needs of their children. One of the Girls' Education Officials vividly described the poverty situation in my research area as follows:

'You know our problem in the three northern regions. Our problem is poverty in reference to food because we have one rainy season. Therefore, our feeding depends on the weather. It is one crop for the whole year so in the twelve months

if the harvest is poor it means that we are going to be hungry all through the year. Another reason is the geographical factor; some years the rains are fine so we have good harvest, some years the rains are poor or too heavy, we have poor harvest. When we do not get good harvest, we have a problem. Because it is from the same crops that parents will sell and feed themselves, take care of the family problems and buy uniforms. Therefore, that is why the three northern regions have the problem' (Female regional girls' education officer, 50-55years 02-11-05).

She explained that parents' livelihoods are threatened by long dry seasons in the three northern regions and most households found it extremely difficult to provide for the basic needs of their families as well as meet the financial obligations towards their children's education. With poor agricultural produce parents are unable to earn enough income to keep their children in school as they progress through the educational system and as the cost of education becomes expensive. Poor parents are particularly affected by the direct and indirect costs of education. Direct costs refer to what parents are expected to spend directly on educating their children such as school fees, uniforms, food, transportation, pocket money, and learning materials while indirect costs are the opportunity costs which are defined in terms of the loss of children's income or work contribution to households as a result of attending school (Patrinos and Psacharopoulos, 1995). The opportunity cost of schooling tends to be higher for girls than for boys due to their multiple roles within the household. In the event of financial difficulties most poor parents tend to depend on their children's labour. Many poor children in Ghana normally combine schooling with income generating activities in order to contribute to family income. Students, who combined work with school, were likely to be regular latecomers and have irregular school attendance, leading to drop out. Girls enrolled in school are therefore more likely than boys to be withdrawn from school to assist their mothers with general domestic tasks and income activities. Household poverty therefore has more negative effects on girls' school retention than boys'. These findings are supported by Amin et al's (2005) study on factors that discourage Bangladeshi children from attending school. The authors found that school children contributed as much as one third of household income through market work and household work and that work tends to be a deterrent to schooling. A number of past studies also emphasized the link

between poverty and dropping out from school, revealing that high cost of schooling is one of the most important causes of non-attendance and early drop out (Okumu et al, 2008; Swainson et al, 1998, Patrinos and Psacharopoulos, 1995; Boakye et al 1997; Colclough et al, 2000; Otu-Danquah, 2004; Ministry of Education, 1995; UNESCO 2001).

8.3 Pregnancy, poverty and school dropout

The issue of teenage pregnancy has been highlighted in the literature (chapter three) as well as in my discussions in chapter six. Teachers and education officials frequently mentioned the issue of teenage pregnancy as a major social problem and a great threat to the promotion of girls' education in the study area. The majority of schoolgirl dropouts also reported that they dropped out at the Junior High Secondary school (JHS) level due to pregnancy. Only two schoolgirls dropped out at the Senior High Secondary school (SHS) as a result of pregnancy. The following are excerpts from two pregnancy related school dropouts.

'I became pregnant and dropped out of school when I was in JSS 3 in 2002 and decided to marry the man and we now have two kids. My parents were in fact very annoyed with me when I became pregnant. I regret my action now. I wished I had concentrated on my education because I have now realized that education can make one's life better. With this awareness, I will do well to invest in my children's education, especially the girls because they have sympathy for parents. I am now a pito brewer. I hope to expand my trade if I get some financial assistance; and save money towards my children's education' (Martha, female dropout, 20 years 12-01-07).

'I went to Wa secondary Technical school but dropped out in form two due to pregnancy in 2005. I did home economics. Even though I did not stop school due to lack of finance, my parents did not find it easy getting all my needs for school' (Lydia, female dropout, 19 years, 06-01-07).

Girls' Education Officers pointed out in interviews that most schoolgirls end their schooling before reaching SHS and thus rarely have opportunities for higher education. They indicated that the high rate of schoolgirl pregnancy in the study area is one of the reasons for the low transition from JHS to SHS level. They also added that as a result of the prevalence of teenage pregnancy in the study area most parents felt that it is not worth investing in their daughters' education even if they are aware of the benefits of educating their girls. Additionally, in conversation with most respondents, they attributed the high incidence of teenage pregnancy to men's and boys' promiscuous behaviour, such as the numerous rape and defilement cases reported by the educational officials. All the pregnancy related schoolgirl dropouts said that their families were in economic difficulties and could not provide them with essential necessities such as learning materials, clothes and pocket money for school. Their survival strategy was to turn to men for support to allow them to continue their education. Other studies in Ghana by USAID (2004) and Ankomah (1996, 1999) revealed that some parents who are unable to procure school materials for their daughters encourage them to engage in sexual relationships with rich men in order to get money for their educational needs, which often results in pregnancy. Girls from poor economic backgrounds who are responsible for their own educational costs are often exposed to threats of sexual exploitation with high risk of pregnancy, early marriage and dropping out of school. These findings correspond with that of Stephen (2000), who suggests that it is poverty that leads to the circumstances in which girls become pregnant and not some 'moral weakness' on their part. While pregnancy may appear to be a biological issue, institutional and structural discriminatory practices both within the school and home, such as sexual harassment, normative gender roles and expectations, and traditional practices such as early and forced marriages highlighted in previous chapters, also contribute to the high rate of pregnancies among girls. These findings corroborate other studies that related schoolgirl pregnancy to structural barriers such as the socio-cultural and economic situations, parental influence and school practices and policies (Grant and Hallman, 2006; Hallman, 2004; Mensch, 2001; Meekers and Ahmed, 1999; Kaufman et al., 2001).

The high incidence of teenage pregnancy among schoolgirls suggests that sex education in schools and the numerous sex education campaigns given through non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and gender advocacy groups are inadequate and ineffective. As I have highlighted in the literature, sex education tends to focus on sexual abstinence and the dangers of sex rather than how to practice safe sex and birth control. Many parents and even some teachers believe that contraceptive knowledge encourages the youth to indulge in promiscuity, as such they tend to resist sex and reproductive health education within schools and the communities. With very limited access to vital information on sexual and reproductive health, including HIV/AIDS, both at home and in the schools, schoolgirls rely heavily on potentially inaccurate or harmful information about sex from peers, the media and the internet and as a result are exposed to the risks of pregnancy and other sexually transmitted diseases. My observation was that nearly all the pregnancies of the girls were unplanned or unexpected. Although all the girls who dropped out as a result of pregnancy said they knew about contraceptives, they failed to make any conscious effort to prevent the unwanted pregnancy, the reasons being that they were reluctant to buy contraceptives from the chemist shop because they didn't want to be dubbed as promiscuous (as sexual intercourse is considered illegitimate outside marriage in Ghana) and the cost of contraceptives was an inhibiting factor. Similar findings were made by Awusabo et al's (2004) and Hallman's (2004) studies on adolescent sexual and reproductive health in southern Ghana and South Africa respectively. The authors suggested that low contraceptive usage among adolescents was because most of their sexual activities were unplanned. They also indicated that many girls were not comfortable obtaining contraceptives from the chemist shop or talking about their sexuality with their partners. In Ghana, pregnant schoolgirls do not have the opportunity for abortion because abortion is not freely available and society disapproves of it. Abortion is only legally permitted on the grounds of rape and incest or if a doctor can prove that having the baby would harm the woman's mental or physical health or there is a high risk that the baby would be seriously disabled (Adanu et al, 2005; Morhee and Morhee, 2006; Cook and Dickens, 1981). Consequently, most women and girls resort to unconventional means to terminate unwanted pregnancies. Unsafe abortion has been noted as one of the major cause of death among young girls in Ghana (Ahiadeke, 2001; Ampofo, 1970).

Commenting on the Ghana Education policy on schoolgirl pregnancy in Ghana, the Municipal Director of Education stated that, until recently, schoolgirls who became pregnant were either dismissed from school or they voluntarily withdrew from school with no chance of returning to school after delivery. The policy, she said, has now been amended to allow pregnant schoolgirls to temporarily withdraw from school and return to school to continue their education after weaning their babies.

‘The policy now is that when a girl gets into the family way along the line, she can go and deliver and come back to school, hither too that was not the case. The girl will get pregnant, drop out, deliver and that ended her education. Now, the policy is that when you are pregnant, go home, deliver and come back and continue with your education, so all such measures would bring about gender equity in education (Female Municipal Director of Education, 45-50years 25-11-05).

The policy also requires schoolboys implicated in schoolgirl’s pregnancy to temporarily withdraw from school for a specified period but this is not often enforced. Hence, in practice the policy only affects girls, meaning dropout for girls is much higher than for boys as a consequence of pregnancy. The education official however revealed that, despite the new policy only a few girls return to continue their education due to school and community resistance to the re- admission of schoolgirl mothers. Many pregnant girls, she noted, still withdraw from school the moment their pregnancies becomes visible because they are often ridiculed by their peers in school and members in their community and shamed into dropping out. The failure of many schoolgirl mothers to return to school seems to suggest that adequate support services such as baby-care facilities and financial support are lacking in both the community and school to encourage their return to school. The discriminatory practice of dismissing pregnant girls from schools dates back to the British colonial era where most African schools were run by Christian missionaries who considered pre-marital pregnancy as immoral and schoolgirls who became pregnant were forcibly dismissed (Chilisa, 2002). Moreover, this dismissal policy is supported by the traditional beliefs in the study area which view pregnancy outside marriage as shameful and illegitimate. As a result, some

pregnant schoolgirls seek marriage, or are compelled to get married by their parents, as a way of making the pregnancy and childbirth legitimate. Other studies on schoolgirls' pregnancies found only a few successful cases of girl mothers who returned to school after delivery (Njau and Wamahiu, 1996; Chilisa, 2002; Dunne et al, 2006; Yakin Ertürk, 2008). For example, Chilisa (2002) observes that in Botswana and Ivory Coast where the new policy allows schoolgirl mothers to return to school there were less than 20% and 30% successful cases respectively. While evidence in Kenya also shows that less than 10% return to school (Njau and Wamahiu, 1996). The action of the educational institution to dismiss pregnant schoolgirls is a violation of their fundamental human rights since it restricts their access to education. Facilitating schoolgirls who get pregnant to continue with their education is one of the strategies to give girls and boys equal opportunity to educational access and participation.

8.4 Poor Academic Performance and Dropout

Several studies in developing countries as well as Ghana associate the poor academic performance of students with the low quality of schools, particularly in rural and some poor urban areas (Akuffo, 1987; Ngau and Wamahiu, 1996; Gachukia, 2004; Pryor & Ampiah, 2003; Etsey, 2005). My analysis of the life histories of school dropouts shows that some of them left school because they lost interest in schooling as a result of their poor performance. Some of them were asked to withdraw after they had repeatedly failed to meet the minimum required academic standards of their respective schools while others dropped out because they were made to repeat their class or grade for failure to master the curriculum for promotion to the next grade. Though grade repetition or withdrawal is not an official policy in the Ghanaian educational system, it is quite common for teachers or parents to request students to withdraw or repeat a class on grounds of poor academic performance. Some of the dropouts attributed their poor academic performance to lack of teachers, poor tuition, inadequate textbooks, lack of furniture and other teaching materials in their schools. Some of the school dropouts explained their reasons for leaving school in the following statements:

'I went to Tuna SSS and after the first year I dropped out of school in 2005 due to poor performance and lack of interest in schooling. I did technical studies but did not like the theory aspect of auto mechanic. My parents and sisters were ready to assist me financially but I wasn't doing well in class. I wasn't academically good so I left school in order not to waste further my parents' money on school fees. My teachers were teaching well and students who misbehaved were punished but punishment wasn't the reason for my leaving school, I just decided to leave because I wasn't good' (Adamu, male dropout, 20 years 12-01 07).

'I was so much interested in school and used to do well in mathematics and science. Though we were sometimes punished when we disobeyed school rules but that didn't deter me from school. What actually killed my interest was that the teachers were not regular and teaching was not effective at school and that contributed to my poor academic performance and dropping out of school' (Rose, female dropout, 18 years 14-01-07).

The inadequate supply of qualified teachers, lack of furniture and other teaching and learning materials in the study area and other parts of Ghana poses a considerable challenge to the country's commitment to making quality education available to all children of school-going age. My interviews with educational officials confirmed that most schools in the study area, particularly rural communities were in poor conditions and poorly resourced. They lamented the inability of Ghana Education Service to train adequate numbers of teachers for schools in the district. They were also particularly worried about the low morale and lack of commitment of teachers, which they identified as the major cause for the low quality of education. Explaining the many challenges faced by schools in the region the Regional Girls Education Officer had this to say:

'Other problems are also from GES (Ghana Education Service). That is lack of teachers, for instance, if there are no enough teachers in the classroom and when children come to school and they have no teacher to teach them, they

would not come again. Sometimes it is the poor performance of teachers. Some teachers will go to school but they will not teach so parents would prefer to keep their children to work for them than sending them to school and they would not be taught. So, lot of problems' (Female regional girls' Education Officer, 50-55 12-11-05).

Teachers play an important role in the development of students' potential; therefore their qualifications, experience, competence and commitment to the teaching and learning process is crucial in shaping the students' experiences of schooling, their motivations and the move towards dropping out. However, officials interviewed noted that most teachers frequently absented themselves, reported late to school or refused to teach when in school. Absenteeism, lateness and lack of tuition on the part of teachers often reduces the amount of contact hours of interaction between them and students for effective learning, making it difficult for students to master the instructional objectives of the syllabus, leading to poor academic results, repetition and dropout. These findings correspond with a study on instructional time loss in four countries including Ghana from 2004 to 2005 (Abadzi, 2007). In the study, Ghanaian students were found to have the least number of contact hours (39%) of effective learning while Tunisia, Morocco and Brazil had 78%, 71%, and 63% respectively. The study also identified teacher absence as one of the major causes of time loss resulting in poor academic performance and school dropout. FAWE (2000) also describe how some Ghanaian teachers in rural communities regularly forced students to work on their individual farms and school farms, perform chores and run errands instead of engaging them in the classroom. Most of the teachers I interacted with, particularly the young male teachers expressed dissatisfaction about their poor working conditions and expressed the desire to leave the classroom if an opportunity came their way. Many teachers no longer see teaching as a financially rewarding career and as such lack the motivation to commit themselves to the profession. The poor academic performance and increasing unemployment of school leavers in the formal sector has made education less attractive to both parents and students (Wynd, 1999; Abadzi, 2007). In my interviews with officials they pointed out that most parents had no great desire to encourage their children to continue schooling as a result of the low quality of education. In particular, when girls perform poorly in school, there is no incentive to continue to support them in education since their labour

is needed more in the household. Such parents became disappointed and discouraged with the low returns of education and would prefer engaging their children in agricultural production, petty trading or one of those low paying jobs to continuing with an education that has no relevance to them. Good quality education affects access and the willingness of parents to make financial and other sacrifices to send their children to school. Poor parents in particular see the relevance of education only if it provides their children with well paid jobs and thus helps break the cycle of poverty in the family. Thus poor academic performance is linked to poor school infrastructure, lack of teaching material, lack of trained teachers and the poor teaching culture in schools, and this parallels the results of other studies in Ghana and other developing countries (Boakye, 1997; Akuffo, 1987; Ngau and Wamahiu, 1996; FAWE, 2000; Pryor and Ampiah, 2003; Otu-Danquah 2004; Etsey, 2005). For example, Pryor & Ampiah's (2003) study in a Ghanaian village revealed that pupils, academic performance was unacceptably low in both mathematics and in the official English language due to the poor teaching culture in the village school. Similarly, Ngau and Wamahiu's (1996) work on grade retention and dropout in Kenya cited children's inability to read properly as the most common cause of students' grade repetition and drop out. Addressing the school quality and efficiency problem is certainly one important means of reducing school dropout and ensuring high enrolments and retention of children in school.

8.5 Family Break up, Death and Dropout

The occurrence of certain events such as divorce or bereavement amongst family members, particularly parents, often makes children more vulnerable to dropout. Evidence from a few school dropouts shows that they left school on the death of a parent or both parents. Only Theresa said she lost both parents.

‘ My father died when I was in primary six and my mother too died when I was about completing JSS 3. There was no one to take care of me so I could not continue schooling after the JSS. I have a brother who also completed JSS but

due to the death of our parents he too could not continue his education’ (Female dropout, 17 years 14 01-07).

‘My father was a butcher but he is dead. My mother is a trader. I have four sisters and a brother but he is also dead. I attended Queen of Peace SSS and completed in 2005 but I could not further my education because my mother alone could not afford the high cost of secondary school fees’ (Felicia, female dropout, 21 years 11- 01-07)

The death of one parent places a heavy burden on the single parent alone to bear, particularly if the surviving parent is the mother. This is because in Ghana, as in many African countries, (as I have explained earlier in chapter 4) widows and their daughters have no right to inherit property from their husband’s estate even when the property was acquired during the marriage. Under customary law, the successor inherits most of the deceased’s estate with a moral responsibility to maintain the widow and her children, including their education, but in reality most of them do not (as the above narrations indicate) and the widow and children, have no legal right under customary law to enforce these obligations, which are legally enforceable rights under the constitutional law (Fenrich & Higgins, 2001). Another problem is that most women, particularly the uneducated rural poor, lack knowledge about the law or may have difficulties in using the services due to poverty or too much bureaucracy in the system. Similar studies on educational access in Ethiopia by Rose and Al Samarrai (2001) and in South Africa by Grant and Hallman (2006) also unsurprisingly, show that children whose parents were dead were more likely to have dropped out of school than those whose parents were alive.

The life histories of the school dropouts also revealed that some were living with one parent because the parents’ marriage had broken up. Many children whose parents have separated or divorced can find themselves at risk and in danger of leaving school due to the uncooperative attitudes of the parents after divorce. As Veronica, one of the dropouts noted:

'The separation of parents can affect our education; like if your parents are divorced they cannot come together to cater for your education and sometimes it is difficult for a single parent to get all your needs for school and this can affect our education' (Female dropout, 18 years 12-01-07).

In the event of divorce, it is often difficult for the divorced parents to collaborate in providing for the social, economic and educational needs of their children. Traditionally, in the research area fathers are responsible for their children's educational and other expenses because they control the household economic resources. However, evidence from my interviews indicates that some fathers were abrogating this responsibility, leaving mothers alone to cater for the children's education. It is usually difficult for women to receive financial support or for properties to be distributed equitably in divorce in Ghana (Fenrich & Higgins, 2001; Bond, 2005; Gedzi, 2009). In the study area a women's obligation in marriage is to support her husband in his endeavours, however her work in the house is not counted as a contribution in the acquisition of marital property. Lack of property rights in the event of divorce often result in some women withdrawing their children from school because they singly do not have adequate financial resources to pay for their educational costs. These findings are consistent with those of past research carried out by Obeng's (2006) and (Ham, 2003). Obeng's (2006) study of dropouts in Ghana observed that it is children whose mothers stay in a marriage who are catered for by their fathers. Those whose mothers are divorced may be ignored and not provided for at school to serve as a punishment to the divorced wife. Additionally, Ham's (2003) study in a district in Colorado (USA) found that children who experience divorce among parents are much more likely to become school dropouts than their peers whose parents stay together. The study also observed that parental divorce affects schoolgirls more than it affects their male peers.

8.6 Present occupation of dropouts and their future Career Aspirations

This section briefly explores the lives of the dropouts after dropping out of the educational system without obtaining any relevant school certificate or skills for

employment and what their future aspirations were. The school dropouts I spoke with were twenty females and ten males, aged between 17 and 25 years old. Most of the schoolgirl dropouts were engaged in petty trading to make money for themselves and for their family by selling all sorts of consumables such as groundnuts, oranges, yams, tomatoes, fish, ice water, bread and fruits. Some of the girls were also assisting their parents or guardian at home in income generating activities such as brewing pito (sorghum beer) and processing shea butter which are the two most common economic activities for women and girls in the research area. A few of them said they were in apprenticeship training⁴ such as dress making and hair dressing with the latter being the most common choice because of its low training costs and less initial capital needed to establish one's own enterprise.

Two of the girls at the time of the interview had finished their apprenticeship training in hair dressing and were operating their own small salon on the corridors of their rooms because they did not have money to rent a shop. Only two girls who dropped out in their second year of SHS said they were day nursery attendants. It is also significant to note that most of the schoolgirl dropouts who had left school for reasons other than pregnancy were married with children while others had babies but were not married. Only one schoolboy dropout was married at the time of the interviews. Two of the girls had the following to say:

'I was really sad when my father said he could no longer afford to pay my fees because of the high fees at the SSS level. Hence I was asked to withdraw. When I

⁴ Traditional or informal apprenticeship training is on-the-job training and accounts for about 80–90% of all basic skills training in Ghana. It prepares trainees for direct entry into a particular traditional craft, trade or occupation and is impacted by master craftsmen and women who are experts of their own skills and vocations. Training depends entirely on what is produced and is the most common source of further training for dropouts and youth who cannot afford secondary schools or formal Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). It is easily accessible to the poor due to the low training cost, but at times no fee is charged if the apprentice is known to the master (see Palmer, 2007; Government of Ghana, 2004; Amankrah, 2001).

stopped schooling I traded in fish but, I am now married and have two children (Ramatu, female dropout, 21 years 12-01-07).

‘As at now, I am not working, I am married as a housewife and have a baby. My plan is that, I still want to further my education and I look up to both husband and father for my future development’ (Cecilia, female dropout, 22 years 12-11-06).

Schoolgirl dropouts face a higher risk of early marriage or becoming pregnant than their peers in school. Most of the boys I interviewed were engaged in farming while a few were in apprenticeship training such as auto-mechanic, carpentry, masonry, welding and tailoring. Some of them were engaged in washing of cars, shining of shoes, and worked as market porters for income. Alidu had this to say:

‘After I had dropped out I went to be an apprentice in an auto mechanic shop. I am about eight months on the job and I plan to set up my own shop after completion and also help to train others’ (19 years old Male dropout, 14-11-06).

Apprenticeship training seems to be gender biased, with girls learning only traditionally female activities, like dressmaking and hairdressing while boys had several activities to undertake. As indicated in chapter 4, the educational reform in 1987 at junior secondary school level was meant to offer basic knowledge and skills in practical subjects like carpentry, masonry and dressmaking, yet school boys and girls are opting out of the formal education system to learn these same skills in apprenticeship training. As mentioned earlier on most JSS in rural communities lacked both human resources and physical infrastructure to train students in vocational and technical skills (Akyeampong, 2005). This raises issues about the efficiency of the JSS education curriculum.

When asked what their future aspirations were, most dropouts, particularly girls hawking on the street and those assisting parents at home, stated that they would like to go back to school or undertake an apprenticeship training if they had the financial support. Similarly, schoolboy dropouts engaged in unskilled jobs and those in farming

activities asserted that they would stop working to go back to complete their education or learn a trade when they had saved enough money. Dropout boys seemed to have more specific aspirations by comparison with girls. Boys' responses seem to suggest that they have control over their income and could therefore save money to go back to school. Girls on the other hand, would need the financial support of parents they work for, as gender inequality and imbalanced power relations in the research area do not allow girls full control over their income. When asked why they would not want to continue with their current job they responded that they felt burdened by such work, and wanted to do something different. Their wish to go back to school is an indication that they value academic education much more than their current jobs and also because of their awareness that education promises to offer better employment opportunities in the future.

Both boys and girls in apprenticeship indicated that they would set up their own shops upon completion of their training. When I probed further how they would get the financial resources to establish their businesses, most of them responded that they were looking to family members and friends for financial support. Without such support many of them would graduate from apprenticeship training unable to use their newly acquired skills to earn a livelihood since government lacks adequate credit facilities to support small scale business. A few girls however, mentioned that they wish to get married soon after their training so that their husbands would help them establish their own shops. Many girls seem to perceive marriage as an escape from family poverty. However, the response from one of their peers seems to suggest that marriage comes with a responsibility and may not necessarily be a solution to one financial problem. The excerpts below confirm this assertion.

'[...] my parents pressurized me to get married. I am now married and my husband is a teacher but marriage does not solve one's problems, rather it adds to it. I wanted to rewrite my exams and improve upon my results so that I can look for government employment since that guarantees regular income but my husband suggested I rather train as a hairdresser. I did not like his idea but what could I do. Therefore, that is what I am doing now, even with the

apprenticeship fee; my uncle helped me to pay' (Sophia, female dropout, 22 years 12-11-06).

In the research area, most graduates from apprenticeship training are unable to start their own small businesses as a result of lack of financial resources. Almost all the dropouts expressed the desire to work in the formal sector because of the job security and regular income but without higher qualifications in education their chances of securing a job with good career prospects in the formal sector seem limited. In his extensive survey of the Ghanaian informal sector and education, Palmer (2007) made similar observations. The study observed that traditional apprenticeship schemes cater for the majority of school dropouts including those who have never been to school. The study also revealed that most graduates from apprenticeship training wishing to enter into self-employment find it very difficult to access formal credit. As a result, the majority rely on their own savings which is not sufficient for the growth of their enterprises and this has not helped them to get out of poverty. The next chapter examines the role of government and efforts by the Girls' Education Unit (GEU) to curb the dropout rate and improve girls' access to education.

8.7 Conclusion

This chapter analyzed the factors that influence school dropout. The findings suggest that extreme poverty, pregnancy, poor academic performance and events such as divorce and death may be factors responsible for students, especially girls' inability to complete their education and dropout of school. It is also clear, following the discussions, that the socio-economic position of parents in the study area, severely constrains the family's ability to provide for their children in school, leading to high dropout rates. Additionally, key issues of concern within the school highlighted in this chapter and previous ones such as lack of teachers, inadequate learning materials and gender discriminatory practices in and outside the classroom may lead to poor academic performances which may encourage early dropout. Dropping out of school without gaining any relevant school qualifications or skills has broader implications on career

prospects and income levels, which have further consequences for their personal development. For girls it appears to have more severe consequences as they are easily lured into early pregnancy and early marriage which lead into disadvantage in adult life and in turn affects their children.

Chapter 9: The Role of Government in Promoting Girls' Education in Ghana

9.1 Introduction

The previous chapter examined the factors and situations, which contribute to the incidence of high dropout rate among schoolgirls in the study area with emphasis on household factors such as poverty, pregnancy, divorce, death and gendered cultural practices. It also analysed how leaving school without adequate skills and qualifications impact negatively on the career prospects of school dropouts, especially girls. In this chapter I analyze the in-depth interviews I had with Girls' Education Officials and the District Assembly gender desk officer to evaluate the successes and challenges of the girls' education unit (GEU) and government policies at improving girls' educational access and opportunities with emphasis on how educational officials perceive government policies in achieving gender equality in the study area.

9.2 The role of Girls' Education Unit

The Government of Ghana recognizes the crucial role that education plays in the promotion of both individual and national development, leading to poverty reduction. In pursuit of the Education For All (EFA) goals the Government of Ghana has undertaken a number of substantial measures to make education accessible to all Ghanaians, among which was the formation of the Girls' Education Unit (GEU) within the Basic Education Division of Ghana Education Service (GES) in 1997 and the appointment of a Minister responsible for, among other things, girl-child education. In my interviews with GEU officials they pointed out that the creation of the GEU was a major step by the government to improving the educational access of girls in the country. The national director of GEU revealed that following the establishment of the GEU, Regional Girls' Education Officers (RGEO) and District Girls' Education Officers (DGEO) were appointed, trained and sent to every region and district of the country to facilitate the

promotion of the girl's education and to ensure that girls who lagged behind boys in education at all levels, go to school and continue schooling at higher levels. She explained that all RGEOs and DGEOs are members of the regional and district education planning teams respectively which give them the opportunity to influence and introduce local initiatives to address the constraints to girls' education at the community, district and regional levels. She revealed that GEU collaborates with international organizations such as UNICEF and World Food Programme, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), District Assemblies (DAs) and traditional leaders in the advocacy for gender equality in education, particularly at the basic level. She explained further that:

'Besides the DAs, many other organizations help to promote girls education in Ghana. Yes I'm aware of Action Aid, before I even came here, they had offered a number of scholarships to a number of girls, provided they performed within the a certain range to be given scholarship. I know FAWE is also working towards improving girls' education and many other Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), all working towards improving girls' education' (Female national director of GEU, 45-50years)

In an interview with the Upper West regional girls' education officer, she acknowledged that the Upper West region has the lowest school enrolment of girls in the country and attributed this to the high level of poverty and the low educational levels of parents in the region. She said in order to improve girls' access to education and reduce the gender gap she goes round communities with DGEOs, organising workshops to draw parents awareness to the importance and benefits of girls' education. In the following statement the Upper West regional girls' education officer gave a brief description of some of her responsibilities:

'I coordinate between the district and the headquarters, for instance, letters of correspondence, giving information to headquarters and getting information from the districts. I also go round to sensitize communities on girl child

education. Certain times I go to assist the district girls' education officers to sensitize, or have workshops in communities to educate parents to send their children to school' (Female RGEO, 50-55years).

According to her the sensitization involves going to communities, sometimes with a resource person who also acts as a role model to organize workshops on the importance and benefit of educating girls. Besides the sensitization activities she also cited a number of interventions and policies such as the school feeding programme, bicycle support for girls, Science and Mathematics clinics for girls and scholarships that have been put in place by the government and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to promote girls' education in the region.

9.3 School Lunches and Free Monthly Dry Food Take-Home Ration

Several studies reveal that malnutrition or hunger among school children impacts negatively on their ability to learn in the classroom leading to irregular attendance, poor performance, repetition and early dropout (Pridmore, 2007; Seidu, 2003; Fentiman et al, 2001; Akyeampong et al, 2007). According to the Upper West Regional Girls' Education Officer the region suffers from food insecurity due to poor agricultural production which makes it difficult for most parents to provide sufficient food to meet the nutritional requirements of their children. Consequently, most children come to school hungry and are unable to participate effectively in school activities resulting in poor performance and dropout. A recent study on dropouts in Brazil found that about 33% of school dropouts said they suffered hunger in their school lives, compared to 17% for those in school (Cardoso and Verner, 2006). The Girls' Education officer said that with assistance from World Food Programme (WFP) and the Catholic Relief Service (CRS), the GEU provides free lunches for schools in districts with the lowest girls' enrolment in the region to increase enrolment and to encourage girls to attend school regularly. She explained that girls from grade 1-3 in such schools are given a free monthly dry food ration to take home as additional incentive for parents to send their

daughters school. In the following statement she explained the procedure for the food ration:

'I go round to monitor the activities at the district levels, and monitor especially the World Food Program (WFP) and the Catholic Relief Service (CRS). Food is given to children within three districts, Nandowli, Lawra and Sissala. Because of low enrolment we want to encourage the girls to go to school. So what we do is that, if you make 85% attendance for a month, then you are given food ration. But we do that for only school terms, the holiday months are not inclusive. We give you 8kgs of cereals; it can be maize, rice, wheat and the two litres of oil. The food is to help the performance of the children, because when they eat well they must come to school and study as well' (Female RGEO 50-55years, 12/11/05).

The free monthly take-home food ration is given to girls based on 85% school attendance. The girls receive food rations to take home to complement their family income, especially during the dry season when food production is low and the dropout rate for girls is the highest. She indicated that the mothers of girls who qualify for the food are invited to the school to collect the ration and they take the opportunity to advise them on the need to ensure regular and punctual attendance of their daughters, as the officials noted that the risk of girls leaving school was strongly influenced by their mothers' socio-economic commitments. The GEU officials mentioned that the School Lunch and Take Home Rations Programs have been the most successful intervention that have quite improved access and participation of girls, thus reducing the gender gap in school enrolment in the region, particularly at the lower primary (grade 1-3). Available statistics show that female enrolment figures in Upper West and Upper East regions where Take Home Ration is given increased by 31.4% and 26.1% respectively compared to the national average of 12.8% (NDPC, 2007). However, she was quick to point out that the main challenge was how to retain them in school, particularly in upper primary (grade 4-6) since most parents begin to withdraw their daughters for economic and cultural reasons. Explaining the problem they face she said:

'We realized that most parents just push their children to school from primary 1 to primary 3 because they want them to collect food but as they get to primary 4 and they are getting grown, and strong enough to do house work they begin to withdraw them. So now the project has decided that they would not give food from primary 1 to primary 3. If you struggle and allowed your girl child to go up to primary 4 then they would take care of you' (Female RGEO 50-55years, 12/11/05).

She noted that not only do parents push their children to school for the food ration but they also relieved themselves of the burden of caring for the children at that tender age so that they can be free to go on with their daily chores. The official revealed that girls outnumbered boys in most of the schools where free lunches and food rations are given but at the upper primary dropout sets in, and sometimes about half of the girls even dropout before they reach primary six. To address the high dropout rate the officials decided to start the take home ration from grade four to six to persuade parents to allow their daughters to stay on longer at school. The RGEO complained that despite the widespread sensitization campaign on the importance of girls' education in the region *'some parents [...] still feel that the girl child's place is the house, because they feel that the girl must cook, she should marry early'* (Female RGEO 55-60years, 12/11/05). As highlighted earlier in previous chapters, the traditional concept of a woman's role as a wife, mother, cook and male subordinate is deeply rooted in the socio-cultural norms of the study area. Therefore, a decade of sensitization is not going to bring about a rapid change of such deeply entrenched perception of gender roles. Despite the problem with children's retention, all the GEU officials acknowledged that there has been an enormous improvement in the overall school enrolment of girls in basic education as a result of these interventions.

Girls' Education officials report that through their advocacies several Scholarship Schemes have been established by the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GET Fund), NGOs, traditional leaders and some individuals to assist poor girls but these were usually given to poor girls who excelled in their studies work to complete their education. Within this sponsorship, deserving girls' school fees are paid by the government while some of the

poor girls also receive scholarships in the form of school materials such as uniforms, books, school bags and shoes. She also noted that rural girls who travel long distances to schools on foot, particularly at JSS level receive bicycles donated by UNICEF to encourage them to attend school regularly and improve transition rates from primary school to junior secondary level. In poor rural communities the cost of a uniform, bicycle or school fees make a difference between a girl dropping out of school or continuing at school. Therefore, these scholarships go a long way to relieve parents of the burden of the direct costs of schooling, so that these girls can continue with their education.

Another area of intervention was in Science, Technology and Mathematics Education (STME). The Upper West municipal director of education pointed out that Science and Mathematics clinics are organized yearly for girls to improve their performance and participation in these subjects. She said:

‘Yearly, we have mathematics and science clinics where we bring in role models to interact with the girls, especially role models, I mean female role models who have come up to certain positions to interact with these girls’ (Female municipal director of education, 50-55years 24/11/05).

She indicated that STME Coordinators and teachers have been trained on gender sensitivity techniques to stimulate girls’ interest in the study of mathematics and science. She said GEU works closely with some NGOs in organizing debates, essay and drawing competitions among girls to assess their performances and to give prizes to deserving girls to encourage them to study. During these events, female role models are invited to interact and inspire the girls to aim high in their education attainments.

Girls' Education officers indicated that through their advocacy they have been empowered by the government to enact by-laws in collaboration with District Assemblies, community leaders and Domestic Violence and Victim support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Police Service to safeguard girls’ interest in the region. She

explained that the unit's concern about the prevalence of schoolgirl pregnancy and forced marriages in particular led to interventions such as the enactment of by-laws to prosecute anybody implicated in schoolgirl pregnancy or forced marriage in the region. She mentioned that the by-laws have succeeded in curtailing these practices.

The RGEO reported that World Universal Service of Canada (WUSC) (one of the NGOs operating in the region) provided the unit with computers and personnel to assist them to generate gender disaggregate data in education in the region. I consider this as a significant support for the unit as lack of gender disaggregated data was one of the constraints of my field work in Ghana. Availability of gender disaggregated data will portray the real situation about the gender gaps and inequalities in the Ghanaian educational system for appropriate gender-sensitive interventions and policies to be developed and for monitoring and evaluating the progress of girls' schooling.

In an interview with the Gender Desk Officer of Wa Municipal Assembly (WMA) she mentioned that she works closely with the RGEO and DGEOs in the various districts to sensitize communities and parents on the need to educate girls. She stated that the WMA lobbies for NGOs to come into the region to facilitate the promotion of girls' education.

'The nature of my work is to sensitize community members and schoolchildren on gender issues. Gender issues like female genital mutilation, HIV/AIDS, child abuse, rural migration and then I help women in income generating activities to get access to income [...]' (Female Gender Desk Officer, 35-40years 18/11/05).

She reported that the WMA supports GEU with funds for girls' educational activities such as those mentioned above. She noted that the District Assembly provides sponsorships for schoolgirls and female teacher trainees who are encouraged to return to their sponsored districts to teach in rural communities and to serve as role models to the young schoolgirls. Additionally, WMA assists women in income generating activities

with small loans to reduce the poverty levels of parents and to enable them to send their children to school.

9.4 The Free, Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) and the Capitation Grant Scheme (CGS)

When asked what other significant policies the government has initiated towards the promotion of girls' education besides the sensitisation activities, all the GEU officers mentioned the FCUBE and the CGS as the two major policy interventions that have resulted in big increases especially, in girls' enrolment, particularly in poor rural areas nationwide. They indicated that the FCUBE policy which was established in 1996 abolished the payment of tuition fees at the basic education level for all pupils, thus making it possible for children from very poor families to enrol in school. However, under the government cost-sharing policy District Assemblies were allowed to charge levies as a means of raising funds for the maintenance of schools under their authority. When asked whether the abolition of tuition fees really made education free, the national director of GEU had this to say:

I think if you sent your child to school, you didn't pay the teacher, the government paid the teacher, and therefore you didn't pay tuition fees, in that sense it was free. If you had to pay Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) levies, the parents themselves purged the amount to be paid. Moreover, it was some kind of voluntary contribution towards the improvement of the school (Female national director of GEU, 45-50years 22/01/07).

The above argument that government provision and payment of teachers to teach in basic schools makes education free at that level seems to be contradictory. If basic education was actually free, why were students levied by schools and district assemblies and if the levies were voluntary contribution as the director wants us to believe why were students sent away from school for non-payment? A recent survey of school levies and their impact on schooling in Ghana found that the imposition of the levies was

arbitrary and sometimes the total amount charged was three to five times higher than the approved amount of ₺40,000 (£1.50) per pupil annually by the government (Karikari-Ababio, 2005). The survey also revealed that school children were sometimes sent away from class by teachers for non payment of levies which was also contrary to government policy that no child should be sent out of school for failure to pay school levies. The study concluded that the imposition of the levies on children added additional burden to the already existing household expenses on education, making schooling out of reach for a significant number of children. These levies were thus perceived by parents as school fees and served as a disincentive for them to send or keep their children in school. Hence, in reality the levies and other hidden charges did not really make basic education free. In the following statement the national director of GEU explained further that if there was any doubt about education being free then the introduction of the CGS in 2005 by the government cleared any such doubt.

‘[...] , now with the capitation, I could say free in its true sense of free because textbooks are being supplied now, and they provide furniture for the school, the school building is also provided and what you bring to school is your exercise books, writing materials and uniform. I don’t think the provision of these items should be so much of a barrier to education’ (Female national director of GEU, 45-50years 22/01/07).

With the introduction of the CGS schools and district assemblies do not have the right to charge any fees to parents. Instead, every school receives an amount of ₺30,000.00 (£1.26) annually per pupil registered through the district assemblies as a compensation for any loss of revenue as a result. The officers explained that the grant also serves to relieve parents of the financial burden created by the levies and that parents who could not send their children, particularly girls to school due to economic reasons would now have no reason not to send their daughters to school. Although, to the national director the financial requirements needed in securing school uniforms and learning materials seem to be fairly small and should not be an obstacle to education, evidence of schoolgirls’ experiences and the personal stories of dropouts’ discussed earlier in this study reveals that parents still struggle to provide for their children’s school

requirements. Moreover, when one considers the opportunity cost involved, schooling becomes expensive to the poor rural households, with particular consequences for girl's enrolment.

All the GEU officials observed that all the measures towards improving girls' education especially the provision of free school lunch and dry food rations, bicycles and scholarships are effective in improving girls' enrolment and retention at the basic level. Available reports that support the officials' assertion of progress in girls' education as a result of these measures indicate that nationally retention rate for girls increased from 83.7% in 2003 to 85.6% in 2006 while that of boys declined from 88% to 87.4% within the same period (NDPC, 2007). Also, a UNICEF working paper in 2007 shows that girls' enrolment in basic education increased by 18.1 whereas that of boys increased by 15.3% during the 2005/06 school year, thereby slightly reducing the gender gap in access to education. The officials noted that the FCUBE program and the CGS, though not gender specific interventions provide significant opportunities for poor children, especially girls who are often discriminated against when parents are forced to make a choice on economic grounds. However, they also confirmed that the increase in enrolment and retention have created more problems such as inadequate furniture, overcrowding of classrooms, and lack of teachers and teaching materials for the education sector. Unfortunately, these problems, as noted earlier in this chapter, lower the quality of education which in turn serves as a disincentive to both parents and children to patronize education. At the end of my interviews with education officials I asked if there was anything they wanted to add, and they all stressed the lack of money and means of transportation. The Upper West regional GEU officer for example had this to say:

'Another obstacle is finance. Certain times we want to do our job but we have problems of getting finance. If we are waiting on GOG (Government of Ghana) we might not even go out for the whole year because there would not be money. [...] Yes, I have even got a four wheel car which was given to me by World Food Program (WFP) and it has been enhancing my work, otherwise it would have been difficult for me to go round all these districts, but at present the major

constrain is fuelling. I don't have enough fuel to go out [laughs], and the districts have similar problems. Some of the district girl child officers have no motorbikes, and a few that have them can't go round to monitor due to lack of fuel. But if we had means of transport and enough fuel to go round I think we would have been doing more than this' (Female RGEO, 50-55years 12/11/0).

Apart from the GEU regional officer who was fortunate to have a car donated by WFP, the other entire district officials lacked vehicles to carry out their duties. A few that had motorbikes lacked sufficient funds to run and maintain them. They noted that lack of transport limits their ability to extend the sensitization programme and other interventions to many rural communities and also monitor their progress. They also emphasized the need for more NGOs to come to their aid, appealing to me to use my position as a UK PhD student to lobby philanthropists and NGOs in the UK to assist them. For the government of Ghana to show real commitment to the promotion of gender equality in education, it is important that the GEU is provided with adequate resources to function efficiently.

9.5 Conclusion

Government educational policies and GEU initiatives such as the scholarship schemes, free school lunch, take home dry food ration; gender sensitisation campaigns, FCUBE and the Capitation grant have improved access and retention of girls, particularly in the study area. Though most of these interventions have succeeded in reducing the economic barrier to education, the underlying socio-cultural factors that constrain girls' participation in education remain to be addressed. Moreover, most of GEU interventions are focused on girls in basic primary education to the neglect of the glaring gender inequalities within secondary and tertiary institutions. Indeed, the gender gap in enrolment, retention and achievement widens as the level of education increases. The GEU should therefore be entrusted with the responsibility for all levels in the education system so as to provide a voice for gender issues not only at the basic level, but throughout the entire educational system.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to explore how structural processes both in and out of school impact on relations and inequalities in education. This study has increased our understanding of the differential treatment schoolgirls experience in school and the effects that it has on their educational outcomes in the Upper West region of northern Ghana. The quantitative research methodology employed in this study was shown to be suitable for gaining an insight into schoolgirl's experiences. Following the discussions of previous chapters I draw out key issues emerging from the study and make recommendations which aim to address the restrictive, gender-based relations and socio-cultural inequalities facing schoolgirls in Ghana.

The results of this study highlight important issues, which build on ideas examined in the literature review. Through the use of social construction of gender as the theoretical framework, and methodological tools of gender analysis, the study illustrated the ways in which poverty, unequal gender relations and socio-cultural factors have a major effect on girls' education and career prospects. Many of the research participants perceived girls to be at a greater educational disadvantage than boys in terms of their sexuality, accompanied by high levels of discrimination and sexual abuse from teachers and parents. The results revealed that most parents in the study area were poor and lacked economic resources due to a lack of education, poor agricultural production and associated food and income insecurity. All these impact negatively on students' participation and achievement in school. The high levels of poverty means that some parents are unable to pay the cost of school fees, transportation and school uniform for their children of school going age as well as the cost of meeting their essential needs for food, shelter and clothing, leading to high dropout rates. In response to the effects of extreme poverty some poor parents over burden their children with agricultural tasks, income generating activities and household chores which leave them little time for study. The levels of national poverty and the socio-economic pressures facing families in Ghana were shown to severely limit girls' access to education.

Though poverty is a major issue in determining who goes to school in the research area, judging from the life histories and other data collected, unequal power relations entrenched in the traditional norms and practices, values, beliefs, and religion sustain a gendered household division of labour and resource allocation which serves to constrain girls' access to education. The results show that boys and girls perform different traditional gender roles within the household as part of the socialisation process. The structural gender divisions of labour in the study area dictate that some household chores like cooking, washing dishes, cleaning and sweeping are considered inappropriate for boys to do because, culturally, these are categorised as feminine. While boys can more easily resist performing 'female-categorised' reproductive roles in an attempt to protect their masculine identity, it is extremely difficult for girls to resist performing productive roles because of how they are socialised to be more obedient and disciplined than boys (Adomako-Ampofo, 2001). Consequently, girls take on a great deal of both reproductive and productive tasks for their families as part of the traditional training towards their presumed future roles as wives and mothers. The performance of domestic chores, such as cooking, cleaning and fetching water before school usually affects girls' participation in classroom activities more than boys because of exhaustion. The disproportionate household chores place greater time and labour demands on girls, thus restricting girls' opportunities for leisure and study. While girls are confined in the house to undertake household chores boys have more time for study, leisure and to work and earn money for their educational needs. On the other hand, schoolgirls from poor households seeking to provide for themselves through education are compelled to exchange sex for money to procure their educational and personal needs (Meekers and Ahmed, 1999). This occasionally resulted in pregnancy-related dropout as was repeatedly reported by education officials and girls themselves. Again, because girls perform most of the household chores, their opportunity costs of staying in school tend to be higher than boys, leading to a high rate of dropout. Thus, the differential treatment girls experience from home deprived them of the opportunities to attend and complete school. In this sense, poverty tends to limit girls' opportunities to education more than boys. Though girls were aware of the impact of the discriminatory attitudes of both parents and teachers on their education, they did not challenge the established gender norms because not conforming to the existing gender roles would be seen as

undermining the identity category (Butler, 1993) and tampering with established socio-cultural traditions. Society sanctions individuals who do not conform to hegemonic gender norms (Sirin et al, 2004). Thus, teachers' and parents' attitudes, and their engaging most of girls in traditionally feminine roles, serve to perpetuate and reinforce gender inequality in education.

All participants in this study reported that traditional practices such as early and forced marriages, dowry system, betrothals, patrilineal inheritance and property rights, polygamy and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in the study area have particularly negative consequences for girls' education and wellbeing. Early and forced marriages force girls into becoming sexually active at an early age, which contributes to girls' poor educational performance, teenage pregnancies, and school dropout rates. Moreover, the expensive dowry system in patriarchal northern Ghana, which requires men to provide very expensive gifts, including cows, to the family of the girls as bride price, is seen by poor families as a solution to their poverty which encourages them to withdraw their daughters from school and marry them off for wealth. However, such relatively expensive bride price reinforces girls' and women's subordination and predisposes them to exploitation and abuse (Furusawa, 2006). Another traditional practice in the research area that appears to have a significant impact on students' education and the stability of many households was polygamous marriage. The findings show that students from polygamous household structures tend to experience exploitation and discrimination from their step-mothers due to jealousy and conflict among wives and the economic pressures facing a single father to provide adequately for a large household size. The study demonstrated that in some cases the economic pressure and maltreatment compelled students, especially girls, to drop out of school. Significantly, the study suggests that the patrilineal inheritance and property rights in the north of Ghana, which overtly favour men and boys, deny women and girls the right to inherit or own property upon the divorce and death of a spouse or a father. This makes women vulnerable to poverty and unable to support their children in school. The strong adherence to traditional practices in the study area can also be attributed to the relatively traditional and religious influence as well as the high illiteracy rates among parents. These cultural practices tend to hold back girls' education and discourage them from excelling in school or pursuing higher education because of the traditional belief that a woman's

place is the kitchen and that her roles as home maker and mother do not need education to be performed. Certainly, these cultural practices violate the fundamental human rights of girls and deny them their dignity and rights to education, which is crucial for their personal development and their effective contribution to the future well being of their families and societies (Yakin Ertürk, 2008).

Significantly, my research demonstrates that there was an attitude of cultural superiority towards boys in the study area because parents tend to perceive them as future bread-winners of the family, even though in reality most women share or take up this responsibility in the household. In a culture where boys are valorised over girls, they are more likely to be given the opportunity to go to school in the event of limited economic resources and be encouraged and supported to continue their education to the highest levels without being restrained by tradition (such as early or forced marriage) and be forced to dropout from school. Therefore, parents' decisions to invest in their sons' education may not be based on their natural abilities or skills but on traditional values and beliefs that value boys' education more than that of girls. Availability of schools therefore does not necessarily imply that girls would have access to education because decisions to send children to school are strongly influenced by the economic, religious, social and cultural situations in which they find themselves (Clocough et al, 2000, 2003; UNESCO, 2003/4). Consequently girls in the study area do not have the same opportunities as boys to access education due to the perceptions and ignorance of parents about the overall benefit of girls' education in the longer term.

Inadequate educational facilities such as lack of suitable or appropriate textbooks, lack of furniture and other teaching materials impact negatively on students' academic performance. Many of the research participants attributed the poor academic performance of students to poorly resourced schools. In particular lack of teachers and poor tuition were found to be the major cause of poor academic performance, lack of interest in school and eventual dropping out. Specifically, when girls perform poorly in school, there is no incentive to continue to support them in education since their labour is more needed in the household. Lack of good quality education affects the willingness of parents to make financial and other sacrifices to send their children to school. My

research points out that one of the reasons why parents do not seem to support their children's education include the perceived low quality of education and lack of relevance of the educational curriculum to the world of work (Palmer, 2007). Poor parents in particular see the relevance of education only if it provides their children with well paid jobs and thus helps break the cycle of poverty in the family. Such parents tend to engage their children in other forms of economic activities that are likely to provide immediate economic returns to maintain themselves and their families. The inability of the Ghana Education Service to train adequate numbers of teachers and to motivate them to teach was identified as the major cause for the low quality of education. Lack of motivation encourages misconduct among teachers such as lateness and absenteeism which often reduce the amount of contact hours between teachers and students for effective teaching and learning, leading to poor academic results, repetition and eventual dropout (Abadzi, 2007; Akyeampong and Lewin, 2002). The vital role a teacher plays in the provision of quality education cannot be overstated. The government's efforts to provide quality education for all children will continue to remain an illusion if the issue of teacher quality is not given adequate attention. The inadequacy of motivation for teachers has rendered the teaching profession unattractive in Ghana. Already, teachers complain each day about their poor conditions of service⁵. Consequently, people with high academic standards shun the teaching profession while qualified teachers leave for other well-paying professions after a period of teaching, thus making it difficult to retain teachers in the classroom.

The study school not only lacked teachers and educational facilities like textbooks and furniture but it also lacked quality and adequate infrastructure such as hostel facilities, drinking water, urinals and toilet facilities. Water and sanitation facilities in schools are increasingly recognized as essential for promoting good hygiene behaviour and children's well-being (UNICEF, 2008). Inadequate educational facilities hinder the full participation of children in school but the lack of sanitation and hygiene facilities in schools has a stronger negative impact on girls than on boys because girls are more

⁵ The National Association of Graduate Teachers (NAGRAT) held nation-wide strike action, which lasted a week to demand for the payment of their salary arrears in November, 2009. After some negotiations with the government which promised to pay, they called off the strike (ghanaweb.com, 2009).

likely to be absent or drop out of school when their greater need for water and sanitary facilities for hygiene purposes during menstruation are not met (Yasheng and Siebert, 2009). The inadequate provision of water and sanitation facilities in schools does not therefore provide equal opportunities for girls to access education, nor does it create a gender friendly environment for effective teaching and learning. Additionally, lack of hostel facilities or accommodation for students, particularly girls from the catchment villages meant that they had to live with relatives and friends or rent their own rooms in compound houses in the regional capital. This exposed them to risk, such as sexual harassment and labour exploitation by guardians or men in the community. For these reasons some parents are unlikely to allow their daughters to move out of their local communities to attend secondary schools in far away towns. This study suggests that lack of adequate boarding or hostel facilities for girls could be one of the reasons for the poor transition rate of girls to secondary school in Ghana which also serves as a deterrent to parents considering sending their children to primary school. This situation contributes to poor attendance and the high dropout rates of girls.

My research also found that corporal punishment and gender violence were widespread in the school environment, which made the learning environment particularly hostile to girls. Both schoolboys and girls in the study lamented about the painful experience of corporal punishment in schools. For example, students in the study school complained about being beaten by teachers even when their parents were unable to procure them school materials due to economic constraints or when they perform poorly in classroom exercises. Teachers, however, seem unaware of the negative impacts of their actions on students' educational outcomes. Students' reports suggest that corporal punishment puts fear in them, and restrains a positive interaction between them and teachers, making it difficult for them to express their views on issues affecting them within the school. The results suggest that corporal punishment was practiced along gender lines as it was mainly administered by male teachers and male school prefects and usually on the buttocks and palms of boys and girls respectively (Humphreys, 2008). Other forms of punishment usually given to girls include sweeping the school compound and classroom or fetching water for the school, while that of boys often involves weeding and digging around the school. It was also revealed that there was widespread bullying of junior students by senior boys. Excessive caning and bullying can deter students from classroom participation and also encourage students to play truant which can eventually

result in school dropout. Worse still, it appears that sexual harassment of schoolgirls by schoolboys and teachers themselves was common in the study school. Teachers perceive sexual harassment and bullying perpetuated against girls by schoolboys as a normal part of school life and often deny their own involvement in the sexual harassment of schoolgirls, instead they reported about other teachers' sexual harassment of girls in other schools. In most cases sexual harassment against schoolgirls, including rape, goes unreported, and if reported, the perpetrators go unpunished. If girls are intimidated, sexually harassed or are scared of becoming victims of boys' aggressive behaviour, then they are far less likely to go to school. Girls suffer sexual harassment because of the entrenched unequal gender relations in society. In this sense then, school does not provide a gender friendly environment for girls to study since they experience discrimination, sexual harassment and dismissal from school when they become pregnant (UNICEF, 2007; Grant and Hallman, 2006). This suggests that despite girls being at the receiving end of boys' aggression, they are often seen as the problem and subject to constant moral advice to be of good behaviour. The blame on girls sometimes goes further to suggest that they are responsible for their own harassment and abuse. This is an indication of the higher moral standards expected of them by the school and society with no such expectation apparently existing for men and boys. These social expectations exist because of the significance of the Ghanaian notion of virtuous woman which calls not only for passive obedience but for living up to higher behavioural standards (Prah, 2002). Blaming girls instead of understanding the numerous discriminatory practices they face both at home and in school may suggest that teachers are not aware of the ways in which gender is an influencing factor in classroom interactions.

Evidence from my research also suggests that girls and boys are treated in significantly different ways in classrooms because most teachers held the notion that boys were academically more intelligent and were more interested in learning than girls. Teachers' attitudes often perpetuate gender biases following the norms, belief, value and traditional practices of the society. Significantly, this discrimination was reflected in the lack of attention teacher paid to girls in the classroom. Gender differences in teacher attention among students results in boys getting more attention. By allowing boys to dominate classroom participation simply because they volunteer to answer or ask questions, teachers encourage their active participation in class leading to improved

performance and achievements. Although teachers acknowledged that the disadvantaged position of girls in the family (such as the heavy workload and low expectation and value for them) affect their educational participation and deserve to receive much attention in the classroom, they failed to encourage girls by denying them the needed attention to participate actively in the teaching-learning process. By not involving girls in the teaching-learning process teachers deny them the opportunity to improve upon their academic performance as well as the confidence to speak and express their ideas. Girls' lesser involvement in class is related to the way they are socialized in the home and to the fear of being punished or ridiculed by teachers and male students for getting answers wrong. Unfortunately for girls, their coping strategy of not participating usually has negative consequences on their confidence and academic performances. Teachers' failure to call on girls simply because they were shy to volunteer answers or ask questions suggests that they lacked gender sensitive teaching methods to encourage girls' participation, thus failing to understand how their own attitudes and that of parents' influence students, particularly girls' behaviour in classroom interaction, thereby perpetuating gender inequality. In the US and UK where equal opportunities are emphasised for all students, girls outperform boys in schools (Francis and Skelton 2005; Smulyan, 2004; UNESCO, 2003). For this reason I argue that girls in Ghana and elsewhere can perform equally if not better than boys but their differential treatment in the classroom as well as the household impacts negatively on their educational performance and achievement.

The research results demonstrate that students' choice of subject and career continues to be influenced mainly by gender. In the Ghanaian educational system both girls and boys do the same subject from primary one to junior high school but when choice becomes available at the senior high school, they tend to choose different types of subjects they consider traditionally appropriate for their sex. For example, evidence from my study shows that girls concentrated on general arts and home economics subjects while boys favoured mathematics, science and technical subjects. Despite efforts to encourage girls to go into the sciences through the science and mathematics clinics, teachers continue to give more attention to educating boys in mathematics, science and technology, rather than girls, because teachers consider them less competent in these subjects than boys. Teachers suggested that the fear girls particularly ascribe to mathematics and science

relates to the gender-insensitive methods teachers often use in teaching. Another reason attributed to the apprehension girls have for maths is related to the home situation where girls are confined to do domestic chores while boys are allowed to explore their environment and indulge in activities that enhance their understanding of maths and science. Significantly, however, students' responses indicated that the subjects and careers advice they received was often directed along gendered lines, meaning that students may not be provided with adequate information about subject and career options, limiting choices for both boys and girls. The overall effect of the differential treatment girls experience from parents and through the formal and hidden curriculum by teachers is reflected in their chosen subjects and future occupations. Generally, boys' choice of science related subjects channels them towards careers that have higher status and higher income. Girls on the other hand are usually directed towards service-related careers in education and health such as nursing, catering and petty trading, which are perceived as feminine and thus attract a lower status and low income, contributing to their subordination and marginalisation within families and societies worldwide.

The pattern of students' choice reproduces and widens the gender gap in education and the labour market. Moreover, this study shows that boys had great ambitions for the future and were more confident in what they wanted to do after school than girls who, as a result of their social conditioning and the job opportunities available to them have lower aspirations for their future. The results also show that parents and teachers expected girls to go into careers that would complement their expected future roles as housewives and mothers. Their expectations often arise from deeply held socio-cultural beliefs and perceptions in the society. This expectation goes beyond the borders of Ghana. Students' choices therefore are a reflection of their desire to identify themselves with the presumed gender appropriate subjects and careers in their communities.

My research findings identified school dropout rate as one of the most serious problems affecting school participation in Ghana. Life history interviews carried out in this study investigating the causes of school dropout show that the causes differ significantly between boys and girls. Boys dropout mainly to work due to poverty, while girls drop out because of interplay of various reasons which include gender, poverty, pregnancy, motherhood and domestic responsibilities. While poverty may affect both boys' and

girls' education, I argue that gender may be a more salient feature than poverty in influencing girls to leave school. High dropout rates among girls are also rooted in differential values attached to the education of girls and boys in the study area. This is most evident in the circumstances of the girl, whose needs and interests are often marginalized by educational policies and households priorities. Poverty and social marginalisation are compounded by gender discrimination, lack of teaching materials and lack of teachers' commitment, which influence students' decision to drop out of school. Most school dropouts who were not already in traditional apprenticeship training expressed the desire to learn a trade or go back to school if given the needed financial support. The dropouts were aware that leaving school without gaining any relevant school qualifications or skills had broader implications for their career prospects and income levels, which had further consequences for their personal development. For girls it appears to have more severe consequences as they may be more easily tempted into early pregnancy and early marriage which lead into disadvantage in adult life and in turn can affect their children's future educational opportunities.

This thesis has also drawn our attention to the commitment of government in making education accessible to all children as it is required by the Ghanaian constitution. The results indicate that several educational policies and schemes have been initiated including the establishment of the Girls' Education Unit (GEU) 1987 and the Ministry of Women and Children to mainstream gender issues in the educational system as well as all other ministries and departments. Two major educational policies aimed to provide education for all are the FCUBE program, which was introduced to abolish the payment of school fees, and the capitation grant to ban the payment of school fees and levies. To complement government's efforts, the GEU with the support of NGOs, has initiated several measures to provide incentives for girls at the basic education level in poor communities. These include scholarship schemes, free textbooks and uniforms, free school lunch, take home dry food rations; gender sensitisation campaigns, science and mathematics clinics for girls, debates, essay and drawing competitions for girls and the enactment of by-laws to safeguard girls interest. Though these programs and policies have improved school enrolment rates, the reality on the ground is that many children are still out of school because in the situation of extreme levels of poverty,

particularly in rural communities in the Upper West region of Ghana , free schooling even becomes unaffordable for poor families because there are other costs incurred in the procurement of educational materials such as school uniforms, books and pocket money for transport and lunch which make schooling expensive (Akyeampong, A.K. et al, 2007). Moreover, the research findings show that many Girls' Education officials are unable to implement government policies and interventions efficiently due to lack of adequate logistical and economic support. This is one of probably several difficulties in the progress towards gender equality in Ghana. However, it takes more than policies to change deeply engrained cultural norms and values that keep girls out of the educational system. What is needed is a change in people's attitudes towards the education of girls in the study area combined with increased resourcing for the strategies to tackle key problems. Beliefs and values supporting the superior role of men and boys in the society are still prevalent in Ghana. It is evident from participants' accounts in the study that the Ghanaian traditional culture is not changing much in terms of gender roles and gender relations. Teachers, parents and girls themselves seem to be slow in changing their attitudes about gender roles thereby perpetuating and reinforcing gender inequalities in education.

10.1 Recommendations

Women and girls are considered as vulnerable because of the lower social status and the discrimination that they experience in education and in society as a whole. Women and girls cannot contribute sufficiently to public life unless they are educated as well as men. Narrowing the gender gap in education is profoundly important for economic and social development. The need to reduce the gender gap is even more important when one considers the benefit of mothers' education both in relation to children's education and improvements to family health and, in particular, in reducing poverty among the poor (UNESCO, 2003). It also has a major impact on other aspects of social development, later marriage and fewer children, lower maternal and infant mortality rates, the passing on of education to the next generation (ibid). I suggest a number of policy recommendations that would enable the government of Ghana to achieve the full benefits that accrue from women and girls' education.

This thesis has demonstrated that students' experiences within the household influences their performance at school, yet is often ignored by teachers and education policymakers. Thus there may be need for government, the Ministry of Education and NGOs to identify the needs of schoolgirls in the context of their socio-cultural environment in order to develop effective policies to address them. Although the Girls' Education Unit's (GEU) policies and interventions are proving the most successful way of addressing the economic and material needs of schoolgirls such as the provision of scholarships, school lunch, uniforms and learning materials, such measures were limited to a few needy girls who excelled in education, due to lack of adequate resources to reach out to many girls in poor rural communities in the region. There is therefore the need for government to significantly equip GEU to be more efficient in addressing the needs of schoolgirls. I recommend that gender specific measures be designed for girls in national plans, policies and programmes to improve access to education. This could include measures to extend financial support to households with large families in poor communities as well as women in income generating activities to improve upon their economic situation and be able to support their children's education. Moreover, I would recommend the government develop strategies to support and regulate the activities of traditional apprenticeship training schemes in the country to ensure that apprentices work in good conditions and acquire the necessary skills relevant to secure jobs in the labour market. The government should also extend financial support to dropouts who cannot afford to pay the costs of apprenticeship since some of the trades, for example, hair dressing requires a high fee and expensive equipment.

The study suggests that culture determines gender role expectations and these in turn influence parents' decisions as to whom to send and support in school. The strongly entrenched division of labour that over-dependes on girls' labour in the household constrains their educational access and outcomes. Generally, it would appear from my research results that girls are valued less than boys in the study area as a result of their perceived social and economic role in society. This implies that for girls' education to be effective in Ghana there is the need to challenge the traditional cultural norms, beliefs and values that subordinate women and girls. I advocate the need to raise the

level of awareness to sensitise parents and the general public at large about the significance for socio-cultural change which is important in promoting girls' education in Ghana. It is also important for parents to gain the awareness that the gender of a child is far less important than the opportunities the child is given in life, especially the opportunity to have quality education. This suggests developing strategies in education to break down gender boundaries between the appropriate activities and interest for schoolboys and girls as well as male and female teachers. Boys, in particular should be encouraged from their earliest years to share domestic responsibilities with girls. Additionally, there is a need to encourage more careful parenting of girls and to promote attitudes such as assertiveness, confidence and self determination to help them to overcome the difficulties they face in education. Finally, the differences in the value placed on girls and on boys, particularly in the patrilineal north of Ghana must be kept to the forefront in any debate or policy action on education. This would help to overcome major barriers based on gender inequality, including equal access to education and the labour market, leading to narrowing the gender gap in society.

In Ghana, it is a constitutional requirement for government to provide quality education for all children; however the research findings revealed that the study school lacked adequate school infrastructure such as furniture, sanitation facilities and educational materials to provide a favourable environment for learning and to promote the general wellbeing of students and girls in particular. To some extent schools determine student's welfare by providing a healthy or unfriendly environment. Thus, this study recommends that government needs to prioritize investment in education and to develop policies to improve the financing of education in such a way as to provide adequate educational facilities for all schools to eliminate the long existing gender and spatial inequalities between the rural and urban communities. Furthermore, the Ministry of Local Government should commit to implementing the Ministry of Education's standardized infrastructure policy that integrates separate toilets for girls in every school in Ghana to provide a healthy environment for children to learn and to improve their wellbeing and academic performance. It is important that toilet designs should include changing facilities for girls to change during their menstruation periods and convenient hand washing facilities to encourage positive hygiene behaviour in children and limit the spread of disease among children, staff and their families (Adams et al, 2009). To

ensure maximum use of these facilities, the study suggests that schools take into account the cultural and social conditions prevalent in the community in the design and building of toilets for students and teachers. Such facilities provide opportunities for greater gender equality in access to education, and create educational opportunities for the promotion of gender friendly environments at school and in communities (UNICEF, 2008). Schools should also ensure proper maintenance of school facilities by carrying out periodic repairs to ensure sustainability of school infrastructure such as classrooms, furniture and toilets, as well as the learning environment.

The research results indicate that girls are affected by violence, sexual harassment, and gender discrimination in the classroom and poor enforcement of policies and laws regarding issues such as corporal punishment and sexual abuse. A hostile school environment also serves to discourage girls from attending school. Heads of educational institutions should lay down secured and clear procedures for students, especially girls, to feel safe and confident to report any incidents of violence to appropriate authorities. My research also calls on government to reform the laws to completely ban corporal punishment in schools and to exercise the courage and political will to implement existing laws that defend and protect women and adolescent girls from the risks of gender violence and discrimination which threaten their well-being and life opportunities. In particular, the Ministry of Education should institute stringent punishment for male teachers, and schoolboys who are implicated in schoolgirls' sexual abuse or pregnancy. Government and NGOs should promote gender consciousness-raising campaigns to protect girls' rights to education, protection from exploitation, violence and abuse, and rights to participate in all decisions affecting them, within the family, school and community. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education should put in place appropriate measures that would encourage and support all schoolgirls who become pregnant while they are still in school to continue with their education during their pregnancy as well as provide economic and child care support after delivery since pregnancy was identified as one of the major causes of school dropout among girls. It is importance to make vital information on sexual and reproductive health accessible to girls through sex education in schools to enable them practice safe sex and make informed decisions about their life.

The findings revealed that teachers did not perceive gender inequalities as an important issue in the teaching-learning process; therefore it was no surprise that they were biased against girls in their teaching. Most of the teachers in the study were of the opinion that boys have a higher aptitude for academic work than girls. The lack of attention to girls in the classroom results in their under-performance in school. The results of this research clearly show that gendered expectations of teachers affect girls' experiences of education, subject choice and career aspirations. It is therefore important to improve the teaching-learning process to encourage participation of girls in the classroom. Teacher training is one of the areas in which the maximum change can be achieved from a gender perspective. The current teacher training education in Ghana was not designed to take into consideration gender issues. It is therefore important to reform teacher education to make it gender-sensitive to ensure that a household's discriminatory attitudes and practices are not reinforced in schools. Thus it is essential to include principles that promote values such as equity, tolerance and competence in teacher training, specifically the principle of gender equality at all levels of the educational system. This would require the Ghana Education Service and relevant departments to develop and constantly organise in-service gender-awareness training schemes for trained teachers, especially in the teaching context. Gender-awareness education is the way to influence teachers' values and change their attitudes towards girls by giving them priority attention, particularly in the classroom to stimulate their interest in learning and improve upon their academic performance. If teachers can inculcate in students values based on gender equity and behave in an unbiased or gender-aware manner in classrooms, they will be promoting equality of opportunity and expectation for both boys and girls in school. The Ghana Ministry of Education should continue to provide and increase the scholarship schemes for female teacher trainees to attract more girls into the teaching profession to serve as role models. Girls who need counselling about issues like menstruation, for example, will find a female teacher more easily approachable. Lack of adequate guidance and counselling for students in secondary school also contribute to gender segregation in students' choice of subjects and careers. The Ghana Education Service should therefore emphasize the provision of adequate guidance and counselling services at all levels of education so that students, particularly girls can make better informed choices to break down the sex-stereotyped attitudes and choices. Girls should be advised and encouraged to discard the idea that science and

mathematics are meant for boys or are too difficult to learn. Furthermore, the science and mathematics clinics organised for girls in secondary schools should continue and be intensified. Teachers should arouse the interest of girls in science and mathematics by relating teaching to girls' interests and everyday life. Teachers also need to be encouraged to move into non traditional subject areas, with more female teachers choosing mathematics, science and technical subjects and more male teachers taking home economics, religious education and languages. This would serve as an example for students to emulate.

However, for teachers to put out their best in the classroom to motivate students to learn, they too need to be motivated in order to boost their morale and commitments. It is therefore significant for the government of Ghana to rededicate its efforts to improve the working conditions of teachers. Motivating teachers could be in the form of incentives ranging from increased salaries, affordable housing and medical care, especially in rural communities. Furthermore, teachers should be given opportunities for career advancement to increase their commitment to the teaching profession. This is in accordance with Maslow's (1970) 'need hierarchy' which proposes that human beings seek to satisfy their basic needs before higher level needs. Unless teachers' basic survival needs for food, shelter and security are satisfied, their motivation may remain low which in turn can have negative impacts on their competence and overall performance and thus learning outcomes of students.

Though these recommendations are laudable to achieving gender equality, they are likely to face formidable challenges in translating them into actionable plans because deep-seated social-cultural attitudes and practices which placed low value on girls' education die hard in the study area. For example, the provision of economic and child care support would fail to encourage schoolgirl mothers to return to school if the government does not address the stigmatizing ways communities and schools react to pregnant and teenage mothers. Other challenges highlighted in the study include the high levels of poverty at both household and national levels which constraint the provision of adequate educational resources leading to poor quality of education, high demand for girls' labour, opportunity costs of sending girls to school, sexual harassment,

corporal punishment, long distance to school, lack of broader policy implementation and gender discrimination. Collectively, these factors create widespread resistance to changing attitudes within the families, schools and communities in the study area and in Ghana in general and further reinforce the cultural norms that limit girls' access to education.

Due to time and economic constrain the study was not able to investigate into teachers' perceptions of the formal and hidden curriculum and their impact on the identity formation of boys and girls in school. It is important, therefore, that further research be conducted to examine how the formal and hidden curriculums shape school children's identities. Additionally, there is need for further research to explore and test the best gender sensitive interventions and policies that would be responsive to local contexts, particularly where local values and interests seem to conflict with national policy to promote gender equality in the Ghanaian education system. I also suggest the need for further similar research needs to focus on gender issues in education in other regions of Ghana to ascertain the nature and pattern of the gender gap in education countrywide so that appropriate measures could be instituted to address them.

In this thesis, I have been able to examine the persistence of gender inequalities in secondary education in Ghana by focusing on students' experiences within the school and household. The research has highlighted the complex ways in which the school and the home work together to constrain schoolgirl's opportunities in education in Ghana. I highlight the various systems that perpetuate gender inequality. These relate to structures of discrimination such as the patrilineal systems, discriminatory socio-cultural practices, gender, extreme poverty, geographical location, and religion in northern Ghana. Gender inequality in education is therefore not caused by a single factor alone, but rather from the interaction of various systems and identities within the schools and the communities in which students live. This call for greater commitment on the part of the government of Ghana and other organisations, especially the Ministry of Women and Children to develop a gender-awareness policy and measures that would promote gender equality in all ministries, departments and in all public institutions nationwide. It is only when parents, teachers and society as a whole realize the

importance of providing equal treatment and opportunity to boys and girls in all aspect of life, and particularly in education, will the UN Millennium Development Goals of universal education for all and gender equality in education come closer to being achieved.

References

Adams et al, (eds.) (2009) *Water, sanitation and hygiene standards for schools in low-cost settings*, World Health Organization.

Abadzi, H. (2007) *Absenteeism and Beyond: Instruction Time Loss and Consequences*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4376.

http://www.wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2007/10/11/000158349_20071011084130/Rendered/PDF/wps4376.pdf accessed on 10/07/06.

Abantu for Development (2004) *The Women's Manifesto for Ghana*, The Coalition on the Women's Manifesto for Ghana, Accessed 23-01-08 <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/ghana/02983.pdf>.

Abraha, S. et al., (1991) 'What Factors Shape Girls' School Performance? Evidence from Ethiopia', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 11 (2), 107 – 118.

Abraham, C., Rubaale, T. & Kipp, W. (1995) HIV-preventive cognitions among secondary school students in Uganda, *Health Education Research: theory and practice*, 10, 155–162.

Acheampong, P. (1992) *Factors that Impede Females from Attaining High Level Education: A Case Study of Female Dropouts in Mataheko*, Unpublished Undergraduate Dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of Ghana, Legon.

Acker, S. (1994) *Gendered Education: Sociological Reflections on Women, Teaching and Feminism*, Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Adanu, R.M.K, Ntummy, M.N. and Tweneboah, E. (2005) 'Profile of women with abortion complications in Ghana', *Tropical Doctor*, (35), 139-142.

Adinkrah, M. (2004) 'Witchcraft Accusations and Female Homicide Victimization in Contemporary Ghana', *Violence against Women*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 325-356. SAGE Online journal, <http://vaw.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/10/4/325> Accessed-23-01-08.

Adjasi, C. and Osei, K. (2007) 'Poverty Profile and Correlates of Poverty in Ghana', *International Journal of Social Economics*, 34, (7).

Adomako-Ampofo, A. (2001) 'When Men Speak Women Listen: Gender Socialisation and Young Adolescents' Attitudes to Sexual and Reproductive Issues', *African Journal of Reproductive Health*, 5 (3), 196-212.

- Adongo, E. et al, (1998) 'Female genital mutilation: Socio-cultural factors that influence the practice in Kassena- Nankana District, Ghana', *African Journal of Reproductive Health*, 2 (2), 25–36.
- Afenyadu, D. and Goparaju, L. (2003) *Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Behaviour in Dodowa, Ghana*, Washington, DC: CEDPA, Accessed on 21-08-08. http://www.cedpa.org/publications/pdf/ghana_arhbehavior.pdf
- African Development Fund (2008) Ghana Country Gender Profile; Human Development Department, (Oshd) <http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/ADF-BD-IF-2008-237-EN-GHANA-COUNTRY-GENDER-PROFILE.PDF> .
- African Elections Database (2006) *Elections in Ghana*, Accessed on 14-02-08. <http://africanelections.tripod.com/gh.html>
- African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), (2005) *APRM, Country Review Report of the Republic of Ghana*, June 2005, Accessed on 07-12-2007. <http://www.nepad.org/2005/files/aprm/APRMGhanareport.pdf>
- Agarwal, B. (1997) "Bargaining" and Gender relations: Within and Beyond the household', *Feminist Economics*, (1) 1-51.
- Agawal, B. (2004) "Bargaining" and Gender Relations: Within and Beyond the Household', *Feminist Economics*, 3 (1) 1-51.
- Agbenyega, S. J. (2006) 'Corporal Punishment in the Schools of Ghana: Does Inclusive Education Suffer?' *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 33 (3), 107.
- Aggleton, P. & Campbell, C. (2000) 'Working with young people-towards an agenda for sexual health', *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*, 15, 283–296.
- Agyei-Mensah, S. (2006) 'Poverty and HIV prevalence in Ghana: a geographical perspective' *GeoJournal*, 66(4), 311-324.
- Agyeman, D. K. (1991) 'Training in Educational Research' *Journal of the Institute of Education*, 2(1), University of Cape Coast.
- Agyeman, D. K. (1993) *Sociology of Education for African Students*, Accra: Black Mask Ltd.
- Ahadzie, W. (2000) 'Ghana's Education Reform: Equalising Opportunities or Marginalising the Poor?' Social Policy, *Journal of the Centre for Social Policy Studies* 1(2), 18-33, University of Ghana: Legon.
- Ahiadeke, C. (2001) 'Incidence of Induced Abortion in Southern Ghana', *International Family Planning Perspectives*, 27 (2) 96-101.

Ahlberg, B.M. (1994) 'Is there a distinct African sexuality? A critical response to Caldwell', *Africa*, 64, 220-242.

Aidoo, A. A. (1995) 'Women in the history and culture of Ghana', in M. Prah (Ed.) *Women's studies with a focus on Ghana: Selected readings* (pp. 206-226), Schriesheim, Germany: Books on African Studies.

Akweongo, B. et al. (2001) *The women's thing: Gender roles sustaining the practice of female genital mutilation in northern Ghana*, Paper presented at the 2001 annual meetings of the Population Association of America, Washington, DC. 29–31, March.

Akyeampong, A. K., et al., (2007) *Access to Basic Education in Ghana: The Evidence and the Issues*, Country Analytic Report: CREATE, University of Sussex, -Accessed on 15-11-07.

http://www.create-rpc.org/pdf%20documents/Ghana_CAR_Executive_Summary.pdf

Akyeampong, A. K. & Lewin K. (2002) 'From Student Teachers to Newly Qualified Teachers in Ghana: Insights into Becoming a Teacher', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 22 (3/4).

Akyeampong, A.K. (2004) 'Aid for self-help effort? A sustainable alternative route to basic education in Ghana', *Journal of International Cooperation in Education*, 7 (1), 41–52.

Akyeampong, D. K. and Murphy, R. (1997) 'Beyond Numbers: Extending the Scope of Educational Research through Qualitative method', *Journal of the Institute of Education*, 3 (4) 4-13, University of Cape Coast.

Akuffo, F. O. (1987) 'Teenage pregnancies and school dropouts: The relevance of family life education and vocational training to girl's employment opportunities', in C. Oppong (ed.) *Sex Roles, Population and Development in West Africa*, (p: 154-164), London: James Currey.

Alenuma, S. (2002) 'The Dagaare-Speaking Communities of West Africa', *Journal of Dagaare Studies*, (2).

Allen, L. (2004) 'Beyond the birds and the bees: constituting a discourse of erotics in sexuality education', *Gender and Education*, 16, (2).

Amankrah, J.Y. (2001) *Ghana's experience in apprenticeship training and other skills development initiatives in the informal sector*, Vocational Skills and informal sector Support Project/Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment, Accra.

Ameahame, G. (1991) *School Dropout among Adolescent Girls of Agortime in Volta Region*, Unpublished undergraduate Dissertation, Sociology Department of Legon.

- Amin, S. Quayes, S. and Rive J. M. (2006) 'Market work and household work as deterrents to schooling in Bangladesh', *World Development*, 34(7), 1271–1286.
- Amoo, P. K. (2008) Hazardous Child Labour Activity Framework for the Cocoa Sector in Ghana, Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment.
- Ampofo, A. A. (2000) Gender Inequalities, power in unions, and reproductive decision making in Ghana, Nashville: Vanderbilt University.
- Ampofo, A.A. (1993) Controlling and Punishing Women: Violence against Ghanaian Women, in *Review of African Political Economy*, No 56, March 1993.
- Ampofo, D. A. (1970) 'The dynamics of induced abortions and the social implications for Ghana', *Ghana Medical Journal*, 295–302.
- Anamuah-Mensah, J., Asabere-Ameyaw, A. and Dennis, S. (2007) 'Bridging the gap: Linking School and the World of Work in Ghana', *Journal of Career and Technical Education*, 23(1), 139.
- Anderson-Levitt, K.M., Bloch, M. and Soumare, A. M. (1998) 'Inside Classrooms in Guinea: Girls' Experiences', in M. Bloch, J. A. Beoku-Betts, and B.R. Tabachnick (eds.) *Women and Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Power, Opportunities and Constraints*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Anderson, M. (1988) 'Individual Household Strategies', in M. Anderson, F. Bechrofer and J. Gershuny (eds.) *The Social and Political Economy of the Household*, Oxford: University Press.
- Angrosino, V. M. and Mays de Perez. A. K. (2000) Rethinking Observation: From Method to Context, in Denzin, K. N. and Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, (2nd Edition), London: SAGE.
- Ankomah, A. (1999) 'Sex, Love, Money and AIDS: The Dynamics of Premarital Sexual Relationships in Ghana', *Sexualities* 2(3), 291-308.
- Ankomah, A. Y. (1990) *Female Participation in Secondary Education in rural Areas of Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana*, Unpublished Thesis to the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA).
- Ankomah, A. Y. (1996) 'Premarital relationships and livelihoods in Ghana, in C. Sweetman (Ed.) *Women Employment and Exclusion*, 39-47, Oxford: Oxfam.
- Anku, S. E. (2009) *Maths must be made lively*, GNA <http://topics.myjoyonline.com/education/200903/27836.asp> accessed on 25-03-09.
- Antwi, M. K. (1992) *Education, Society and Development in Ghana*; Accra: Unimax Publishers Ltd.

- Appiah-Kubi (2003) *Micro Impact of Macroeconomic and Adjustment Policies, Education Inequalities in Ghana*, MIMPA-Ghana Research Report, No. 001 Accra: Centre for Policy Analysis.
- Appleton, S. Hoddinott, J. and J. Mackinnon (1996) 'Education and health in sub-Saharan Africa' *Journal of International Development*, 8(3), 307-339.
- Appleton, S. and P. Collier, (1990) *Agriculture and the Macro-economy: Consequences of Negative External Shocks in Ghana and the Cote d'Ivoire: 1979-87*, World Employment Programme: Rural Employment Policy Research Programme Working Paper 103, Geneva, ILO, November.
- Arko, S. (2001) *A Comparative Study of Family Size Preference among Women in Ghana and Kenya*, M.A. dissertation, Regional Institute for Population Studies, University of Ghana: Legon.
- Arnot, M. (2002) *Reproducing Gender, Essays on Educational Theory and Feminist Politics*, London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Arnot, M., David, M. and Weiner, G. (1999) *Closing the Gender Gap. Postwar Education and Social Change*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Arnot, M. and Dillabough, J. (eds.) (2000) *Challenging Democracy: feminist perspectives on the education of citizens*, London: Routledge.
- Arnot, M. and Mac an Ghail, M. (2006) '(Re) Contextualising Gender studies in Education: Schooling in late Modernity', in Arnot, M. and Mac an Ghail, M. (eds.) *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in Education and gender*, London: Routledge.
- Assie-Lumumba, N. T. (2000) 'Educational and economic reforms, gender equity, and access to schooling in Africa', *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 41(1), 89-120.
- Association of Church Development Projects (ACDEP) (2007) *The Upper West Region*, ACDEP <http://www.acdep.org/Regions/UpperWestRegion.php> accessed on 02/16/09
- Atkinson, R. (1998) *The life Story interview*, London: Sage.
- Awumbila, M (2006) 'Gender equality and poverty in Ghana: implications for poverty reduction strategies', *GeoJournal* (67), 149–161.
- Awumbila, M. (1997) 'Gender and structural adjustment in Ghana: A case study in northeast Ghana', in A. Awotona, & N. Teymur (Eds.) *Tradition, location and community: Place making and development*, 161–172, Aldershot: Avebury.
- Awumbila, M. (2001) 'Women and gender equality in Ghana: A situational analysis', in E. Tsikata (ed.) *Gender training in Ghana: Trends in politics, issues and tools*, 33–59, Accra: Woeli.

Awumbila, M. (2006) *The gendered face of poverty: female porter's adaptive responses to poverty in urban Ghana* Paper presented at the 49th African Studies Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, 16–19 November 2006.

Awumbila, M. & Momsen, J. H. (1995) 'Gender and the environment: Women's time use as a measure of environmental change', *Global Environmental Change*, 5(5), 337–346.

Awusabo-Asare, K., Abane, M.A. and Kumi-Kyereme K. (2004) *Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health in Ghana: A synthesis of Research Evidence*, Occasional Report, New York: The Allan Guttmacher and future Institute, No.13. http://www.agi-usa.org/pubs/or_no13.pdf.

Awusabo-Asare, K. (1990) 'Matriliney and the New Intestate Succession Law of Ghana', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 24 (1), 1-16.

Awusabo-Asare, K., J.K. Anarfi and K.K. Agyeman (1993) 'Women's Control Over their Sexuality and the Spread of STDs and HIV/AIDS in Ghana', *Health Transition Review*, Vol. 3, Supplementary Issue.

Awusabo-Asare, K., Abane, M. A. and Kumi-Kyereme K. (2004) *Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health in Ghana: A synthesis of Research Evidence*, Occasional Report, New York: The Allan Guttmacher Institute, No.13.

Axinn, William G. (1993) 'The Effects of Children's Schooling on Fertility', *Population Studies*, 47 (3), 481-493.

Ayelazuno, J (2007) 'Democracy and Conflict Management in Africa: Is Ghana a Model or a Paradox?', *African Journal of International Affairs*, 10(1/2), 13–36. http://www.codesria.org/Links/Publications/ajia_10_1_07/ayelazumo.pdf

Baden, S., Green, C., Otoo-Oyortey, N and Peasgood, T. (1994) *Background paper on gender issues in Ghana*, Report prepared for the West and North Africa Department, Department for Overseas Development (DFID), UK. Accessed- 21-11-07 <http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports/re19c.pdf>

Barbara Herz and Gene B. Sperling (2004) *What Works in Girls' Education: Evidence and Policies from the Developing World*, Council on Foreign Relations Inc.

Barnett, T. (2004) 'Postscript: HIV/AIDS-How Bad does bad have it be before we believe in bad? How can we translate words to deed?' *Journal of International Development*, 16 (7), 943-949.

Barnett, T. and Whiteside (2002) *HIV/AIDS in the twenty-first century: Disease and Globalization*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Barriteau, V. E. (2000) *Feminist Theory and Development: Implications for Policy*,

- Research, and Action, in Barriteau, V. E., Parpart, J. L., & Connelly, M. P (eds.) *Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Development*, Ottawa, ON: International Development Research Centre.
- Barton, A. C. (1998) 'Teaching Science with Homeless children: Pedagogy, representation, and identity', *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 35, 379-394.
- Baryeh, E. A. et al. (2000) 'Ghanaian women and the engineering profession', *International Journal of Mechanical Engineering Education*, 28(4), 335-346.
- Bassett T. J. (1993) Introduction: The land question and agricultural transformation in Sub-Saharan Africa, in T. J. Bassett and D. E. Crummey (eds.) *Land in African Agrarian Systems* Madison, Wis., USA: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Basu, K. (2001) *Gender and say: an intra-household model of household behaviour*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Becker, S. H. (1999) 'Problems of Inference and Proof in Participant Observation', in Bryman, A. and Burgess, G. R. (Eds.) *Qualitative Research*, Vol. 2, London: SAGE.
- Benavot, A. (1989) 'Education, Gender, and Economic Development: A Cross-National' Study; *Sociology of Education*, 62, (1), 14-32.
- Bendera, S. (1999) 'Promoting education for girls in Tanzania', in C. Heward and S. Bunawaree (eds.) *Gender, Education and Development: Beyond Access to Empowerment*, London, Zed Books, 117-132.
- Benefo, K. and Schultz, T. (1994) *Determinants of Fertility and Child Mortality in Cote D'Ivoire and Ghana*, LSMS Working Paper, Number 103. The World Bank: Washington.
- Bening, R. B. (1990) *A history of education in Northern Ghana, 1907-1976*, Accra, Ghana: Universities Press.
- Benneh, G. (1987) 'Land Tenure and Agro-forestry Land use Systems in Ghana', in J. B. Raintree (ed.) *Land, Trees and Tenure*, Nairobi: International Centre for Research in Agro-forestry, and Madison, Wis., USA: Land Tenure Centre.
- Benneh, G. and K.B. Dickson (1988) *A New Geography of Ghana*, Longman Group Ltd, Essex: England.
- Benneh, G., Kasanga, R. K. and Amoyaw, D. (1995) Women's Access to Agricultural Land in the Household: A case study of three selected districts in Ghana, Accra: FADEP.
- Bennell, P. (2005) 'The Impact of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic on the Schooling of Orphans and other directly affected Children in sub-Sahara Africa', *Journal of Development Studies*, 4 (3), 467-488.

Bennell, P. (nd.) The Impact of the Aids Epidemic on Teachers in Sub-Saharan Africa http://gametlibrary.worldbank.org/FILES/671_The%20impact%20of%20the%20AIDS%20epidemic%20on%20teachers.pdf accessed on 14/20/08

Bernard, R. H. (1995) *Research Methods in Anthropology Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, New York, Alta Mira.

Bhalotra, S. (2000) *Is child labour necessary?*, Econometric Society World Congress 2000, (Working Papers in Economics No. 0500).

Bhalotra, S.; Heady, C. (2000) *Child labour: theory and evidence*, International Centre for Economic Development, Discussion Paper Series, No. 24.

Birke, L. (2000) 'Sitting on the fence: biology, feminism and gender-bending environments', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 23(5), 587–599.

Blease, D. (1983) Observer Effects on Teacher and Pupils in Classroom Research, *Educational Review*, 35 (3), 213 – 217

Bleek, W. (1987) 'Family and family planning in Southern Ghana', in Opong, C. (ed.) *Sex Roles, Population and Development in West Africa*, London.

Boafo-Arthur, K. (1999) 'Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) in Ghana: Interrogating PNDC's Implementation', *West Africa Review*, 1 (1) Accessed-21-09-07 www.westafricareview.com/war/vol1.1/boafo.pdf.

Boakye, J. K. et al (1997) *Causes of Dropout from Basic Education in Ghana*, Accra: Ministry of Education, Ghana, Girls' education Unit.

Boateng, J. K. et al, (2006) *Gender Socialization of Pre-teen Youths in Ghana: Alternative Approaches for Extension*, AIAEE 22nd Annual Conference Proceedings, Cleawater Beach, Florida <http://www.aiaee.org/2006/Accepted/070.pdf> Accessed on 27-03-07.

Bodgan, R. and Biklen, S. (1992) *Qualitative for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods*, Boston, Mass: Allyn and Bacon.

Bond, J. (2005) (ed.) *Ghana: Women's Rights in Ghana, Uganda, and Tanzania*, Carolina: Academic Press.

Bortei-Doku A. E. (2001) *Human Capital Development for Socio-Economic Transformation Ghana in the 21st Century*, Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) Millennium Series, No. 8. University of Ghana: Legon.

Boserup, E. (1970) *Women's Role in Economic Development*, St. Martin's Press, New York.

- Boyle, E. (2004) *The Feminization of Teaching in America*, Program in women's studies <http://www.mit.edu/~womens-studies/writingPrize/eb04.html> 17/12/09.
- Brock, C. and Cammish, N.K. (1998) *Factors Affecting Female Participation in Education in Six Developing Countries*, Education Research Series, No. 9, London: ODA.
- Brown, C.K. (2003) *Sexual abuse of school children in Ghana*, Ghana: Centre for Development Studies, University of Cape Coast.
- Brydon, L. and Chant, S. (1989) *Women in the Third World: gender issues in rural and urban areas*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, USA.
- Bryman, A. (2001) *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*, London: Unwin Hyman
- Bryman, A. (2001) *Social Research Methods*, Oxford University Press.
- Bryman, A. and Burgess, G. R. (1994) *Analyzing Qualitative Data*, London: Routledge.
- Bunch, C. and Carrillo, R. (1990) 'Feminist perspectives on women in development', in Tinker, I. (ed.) *Persistent inequalities*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Burgess, R.G. (1984) *In the Field: An introduction to Field Research*, London: Routledge
- Burgess, R. G. (1985) *Strategies of Educational Research: Qualitative Methods*, London: Falmer Press.
- Burman, E. (1994) *Deconstructing developmental psychology*, London: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1990) *Gender Trouble, Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, London: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1999) *Gender Trouble* (10th Anniversary Ed.) New York: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1993) *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*, New York: Routledge.
- Byrne, E.M. (1978) *Women and Education*, London: Tavistock Publishers.
- Canagarajah, S. and Pörtner, C. (2003) *Evolution of Poverty and Welfare in Ghana in the 1990s: Achievements and Challenges*, Africa Region Working Paper Series No. 61. The World Bank: Washington.
- Canagarajaha, S. Newman, C. and Bhattamishra, R. (2001) 'Non-farm income, gender, and inequality: evidence from rural Ghana and Uganda', *Food Policy*, (26) 405–420.
- CARE (2002) *Alternative Routes to Basic Primary Education*, Atlanta: CARE.

CARE International, Ghana (2003) *Reaching Underserved Populations with Basic Education in Deprived Areas of Ghana: Emerging Good Practices*, Ghana: Washington DC: USAID.

Caroline O. N. Moser (1993) *Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice, and Training*. Routledge: New York Publication.

Casely-Hayford, L. (2007) *Gendered Experiences of Teaching in Poor Rural Areas of Ghana*, RECOUP Working Paper No. 8.

<http://recoup.educ.cam.ac.uk/publications/WP8-LCH.pdf> Accessed on 08-02-08.

Casely-Hayford, L. (2002a) *Situational Analysis of Gender Issues in Education: from Literate Girls to Educated Women*, Education Sector Review Report. Accra: Ministry of Education.

Casely-Hayford, L. (2001) *Education, Culture and Development in Northern Ghana: Micro Realities and Macro Context: Implications for Policy and Practice*, Seminar Report, Accra: World University service of Canada.

Casely-Hayford, L. (2002b) *Situational Analysis of Gender Issues in Education: from Literate Girls to Educated Women*, Education Sector Review Report. Accra: Ministry of Education.

Casely-Hayford, L. et al. (2003) “*Reaching Underserved Populations with Basic Education in Deprived Areas of Ghana: Emerging Good Practices*”. Accra and Washington, D.C.: CARE International and USAID.
http://www.dec.org/pdf_docs/PNACS140.pdf

Casely-Hayford, L. and Wilson, S. (2001) *How the Poor Get Poorer: Investigation of the Needs of Females teachers in Rural Deprived Areas*. Accra: Girls’ Education Unit, Ministry of Education.

CEDAW (2005) *Consideration of reports submitted by State Parties under Article 18 of the Convention; Ghana, Combined third, fourth and fifth periodic reports of States parties*, Ghana, /C/GHA/2-5.

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the United States, (2008) *World Fact Book* (http://www.theodora.com/wfbcurrent/ghana/ghana_people.html)

Chilisa, B. (2002) ‘National policies on pregnancy in education systems in Sub-Saharan Africa: the case of Botswana’. *Gender and Education*, 14(1): 21-35.

Chimombo, J. P. G. (2005) ‘Issues in Basic Education in Developing Countries: An Exploration of Policy Options for Improved Delivery’, *Journal of International Cooperation in Education*, 8(1), 129-152.

<http://home.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/cice/chimombo8-1.pdf>

Chowdhury, A., and Mushtaque, R. et al. (2002) ‘Enrolment at primary level: gender difference disappears in Bangladesh’, *International Journal of Educational Development*, 22 (2), 191-203.

Clacherty, G. et al.'s (2005) *Children's Experience of Corporal and Humiliating Punishment in Swaziland, A Quantitative and Qualitative Survey*, Summary report May 2005 in collaboration with Save the Children Swaziland Commissioned by Save the Children Sweden.

http://www.rapcan.org.za/sanchpc/documents/CP_Submission_ACERWC_final_3010_E.pdf

Clark, G., and T. Manuh, (1991) Women Traders in Ghana and the Structural Adjustment Program, in C.H. Gladwin (ed.) *Structural Adjustment and African Women Farmers*, Centre for African Studies, Gainesville: University of Florida Press.

Clarricoates, Katherine. (1978) 'Dinosaurs in the Classroom: A Re-examination of Some Aspects of the Hidden Curriculum in Primary Schools', *Women's Studies International Quarterly*, I,(4), 358-362.

Clisby, S., Holdsworth, S., Fairbank, A. and Miles, H. (2007) *Breakthrough: Researching Gendered Experiences of Education and Employment in Yorkshire and Humberside*, Research Report, UK.

Cockburn, J. (2000) *Child labour versus education: poverty constraints or income opportunities*, mimeo, Nuffield College, Oxford.

Cockburn, J. (2001) *Child labour versus education: poverty constraints or income opportunities?* Londres: MacMillan.

Cobbe, J. (1991) 'The Political economy of education reform in Ghana', in Rothchild, D. (ed.) *Ghana: the political economy of recovery*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 105-15.

Coeyman, M. (2000) *Bridging Ethiopia's Educational Gender Gap*, Christian Science Monitor, March 14.

Coffey, A. & Delamont, S. (2000) *Feminism and the Classroom Teacher*, London: Routledge/Falmer.

Cohen, L. and Manion, L (Eds.) (1994) *Research in Education, (4th Edition)*, London: Routledge.

Colclough, C. (2004) 'Achieving gender equality in education: How does it take?', *Prospects*, 34(1), 3-10.

Colclough, C., Al-Samarrai, S., Rose, P. and Tembon, M. (2003) *Achieving Schooling for All in Africa: Costs, Commitment and Gender*. Aldershot: UK, Ashgate.

Colclough, C., Rose, P. and Tembon, M. (2000) 'Gender Inequalities in Primary Schooling, The role of Poverty and adverse cultural practice', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 20(1), 5-28.

Colclough, C., Rose, P. and Tembon, M. (1998) *Gender Inequalities in Primary Schooling: the role of poverty and adverse cultural practice*, IDS Working Paper No. 78, Brighton, IDS.

Connell, R. W. (1987) *Gender & Power: Society, the person and sexual politics*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Connell, R. W. (1995) *Masculinities*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Connell, R. W. (2002) *Gender*. Cambridge: Polity press.

Cook R.J. and Dickens, B.M. (1981) 'Abortion laws in African commonwealth countries', *Journal of African Law*, 25(2), 60-79.

Coulombe, H. (2004) *Construction of the Census-Based Ghana Poverty Map*, Paper Presented at ISSER-Cornell International Conference on Ghana at the Half Century, Accra, July 2004.

Cotteril, P. and Letherby, G. (1994) "'The person" in the Researcher Studies', *Studies in qualitative Methodology*, 4, 107-136.

Croft, A. (2000) *Gender Gaps in Primary Schools and Colleges: Can teacher education policy improve gender equity?* Muster Discussion Paper 14, University of Sussex Muster Project, UK.

Daily Graphic (2009) *National Association of Graduate Teachers (NAGRAT) threatens to go on strike*,
<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=172448>

Daily Guide (2009) *Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF) Punches Mills*, 12 October, 2009, <http://www.modernghana.com/news/242933/1/wildaf-punches-mills.html>

Danso-Manu, K.B. (2004) *Education, Poverty and Public expenditure in Ghana, 2003*, GSS: Accra.

Date-Bah, E., (1986) 'Sex Segregation and Discrimination in Accra-Tema: Causes and Consequences', in R. Anker et al., (eds.) *Sex Inequalities in Urban Employment in the Third World*, ILO Studies Series, Basingstoke: MacMillan.

David, M. (2002) 'Problems of participation: the limits of action research', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology: Theory and Practice*, 5(1), 11-17.

David, M. and Sutton, D. C. (2004) *Social Research: The Basics*, London: Sage.

Davies, B. & Banks, C. (1992) 'The gender trap: a feminist Poststructuralist analysis of primary school children's talk about gender', *Journal of curriculum studies*, 24(1), 1-25.

- Dei, G. J. S. (2004a) 'Dealing with difference: ethnicity and gender in the context of schooling in Ghana', *International Journal of Educational Development*, (24) 343–359.
- Dei, G. J. S. (2004b) *Schooling and educational reforms in Africa: the case of Ghana*, Trenton, New Jersey: African World Press.
- Denis, A. and Martin, P. J. (2005) Symbolic Interactionism and the concept of power, *The British Journal of Sociology*, 56(2), 191-213.
- DeRose, L.F. (2004) *Marriage, lineage, relative spousal influence and fertility decline in Ghana*, Paper presented in the 2004 Population Association of America Conference, Boston.
- Delamonica, E., Mehrotra, S. and Vandemootele, J. (2004) 'Education for All: How Much Will it Cost?' *Development and Change*, 35 (1), 3-30.
- Delamont, S. (1990) *Sex Roles and the School*, London: Routledge.
- DFID (2005a) *DFID Review of Health and Education Progress (RHEP), Country level Report on the education sector in Ghana*, Mimeo, DFID Ghana: Accra.
- DFID (2007) *Gender Equality at the Heart of Development: Why the role of women is crucial to ending world poverty*, <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/gender-equality.pdf> Accessed-25-03-08.
- Djamba, Y. (1997) 'Financial capital and premarital sexual activity in Africa: The case of Zambia', *Population Research and Policy Review*, 16, 243–257 <http://www.springerlink.com/content/j8607hr3j82204g6/fulltext.pdf> accesses on 17-10-07.
- Deem R. (1978) *Women and Schooling*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Diorio, J. (1985) 'Contraception, copulation, domination, and the theoretical barrenness of sex education literature', *Educational Theory*, 35, 239–254.
- Diorio, J. & Munro, J. (2000) Doing harm in the name of protection: menstruation as a topic for sex education, *Gender and Education*, 12, 347–365.
- Dolphyne, A. F. (1987) 'The Ghana National Council on Women and Development: An example of concerted action', in Oppong, C. (ed.) *Sex Roles Population and Development in West Africa*, London: Heinemann, 213-220.
- Dourinaah, E. and Dery, S. (2001) *Report on District Level Consultation Upper West Region*, GNECC.
- Driessen, G. (2007) 'The Feminization of Primary Education: Effects of Teachers' Sex on Pupil Achievement, Attitudes and Behaviour', *International review of education*, 53(2), 183-203.
- Duncan, B. (1997) *Women in agriculture in Ghana*, Accra: FES/FIDA.

Duncan, B. A. (2004) *Women in Agriculture in Ghana*, Ghana: Friederich Ebert Foundation.

Dunne (2007) 'Gender, sexuality and schooling: Everyday life in junior secondary schools in Botswana and Ghana', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 27, 499–511.

Dunne, M. and Leach, F. et al (2005) *Gendered school experiences: The impact on retention and achievement in Botswana and Ghana*, Education Research Report, No. 56 DFID. <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/genschoolbotsghanaedpaper56.pdf> 05-06-07.

Dunne, M. and King, R. (2003) 'Outside theory: an exploration of the links between education and work for Ghanaian market traders', *Journal of Education and Work*, 16(1), 27 – 44.

Dunne, M., S. Humphreys and F. Leach (2006) 'Gender violence in schools in the developing world', *Gender and Education* 18(1): 75-98.

Dunne, M., S. Humphreys and F. Leach (2003) *Gender violence in schools*, UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4, Background Paper, on line at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001467/146752e.pdf> Accessed on 18 May 07.

Dzorgbo, D. (2001) *Ghana in Search of Development. The Challenge of Governance, Economic Management and Institution Building*, Ashgate: Aldershot.

Dzobo, N. K. (1974) *The Report of the Education Review Committee - The New Structure and Content of Education for Ghana*, Accra: Ghana Ministry of Education.

Effah, P. (2003) 'Ghana', in D. Teferra and P. Altbach (eds.) *African Higher Education: An International Reference Handbook*, Indiana: IUP, Accessed -27-03-08 <http://www.gse.buffalo.edu/org/IntHigherEdFinance/CountryProfiles/Africa/Ghana.pdf>

Ellis, F. (2000) *Rural livelihoods Diversity in Developing Countries*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Epstein, D. et al (2001) 'Boys and girls come out to play: making masculinities and femininities in school playgrounds', *Men & Masculinities*, 4 (2), 158–172.

Epstein, D. (1997) '“Boyz’ Own Stories: masculinities and sexualities in schools', *Gender and Education*, 9, 105–115.

Ertürk Yakin (2008) *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences*, Addendum Mission to Ghana, February, 2008. Accessed-09-05-08.

<http://64.233.183.104/search?q=cache:Yd1nHFAUI14J:www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/7session/A.HRC.7.6.Add.3.doc+The+Gambaga+Outcast+Home&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=9&gl=uk>

Evans, K. (1995) *Barriers to participation of women in technical education and the role of long distance education*, Commonwealth of Learning Occasional Paper.

- Evans, R. (2003) *Negotiating Childhood: The Gendered Experiences of Street Children and Children in Difficult Circumstances in Tanzania*, Thesis Presented to University of Hull for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.
- Evans, R. (2002) 'Poverty, HIV/AIDS, and Barriers to Education: Street Children Experiences in Tanzania', *Gender and Development* 10(3), 51-62.
- Europa Yearbook (1982) *A World Survey*, Vol. 2, 382, London: Europa.
- Ezeh, A. (1993) 'The influence of spouses over each other's contraceptive attitude in Ghana', *Studies in Family Planning*, 24, 163 – 74.
- Fallon, K. (1999) 'Education and Perceptions of Social Status and Power among Women in Larteh, Ghana', *Africa Today*, 46, 67-91.
- Fenrich, J., Higgins, T. E. (2001). 'Promise Unfulfilled: Law, Culture and Women's Inheritance Rights in Ghana' *Fordham International Law Journal*, 25: 259-341. <http://law.fordham.edu/documents/doc-8789.pdf>
- Fentiman, A., Hall, A. and Bundy, D. (2001) 'Health and cultural factors associated with environment in basic education: a study in rural Ghana', *Social Science and Medicine*, 52, 429-439.
- Filmer, D. (2001) *Educational attainment and enrolment profiles: a resource book. Based on an analysis of demographic and health survey data*, Washington, D. C., Development Research Group.
- Finn, J., Dulberg, L. and Reis, J. (1979) 'Sex Differences in Educational Attainment', *Harvard Educational Review*, 49, 477-503.
- Firebaugh, G. (2001) 'The America Sociological Review (ASR) review process', *America Sociological Review*, 66, 619-621.
- Fontana. A. and Frey, H. J. (2000) 'The Interview: From Structured Questions to Text', in Denzin, K. N. and Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, (2nd Edition), London: SAGE.
- Ford, E. L (2002) *Women and Politics: The Pursuit of Equality*, Houghton Mifflin Company-Berkeley.
- Forum for African Women Educationist (1995) *Girls and African Education*, Nairobi: Kenya, FAWE.
- Forum for African Women Educationist (FAWE) (2000) 'Closing the Gender Gap in Education; Curbing Dropout', *FAWE Newsletter*, 8(3).

- Foster, P. (1965a) *Education and Social Change in Ghana*, Routledge and Kegan Paul: London.
- Francis, B. (2001) 'Beyond Postmodernism: Feminist Agency in Educational Research', in B. Francis and C. Skelton, (eds.) *Investigating Gender: Contemporary Perspectives in Education*, Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Francis, B. (2000a) 'The Gender Subject- Students' Subject Preferences and Discussions of Gender and Subject Ability', *Oxford Review of Education*, 26 (1), 35-48.
- Francis, B. (2000b) *Boys, Girls and Achievement: Addressing the classroom issues*, London: Routeledge, Falmer.
- Francis, B. (2005a) Girls in the classroom: new research, old inequalities, http://www.sare-emakunde.com/media/anual/archivosAsociados/Francis.B_05_in.pdf Accessed on 01-04-09
- Francis, B. (2005b) 'Not/Knowing Their Place: Girls, Classroom Behaviour', in: G. Lloyd (ed.) *Problem Girls*, London: Routeledge.
- Francis, B. (2002) 'Is the future really female? The impact and implications of gender for 14–16 year olds' career choices', *Journal of Education and Work*, 15 (1), 75 – 88.
- Francis, B. and Skelton, C. (eds.) (2001) *Investigating Gender: Contemporary Perspectives in education*, Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Francis, B. and Skelton, C. (2005) *Reassessing gender and Achievement*, London: Falmer.
- Furusawa, R. (2006) *Polygamy in Modern Ghana -A statistic analysis of a case in Accra, African Traditional Kingdoms Studies, Vol. 3*, Republic of Ghana.
- Gadzekpo, A. (2001) Gender Discourses and Representational Practices in Gold Coast Newspapers, *A Journal of Cultural and African Women Studies*, (1) 2. <http://www.jendajournal.com/vol1.2/gadzekpo.html>
- Gage, A. J. & Meekers, D. (1994) 'Sexual activity before marriage in sub-Saharan Africa', *Social Biology*, 41, 44–60.
- Garner, J. (1972) 'Some Aspect of behaviour in Infant Classrooms,' *Research in Education*, 7, 28-47.
- Gasperini, L. and Atchoarena, D. (2005) *Education for Rural People to achieve EFA and the MDGs*, Background paper by FAO, Sustainable Development Department, UNESCO, Paris. <http://www.fao.org/SD/ERP/documents2005/WGEFA%20background.pdf>, Accessed on 18-05-07
- Gedzi, V. (2009) *Women and Property Inheritance after Intestate Succession, Law III in Ghana*, A paper presented at IAFFE Conference, Boston: 25-28 June 2009.

https://editorialexpress.com/cgi-bin/conference/download.cgi?db_name=IAFFE2009&paper_id=325

Gertler, P, and Glewwe, P. (1992) 'The Willingness to Pay for Education for Daughters in Contrast to Sons: Evidence from Rural Peru,' *The World Bank Economic Review*, 6(1): 171-188.

Ghana (1992) *The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana*, Accra, Ghana: Assembly Press.

Ghana AIDS Commission, (2003) *A Situational Appraisal of HIV/AIDS Activities in Ghana 2002*, Accra, Ghana: Ghana AIDS Commission.

Ghana Aids Commission (2010) Ghana's Progress Report on the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) Declaration of Commitment on HIV and Aids January 2008 – December 2009.

http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2010/ghana_2010_country_progress_report_en.pdf

Ghana Core Welfare Indicators Survey Report (1998) *Statistical Service*, Accra: Ghana

Ghana Education Service (2004) *The Development of Education: National Report by Basic Division, Ghana Education Service (GES), for the presentation at the forty-seventh session of the international Conference on Education, (ICE)* Accessed- 24-04-05. <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/international/ice47/english/Natreps/reports/ghana.pdf>

Ghana Health Service (2003) *HIV Sentinel survey 2002 report*. Accra: Ghana Health Service.

Ghana Health Service, (2003) *HIV Sentinel Survey 2002*, Accra, Ghana: Ministry of Health.

Ghana Joint Assistance Strategy (G-JAS) (2007) *Commitments by Partners to Work toward GPRS II Goals and Harmonization Principles* February 27, 2007. Accessed 04-12-07 <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/countries/africa/ghana/ghana-gjas.pdf>

Ghana News Agency (2009) Domestic violence is still a problem in Ghana <http://www.modernghana.com/news/205723/1/domestic-violence-is-still-a-problem-in-ghana-dire.html> accessed on 10/03/09

Ghana News Agency (2007) *FGM still prevalent in Upper West Region*, Tuesday, 16 October.

<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=132467>

Ghana News Agency (GNA) (2007) *WASSCE results released*, 23-10-2007, Accessed on 06-11-07, http://www.ghana.gov.gh/ghana/wassce_results_released.jsp.

Ghana People (2010)

http://www.theodora.com/wfbcurrent/ghana/ghana_people.html.

- Ghana Statistical Service (2000) *Ghana Living Standard Survey: Report for the Fourth Round (GLSS 4)*, Ghana Statistical Service, Accra, Ghana.
- Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) (2000) *Poverty Trends in Ghana in the 1990s*, Accra, Ghana Statistical Service.
- Ghana Statistical Service (2005a) *Ghana 2003 core welfare indicators questionnaire (CWIQ II) survey report*, Accra: Ghana Statistical Service.
- Ghana Statistical Service (2000b) *Ghana Living Standard Survey: Report for the Fourth Round (GLSS 4)*, Accra, Ghana Statistical Service.
- Ghana Statistical Service (2005b) *Ghana: Population data analysis report: Vol. 1. Socio-economic and demographic trends*, Accra: Ghana Statistical Service.
- Ghana Statistical Service (2000) *Poverty Trends in Ghana in the 1990s*, Accra, Ghana Statistical Service.
- GHP (2004) *2004 SSSCE Results Released*, General News of Tuesday, 23 November 2004, Accessed- 27-11-07, <http://www.modernghana.com/print/115717/1>
- Gladwin, C. (Ed.) (1991) *Structural adjustment and African women framers*, Gainesville: University of Florida Press.
- Glewwe, P. and Jacoby, H. (2004) 'Economic Growth and the Demand for Education: Is there a Wealth Effect?', *Journal of Development Economics*, 74(1): 33-51.
- Goody, J. (1967) *The Social Organization of the LoWiili*, Oxford University Press.
- Gordon, R. (1998) 'Girls cannot think as boys do: socialising children through the Zimbabwean school system', in C. Sweetman (Ed.) *Gender, Education and Training*, Oxford: OXFAM.
- Gordon, R. (1995) *Causes of Girls' Academic Underachievement: the Influence of Teachers' Attitudes and Expectations on the Academic Performance of Secondary School Girls*, Harare, HRRC, University of Zimbabwe.
- Government of Ghana (GoG) (2006a) *The Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Act*, Government Printer: Accra.
- Government of Ghana (GoG) (2005a) *Growth and poverty reduction strategy (GPRS II), The coordinated programme for the economic and social development of Ghana (2006-2009)*, (November), NDPC: Accra.
- Government of Ghana (2003b) *Ghana poverty reduction strategy, an agenda for growth and prosperity, vol. 1*, Accra: National Development Planning Commission.
- Government of Ghana (2004a) *White Paper on the Report of the Education Reform Review Committee*, Government of Ghana: Accra.

Government of Ghana (2004) *Draft TVET policy framework for Ghana, Developed for Ministry of Education Youth and Sports (MoEYS) Accra, January 2004* https://editorialexpress.com/cgi-bin/conference/download.cgi?db_name=IAFFE2009&paper_id=325 Accessed on 11/08/09.

Government of Ghana (1987) *Programme of Actions to Mitigate the Social Costs of Adjustment*, Government of Ghana.

Government of Ghana (2003a) *Education Strategic Plan 2003 to 2015, Vol. 1, Policies, Targets and Strategies*, Ministry of Education: Accra.

Government of Ghana (2002a) *Meeting the Challenges of Education in the Twenty First Century. Report of the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana*, GoG: Accra.

Government of Ghana (2002b) *Education Sector Review*, MOEYS: Accra.

Government of Ghana (1996) *Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE)*, Ministry of Education: Accra.

Government of Ghana (1995b) *Programme for the Development of Basic Education within the Framework of Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) by the year 2005*, Ministry of Education: Accra.

Government of Ghana (2003c) *Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (GPRSP) An Agenda for Growth and Prosperity 2003-2005*, IMF Country Report No. 03/56.

Government of Ghana (1998) *Children's act*, Government Printer: Accra.

Government of Ghana (1995) *Ghana - vision 2020 (The First Step: 1996-2000)*, Government Printer: Accra.

Government of Ghana (1992) *The Constitution for the Fourth Republic of Ghana*, Accra, Ghana.

Government of Ghana (1972) *Report of the Education Advisory Committee on the Proposed New Structure and Content of Education for Ghana*, Ghana: Accra.

Government of Ghana /UNDP (2003) *Ghana: Millennium Development Goals Report, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning*, Accra.

Gold Coast (1951) *Accelerated Development Plan for Education, 1951*, Government Printing Department: Accra.

Government of Ghana (2005a) *Preliminary education sector performance report July 2005*, Ministry of Education Youth Sports, Accra.

Graham, C. K. (1971) *The history of education in Ghana: from the earliest times to the declaration of independence*, London: Frank Cass and Company Ltd.

- Grant, M. and Hallman, K. (2006) *Pregnancy Related School Dropout and Prior School Performance in South Africa*. Policy Research Division Working Paper No 212. New York: Population Council. <http://www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/wp/212.pdf>
- Greene, J. C. (1994) 'Qualitative Programme Evaluation', in Denzin, K. N. and Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, London: SAGE.
- Greenstreet, M. (1990) *Education and Reproductive Choices in Ghana: Gender Issues in Population Policy Development*, 1, 40-47.
- Griffiths, M. and Parker-Jenkins, M. (1994)'Methodological and Ethical Dilemmas in International Research: School Attendance and Gender in Ghana', *Oxford Review of Education*, 20 (4), 441-449.
- Gubrium, F. J. and Holstein, A. (1999) Method Talk, in Bryman. A. and Burgess, G. R. (Eds.) *Qualitative Research, Vol. 1*, London: SAGE.
- Haddad, L. (1991) *Gender and Poverty in Ghana: A Descriptive Analysis of Selected Outcomes and Processes*, IDS Bulletin, Vol. 22, No. 1, January.
- Haddad, L. and Gillespie, S. (2001) 'Effective Food and Nutrition Policy Responses to HIV/AIDS: What we know and what we need to know', *Journal of International Development*, 13(4) 487-511.
- Haddad, L. and Rajiv K. (1990) 'How Serious is the Neglect of Intra-household Inequality?' *Economic Journal*, 100, 866-881.
- Haddad, L. and Reardon (1993) 'Gender Bias in the Allocation of Resources within Households in Burkina Faso: A Disaggregated Outlay Equivalent Analysis', *Journal of Development Studies*.
- Hallman, K. (2004) *Socioeconomic Disadvantage and Unsafe Sexual Behaviours among Young Women and Men in South Africa*, Policy Research Division Working Paper No. 190, New York: Population Council.
- Ham, B. D. (2003) 'The Effects of Divorce on the Academic Achievement of High School Seniors', *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 38(3/4), 167-185. <http://www.divorcereform.org/edu.html>
- Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P. (eds.) (1995) *Ethnography: Principles in practice (2nd Edition)*, London: Routledge.
- Haralambos, M. and Holborn, M. (2004) *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives, 6th Edition*, London: Harper Collins Publishers.
- Harding, S. (1997) 'Comments on Hekman's "Truth and Method: Feminist standpoint theory revisited": Whose Standpoint needs the regimes of truth and reality?' *Signs*, 22, 382-392.

- Hargreaves, David, (1967) *Social relations in a Secondary school*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Harold Coulombe and Quentin Wodon (2007) *Poverty, Livelihoods, and Access to Basic Services in Ghana*.
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGHANA/Resources/CEM_poverty.pdf
- Harris, M. (1999) 'Women and mathematics: ignoring a majority', in Leach, F. and Little, A. (eds.) *Education, Cultures and Economics: Dilemmas for Development*, London: Falmer Press, 315-25.
- Haywood and Mac an Ghail (2006) 'Education and Gender Identity: seeking frameworks of understanding', in Arnot, M. and Mac an Ghail, M. (eds.) *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in Education and gender*. London: Routledge.
- Heady, C. (2003) 'What is the effect of child labour on learning achievement? Evidence from Ghana', *World Development*, 31 (2), 385-398.
- Hedges, J. (2002) 'The Importance of posting and interaction with the education bureaucracy in becoming a teacher in Ghana, in Researching Teacher Education', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 22 (3/4).
- Heintz, J. (2005) *Employment, poverty and gender in Ghana*, Working paper Series Number 92, Political Economy Research Institute. Amherst: University of Massachusetts.
http://www.peri.umass.edu/fileadmin/pdf/working_papers/working_papers_51-100/WP92.pdf accessed on 25/09/06
- Heneveld, W. (1994) *Planning and Monitoring the Quality of Primary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Technical Note 14, Human Resources and Poverty Division, Washington DC: World Bank.
- Henwood, E., & Miller, K. (2001) 'Boxed in or coming out? On the treatment of science, technology and gender in educational research', *Gender and Education*, 13(3), 237-242.
- Heward, C. (1996) 'Masculinities and families', in M. Mac an Ghail (Ed.) *Understanding masculinities* (Buckingham, Open University Press).
- Higgins, K. (2009) *Regional Inequality and Secondary Education in Ghana*, Policy Brief No.1, Prepared for the World Development Report 2009.
<http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/2503.pdf>
- Human Rights Watch (2001) *Scared at School: Sexual Violence against Girls in South African Schools*, New York: Human Rights Watch.
- Humphreys, Sara (2008) 'Gendering corporal punishment: beyond the discourse of human rights, Gender and education', 20(5) 527-540(14).

Hyde, K. (2003) *Expanding educational opportunities at primary level: are community schools the answer?* Mimeo ID21, Communicating development research, University of the Western Cape, <http://www.id21.org/Education/EgveDreyer.html>

Jamison, D.; Lau, L. (1982) *Farmer education and farmer efficiency*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Janestick, V. J. (2000) 'The Choreography of Qualitative Research Design: Minuets, Improvisations and Crystallization', in Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 2nd edition, London: Sage.

Joshi, G. P. and Anderson, J. (1994) 'Female Motivation in the Patriarchal School: An Analysis of Primary Textbooks and School Organisation in Nepal, Some Strategies for Change', *Gender and Education*, 6(2), 169-182.

Jung-ah, C. (2006) 'Doing poststructural ethnography in the life history of dropouts in South Korea: methodological ruminations on subjectivity, positionality and reflexivity', *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 19(4), 435-453.

Kabeer, N. (1997) 'Women, wages and intra-household power relations in urban Bangladesh', *Development and Change*, vol. 28.

Kabeer, N. and Subramanian, R. (1996) *Institutions, Relations and Outcomes: Framework and Tools for Gender-Aware Planning*, IDS Discussion Paper, 357. Sussex, IDS.

Kadzamira, E.C. & Chibwana, M. (2000) *Gender and Primary Schooling in Malawi*, IDS Research Report No. 40, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.

Kafui Etsey (2005) *Causes of low academic performance of primary school pupils in the Shama Sub-Metro of Shama Ahanta East Metropolitan Assembly (SAEMA) in Ghana*, Ghana Education Service.

Kakuru, M. D. (2006) *The combat for gender equality in Education: Rural livelihood pathways in the context of HIV/AIDS*, Wageningen: Wageningen Academic Publishers.

Kakuru, M. D. and Katto, D. (2006) 'Rural Women's Reproductive Tasks: The Role of Impression Management in a Rural Uganda Community', *The Social Science*, 1 (2), 139-143 <http://www.medwelljournals.com/fulltext/TSS/2006/139-143.pdf>

Karikari-Ababio, M. (2005) *Survey of the Structure of Fees Charged and Paid In Public Basic and Secondary Schools in Ghana*, Ghana Education Service.

Kasente, D. (2003) *Gender and education in Uganda*, Background paper for EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001467/146790e.pdf>

Kates, J. and Leggoe, A. W. (2005) *The HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Ghana*, Kaiser Family Foundation, <http://www.kff.org/hivaids/upload/7355.pdf> accessed on 11/08/07

Kaufman, C. E. et al. (2001) 'Adolescent pregnancy and parenthood in South Africa', *Studies in Family Planning*, 32(2) 147–160, <http://www.saga.cornell.edu/saga/educonf/etsey.pdf>

Kehily, M. J. (2002) *Sexuality, Gender and Schooling: Shifting agendas in social learning*, London: Routledge.

Kehily, M. J. (2001) 'Issues of Gender and Sexuality in Schools', in Francis, B. and Skelton, C. (eds.) *Investigating Gender: Contemporary Perspective in Education*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Keller, E. T., Hilton, D. B and Twumasi-Ankrah, K. (1999) 'Teenage Pregnancy and Motherhood in a Ghanaian Community', *Journal of Social Development in Africa*, 14(1), 69-84.

Kelly, A. (1988) 'Gender differences in teacher-pupil interaction: a meta-analytic review', *Research in Education*, 39, 1-23.

King, E. and Hill, M.A. (1993) *Women's Education in Developing Countries: Barriers, Benefits and Policies*, Washington DC, World Bank.

King, U. (1987) 'World Religions, Women and Education', *Comparative Education*, 23(1), 35- 49.

Kitetu, C. (nd.) *Gendered Discourses in the Classroom: the Importance of Cultural Diversity*, <http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/groups/crile/docs/crile49kitetu.pdf> Accessed on 25-09-08.

Klasen, S. (2002) 'Low Schooling for Girls, Slower Growth for All? Cross-Country Evidence on the Effect of Gender Inequality in Education on Economic Development', *The World Bank Economic Review*, 16(3), 345-373.

Kofi, E., et al. (2003) 'Sexual Health Experiences of Adolescents in three Ghanaian Towns', *International Family Planning Perspectives*, 29(1), 32–40 <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/journals/2903203.pdf>.

Kotey, A. N. & Tsikata, D. (1998) '*Gender relations and land in Ghana*', in A. Kuenyehia (Ed.) *Women and law in West Africa: Situational analysis of some key issues affecting women*, Accra: WALWA.

Kuenyehia, A. (1991) 'Legal Aid and Services to Women in Ghana', in A. Dieng et al (eds.) *Paralegals in Rural Africa, seminars in the Gambia*, Banjul, November 1989, and Harare, Zimbabwe, February, 1990.

Kuenyehia, A. (1992) 'Legal literacy and the Law Enforcement Agencies in Ghana', in M. Schuler and S. Kadirgarmar-Rajasingham (eds.) *Legal Literacy: A Tool For Women's Empowerment*, Women in Law and Development Series, OEF International.

- Kutnick, P., Jules, V. and Layne, A. (1997) *Gender and School Achievement in the Caribbean*, DFID Education Research Series No. 21, London, DFID.
- Labaree, F. D. (2003) 'The peculiar problem of preparing educational researchers', *Educational Researcher*, 32(4), 13-22.
- Lackland, A. and De Lisi, R. (2001) 'Students' choices of college majors that are gender traditional and non-traditional', *Journal of College Student Development*, 42(1), 39-48.
- Lamba, I. C. (1999) 'The plight of secular education for African Muslims in Malawi: a historical perspective up to 1961', *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 31(1), 1-18.
- Lavy V. (1996) 'School supply constraints and children's educational outcomes in rural Ghana', *Journal of Development Economics*, 51(2) 291-314.
- Leach et al (2004) Gender Violence in Schools: Ghana, available at http://www.sussex.ac.uk/education/documents/ghana_.pdf
- Leach, F. Fiscian, V. Kadzamira, E. Lemani, E. and Machakanja, P. (2003) *An Investigative Study of the Abuse of Girls in African Schools*, DFID Education Research No. 54, London: DFID.
- Leach, F. and Humphreys, S. (2007) 'Gender violence in schools: Taking the 'girls-as-victims' discourse forward', *Gender and Development*, 15.
- Leach, F. and Machakanja, P. (2000) *Preliminary Investigation of the Abuse of Girls in Zimbabwean Junior Secondary Schools*. DFID Education Research No. 39, London, DFID.
- Leach, F. and Machakanja, P. (2001) *The sugar daddy trap, Peer pressure pushes girls into sex*, Insights Gender Violence Special Issue, August, 2001.
- Lincoln, Y. S. and Guba, E. G. (1985) *Naturalistic Inquiry*, Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE.
- Lloyd, C.B and Blanc, A.K. (1996) 'Children's Schooling in sub-Saharan Africa: The Role of Fathers, Mothers, and Others', *Population and Development Review* 22(2) 265-298.
- Lloyd, C.B., Kaufman, C. and Hewett, P. (2000) 'The spread of primary schooling in sub-Saharan Africa: Implications for fertility change', *Population and Development Review* 26(3) 483-515.
- Lloyd, C.B., Mensch, B.S. and Clark, W. H. (1998) *The Effects of Primary School Quality on the Educational Participation and Attainment of Kenyan Girls and Boys*, Population Council, Policy Research Division Working Papers No. 116.
- Lockheed, M., Jamison, D. and Lau, L. (1980) 'Farmer Education and Farm Efficiency: A Survey', *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 29(1) 37-76.

- Logan, B. I. and Beoku-Betts, J. A. (1996) 'Women and Education in Africa: An Analysis of Economic and Socio-cultural Factors Influencing Observed Trends', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 31(3), 217-239.
- Mac an Ghail, M. (1994) *The Making of Men: Masculinities, Sexuality and schooling*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Madeez, A. et al, (2007) *Achieving Universal Primary Education in Ghana By 2015: A Reality or a Dream?*, New York: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).
- Magidson, S. (2005) 'Building bridges within mathematics education: teaching, research, and instructional design', *Journal of Mathematical Behaviour*, 24(2), 135-169.
- Maimbolwa-Sinyangwe, I.M. and Chilangwa, B.Y. (1995) *Learning from Inside the Classroom: A Research Report*, New York: UNICEF and MOE, Zambia.
- Magno, C. and Iveta, S. (2007) 'Teaching in transition: Examining school-based gender inequities in central/southeastern Europe and the former Soviet Union', *International Journal of Educational Development*, (27) 647-660.
- Manuh, T. (1989) 'Women, The Law and Land Tenure in Africa', in Eva M. Rathgeber (ed.) *Women's Role in Natural Resource Management in Africa*, IDRC Manuscript Report 238e, October.
- Manuh, T. (1984) *Law and the status of women in Ghana*, African training and Research Centre for women research series, Addis Ababa: United Nations.
- Manuh, T. (2007) *The Passage of Domestic Violence Legislation in Ghana*, Pathways of Women's Empowerment, University of Ghana, accessed-16-03-2007. <http://www.pathways-of-empowerment.org/GhanaDV.pdf>
- Manuh, T. (1993) 'Women, the State and Society under the PNDC', in E. Gyimah-Boadi (ed.) *Ghana under PNDC Rule*, Dakar: CODESRIA.
- Manuh, T., Songsore, J. & Mackenzie, F. (1997) *Gender and land: The interface between legislative initiatives, customary tenure and land use management in Ghana*, Canada: Research Report Submitted to IDRC.
- Maslow, A. H. (1970) *Motivation and Personality* (New York, Harper and Row).
- Maykut, P. and Morehouse, R. (1994) *Beginning Qualitative Research- A Philosophical and Practical Guide*, London: SAGE.
- McCreary, D. (1994) 'The male role and avoiding femininity', *Sex Roles*, 31, 9-10.
- McEwain, C. (2001) 'Postcolonialism, feminism and development: intersections and delimitations', *Progress in Development studies*, 1(2), 93-111

- McWilliams, H. O. A. & Kwamena-Poh, M. (1975) *The development of education in Ghana*, (Hong Kong, Longman Group Ltd).
- Meekers, D. (1994) 'Sexual initiation and premarital childbearing in sub-Saharan Africa', *Population Studies*, 48: 47–64.
- Meekers, D. and Ahmed, G. (1999) 'Pregnancy-related school dropouts in Botswana', *Population Studies*, 53(2), 195–209.
- Mellington, N. & Cameron, L. (1999) *Female education and child mortality in Indonesia*, Department of Economics, University of Melbourne, available online at: <http://www.ecom.unimelb.edu.au/ecowww/research/693.html>
- Mensah-Kutin, R. (2008) *Decentralisation and Women's Rights in Ghana: issues, gaps and options*, Paper presented during an IDRC Workshop on Decentralisation and Women's Rights in sub-Sahara Africa, 21-22 January, Dakar.
- Mensch, B. et al. (2001) 'Premarital sex, schoolgirl pregnancy, and school quality in rural Kenya', *Studies in Family Planning* 32(4): 285–301.
- Merriam, C. M. (1988) *Case Study Research in Education: A Qualitative Approach*, San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- MICS Survey (2006) *Ghana Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey*, accessed- 19-04-2008 http://www.childinfo.org/mics/mics3/docs/countryreports/MICS3_Ghana_%20PreliminaryReport_2006.pdf
- Miles, M. B. and Huberman, M. A. (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis-An Expanded Sourcebook (Second Edition)*, London: SAGE.
- Miller, E. M., & Costello, C.Y. (2001) 'The limits of biological determinism', *American Sociological Review*, 66, 592-598.
- Mills, M. (2001) *Challenging Violence in Schools*, Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Ministry of Education (1987) *Ghana Education*, Accra Ghana: Ministry of Education Publication.
- Ministry of Education (1996) *Basic Education Sector Improvement Programme Policy Document; Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education by the Year 2005*, Accra, Ghana: Ministry of Education.
- Ministry of Education (2002) *Ghana Education Service Internal Budget Book*, Accra: Ghana Education Service.
- Ministry of Education (2002) *Education Sector Review (ESR)*, Ministry of Education, Accra: Ghana.

Ministry of Education and Sports/Ghana Education Service (2006) *Towards Gender Parity in Primary Education in Ghana*, Executive Summary of the Report of the Girls Education Unit (March).

Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) (2006) Preliminary Education Sector Performance Report. Accra: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MOESS) (2007) *Ghana Preliminary Education Sector Performance Report*, June, Accra.

Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (2004) *Beijing + 10 Reports*, Accra: MOWAC.

Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (2005) *Ghana's combined 3rd, 4th and 5th Reports on CEDAW*.
http://www.bayefsky.com/reports/ghana_cedaw_c_gha_3_5_2005.pdf

Mirembe, R. and L. Davies (2001) 'Is schooling a risk? Gender, power relations and school culture in Uganda', *Gender and Education* 13(4) 401-416.

Mirembe, R. (2006) 'Gender, AIDS and schooling in Uganda', in F. Leach and C. Mitchell (eds.) *Combating Gender Violence in and around Schools*, Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.

Mirsky, J. (2003) *Beyond Victims and Villains: addressing sexual violence in the education sector*, London: Panos.

Mohanty, C. (2003) 'Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses', in Lewis, R. and Mills, S. (eds.) *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: a reader*, Edinburgh University Press, 49-74

Moore, H. (1992) 'Households and Gender relations: The modelling of the Economy', in Ortiz, S. and Lees, S. (eds.) *Understanding Economic Process*. New York: University Press of America.

Morgan, D. L. (1998) *The Focus Group Guidebook*, London: Sage.

Morhee, R. and Morhee, E. (2006) 'Overview of the Law and Availability of Abortion Services in Ghana', *Ghana Medical Journal*, 40(3), 80-86.

Morley, L. et al., (2007) *Widening Participation in Higher Education in Ghana and Tanzania: Developing an Equity Score Card*, accessed on 16/03/2007
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/education/documents/working_paper_1.pdf

Morley, L. (1999) *Organising Feminisms: The Micro-politics of the Academy*, London: Macmillan.

Morley, L. (2007) *Widening Participation in Higher Education in Ghana and Tanzania: Developing an Equity Scorecard*, An ESRC/DFID Joint Research Funding Scheme.

http://www.research4development.info/PDF/Outputs/ESRC_DFID/60335-RL_LMTz_Dissemination_Seminar_finaldec07.pdf

Morton, P. (2004) *Job Quality in Micro and Small Enterprises in Ghana: Field Research Results*, SEED Working Paper No. 68, Series on Job Quality in Micro and Small Enterprise Development, ILO: Geneva.

Mukhopadhyay, M (1995) Gender Relations, Development Practice and 'Culture', *Gender and Development*, 3(1), 13-18.

Mungai, A. (2002) *Growing up in Kenya: Rural Schooling and Girls*, New York: Peter Lang.

Nachmais, David and Nachmais, Chara (1992) *Research methods in social science (4th Edition)*, London: Edward Arnold.

Nancy J. Hirschmann (1997) feminist standpoint as postmodern strategy, *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, 18(3), 73 – 92.

National AIDS Control Programme, (2004) *Report on AIDS Situation in Ghana, 2003*, Accra: Ghana Health Service.

National Council on Women and Development (NCWD) (1994) *The NCWD Report on the Status of Women*, Ghana.

National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) (2004) *Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy Update. Policy Framework for Addressing Vulnerability and Exclusion*, Draft (December 2004), Accra: Government of Ghana.

NCTE (2006a) *Statistical Digest of Universities and IPS 2005/2006*, Accra: NCTE Ghana Records.

NCTE (2006b) *Student Enrolments for Private Tertiary Institutions from 1999 to 2006*, Accra: NCTE Ghana Records.

NCTE (2006) *Statistics on Tertiary Education in Ghana*, Ministry of Education.

NDPC (2007) *Ghana: The Millennium Development Goals, 2006 Report*. <http://www.ndpc.gov.gh/GPRS/MDG%20Report%202006%20Ghana.pdf>

Ninsin, K. (1991) *The Informal Sector in Ghana's Political Economy*, Freedom Publications: Accra.

Njau, W. and Wamahiu, S. (1996) 'The cost of female dropout: addressing the issues', in Cotton, A. and Synge, R. (eds.) *Cutting the Gordian Knot: The Benefit of Girls' Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Cambridge: CAMFED.

Non-Formal Education Division (NFED) (nd.) *Intestate Succession Law, 1985 (PNDC Law 111)*, Draft Instruction Manual for Facilitators: Accra.

- Norris, C. (1993) 'Some Ethical Considerations on Field-work with the Police', in D. Hobbs and T. May (eds.) *Interpreting the Field. Accounts of Ethnography*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Nti (1997) *Report of Consultancy on Organisational and Institutional Analysis*, Ghana: Ministry of Education, September.
- Nussbaum, M.C. (1999) *Sex and Social Justice*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nussbaum, M.C. (2000) *Women and Human Development*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nussbaum, M. C. (2003) 'Capabilities as Fundamental Entitlements: Sen and Social Justice', *Feminist Economics*, 9(2-3), 33-59.
- Oakley, A. (1981) 'Doing Feminist', in H. Robberts (ed.) *Doing Feminist Research*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Oakley, A. (1985) *Sex Gender and Society*, England: Gower House.
- Obasi, E. (1997) 'Structural adjustment and gender access to education in Nigeria', *Gender and Education*, 19, 161-177.
- Obeng, C. S. (2006) "'We were victims of our families' uncooperative behavior": Problems Faced by School Dropouts in Rural Ghana', *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 15(4): 544-565.
- Obura, A. (1991) *Changing Images: Portrayal of Girls and Women in Kenyan Textbooks*, Nairobi: ACTS Press.
- Odaga, A. and Heneveld, W. (1995) *Girls and Schools in Sub-Saharan Africa: From Analysis to Action*, World Bank Technical Paper No. 298, Africa Technical Department Series http://mpr.ub.uni-muenchen.de/7851/1/MPRA_paper_7851.pdf accessed on 20/04/09.
- Olesen, V. L. (2000) 'Feminisms and qualitative research at and into the millennium', in Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd Ed.), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Opong, C. & Abu, K. (1987) *The Seven Roles of Women: Impacts of Education, Migration and Employment and Ghanaian Mothers*, International Labour Organisation Series No. 13 Women Work and Development, Geneva: ILO.
- Osei, G. M. (2004) 'The 1987 Junior Secondary-School Reform in Ghana: Vocational or Pre-Vocational in Nature?' *International Review of Education* 50(5/6), 425-446.
- Osei, G. M. (2006) 'Teachers in Ghana: Issues of training, remuneration and effectiveness', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 26(2) 38-51.

Owusu-Ansah, A. (2003) 'Trokosi in Ghana: Cultural relativism or slavery? The African Symposium', *African Educational Research*, 3(4), *An Online Journal*, accessed on 22/03/06 <http://www2.ncsu.edu/ncsu/aern/decj03.html>

Owusu-Banahene, N. O. (2000) *The Impact of Custom and Tradition in Educating the Female-Child in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of Ghana*.

http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/19/a4/ae.pdf

Oxfam (2000) *Education: The Global Gender Gap*, Parliamentary Briefing Oxfam Policy Papers No. 9. Oxford, Oxfam.

Oxaal, Z. (1997) *Education and Poverty: A Gender Analysis*, Report prepared for the Gender Equality Unit, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

Paechter, C. (1998) *Educating the other: gender, power and schooling*, London: Falmer Press.

Paechter, C. (2000) *Changing school subjects: power, gender and curriculum*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Paechter, C. (2006) 'Reconceptualizing the gendered body: Learning and constructing masculinities and femininities in school', *Gender and Education*, 18(2), 121-135.

Palmer, R. (2005) *Beyond the Basics: Post-Basic Education, Training and Poverty Reduction in Ghana*. *Post-Basic Education and Training*, Working Paper Series – No. 4 July 2005. http://www.cas.ed.ac.uk/research_and_publications/projects/documents/Palmer_Ghana_PBET%20WP4.pdf accessed on 18-10-07

Palmer, R. (2007) 'Skills for work?: From skills development to decent livelihoods in Ghana's rural informal economy', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 27, 397–420.

Palmer, R. (2005b) *Beyond the basics: post-basic education and training and poverty reduction in Ghana*, *Post-Basic Education and Training*, Working Paper Series No. 4, CAS: Edinburgh <http://www.cas.ed.ac.uk/research/projects.html> accessed- 08-11-07.

Parpart, J. L. (1993) 'Who is the 'Other'?: A Postmodern Feminist Critique of Women and Development Theory and Practice', *Development and Change*, 24(3), 439–464.

Patrinós, H.A. and Psacharopoulos, G. (1995) 'Educational Performance and Child labour in Paraguay', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 15 (1), 47-50.

Pearse, R. (1985) 'A study of Factors Related to Inequality in Participation in Schooling in Java', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 5(1), 11-26.

Plan Ghana (2009) *Child Sexual Abuse in Schools*, Accra: Ghana. <http://plan-international.org/learnwithoutfear/files/ghana-child-sexual-abuse-in-schools-study-brief-english>

Potter, G.A. (2000) *Deeper than Debt: Economic Globalisation and the Poor*, LAB, London.

Powney, J. and Watt, M. (1987) *Interviewing in Educational Research*, London: Routledge.

Prah, M. (2002) 'Gender issues in Ghanaian tertiary institutions: Women academics and administrators at Cape Coast University', *Ghana Studies*, 5, 1-20.

Pryor, J. et al. (2003) *Understandings of Education in an African Village: the Impact of Information and Communication Technologies*, Report on DFID Research Project No. 52 <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/understandedafricaedpaper52.pdf>

Psacharopoulos, G. (1985) 'Returns to Education: a further international update and implications', *Journal of Human resources*, 20(4), 583-604.

Psacharopoulos, G. (1997) 'Child labour versus educational attainment: some evidence from Latin America', *Journal of Population Economics*, 10, 377-386.

Psacharopoulos, G. and Patrinos, H. (2002) *Returns to investment in education: a further update*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 2881, World Bank.

Punch, K. F. (1998) *Introduction to Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. London, Sage.

Quist, H. O. (1999) 'Secondary Education in Ghana at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century: Profile, Problems, Prospects', *Prospects*, Vol. XXIX, (4), 425-442.

Quist, H.O. (1994) 'The missionary element in the development of education in the Volta region of Ghana, 1920-1950', *Journal of the Institute of Education*, 3(1), 119-33 (University of Cape Coast, Ghana).

Quist, H. (1994) 'Illiteracy, Education and National Development in Postcolonial West Africa: An Appraisal', *Africa Development*, 19, 258-272.

Quist, H.O. (2003) Transferred and adapted models of secondary education in Ghana: what implications for national development? *International Review of Education*, 49(5), 411-431.

Quisumbing, A. (1994) *Gender Differences in Agricultural Productivity: A Survey of Empirical Evidence*, Mimeo, International Food Policy Research Institute.

Quisumbing, A. R. (1996) Male-female differences in agricultural productivity: methodological issues and empirical evidence, *World Development*, 24(10) 1579-1595.

- Quisumbing, A. R. and Maluccio, J. A. (1999) Intra-household Allocation and Gender Relations: New Empirical Evidence, International Food Policy Research Institute. <http://www.csae.ox.ac.uk/conferences/2000-OiA/pdfpapers/quisumbing.PDF>
- Rai, S. (2002) *Gender and the Political Economy of Development*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Ray, R. (2000) Child labour, child schooling, and their interaction with adult labour: empirical evidence for Peru and Pakistan, *World Bank Economic Review*, 2(14), 347-367.
- Razavi, S. (Ed.) (2000) *Gendered poverty and well-being*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Reinharz, Shulamit (1992) *Feminist methods in social research*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Reiss, M. (1993) 'What are the aims of school sex education?' *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 23, 125-136.
- Rich, A. (1980) Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 5, 631-660.
- Rimmer, D. (1992) *Staying Poor: Ghana's Political Economy 1950-1990*, Pergamon Press: Oxford.
- Ritchie, A., Lloyd, C., and Grant, M. (2004) *Gender Differences in Time Use Among Adolescents in Developing Countries: Implications of Rising School Enrolment Rates*, Working Paper No. 193, New York: Population Council. Accessed on 01-04-08 <http://www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/wp/193.pdf>
- Roboson, C. (1993) *Real World Research: A Resource for social Scientists-Practitioners*, Oxford, U K and Cambridge, M A: Blackwell.
- Rose, P. (2003) *Can gender equality in education be attained? Evidence from Ethiopia* UNESCO, 2003/4, http://www.unesco.org/education/efa_report/chapter3.pdf accessed on 15-06-07.
- Rose, P. and Al Samarrai, S. (2001) 'Household Constraints on Schooling by Gender: Empirical Evidence from Ethiopia', *Comparative Education Review*, 45(1): 36- 63.
- Rose, P. and Tembon, M. (1999) 'Girls and schooling in Ethiopia', in C. Heward and S. Bunwaree (eds.) *Gender, education and development: beyond access to empowerment*, London, England: Zed Books.
- Rosen, J. E., Murray N. J. and Moreland, S. (2004) *Sexuality Education in Schools: The International Experience and Implications for Nigeria*, Policy Working Paper Series No. 12. <http://www.policyproject.com/pubs/workingpapers/wps-12.pdf> accessed on 11-03-07

Rothchild, J. (2006) Gendered Homes and Classrooms: Schooling in Rural Nepal. *Research in the Sociology of Education*, 15, 101-131.

Ruggles, P. (1990) *Drawing the line: Alternative poverty measures and their implications for public policy*, Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press.

Sackey, H. A. (2005) *Female labour force participation in Ghana: The effects of education. Kenya*, The African Economic Research Consortium. <http://www.aercafrica.org/documents/RP150.pdf>

Sarpong, P (1974) *Ghana in Retrospect: Some Aspects of Ghanaian Culture*, Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation.

Sarris, A., and H. Shams, (1991) *Ghana under Structural Adjustment: The Impact on Agriculture and the Rural Poor*, IFAD Studies in Rural Poverty No 2, New York IFAD

Save the Children (2003) *Rights of Passage: harmful cultural practices and children's rights*, Londres, Alliance international, No. 25.

Save the Children UK, (2000) *War brought us here: protecting children displaced within their own countries by conflict: summary*, Londres, Save the Children UK.

Sawyer, A. (September, 2001) 'The student loans scheme: Two decades of experience in Ghana, National Council for Tertiary Education', *Tertiary Education Series*, 1(3), 1-12.

Scantlebury, K. (2005) 'Learning from Fly Girls: Feminist Research Ethics in Urban Schools', *Qualitative Social Research*, 6(1), <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0501321> accessed 04/01/2010.

Scholer, A. (2002) 'Sexuality in the science classroom: one teacher's methods in a college biology course', *Sex Education*, 2, 75-86.

Schultz, T. P. (1993) 'Investment in the schooling and health of women and men: Quantitative Returns', *Journal of Human Resources*, 28(11), 694-734.

Schultz, T. P. (2002) 'Why governments should invest more to educate girls', *World Development*, 30(2), 207-225.

Schultz, T. P. (1989) *Benefits of Educating Women Background Papers Series, Education and Employment Division*, Population and Human Resources Department (Washington, DC, World Bank).

Shabaya, J. and Konadu-Agyemang, K. (2004) 'Unequal access, unequal participation: some spatial and socio-economic dimensions of the gender gap in education in Africa with special reference to Ghana, Zimbabwe and Kenya', *Compare, A Journal of Comparative Education*, 34(4), 395-424.

Razavi, S. and Miller, C. (1995) *From WID to GAD: Conceptual Shifts in the Women and Development Discourse*, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development United Nations Development Programme (UNRISD) [http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/document.nsf/0/d9c3fca78d3db32e80256b67005b6ab5/\\$FILE/opb1.pdf](http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/document.nsf/0/d9c3fca78d3db32e80256b67005b6ab5/$FILE/opb1.pdf)

Shumba, A. (2001a) *Child abuse by teachers in Zimbabwe*, Insights, Gender Violence, Special Issue, August.

Shumba, A. (2001) 'Who Guards the Guards? A Study of Reported Cases of Child Abuse by Teachers in Zimbabwean Secondary Schools', *Sex Education* 1, 77-86.

Sibbons, M. and Seel, A. (2000) *Mainstreaming Gender through Sector Wide Approaches in Education: Ghana Case Study*, A study carried out for DFID by Centre for Aid and Public Expenditure Overseas Development Institute London. Accessed on 07-01-08 <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/CAFRAD/UNPAN011442.pdf>

Sirin, S. R. et al. (2004) 'Differential Reactions to Men and Women's Gender Role Transgressions: Perceptions of Social Status, Sexual Orientation, and Value Dissimilarity', *The Journal of Men's Studies*, Vol. 12.

Srinivasan, S. and Bedi, S. A. (2007) 'Domestic Violence and Dowry: Evidence from a South Indian Village', *World Development*, 35(5), 857–880.

Skelton, C. (2001) *Schooling the boys: masculinities and primary education*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Skelton, C. (2002a) 'Constructing dominant masculinity and negotiating the 'male gaze'', *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 6(1), 17–31.

Skelton, C. (2002b) 'The 'Feminisation of Schooling' or 'Re-masculinising' Primary Education?', *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 12(1).

Smith, D. (2002) 'Foreward', in S. Fenstermaker, and C. West (eds.) *Doing gender, doing difference: Inequality, power, and institutional change*, ix-xii, New York: Routledge.

Smith, J.B. (2004) *Male primary teachers: Disadvantaged or advantaged?* Paper presented to the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, Melbourne.

Smulyan, L. (2004) 'Redefining self and success: becoming teachers and doctors', *Gender and Education*, 2(16), 225-245.

Songsore, J. (2003) *Regional development in Ghana, The theory and the reality*, p.331, Accra: Woeli Publishing Services.

- Sowell, S. P. (2004) *Doing Gender/Teaching Science: Feminist Poststructural Analysis of Middle School Science Teachers' Identity Negotiations*, A thesis submitted to the Florida State University College of Education in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, accessed on 09/11/07. http://etd.lib.fsu.edu/theses/available/etd-11042004-112149/unrestricted/Sowell_Dissertation.pdf
- Spencer, W. R. (2005) 'Power structures and capacity aspects of macro-poverty analyses', *Development Policy Review*, 2(3), 351-367.
- Spender, D. (1982) *Invisible Women: The Schooling and Scandal*, London: Writers and Readers.
- Stake, Roberts, T. (1995) *The Art of Case Study Research: Perspectives on practice*, Oaks, Calif: Sage.
- Stanley, L. and Wise, S. (1983) *Breaking Out: Feminist consciousness and Feminist Research*, London: Routledge.
- Stanworth, M. (1981) *Gender and Schooling*, London: Hutchinson.
- UNFPA (2008) 2008 State of World Population. *Reaching Common Ground: Culture, Gender and Human Rights*, report from United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2008/includes/images/pdf_swp/00_overview.pdf
- Stephens, D. (1990) 'The Fieldwork Process in Nigeria Cultural Context', in G. Vulliam, K. Lewin and D. Stephens (Eds.) *Doing Educational Research in Developing Countries*, The Falmer Press.
- Stephens, D. (1998) *Girls and Basic Education: A Cultural Enquiry*, DFID Education Research No. 23, London, DFID.
- Stephens, D. (2000) 'Girls and basic education in Ghana: a cultural enquiry', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 20, 29-47.
- Stromquist, N. P. (1997) *Increasing Girls' and Women's Participation in Basic Education*, UNESCO.
- Stromquist, N. P. (2007) *The Gender Socialization Process in Schools: A Cross-National Comparison*. Background paper prepared for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008 Education for All by 2015: will we make it? Accessed on 01/02/09 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001555/155587e.pdf>
- Subrahmanian, R. (2005) 'Gender Equality in Education: Definitions and Measurements', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 25(4) 395-407.

Subrahmanian, R. and Jha, J. (2005) *Secondary Education in the Indian State of Uttar Pradesh: Gender Dimensions of State Policy and Practice*. [http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/\(httpPublications\)/34DEBBE3CE1C347BC1257013004EB99F?OpenDocument](http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/(httpPublications)/34DEBBE3CE1C347BC1257013004EB99F?OpenDocument)

Summers, L. H. (1992) *Investing in All the People*, Policy Research Working Papers, Report No. 905 (Washington, DC, World Bank).

Sutherland-Addy, E. (2002) *Impact Assessment Study of the Girls' Education Programme in Ghana*, UNICEF – Ghana. http://www.unicef.org/french/evaldatabase/files/GHA_2002_022.pdf

Swainson, N., Benders, S., Gordon, R. and Kadzamira, E. (1998) *Promoting girls' education in Africa: The design and implementation of policy interventions*, DFID Education Research No. 25, London, DFID.

Tabach, M. (2006) *Research And Teaching – Can One Person Do Both? A Case Study*, The Weizmann Institute of Science, <http://www.emis.de/proceedings/PME30/5/233.pdf> accessed on 02/01/2010.

Tanye, M. (2008) 'Access and Barriers to Education for Ghanaian Women and Girls', *Interchange*, 39(2), 167–184.

Taylor, D. (2005) *Education within the context of Decentralisation*, Statement by Dr. Don Taylor (Education Advisor, DFID Ghana) on behalf of the Development Partner Education Sector Group, 9th March, 2005.

Teal, F. (2001) *Education, Incomes, Poverty and Inequality in Ghana in the 1990s*, CSAE WPS/2001-21, Centre for the Study of African Economies: Oxford.

Tettey, L. (2003) *Socio-Economic Determinants of Infant and Child Mortality in Ghana and Nigeria*, M.A. dissertation, Regional Institute for Population Studies, University of Ghana: Legon.

Temah, T.C. (2007) *Gender inequality and HIV/AIDS epidemic in Sub-Saharan Africa*. http://www.gdnet.org/pdf2/gdn_library/annual_conferences/Ninth_annual_conference/Temah_paper_parallel_session2.4.pdf accessed on November 2007

Tembon, M. et al. (1997) *Gender and primary schooling in Guinea*, Brighton, Institute of Development Studies (research Report No. 32).

Thorne, B. (1993) *Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School*, Buckingham, Open University Press.

Thorne, B. (1980) 'You Still Takin' Notes? : Fieldwork and Problems of Informed Consent' *Social Problems*, 27(3), 284-297.

Thomson, R. (1994) 'Moral rhetoric and public health pragmatism: the recent politics of sex education', *Feminist Review*, 48, 40–60.

- Thorogood, N. (2000) 'Sex education as disciplinary technique: policy and practice in England and Wales', *Sexualities*, 3, 425–438.
- Tolley, K. (2003) *The science education of American girls: A historical perspective*, New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Tsikata, E., (1989) 'Women's Organisation in Ghana', 1951-87, in E. Hansen and K. Ninsin (eds.) *The State, Development and Politics in Ghana*, Codesria Book Series, Dakar.
- Tsouroufli, M. (2002) Gender and Teachers: Classroom Practice in a Secondary School in Greece, *Gender & Education*, 2 (14), 135–147.
- Vulliamy, G. (1990) 'The Potential of Qualitative Educational Research: Strategies in Developing Countries' in Vulliamy, G. Lewin, K. and Stephens, D. (eds.) *Doing Educational Research in Developing countries*, The Farmer Press.
- UNDP (2002) *Human Development Report 2002*, Oxford University Press: New York.
- UNDP/ISSER (2001) *Ghana Human Development Report 2000*, ISSER/UNDP, Worldwide Press: Accra.
- UNECA, (1984) *Law and Status of Women in Ghana*, African Training and Research Centre for Women, Research Series, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: UNECA.
- UN Millennium Project (2004) *Millennium Development Goals Needs Assessments for Ghana, Tanzania, and Uganda*, (3 September 2004), UN: New York. http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/documents/MP_Background-Paper_BPEA_September3-04.pdf Accessed- 14-12-2007.
- Unterhalter, E. (2003) *Global Inequality, Capabilities, Social Justice and the Millennium Development Target for Gender Equity in Education*, Paper presented at The Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex. February 2003.
- Unterhalter, E. (1999) 'The Schooling of South African Girls', in C. Heward and S. Bunwaree (eds.) *Gender, Education and Development: Beyond Access to Empowerment*, London, Zed, 49-64.
- UNAIDS (nd.) Uniting the World against Aids <http://www.unaids.org/en/CountryResponses/Countries/ghana.asp> accessed-04/07/2008
- UNAIDS/WHO (2006a) *Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*, May 2006, Geneva, UNAIDS/WHO, Available on line-10 July 2007.
- UNAIDS/WHO (2006b) *Fact Sheet Sub-Sahara Africa 2006*. Available on line at http://www.unaids.org/en/HIV_data/2006GlobalReport/default.asp accessed-10/06/2007
- UNAIDS/WHO (2005b) "3 by 5 Progress Report December 2004", UNAIDS/WHO, Available on line at www.who.int/3by5/progressreport05/en/, accessed-10 July 2007.

UNAIDS/WHO/UNICEF (2008) Epidemiological Fact Sheets, 2008 Update, <http://www.unaids.org/en/CountryResponses/Countries/ghana.asp>

UNESCO (2004) *Educating rural people: a low priority, in Education Today*, No. 9, April-June 2004, <http://portal.unesco.org/education> accessed on 14-03-07.

UNESCO (2007) Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007 <http://www.unesco.org/education/GMR/2007/chapter9.pdf> accessed on 22-06-07.

UNESCO, (2002) *Education for All: Is the World on Track? EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002*, Paris: UNESCO. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001325/132513e.pdf>

UNESCO (2007) *The 2007 Education for All Global Monitoring Report (2006): Strong foundations Early childhood care and education*, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001477/147794E.pdf>

UNESCO (2003a) *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2003/4*, Paris: UNESCO.

UNESCO, (2003b) *Gender and Education for All: the leap for equality*, Global Monitoring Report 2003/2004. UNESCO: Paris.

UNESCO, (2003c) *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4. Education for All: Is the World on Track?* Paris, UNESCO, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001325/132513e.pdf>

UNICEF (2006a) *The State of the World's Children 2007*, The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) <http://www.unicef.org/sowc07/docs/sowc07.pdf> accessed on 06/03/08.

UNICEF, (2007) *Achieving Universal Primary Education in Ghana by 2015: A Reality or Dream?* A Working Paper from the Division of Policy and Planning http://www.unicef.org/videoaudio/PDFs/Achieving_Universal_Primary_Education_in_Ghana_by_2015.pdf accessed on 20/06/09.

UNICEF (2006b) *Adolescent girls*, http://www.unicef.org/adolescence/index_girls.html accessed on 15-07-07.

UNICEF, (2001) *Early marriage: child spouses*. <http://www.unicef-icdc.org/publications/pdf/digest7e.pdf> accessed on 25-06-07

UNICEF (2000b) *Educating Girls, Transforming the Future*, New York: United Nations.

UNICEF (2001) *The State of the World's Children 2001*, UNICEF, New York http://www.unicef.org/sowc04/sowc04_contents.html accessed on 12-05-05.

- UNICEF (2004) *The State of the World's Children 2004*, UNICEF, New York http://www.unicef.org/sowc04/sowc04_contents.html accessed on 22-09-05.
- UNICEE (2000a) *The State of the World's Children*, (New York, United Nations).
- UNICEF, Ghana (2008) *Good Practices: Fighting the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents in Ghana*. http://www.unicef.org/wcaro/wcaro_WCIII_good_practice_Ghana.pdf accessed on 25/03/09
- UNICEF (2006) *The State of the World's Children 2007*, UNICEF, <http://www.unicef.org/sowc07/docs/sowc07.pdf> accessed on 22/02/08
- UNICEF (2008) "Water, environment and sanitation". http://www.unicef.org/wes/index_womenandgirls.html accessed on 10/08/09
- United Nations (1989) 'UN Convention on the right of the child', Geneva.
- USAID (1999) *Girls' Education: Good for Boys, Good for Development*, Gender Matters Information Bulletin, No. 5, October.
- USAID/Ghana (2008) Ghana's HIV/AIDS Health Profile http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/global_health/aids/Countries/africa/ghana_profile.pdf
- United States Department of State (USDOS) (2001) *Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): Individual Country Reports*, Washington, DC: USDOS, Office of the Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/9424.pdf>
- USAID, (1994) *The demand for primary schooling in rural Ethiopia, A research study*, Addis-Ababa, USAID (mimeo).
- Wak, G. (2002) *Determinants of Infant Mortality in the Kassena-Nankana District*, M.A. dissertation, Regional Institute for Population Studies, University of Ghana: Legon.
- Walker, J. C. (1988) 'The way men act: dominant and subordinate male cultures in an inner-city school', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 9(1), 3–18.
- Walkerdine, V. (1990) *Schoolgirl Fictions*, London: Verso.
- Walkerdine, V., Lucey, H. and Melody, J. (2001) *Growing up girl*, New York: New York University Press.
- Wamahiu, S.P. (1996) 'The Pedagogy of Difference: An African Perspective', in P.F. Murphy and C.V. Gipps (eds.) *Equity in the Classroom: Towards Effective Pedagogy for Girls and Boys*, London: Falmer Press.

- Weale, M. (1992) *Education, Externalities, Fertility, and Economic Growth*, Population and Human Resources Department, Policy Research Working Paper No. WPS 1039 (Washington, DC, World Bank).
- Weedon, C. (1999) *Feminism, Theory and politics of Difference*, Oxford: Blackwell
- Wharton, Amy S. (2005) *The Sociology of Gender: An Introduction to Theory and Research*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Whiteside, A. (2003) 'Poverty and HIV/AIDS in Africa', *Third World Quarterly*, 23(2) 313-332.
- Whitehead, Ann (2006) 'Persistent poverty in North East Ghana', *Journal of Development Studies*, 42(2), 278–300.
- Wilkins, K. (1999) 'Development Discourse on Gender and Communication in Strategies for Social Change', *Journal of Communication*, 49(1), 44-64.
- Wilson, D. (2004) 'Human Rights: Promoting Gender Equality in and through Education', *Prospects*, 34(1) 11-27.
- Wolpe, A. (1987) 'Sex in schools: back to the future', *Feminist Review*, 27, 37–47.
- Wood, K.; Jewkes, R. (1997) 'Violence, rape and sexual coercion: everyday love in a South African township', *Gender and Development*, 5, 41-46.
- World Bank (2003) *Gender equality and the millennium development goals*, Washington DC: The World Bank Gender and Development Group.
- World Bank (2004) *Books, Buildings, and Learning Outcomes: An Impact Evaluation of World Bank Support to Basic Education in Ghana*, Operations Evaluation Department, Report No. 28779, World Bank: Washington.
- World Bank (1996) *Basic Education Sector Improvement Program, Staff Appraisal Report, Republic of Ghana*, Population and Human Resources Division, Africa Region, World Bank: Washington.
- World Bank (1985) *Ghana agricultural sector review*, World Bank: Washington.
- World Bank (1993) *The benefits of education for women, HRO Dissemination Notes*, Human Resources Development and Operations Policy (Washington, DC, World Bank).
- World Bank (2002) *Education and HIV/AIDS: A Window of Hope*. Washington DC, The World Bank.
- World Bank (1995) *Priorities and Strategies for Education: a World Bank View*, Washington DC: The World Bank.

World Bank (1996) *Levelling the Playing Field: Giving Girls an Equal Chance for Basic Education- Three Countries' Efforts*, EDI Learning Resources Series (Washington, DC, World Bank).

World Health Organization (WHO) (2008) *Female genital mutilation*, Geneva, WHO, Factsheet No. 241. <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/> accessed on 13/04/09

Wragg, E. C. (1999) *An Introduction to classroom Observation*, second edition, London: Routledge.

Wynd, S. (1999) 'Education, Schooling and Fertility in Niger', in: C. Heward and S. Bunwaree (eds.) *Gender, Education and Development: Beyond Access to Empowerment*, 101–116, London & New York: Zed Books Ltd.

Yasheng, M. and Siebert, S. (2009) *The Gender Education Gap in China: The Power of Water*, IZA Discussion Paper No. 4108, Social Science Electronic Publishing. Available at <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1391760>

Yeboah (1990) *Educational Reform in Ghana*, Paper given at USAID Conference on Educational Reform in Africa, Ministry of Education: Accra. 9-15 September, Unpublished paper.

Yin, R. K. (1994) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods (2nd Edition)*, SAGE.

Young, K. (1997) 'Gender and Development', in Visvanathan, N et al (eds.) *The Women, Gender and Development Reader*, Halifax, Canada: Fernwood Publishing Ltd. 51-53.

Zounmenou, D. (2009) *Ghana's 2008 election: towards a consolidated democracy?* Institute of Security Studies, Situation report, 27 July 2009 accessed on 24/12/09. http://www.iss.co.za/dynamic/administration/file_manager/file_links/GHANA%20NEW%2027-07-09.PDF?link_id=25&slink_id=7920&link_type=12&slink_type=13&tmpl_id=3

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1

In-depth interview schedule for individual male and female students and, focus group discussion

This interview schedule is designed to gather information on students' perspectives of gender inequalities at the secondary level of education in Ghana. The study is purely an academic exercise and all information gathered would be handled as strictly confidential. I would be grateful if all questions are answered. However, the choice to answer any question is yours.

1. Background information

- Age
- sex
- Class/form in school
- Course of study
- Number of siblings
- Parents' occupation

2. Access to school

- Socio-economic factors (attitudes to gender roles in Ghana)
 1. What work do boys perform in the house?
 2. What work do girls perform in the house?
 3. Do you face any financial difficulty in the course of schooling? (individual not group)
- Cultural values
 1. How do some of the cultural values (customs and traditions) of your community affect your education, e.g. early marriage?
- Gender
 1. Do you think that teachers treat you in a particular way because you are a male or female?

1. Do you think that parents treat you in a particular way because you are a male or a female?

3. Boys and girls experiences of schooling

- Teachers' attention for example, the distribution of questions
 1. Do teachers give boys and girls equal chances to ask and answer questions?
- Factors that influence choice of subjects
 1. What subjects do you like?
 2. What factors do you consider in choosing your subjects?

Do you have a choice?

Who influences your choice of subject? For example, Students' interest
Teachers/parents' influence, Future job aspiration

4. Violence/bullying-experiences as victims or perpetrators

1. What type of behaviour have you experienced from a fellow student that makes you feel uncomfortable?
 2. What type of behaviour have you experienced from a teacher that makes you feel uncomfortable?
- Future expectations
 1. What would you like to be in future?
 2. Do you think you will release your dreams or ambitions?
 3. What factors might help or hinder these goals?

APPENDIX 2

In-depth interview schedule for parents

This interview schedule is designed to gather information on parents' perspectives of gender inequalities at the secondary level of education in Ghana. The study is purely an academic exercise and all information gathered would be handled as strictly confidential. I would be grateful if all questions are answered. However, the choice to answer any question is yours.

1. Background information

- Age
- sex
- Occupation
- Number of children
- Marital status

5. Parents attitudes towards boys and girls at home

- Expectations of boys and girls
 1. What do you expect from boys and in terms of their behaviour, school achievement and future career?
 2. What do you expect from girls in terms of their behaviour, school achievement and future career?
- Domestic roles
 1. What type of roles do you assign to boys in the house?
 2. What type of roles do you assign to girls in the house?
- Value of boys and girls

1. Do you value girls in the same light as you value boys?
- Access to school
 1. Do boys and girls have the same opportunity to go school?
 2. In the situation of limited resources, which one would you send to school, a boy or a girl?

APPENDIX 3

In-depth interview schedule for educational officials

This interview schedule is designed to gather information on educational officials' perspectives of gender inequalities at the secondary level of education in Ghana. The study is purely an academic exercise and all information gathered would be handled as strictly confidential. I would be grateful if all questions are answered. However, the choice to answer any question is yours.

1. Background information

- Age
- sex
- Position/rank
- Marital status
-

2. Educational Policy

- Educational policy on gender
 1. What is the significance of FCUBE and capitation grant in promoting equity in education?
 2. What other policies have been put in place so far concerning gender equality in education?
 3. How have these policies worked?
 4. Are there any obstacles in the implementation of these policies?
 5. Do you think boys and girls are given the same opportunity to education?
 6. Tell me more about the aims, obstacles, your opinion on success of this activities

APPENDIX 4

In-depth interview schedule for teachers

This interview schedule is designed to gather information on teachers' perspectives of gender inequalities at the secondary level of education in Ghana. The study is purely an academic exercise and all information gathered would be handled as strictly confidential. I would be grateful if all questions are answered. However, the choice to answer any question is yours.

1. Background information

- Age
- sex
- Class/form taught in school
- Subject taught
- Marital status

2. Teachers' attitudes towards boys and girls

- Expectations of boys and girls
 1. What are your expectations of boys in terms of behaviour, achievement in class and future career?
 2. What are your expectations of girls in terms of behaviour, achievement in class and future career?
 3. What differences, if any exist between boys and girls, do they behave differently towards certain activities?
 4. Do you find yourself behaving differently towards your students because they are boys or girls?
 5. Do you do anything to compensate for any differences in abilities, activities and behaviour of boys and girls?
- Control/punishment
 1. What types of discipline are given to students in this school?

2. Are boys and girls disciplined in the same way?
 3. Who are easier to control in class, boys or girls in the classroom?
- Reward/praise
 1. What behaviour of boys and girls deserve praise or reward in the school?
 2. Are boys and girls praised or rewarded for the same kinds of behaviour?
 - Attention
 1. Do you feel boys or girls demand the same or different attention in the classroom in terms of their behaviour or ability for example?
 2. How do you feel you deal with this?
 3. How would you rate boys and girls participation in lessons?
 - Choice of subject
 1. What subjects are offered to boys and girls in the school?
 2. Which subject do boys or girls do better?
 3. Do you think boys and girls respond differently to a particular subject?
 4. What part do you play in the choice of students' subject?
 5. How does the formal and hidden curriculum work in terms of experiences of boys and girls in school?

APPENDIX 5

Life history interview guide for school dropouts

1. Background information

- Age
- sex
- Class/form in school
- Course of study
- Parents' occupation

1. Could you please tell me about your family background?
2. What are your experiences of schooling and reasons for dropout?
3. What are you doing now and what are your future expectations?
4. Do you think you will release your dreams or ambitions?
5. What factors might help or hinder these goals?