

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**INTERVENTIONS AND RETENTION OF THE GIRL-CHILD
EDUCATION IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN AGONA WEST
MUNICIPALITY**



MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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**A thesis in the Department of Educational Administration and
Management, Faculty of Educational Studies, submitted to the School of
Graduate Studies, in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Philosophy
(Educational Administration and Management)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

JUNE, 2022

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Lucy Lartey, declare that, this thesis, with the exception of quotations references contained in published works that have been identified and acknowledged, is entirely my own work and that it has not been submitted either in part or whole for another degree in any institution elsewhere.

Signature:

Date:

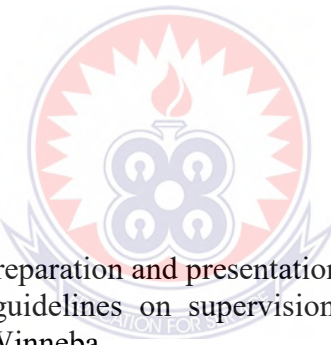
Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis were supervised by me in accordance with guidelines on supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Supervisor's Name: DR. KWAME ODEI-TETTEY

Signature:

Date:



DEDICATION

To my dear daughter, Ms. Adelaide Antwi, for her great support.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincerest and deepest appreciation go to Dr. Kwame Odei-Tettey, Senior Lecturer and my research supervisor, for his guidance, suggestions and his painstaking vetting of the work. He brought his rich experience and knowledge to bear upon this work. I am grateful. I am also indebted to Mr. N. O. Asamoah, an educationist who supported me in no small means with much-needed information that helped to make the work successful. My family, especially my husband Mr. George Antwi Sakyi, deserves gratitude for their support and prayers. I owe a great depth of gratitude to my course mate, Mrs. Joana Kasandra Turkson who in diverse ways contributed to the success of this work.

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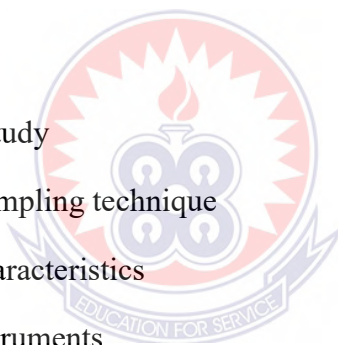
It will be ungrateful on my part if I fail to show appreciation to all who furnished me with information during the data collection. To my participants, I say well done to you. I am also grateful to Mr. Robert Nkansah Boakye and Ms. Helena Dankwah for ensuring good typesetting for the presentation.

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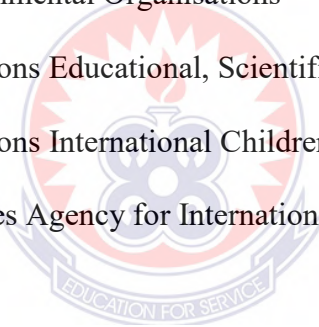
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GLOSSARY

CAMFED	Campaign for Female Education
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
GCEP	Girl-Child Education Programme
GES	Ghana Education Service
GHF	Guraba Hands Foundation
IDA	International Development Association
MGCSP	Ministry of Gender and Children and Social Protection
MOE	Ministry of Education
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development



ABSTRACT

Education is a fundamental human right, and ensuring that girls receive quality education is not just their human right but a global development priority. This study investigated girl-child education interventions and retention of the girl-child in JHSs in Agona West Municipality. The study sought to investigate the various girl education intervention programmes instituted to promote girl-child education at the basic school level in the Agona West Municipality and to find out how these programmes could be expanded to retain girls in school. The research approach adopted was qualitative. The study collected primary data through interviews with a sample size of 20 participants (comprising female students, head teachers, parents, teachers, Girl-Child coordinator, and Gender desk coordinator in the municipal assembly), using semi-structured interview guides and focused-group discussions. Findings of the study were that the municipality has rolled out several programmes intended at promoting girl-child education through solitary and collaborative efforts by the Ghana Education Service, the Municipal Assembly as well as local and international donors. On the expectations of female students regarding the programmes, three themes were developed; provision of incentive packages; empowerment of parents through financial support; and interventions backed by law. The study revealed four major contributions of the girl-child intervention programmes namely improved enrolment and retention of female children; lessening of financial burden on parents; society reconsider on their stance on the value of female education; and improved health of female children. Concerning expanding the interventions, the participants advocated for parental intervention, mentorship programmes, intensification of existing programmes, and parental education. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended, among others that the Municipal Assembly in collaboration with the Municipal Education Directorate (GES) need to resource the girl-child education unit adequately to enable facilitators help in implementing girl-child education programmes in the municipality. In addition, it was recommended that local civil society organizations, educated citizens occupying recognized positions need to be encouraged to play meaningful roles in advocating for the elimination of cultural practices and beliefs that remain hindrance to girl-child education in the municipality.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

One of the best legacy every society or nation can bequeath to its citizens is education. Education serves as the basis for human capital formation which is a priceless asset for growth and development. It is an instrument for academic progress, social integration, political stability and an effective national development asset for any country (Forum for African Women Educationalists [FAWE], 2000). Education is a cornerstone of development, in that, it provides individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to actively participate in social and economic life of society. When children receive good quality education, they are more likely to be active participants in the economic and social development processes and this is likely to translate into sustained poverty reduction. Education is a universal practice engaged by everyone for the purpose of teaching skills, training the intellect, transmitting the cultural heritage, acquisition, creation, and adaptation of knowledge and values which are indispensable for inclusive economic development (Education for All, 2000). Education is considered both as an end (a vocation) and as a means to an end (avenue for future vocation) for individuals and society to grow. In this vein, it is considered as the key to sustainable development and it is a fundamental human right.

As a result of the significance of education, various efforts have been made towards achieving education for everyone. Accordingly, several global goals have been consistently and greatly supported regarding the notion that every child in every country should have the chance to complete, at least, primary education. For example, there was the World Conference on Education in the 1990s in Jomtien, Thailand which targeted the year 2000 as the year for Universal Education. Again, there was a

global education forum held in Dakar in the year 2000 to assess the Jomtien Declaration and the Millennium Development Goal 2 and Sustainable Development Goals in Education, 2015 (UN, 2015). In these fora the concept of universal primary completion rates and gender equity were emphasised (UNESCO, 2008; United Nations, 2015).

The expansion of educational opportunities to both males and females is a win for all the society. In congruence to this, in 2005, Ghana started the implementation of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy in response to a constitutional requirement that such education be provided for every Ghanaian child over a 10-year following its proclamation in 1993 (Mankoe, 2007). FCUBE, as the policy is called, is a comprehensive programme designed to provide good quality basic education for all children of school going age. All of these (World Conference on Education, 1990 and Education Policy of 1961) promulgations were the off-shoots of the 1992 Constitution. The government of Ghana also sees education as a very significant way by which it could harvest its human and physical resources to explore the material resources for national development. As a result, successive governments have developed numerous policies or reforms to provide basic education for all children. For example, the Education Policy of 1961 and the FCUBE policy of 2005 aimed at providing basic education for all, while mindful of the quality of education (Mankoe, 2007).

Ghana is also a signatory to a number of international conferences which seek to focus on equalisation of access to quality education. Some of these conferences are Education for All (1990) in Jomtien, Thailand and Education for All (2000) in Dakar, Senegal. Again, Ghana adopted the Millennium Development Goals in 2000 (now

Sustainable Development Goals of 2015). The government of Ghana also regards Basic Education as necessary for the development of the democratic process and thus preparing citizens to participate in the general life of the country.

The perceived challenge, especially for the girl-child that developing countries need to grapple with, are the socio-economic structures and the contributions of parents, many of whom have varying perceptions of female education. In order to mitigate the challenges, the government of Ghana promulgated the FCUBE in 1995 to ensure that children in the country attend school up to the basic level (FAWE, 2000).

Despite the relief brought forth by the FCUBE, participation of girls in basic education and their achievements level continue to be disproportionately low as compared to the boys (UNESCO, 2008). Boakye (2004) observes that thousands of girls in Ghana either do not have access to school or dropped out of school or perform poorly due to socio-economic factors such as child labour, poverty, broken homes, engagement of girls as house helps, quest for wealth and early marriage. While it is a truism that some achievements have been made regarding the implementation of the FCUBE, there are still challenges relating to universal access and participation. This is particularly true for the girl-child who, for some social economic and cultural reasons, is lagging behind (Boakye, 2004). This challenge has been trending since independence in Ghana in 1957.

Hence, beyond admission, girls remain one of the focal points under the FCUBE policy. In the Agona West Municipality, for example, as a means of admitting and retaining girls in school, an initiative has been embarked on by the organisation called the Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) to empower girls through basic education and to Junior High School completion. The campaign support included

scholarship packages for girls, in order to relieve parents of some of the expenses relating to footwear, sanitary pads, feeding and transportation (Agona West Municipal Education Directorate, 2019). These anticipation would whet the appetites of the girls to pursue education, reduce female dropout rates, increased transition and improved completion rates for girls. In addition to these interventions, Parent Associations (PAs) and other donors have mobilized resources to support Science, Technical and Mathematics Education programmes and entrepreneurship for girls in the Agona West Municipality. Government, on her part, has introduced interventions such as the Capitation Grant, the School Feeding Programmes, the Free Exercise Book, and the Free Uniform Policies. Moreover, Girl-Child Education Units have been established at all regional and district assemblies for the purpose of conducting sensitization campaigns on the potentials of the girl-child in the development efforts of Ghana as a whole. These interventions helped many girls to attend school at the basic level instead of remaining at home (Boaltse, 2002).

Despite these numerous interventions at the local and national levels, a sizeable number of girls are still out of school in the Agona West Municipality. Some of the girls who are either out of school, drop outs or those who have never attended school have been forced into early marriage, domestic servitude and have resultantly experienced de-humanizing cultural practices such as teenage pregnancy, streetism and migration to bigger cities for menial jobs, baby-sittings and shop-keepings (Sekyere, 2006). This challenge of the girl-child has been disproportionately outnumbered by boys in basic schools is very worrying and constitutes a serious disincentive to national development. For example, the percentage of girls' enrolment in public junior high schools in both public and private schools increased very minimally from 47% in 2011 and there is evidence of high dropout rates from primary

to junior high school (Boaltse, 2002). Moreover, the gender parity index (i. e. the ratio of girls' gross enrolment as a proportion to boys' enrolment) increased slightly from 0.93% in 2016/2017 to 0.94 in 2017/2018 academic year (Briamah, 2017). Briamah cited early marriage, poverty level of families, societal attitude to girl-child, low self-concept of the girl-child and parental neglect as the causal factors.

The girl-child is a female child at the school- going age of six to fifteen years (UNICEF, 2002), a period in which she is supposed to complete junior high school. In pursuance of the objective of promoting girl-child education, the government of Ghana set up the Girls–Child Education Unit in 2000. Despite this intervention, there are still factors inhibiting girl-child education in the country. Amekuedi (2006) observes that some of the challenges that still seem to militate against girl-child education are lack of sustained parental involvement and socio-economic and cultural factors. For example, some parents still believe that the place of the girl-child is in the kitchen. Hence, girls should be raised to prepare for marriage. Some parents even give out their girls as house helps or engage them in petty trading to meet economic needs. In view of some of these perceived challenges, various workshops and seminars have been organised periodically and Girl-child coordinators have been assigned to basic schools.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The introduction of Education for All (EFA) and other national policies and interventions such as the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) were launched in 1996 to ensure that education is delivered to all manner of persons, irrespective of their class, socioeconomic status and gender. However, in view of some perceived reasons/challenges facing girl-child education in Ghana, there are

underpinning factors why these problems still persist in the face of numerous interventions. Moreover, if the population of Ghana is made up of males and females, especially so when the females outnumber the males, it seems reasonable to argue that educational access should be available to both without disproportionate challenges to the girl-child. Indeed, it should be noted that girls grow up to be mothers (women) and so if girls are denied education access or let to experience education challenges, it is the future of women that are put in danger as far as their contribution to national development is concerned. This proposition should hold for all parts of the Ghanaian society in which there are basic education facilities.

The Agona West Municipality in the Central Region of Ghana is a thriving economic area with many businesses and basic schools. It is largely urban in nature but with some rural areas in which farmers and artisans reside. Many girls in the municipality are found loitering about, going to the farms and hawking while parents look on unconcerned. Teenage pregnancy is rampant and is not frowned upon, and many of the girls are not in school (Agona West Municipal Directorate of Education Report, 2018).

Table 1.1: Dropout of female students, 2018-2022

School	Admission	Completion
AWMAE JHS	48	28
Methodist A JHS	33	22
IT Ahmadiyya Islamic JHS	16	15

Source: Fieldwork data (2022).

From the table it can be realised that 48 girls were admitted at the A.WM.A.E. JHS 1 and 28 completed. In the same situation, 33 of the female students admitted at Methodist 'A' JHS 1, 22 completed in the school. However, it is unclear as whether

who did not complete in the respective schools dropped out as some may have sought of transfer to other schools. Again, other may have relocated as a result of transfer of parents. In the Ahmadiyya however, 16 girls were admitted to JHS in 2018 and 15 completed with only one (1) dropping out. The one who dropped got pregnancy as explained by the headteacher of the school. This is not significant enough and the low rate or absence of drop out could be attributed to the effectiveness of the intervention in the communities.

Consequently, the problem underpinning this research is that: in spite of the many girl-child education intervention programmes brought to the school in the Agona West Municipality, many female students continue to stop or drop out of school and then tends to render the intervention programmes irrelevant. This phenomenon raises a lot of issues the study sought to investigate. Indeed, despite the many workshops and seminars held to sensitize stakeholders on the significance of girl-child education, challenges still persist in the Municipality. Despite many studies on the girl-child education programmes in the country (e.g., Alhassan, 2010; Arku, Angmor & Tetteh, 2014; Ankoma-Sey, Nsoh & Quansah, 2019), none, has explored in the case of the Agona West Municipality. The research gap this study attempts to resolve, therefore, is an assessment of the girl-child education interventions and retention in selected JHSs in the Agona West Municipality.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the output of the various girls' education intervention programmes instituted to promote girl-child education at the basic school level in the Agona West Municipality.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. find out the nature of the girl-child education intervention programmes in the Agona West Municipality.
2. find out the expectations of female students regarding girl-child education intervention programmes in the Agona West Municipality.
3. investigate the contribution of girl-child education intervention programmes to the retention of girls in schools within the Agona West Municipality.
4. explore how the girl-child education intervention programmes can be expanded to retain girls in the schools in the Agona West Municipality.

1.5 Research questions

The study used the research questions below as the bases for data collection.

1. What is the nature of the girl-child education intervention programmes in the Agona West Municipality?
2. What are the expectations of the female students regarding girl-child education intervention programmes in the Agona West Municipality?
3. What are the contributions of the girl-child education intervention programmes to the retention of girls in schools within the Agona West Municipalities?
4. How can the girl-child education intervention programmes be expanded to retain girls in the schools in the Agona West municipality?

1.6 Significance of the study

Girl- Child education has been the concern of stakeholders of education due to the important role women play in the development of the manpower needs of the country and the important contributions they make in decision-making process. The findings of the study helped to reveal some of the factors that militate against girls' education in Ghana in general and the Agona West Municipality in particular. This helped the Ghana Education Service and the Girl-Child Education Unit to design interventional programmes that facilitate enrolment, retention and completion of girls in school. Again, it enabled the girl-child education units at the local level to plan appropriately to intensify public education on policies regarding girls' education more especially the role parents/ guardians play in the education of the girl-child.

Furthermore, findings of the study encouraged the intensification of collaboration between donor agencies, non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations/ churches and individual philanthropists, and the government (district/ municipal assemblies) in the implementation of education intervention programmes for girl-child education. To teachers, educated women, individuals and community leaders, findings of the study helped to strengthen the advocacy role they play in minimizing or eliminating of cultural practices that work against opportunities for girl education. This led to ensuring and achieving the full development of the potentials of the girl-child to enhance their contributions to social development. The findings further created awareness among girls in school to develop assertive skills which will better their chances in life through education. The study will also add to the body of literature available in the area of girl-child education in Ghana.

1.7 Delimitation to the study

The study involved girl-child education intervention and retention at the JHS level in the Agona West Municipality. The study was delimited to this area so as to ensure better understanding of intervention programmes relating to girls' education though there might be other areas of study that contribute to development of the girl-child. It was delimited to make the study outcomes more valid and reliable since detailed research could be undertaken by the researcher. It was delimited to the contributions made by parents, headteachers, female students and girl-child coordinators in the Agona West Municipality.

1.8 Limitation to the study

The major limitation or obstacle that the researcher encountered related to instances where some participants were unwilling to be open in giving information involving cultural practices. In African societies, and for that matter Ghanaian society, the great attachment people make on cultural practices is very high. Sometimes the fear of some individuals in revealing realities creates challenges to researchers. This is because such individuals are of the view that when it comes to light that they revealed realities concerning cultural practices, they would be accused and subjected to public ridicule. Like the adage goes "we don't wash our dirty linen in public" so it is when talking about cultural practices. Body language indicated that participants were reluctant to share some data purported to bother on cultural practices. However, these challenges did not affect the findings of study greatly since the researcher, was able to collect data that was relevant and useful to the study.

Again case study research design allows equivocal evidence or biased views to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions. It also provides very little basis for scientific generalisation since they uses a small number of subjects and this study may have suffered that fate.

1.9 Operational definition of terms

For the purpose of clarity and consistency in the study, the following terms carry the perspective operational definitions given below:

Girl – Child: A female child below the age of 18.

Parent: Biological father or mother of a child who is responsible for the upkeep and survival of the child in terms of his/her physical, social, educational, security and economic needs.

Culture: The behaviour patterns, beliefs and all other products of a group that are passed on from generation to generation

Gender Parity Index (GPI): An indicator used for assessing gender equality in education. It is obtained by dividing girls' enrolment ratio by boys enrolment ratio; thus the attainment of 1.0 in GPI means achievement of gender parity.

Universal Education: An education which promotes equal access to learning for all children of school – going age irrespective of gender, tribe, ethnicity, geographical location, religious or political affiliation.

Interventional programmes: Actions and activities put in place to increase or improve educational outcomes or the social well – being of a group or individuals.

Donor Agencies: Individuals and Organizations (Internal and External) that give support towards educational, social and physical development of individuals and society (GES, 2005).

Guardian: a caregiver who is responsible for the upkeep and survival of the child in terms of his/her physical, social, emotional, educational, security and economic needs in absence of the biological parents.

Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs): organizations formed on religious basis that work in communities in terms of giving support to general development in the area they operate.

Civil Society Organizations (CSO): Associations formed by artisans such as tailors/seamstress, hairdressers, farmers, market women, businessmen among other hat function in the community.

Bilateral Donor Agencies: International Agencies that works at the governmental level usually between two nations. e.g. USAID, DFID, DANIDA, GTZ etc.

Multilateral Funding Agencies: Funding agencies involving more than two nations eg. UNICEF, UNESCO, African union.

Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs): Agencies and Organizations that work directly with communities not necessarily through governmental levels. eg. World Vision Ghana, CAMFES, Guraba Hands Foundation

Education: Education as used in this research work implies schooling (Formal education)

Girl – Child Education: Refers to the teaching and learning in the classroom, teacher-learner interactions, co-curricular activities provided to females under 18 years which aim at ensuring their physical, social, economic, health, mental or total development to make them responsible to contribute to the national growth and development.

Parental involvement: The responsibility that is placed on mothers, fathers, foster parents, grandparents, guardians, aunts, uncles and non – custodial parents for the care and well – being of children’s education.

1.10 Organisation of the study

The study was organised into five distinct chapters which represented the structural outlay of the study. The first chapter is the introduction which contains the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose and objectives, research questions that guided the study and the significance of the study. The chapter also contains the delimitation of the study. Chapter Two, which is the review of related literature critically reviews the works of authors that are related to the study. Basically, the literature review comprises the theoretical, conceptual and empirical review. Chapter Three is the research methodology which is the blueprint of the methods adopted to collect field data. The chapter comprised the research philosophy or paradigm, research approach, the research design, population, instrumentation, sample and sampling techniques, methods of data analysis, validity of instruments and ethical considerations. The fourth chapter is the result and discussion of data from the field, whiles Chapter Five constitutes the summary, conclusion, recommendations as well as areas for future research.

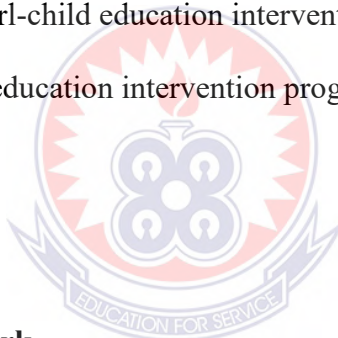
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is a review of related studies and contributions on girl-child education intervention and retention at the JHS level in Agona West Municipality. This chapter reviews literature under the following themes:

- Theoretical review
- Girl-child education in Ghana
- The nature of girl-child intervention policy in education,
- Expectations of the girl-child education intervention programmes,
- The contribution of girl-child education intervention programmes and strategies
- Expending girl-child education intervention programmes to retain girls in school.
- Empirical review
- Conclusion



2.1 Theoretical framework

The theory which underpins this research is the system theory as espoused by Swanson (2001). As Swanson (2001), has explained, however, critics of human resource development fail to mention that most other applied fields, such as medicine, engineering, and education, also rely on multidisciplinary theoretical bases. Whether it is a “discipline proper” or not, system theory has rightly maintained its status fundamental theoretical support of the emerging field of human resource development (Swanson & Holton, 2001). According to Gibson (2016), systems theory, also called social systems theory, in social science, is the study of society as a complex arrangement of elements, including individuals and their beliefs, as they relate to a whole (e. g. a country). The study of society as a social system has a long history in

the social sciences. The conceptual origins of the approach are generally traced to the 19th century, particularly in the work of English sociologist and philosopher Herbert Spencer and French social scientist Emile Durkheim.

Formal education in Ghana, as seen everywhere, is a system comprising various components such as educational institutions, various stakeholders, students, teachers, and non-teaching staff. All the components work by means of the principle of interdependence to get the system working. This means, if one component of the entire system breaks down, it affects the entire system. Girls remain an important component of the system, meaning that their non-participation in the educational system can affect the performance of the system and even the society in general as the universal system. Hence, in order to increase the retention of girls in education in relation to the system theory, all other components within the educational system such as parents, teachers, government, NGOs, traditional and religious leaders should advocate and contribute towards the achievement of goals of girl-child education.

2.2 Girl-child education in Ghana

Research has shown that investing in girls' education is probably the most cost-effective measure a developing nation can take to improve its standards of living. Educating girls is critical for economic growth and poverty reduction. It reduces the number of mothers who die during childbirth. For example, the World Bank (2005) has noted that in South Africa, where female rates are low in terms of enrolment, maternal mortality rates are about 10 times greater than in East Asia where many girls go to school. Educating girls reduces the number of children who die. The World Bank showed evidence that functional literacy as a kind of education led to a 10% reduction in child mortality. Ever since, Nyere (1976) argued that the various kinds of

education of the girl-child are the bedrock of the family which eventually extends to the entire society. By inference, education is an investment for a girl's future. Implicitly, education is meant to liberate the child from the restraints and limitations of ignorance and dependency.

Education is meant to increase the girl-child's physical and mental freedom; it increases her control over her own life and the environment within which she lives. Truly, a girl who gets basic education of one level or scope of education is more likely to resist some cultural practices such as female circumcision and other bad traditions than the ignorant and uneducated girl. The educated girl is liberated from various prejudices and cheating by her male counterparts. The Girls' Education Unit (2000) points out that the vicious cycle of ignorance and exploitation in society will be broken if women are educated in various forms, levels, or scopes. Particularly, when a rural woman is functionally educated, she becomes more aware of her environment and compares her life with others across the world; she will be able to take control of her life.

Mankoe (2007) commenting on female education says that it is broad in nature and scope and that women throughout history are known to be closer to the children than men, and that any attempt at transmitting societal values cannot be made without the effective participation of women in education.

In fulfillment of the policy requirement relating to providing various kinds of learning opportunities for girls in education, Girls Education Officers have been appointed at District and Regional offices and even at the National Headquarters of GES. These officers are charged with the responsibilities of disseminating information, education and communication on the values of education, school health and other categories of

learning opportunities particularly as they relate to the girl-child. Other policy dimensions include the formation of girls' clubs in schools. These clubs, as interventions are aimed at attracting enrolment and retention of girls in school. They discuss family life education issues such as safety, sanitation and sexual health. They also focus on efforts to increase the proportion of female teachers in the workforce to provide positive role models for female pupils and reinforce the point that girls' education is very vital (Ministry of Education, 2000). Girls' education, according to Asare-Danso (2015), is not a concern only for Ghana as evidenced in the Dakar Framework for Action which was championed by UNESCO.

2.3 Nature of girl-child intervention programmes in education

The National Development Planning Commission (NDPC, 2012) has observed that the disparity between girls and boys in the acquisition of education in Ghana remains 89.3 percent for boys and 84.3 percent for girls. In coping with this disparity, the government of Ghana introduced the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE), earlier and now the Free SHS policy in 2017, but these have not been able to remove the disparity. This leads one to wonder as to what has been the nature and scope of the FCUBE and many others including girl-child interventions in education programmes. This is reflected as one of the cardinal questions in this research: what is the nature of girl-child intervention programs in education in the Agona West Municipality?

In Ghana, the Basel Mission blazed the path regarding policy to enhance family education in Ghana. This policy of the Basel mission was based on what is termed the theology of marriage and family. This theology placed the home as the centre of the

universe and the educated mother based the training of her children on the Christian principles she has learned in the course of time.

In later years, girl-child policy-oriented institutions such as the Girl Education Unit were introduced and established. For example, according to the Borgen Project, in 1997, the government of Ghana created the Girls' Education Unit in the Ministry of Education, which means every region, metro, municipal and district had a Girls' Education Officer or Coordinator. The Ministry of Education (2018) also partnered with UNICEF to develop and implement education strategies for girls. Furthermore, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) worked in Ghana from 2012 to 2016 in a joint effort with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF. This partnership saw real results, including that 889 Gender Officers received training in guidance and counselling, 94,827 in-service teachers were trained and 28,056 teachers received mathematics education and training. Others included free scholarships for girls and the establishment of a District role model for girls. The Forum for African in Women Education (FAWE, 2000) has enumerated a number of interventions to curb the challenges girls, face in their educational journey. These interventions include providing educational facilities for girls, undertaking advocacy programmes in districts, financial incentives, and conducting research priority relating to girls' education.

Furthermore, the introduction of gender equality in education has come as a hope for the girl-child and is multi-dimensional. It needs an active involvement of parents, society, teachers, and the government at every level for success. Once children are in school, the role of parents, teachers, and caretakers become very vital interventions for girl-child are multi-dimensional and need the active involvement of parents, the

society, teachers, and the government at every level for success. Once children are in school, the role of parents, teachers, and caretakers becomes very vital in girl-child literacy development. Topping and Bamford (2008) observe that parental attitude is more highly related to children's academic performance than any measured factor. A key intervention, therefore, is to get parents seriously involved in the literacy development of girls and keep them in school. This can be done in the form of organizing projects for parents.

A third intervention is parental education and training aimed at suppressing regressive and repressive customs, traditions and the mindset which makes society biased against the girl-child. parental education and training intervention programmes goes into specific programmes and every aspect about the girl-child development and empowerment including the nutritional and healthcare requirements, education, recreation and free time sexual abuse is (Girls' Education Unit, 2000). In trying to retain girls in school, an incentive package should be instituted. If there should be any economic support to the family, it should be tied up with set criteria for girls' education. Brew (2002), notes that a difficult and less supportive home environment is the prime reason why young women or girls do not go to school and even if they go, they drop out of school. Another intervention according to Brew (2002) is economic development of parents by giving out loans to help give the girl-child the freedom to enjoy their childhood and complete their education without exploitation. Ideally, elimination of child labour in any form is only possible by making family units viable economically and educating them further to keep their girl children in school.

Osei (2004) also thinks that educated women in responsible positions should be invited to interact with girls at school and in community functions. In other words, to keep the girl-child in school, more female teachers should be posted to girls' schools to serve as role models and to encourage them to stay in school and continue their education to any level they wish. Another intervention of keeping the girl in school is for the government, with the help of parents and other supportive structures in the society, to initiate children into a safe environment. Osei (2004) argues that to bring real benefits to the girl-child in terms of a positive future, the government should support the formation of community-based abuse prevention activities including child protection committees, mentoring programmes and provision of day care centres for children of working parents so that the girl-child will not be employed to care for these children but allowed to stay in school.

All of these interventions call for the enactment of laws by the government to provide sanctions for parents who keep girls out of school. Again, other positive bodies of society such as NGOs in education and child rights advocacy groups could take up the issue of adequately funding girls' education to ensure girl-child rights, improve school curricula, provide incentives towards girl-child education, and ensure free, compulsory, quality and inclusive education for all children, especially girls. In sum, the girl-child can hope for a bright future if society can seriously tackle the challenge of gender discrimination and bias. Only gender equality with total women empowerment can ensure a safe and secure future for the girl-child.

Much more in furtherance of more interventions relating to female education, a symposium, "Approaches for Advancing Girls Education" was organized in Ajumako, Ghana. This resulted in a strategic document entitled "A National Vision

for Girls Education in Ghana: A Framework for Action” (c, 2005). These conferences were apparently organized to address the issue of gender inequality in the educational space which was described by Kofi Annan, the former UN Secretary-General as follows: “In most countries, girls are almost disadvantaged when it comes to schooling. Millions of young girls’ complete education, and countless numbers never received the quality education that is their right” (UNICEF, 2005: vii)

This assertion by Kofi Annan heralds the need for concerted efforts to champion female education in its various forms. This will bring humanity to the realization of the need to educate the girl-child since in the words of Nangurai (2003: p.7) “the more girls stay in school, the greater their economic and social progress and prospects”. These efforts will culminate into the expectation of girls to be much higher about schooling as compared to boys.

In comparative terms, progress relating to female education from an international perspective is much higher in South Asian countries than in sub-Saharan countries. UNESCO (2008) observes that since 1999, EFA indicators for female participation in school show that South Asia takes a fifth of the share of 15.8 million children in school including a significant portion of females. Compared to sub-Saharan Africa, research has shown that millions of girls, about 73%, do not participate in school due to child labour, lack of sponsorship, a quest for wealth, truancy, broken homes and engagement of children as house helps. In Nigeria with a population of more than 350 million people, over half of the population lives below the poverty line and this has greatly affected female participation in education (World Bank, 2012). Again, in Ethiopia, millions of girls are forcefully married out to men who have no interest in their education.

In Ghana, many young school-going girls are recruited from poor rural families to work as domestic servants in faraway urban towns and even neighbouring countries (World Bank, 2012). All these narratives imply girl-child participation in education, which is a fundamental right that is frequently denied in many African countries and Ghana. Essentially, in Ghana, for example, when a household has to make a choice, due to limited resources of educating for both boy and girl, it is always the boy that is chosen to attend schools leaving out the girl who is left with the choice of working at a young age to get additional income for the family (Asare, 2009). Asare intimated that there are complexities relating to the non-participation of females in school. One of the challenges he stated was the defiance of effective intervention and practices in the country. He observes that in addition to statutory weaknesses to remove the barriers hindering female education, there are also weak collaborative links between government and civil society organisations to safeguard gender interest. Resultantly, several regions of Ghana have experienced non-participation of girls in school as compared to boys. The differences in the participation levels in terms of scope are especially sharp in Northern Ghana and the leeward regions. In these places, 5% of girls participate in education compared to 77% of their male counterparts (Ayeremah, 2013).

Again, as it relates to Ghana, relative to the scope of girl-child education, there has been a minimal increase in the percentage of female participation in school. The percentage increased from 4.5% to 4.8% between 2012 -2014, and participation often decreases when girls move from primary school to Junior High School. The percentage of girls' enrolment in both public and private Junior High Schools increased from 47.0% in 2010-2011 to 47.4% in 2011-2012. Rationally, from the data, the percentage increase is insignificant. This could be that most girls dropped

out of school when they were moving from primary to JHS or the number of girls at the primary level was not encouraging. In effect, stakeholders of education need to collaborate to increase the enrolment rate in subsequent years (EMIS, 2012).

2.4 Benefits of education

It is universally accepted and a basic fact that education is a very important instrument for national development. Amutabi and Oketch (2003) construe education as one of the means of harnessing the human resources (men and women, boys and girls) for socio-economic and political stability. This means that no one, including the girl-child, should be left out of the educational arena in an effort to get a country developed.

Essentially, education is the backbone of every country. It is virtually for everyone. It is the level of education that helps people earn respect and recognition. It is an indispensable part of life both at personal and social levels (Adentwi, 2003). The impotence and benefits of education are undeniably for every single person. It is without saying that education has a positive effect on human life. All people need to study.

Ozturk (2001) observes that it is with the advent of education that people gain knowledge and enlarge their worldview. For example, learning by television watching or reading books give people a huge amount of information about anything they are interested in such as Mathematics, current news, exchange rates and about other countries and cultures. This means education in every sense of the word is one of the fundamental factors of development. Again, no country can achieve sustainable economic development without substantial investment in human capital. Education enriches people's understanding of themselves and the world. It improves the quality

of their lives and leads to broad social benefits to individuals and society. Oak (2016) argues that education raises people's productivity and creativity and promotes entrepreneurship and technological advances. This suggests that education plays a key role in securing economic and social progress and improving income distribution. For example, in areas where residents are unable to receive better education, life cannot be as thriving and prosperous as locations where there is a high standard of education.

Analytically, and as a matter of fact, everything we create today is based on the knowledge that we obtain throughout our lives by way of education. Education assists in inventing equipment and devices, resulting in high technological advancement today. Ideally, the more developed life becomes, the more necessary education is for everyone. Although education has benefits and influences life significantly, average education characterized by dropout instances is not the same everywhere. Thus, it has become a matter of strategy by many countries in the differences in their levels of education. This relates somehow to equity of education. UNESCO (2013) notes that, up to date, many nations of the world are striving to educate people. However, there are still some places where the inhabitants are almost completely uneducated, causing a serious knowledge defect. Therefore, every child, boy, or girl should be given equal opportunity to learn. This is because the development of every country depends on the education of its male and female.

Rationally, every country must do everything in its power to improve the education of its citizens. Although education differs in terms of its contents and standards from country to country, yet, all countries share the same goal which is to provide their citizens with suitable and meaningful learning for prosperous future development. For instance, in developing countries such as Ghana, huge chunks of their budgets are

spent to advance and broaden the knowledge base of their citizens across all levels of education. In 2017, Ghana devoted a colossal amount of GH¢7.7 billion to the education sector representing, 24% of the country's total budget (Ghanaian Chronicle, 2017). This has been so since independence. Indeed, since independence in 1957, various governments have made these types of budgetary efforts for equal access to education, elimination of gender-stereotyping, and the development of an educational system that is to close the gap in educational levels between males and females.

Anamuah-Mensah (2000) observes that there is a positive relationship between female education and improved household incomes and nourishment, hence, education has very important benefits for girls as it is for boys. Education, he noted, contributes to the development of analytical minds and reasoning power in individuals and keeps them building a sense of confidence and self-respect. This implies that any child, boy or girl, who is not educated, is disadvantaged in terms of income and health opportunity. This means that for a country such as Ghana, in the coming years, if it does not educate its children, it will be disabled in terms of economic productivity and social welfare.

Earlier, Sutherland-Addy (1995) stressed similar views as Anamuah-Mensah by noting the role of education in the development of quality human resources, and if there is no gender equity, the expected benefits of training human capital for national development cannot be realized. Hence, relating to the benefits of education, it can be summed up by noting that education is the best legacy a nation can give its citizens, especially the youth. This is because the development of any nation, community, or individual depends largely on the quality of education of such a nation. Education helps individuals to grow and develop the society in which they live.

Various governments in Ghana have demonstrated concerns for the gender equality role that girls play in the family as an institution and agent of socialization. This has been highlighted by Dr. George Kwegyir-Aggrey, a prominent Ghanaian educationist. Dr. Kwegyir-Aggrey said. “If you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a nation (Mankoe, 2007). Implicitly, the education of women has been recognized as a major tool for societal advancement, and various governments since colonial times have made conscious efforts to promote female enrolments in school.

2.5 Socio-economic challenges facing girl-child

Efforts to achieve efficiency in girl-child education have not been without challenges or smooth sailing. This is because many challenges have been identified even with interventional programmes. Boakye-Donkor (2004) outlines the socio-economic factors which serve as challenges to female education. They include societal attitudes, socio-cultural barriers, poverty, and parental level of education. Certain socio-economic conditions and practices have implications for termination of the education of children, for example, the socio-economic status of families is a foremost fact. This relates to a family’s level of educational attainment, occupation and income. The school performance of children in some developing countries revealed four determinants of a child’s capacity to learn, and this determines the child’s participation in education. These are family environment (including income levels and educational levels) peer group interaction and the type of children whom the individual associate with, the child’s interest, intelligence and ability, and early nutrition and health. These factors affect both sexes, especially the girls (Lichter, 2002).

Economic considerations have motivated familial preference for investing in male education rather than female education over the years (Burns, 2004, Khan, 2003). The act of families placing a high premium on the economic contributions of girls has been identified as a factor that restricts girls' participation in education. Handa (2006) found that for the academically elite high schools, income was the single most influential characteristic affecting enrolment and other intervention programmes for girls. Poverty has also been seen as a major underlying factor in the decisions of families to invest less in female education. In many families in poor societies and communities, girls are tasked to make contributions in the form of childcare, home production, agriculture and trade, which are very essential for the survival of family members and the education of siblings. Girls' contributions to their families begin at an early age and this underpins low priority given to female education in those communities. Investment in the education of boys in many poor families is seen, however as security for old age (Psacharapoulos, 1985).

Psacharapoulos (1985) further argued that the phenomenon of low female participation and retention in education goes beyond the issue of poverty. He observed that other economic factors such as parents' unwillingness to bear the educational cost of books, uniforms and other expenses contribute to low female participation in education. Khan (2003) found that both economic and cultural factors conspire to make girls lag behind boys in terms of the number of years of schooling and in grades achieved. According to him, early marriage, concern for girls, moral and physical welfare, segregation and seclusion in some countries combine in various ways to limit and restrict female education.

The arguments above relating to the preferential treatment given to boys as opposed to girls' education is echoed by Boakye-Donkor (2007) who observes that due to the high cost of education, most parents find it difficult to provide for their wards' education. In such circumstances, the little money they have in their opinions must be spent on the boys first. This is because girls are likely to get married and will be taken care of by their husbands. As such informal duties like cooking, washing and home craft will help the girl-child than formal education. Research has shown that in many parts of rural Africa and poor urban areas, where decisions would have to be made because of financial constraints, girls are most likely to be held back or withdrawn from school because her brother had passed the BECE and her parents felt they could not look after both of them in the secondary school and so the girl had to drop out of school to make it possible for her brother to have secondary education. Her parents then apprenticed her to a dressmaker. The total financial outlay was enough to have paid for the girl's secondary education for two years, and the parents were surprised when this was pointed out to them (Agyare-Kwasi, 2013). What this means is that when parental decisions are to be made due to financial constraints, priority is given to the boy.

In a seminar paper presented to the National Council on Women and Development (NCWD), by Akuffo (1978), he attributes the high dropout rate in girls' education to social and economic factors. He points out that parents show a preference for boys' education when confronted with inadequate resources on the ground of belief in the traditional sex role. Briamah (2017) comments that apart from the few chances given to women most parents think if a girl is highly educated, she will not get a husband or she will get barren. Briamah's (2017) study also revealed that parental and family expectations of the female child are lower than that of the male child because the

social environment continues to encourage males to have high aspirations. Implicitly, when a family's finances are low, the young girl's education becomes something of a second choice or importance.

The specific behaviours of individual families toward girls' participation and retention in education is a general reflection of the collective attitude of society. In African society, for instance, the importance attached to female education is measured by the differences in sex roles. Some researchers revealed that the sex of the individual influences' parents' attitude and decisions on the education of that individual. Rosseau (2007) as cited in Obeng (2008) researched sex differences in education and occupational pressure and found out that traditionally, parents will prefer educating their male children where there are more dependents than their resources can meet because the male children will get a well-paid job in future and take care of their future families.

The Girl-child Education Unit (2000) argues that there is a belief out there in society that there is an opportunity cost of sending daughters to school. The girl-child labour is indispensable to the survival of many households. Also, parents feel that since the girl-child is going to marry into different families, sending her to school is not worth the investment. Boakye-Donkor (2004) observes that parents believe that it is taboo for boys to perform certain roles such as sweeping washing, cooking, going to the market, bathing the young ones, fetching water and firewood. These parents believe that the girl-child has no time to rest if she has to combine all these with school work. This is why in Ghana it is not strange to see girls caring for young siblings or going to work. In a similar vein, some parents who are traders find it cheaper to use their girl children or wards as partners, especially on market days when help is needed most

(Boakye-Donkor, 2004). Analytically, the girl will obviously lag behind in school since she is the one used by the mother, leading eventually to dropping out.

Another economic dimension that has negatively contributed to the low participation and retention of girls in school is cost-sharing. During the 1980s most governments in Africa and other parts of the developing world introduced cost-sharing in the provision of essential social services such as education and health as a conditionality of neoliberal market policies and structural adjustment. This was intended to reduce the cost of providing such services and release funds for other services. The introduction of structural adjustment policies caused widespread income disparities and marginalized poor and disadvantaged groups within the population of those countries. For example, in Latin America and Sub-Sahara Africa, the affected groups ended up with limited access to social services (Osei-Hwedie, 1999).

Particularly as it relates to Sub-Sahara Africa, the farmers who were feminine, were the hardest hit in the educational sector. As a result, girls became disproportionately affected by the imposition of structural adjustment policies. In Ghana, the implementation of neo-liberal market measures increased the burden on most women who manage households, and this brought in its trail inequalities in the education of school-going children, especially girls. The introduction of higher user charges or fees increased educational costs to families in terms of higher school fees payment and this compelled households constrained by limited resources to prefer educating boys to girls (Osei-Hwedie, 1999). This phenomenon became increasingly characterized by increased child labour for girls especially those of poor households as their burden mothers tasked them to provide help to earn income for the survival of their families (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2009).

2.6 Parental contribution as a key factor towards girls' education

The above narrative implies that all children have two main educators in their lives, their parents and teachers. Essentially, parents are the prime educators of a child until the child attends early grade school. The school and parents have crucial roles in terms of interventions. As of date, there is no specific universal agreement on what parental involvement is. It can take any form, from contributing at the school level (as governor, helping in the classroom, or during lunch) through to reading to the child at home, teaching songs or nursery rhyme, and assisting with homework. Peter, Seeds, Goldstein and Coleman (2008) noted that parental contribution can be categorized into two broad strands: Parents' involvement in the life of the school and parents' involvement in support of the individual child at home. It is widely recognized that if pupils are to maximize their potential from schooling, they will need the full support of their parents.

Attempts to enhance parental contribution as an intervention in education occupy the attention of governments, administrators, educators and parent organisations across the world. It is anticipated that parents should intervene not only in the promotion of their own children's education and achievement but more broadly in school improvement and the democratization of school governance. The European Commission, for example, observes that the degree of parental contribution is a significant indicator of the quality of schooling and it is a major intervention. In England, the government's intervention for securing governmental involvement was first set out in the 1997 White Paper "Excellence in Schooling" The intervention described included three elements: Providing parents with information, giving parents a voice and encouraging parental partnership with schools (Peter et al., 2008).

Implicitly, if governments realize that education is not a sole responsibility but a partnership between all stakeholders, that is government, parents, and other stakeholders such as NGOs and CBOs in the society, then attaining hundred percent in increasing the parity index between the girl-child and the boy-child will be high. The intervention by parents has since been played out through a wide range of activities including enhancement of parents' roles, involvement in inspection processes, provision of annual reports and prospectuses, the requirement for home-school agreements, the provision of an increasing amount of information about the curriculum and school performance. For example, regardless of government intervention, some parents have been actively involved in enhancing their children's development and educational progress. This spontaneous activity has taken a number of forms including good parenting in the home (pre-school) which provides a good foundation of skills, values, attitude and self-concept), establishing good relationships, discussions with teachers to keep abreast of the child's progress or discussions with an emergent problem, and assisting more broadly in the practical activities and governance of the school (Stein & Sanders, 2002).

Furthermore, parents rationally, if made aware of their roles in the schooling of their girl-child, will help pull resources together with other stakeholders to bridge the gap between the male child and the female child in school. Parenting talks about the total care of the child, that is provision of basic needs. Communicating with teachers on issues concerning girls' performance in class makes children feel their parents are concerned about their schooling and could motivate them to participate in education. Helping children with their homework, taking a decision in children's school matters, and collaborating with other stakeholders in the community are all part of parental intervention. Ideally, it may be perceived that if parents are actively involved in these

areas, there is the likelihood that it will stimulate children's interest in school and positively influence achievement. Epstein and Sanders (2002) have pointed out that families and schools have worked together since the beginning of formalized school schooling. However, the nature of the collaboration has evolved over the years. Parental intervention is a major factor in children's education, especially that of the girls (Odaga & Heneveld, 2005). A favourable parental contribution is likely to bring about an increase in girls' participation in education.

Amoako-Gyimah (2007) recalls that the ability to give quality education to students to produce encouraging academic performance largely depends on parents, teachers and other education stakeholders. Collaboration among these groups has a great impact on the quality of education. Collaboration as a term is defined as a process in which problems or goals are addressed by a team of individuals, each of whom contributes his or her skills and knowledge and is viewed as having equal status. This group of people has a common objective, since of direction and purpose. Therefore, the parental contribution cannot be ignored or underestimated.

Parental intervention makes an enormous impact on the girl's attitude, attendance and academic achievement and promotes better cooperation between parents and schools. It also allows parents and teachers to combine efforts to help children succeed in school. Dampson and Mensah (2010) support that traditionally, parental involvement in education and the contribution they make include children's home-based activities such as helping with homework, encouraging children to read, and promoting school attendance. It also involves contributing towards school-based activities such as attending Parent-Teachers Association meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and participating in fundraising activities. These activities, if well patronized, contribute

to advocating for better educational opportunities for the child, especially the girl-child.

2.7 Expectations of the girl-child education intervention programmes

The discussion in this section pertains to research question two which sought to enquire into the expectations of the intervention's programmes used to support girl-child education. There are expectations among girls regarding the push and pull factors for attending school. Push factors are activities that push girls out of school and pull factors are intervention programmes that pull them into schools. A survey by the Agona Municipal Education Directorate (2018) on the expectations of girls regarding what will help them attend school and be retained in school are sports, food rations, capitation grants, quizzes, competition, drama, excursion and provision of sanitary pads. The survey reveals that girls, especially those between the ages of 11 to 17, expect either their parents or the government to ensure that these interventions are sustained.

On the other hand, the survey findings revealed that girls' reasons for dropping out of school were peer group pressure from those roaming around and not in school, lack of uniform, broken homes and poor academic performance. Again, the girls expect that school authorities and parents in the Agona Municipality to focus attention on interventions such as teacher-friendly attitude, especially as it regards teachers who were hard-working, teachers who listen to their concerns and teachers who offer advice, counselling and the provision of female teachers who they see as role models and with whom they can confide in matters relating to their menstrual cycle and absence from school as a result of menstrual pains (Koomson, Brown, Dawson-Brew, Ahiatorgah, & Buhari, 2016). Responding to the motivation of what they did not like

about school, girls stated poor conditions of classroom especially as they relate to seating arrangements, poor urinals and toilets that are not conducive for females especially when they are in their menses, and poor motivation from science and mathematics teachers who scold them for poor performance (Koomson et al., 2016).

In order to appreciate or obtain a deeper understanding of the expectations of the girl-child education intervention programmes in Ghana, one needs to go beyond what only girls think of their own education, but also on what societal expectations are. This is especially true in terms of cost-benefit analysis. Society in general, including girls, their parents, stakeholders and communities in which girls live expect the education of girls to serve as an investment. In Ghana, according to Mankoe (2007), basic education should be seen as a major intervention and key intervention in the general provision of education, because it is this intervention or investment that will pay off most. This argument is seen in the proverbial statement of Kwegyir-Aggrey who noted: “if you educate a boy, you educate an individual, but if you educate a girl, you educate a nation” (Boakye, 2004, p.8).

This expectation by society is based on a cost-benefit analysis. On the one hand, the expectation is based on the argument that the nation Ghana should invest its money and other resources in interventions in girl-child education for the holistic growth and development of the nation. Another considerable expectation is whether the cost incurred by parents on their girl-child education would outweigh the cost of not sending girls to school. Indeed, it is the expectation of parents and some girls that early marriage, trading, farming, or hawking will be of more benefit to the girl than her going to school (FAWE, 2000). This argument explains why some girls drop out

of school when the cost-benefits analysis has to be made between sending a boy or a girl to school.

This argument is placed within the context of the fees paid in basic schools. According to Boakye (2004), even though primary education was declared free in 2005, there has been the payment of what is often referred to as hidden fees. In other words, many schools have started charging levies for other services to replace lost tuition fees, and if parents did not pay these levies, the children were sent home thereby dampening their expectations of the free tuition intervention. One such fee was examination fees. One other expectation relating to the expectation of girl-child education intervention programmes is linked to the issue of child labour. Mankoe (2007) argues that formal education often clashes with child labour. Accordingly, it is the expectation of parents that the government's intervention will curb this menace. Essentially, child labour is real because in some poor households it is an important contributor to household incomes. This is why Boakye (2004) proposed interventions such as a conditional cash transfer scheme that encourages poor people to go to school and therefore reduce the dependency of their children.

2.8 Contributions of girl –child education intervention programmes

In the ensuing discussion, research question 3 is to determine how the girl-child education intervention programmes have contributed to the retention of girls in schools.

The Girl-Child Education Unit (2000) observes that the policies, girl-child intervention programmes by the Government of Ghana and the GEU and other civil society organisations have had some positive impact and contributions. The unit noted that the intervention has led to a significant increase in female education enrolment

particularly at the primary level. However, GEU observes that regionally, more progress needs to be made in the northern region of Ghana and other poverty-stricken areas in Eastern and Central of Ghana where school rates are lower (Agyare-Kwasi, 2013). GEU further observes that the gender gap at the primary and JSS level has improved with a parity index of 0.03% between 2003/2004 and 2007/2008. There is also an increase in female enrolment, retention and completion rate at every level. However, the gap between girls' and boys' achievement, access and completion rate levels remain.

Again, the gap of gender difference and completion rate widens at the higher levels of schooling. For example, against the targets of 100% in 2015, entry achievements for females in universities was 34%, polytechnics 30% and TVET was 16.7%. Of particular interest in the overall contribution of Girl-child Education intervention by the Government of Ghana is the capitation grant. UNESCO (2013) observes the capitation grant intervention has led to 17% increase in basic education, even though it does not have specific gender targets or provisions of districts with endemic poverty and entrenched cultural issues. Moreover, UNESCO observes that the school feeding intervention programme is contributing to increases in school enrolment and retention.

Another significant group that has positively contributed interventions to girl-child education programmes is Development partners. Some development partners are multi-lateral and bilateral agencies working on girls' education. These partners are UNICEF, World Food Programmes, Department for International Development (DFID) and USAID. According to UNESCO (2013), the role of interventions and programmes is to support girls across target districts. They mostly work through local

partners to promote a wide range of interventions, and programmes to support girls across target districts. All development partners work towards the removal of levies and other financial and non-financial barriers to give access to education at the national level.

Some efforts at this stage are materials support such as UNICEF provision of bicycles, school feeding and take-home rations and supply of school equipment. According to UNESCO (2013), most of the support of bilateral organisations are in the form of funding, technical support and logistical and capacity building. Specifically, these interventions are making schools more child-friendly, capacity building of women at grassroots levels, school health education, improved leadership and capacity in advocacy for girls' education, the Girls Ambassador Programmes and Supporting Education staff through data collection and supervision of projects.

2.9 Expanding girl-child education intervention programmes

The theme that underpins this discussion relates to research question 4 which sought to find out how the girl-child education intervention programmes can be maximized to retain girls in school. Research has revealed that Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest rate of girls in school. Implicitly, the dropout rates of girls are high in the sub-region. UNESCO (2013) reported that in Sub-Saharan Africa, the number of girls that drop out of school each year has risen from 20 million in the 1990s to 24 million in 2002. Out of the 25 countries studied, 15 were in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The criteria studied were: enrolment rates for girls and gender gaps of more than 10 percent in primary education in countries with more than one million girls out of school. The countries were included in the World Bank's Education for All Fast-Track initiatives and countries hard hit by a range of crises that affect school

opportunities such as HIV/AIDS and conflict. The fifteen countries included Chad, Nigeria, Sudan, Tanzania, Eritrea Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The worst hit is Southern Sudan which has been seriously affected by Civil War for decades. UNICEF (2002) noted that to wait for an end to a conflict would be to dismiss the rights of generations of children. While children dropping out without completing primary school remains a key constraint for achieving universal primary Education, country experiences in the last 10 years have demonstrated that it is possible to change. In Tanzania and Ghana, for example, survival to class 7, the final year of basic education for 10-9 years old has increased steadily. Particularly in Ghana, the final year of primary education increased steadily from 72.8 percent in 2001 to 72.5 percent in 2017. Although these countries have shown clear progress on average, issues around the links between social exclusion and dropout and completion rates from primary schools remain to be solved. Marginalized groups (girls) are most seriously at risk of dropping out and they often remain hidden to policy interventions.

Regarding maximizing girl-child interventions, retention relative to parental contribution to female education, another angle is parental level of education. Numerous studies have shown that the higher the educational level of parents, the greater the participation of the child in school (Kelly & Elliot, 2002). A recent survey of teachers, university students and secondary school students in Ghana (which examined the backgrounds of parents of students) illustrates the multiplier effect of female education. Female students who had mothers with a higher level of education were themselves given opportunities and funding to promote their own education to a higher level and secondary levels had mothers with no education at all or education limited to primary school. The implication of this is that for the multiplier effect to work, it is important for females to be educated beyond the primary level (Dall,

2009). Implicitly, the impact of the daughter's schooling will be greater if the mother has secondary or higher education.

2.9.1 Key areas for expanding girl-child education programmes

Williams (2001) observes that barriers to girls' participation and retention in school are multifaceted and interrelated, and often times many of these factors are beyond the government's control. According to UNESCO (2013), females constitute more than 50% of the world's population. Despite this fact, they face a number of inequalities and other difficulties that limit their potential in promoting personal and collective development. Some of the factors hindering female participation and retention in school are socio-cultural and they include early marriage, poverty levels of families, hawking practices, societal attitude towards girl-child education, low self-concept, and parental neglect.

a. Early marriage

In many African countries including Ghana, a lot of girls are given off in early marriage between the ages of ten and fourteen years, thus limiting their chances of being formally educated and with no provision for non-formal education (UNESCO, 2013). In Ghana especially in the Northern part, marriages are arranged by families and in many cases without the consent of the girl (Yidana, 2001). Although the marriage law in Ghana stipulates a minimum age of 18 for females and 20 for males, it is rarely enforced and child marriages remain common, particularly in rural areas and the Northern part of the country. Customary marriages are solemnized outside the preview of personal law-including child marriages which are accepted as valid and while the perpetrators are liable to simple fines and imprisonment, they are rarely punished. Again, a lack of effective birth and marriage registration systems remains a

major hindrance to the abolition of child and forced marriages (USAID, 2000). The non-registration of the birth and marriage system does not help advocates know the actual age of the child hence the inability to defend and protect against such abuse.

b. Poverty levels of families

The increasing cost of schooling is the major reason parents give for not educating their girls or for removing children, particularly girls from school. Asomaning (2004) observes that this is not surprising because of the economic crisis in Ghana. Poverty is widespread and affects schools and families alike. Implicitly, in order to maintain the children in schools, parents must first tackle the issue of poverty. Studies in Ghana, Guinea, Malawi and Zambia showed that the cost associated with scholarship is higher for girls than boys. This is due to the higher cost of girls' uniforms. For modesty reasons, girls are less likely to go to school in torn or ill-fitting uniforms (Lloyd, Gager & Brandon, 2003). Anecdotal evidence indicates that a major problem for girls' school attendance is the lack of underwear and sanitary protection. In Ghana, research has indicated that the most common factor causing dropout among boys and girls at the basic education level is lack of sustain parental support with respect to funding and the provision of essential items required by the schools (Boakye, 2007). FAWE (1996), notes that this problem is widespread in West Africa.

Analytically, the above claim notwithstanding, researchers have also established evidence that when decisions have to be made because of financial constraints, girls are mostly than boys, to be held back or withdrawn from school. Girls from homes above the poverty line are more likely to enrol and remain in school far longer than those from poor homes and rural areas (Colclough & Lewin, 1993). The direct cost of schooling makes it virtually unaffordable for the poorer parents, they are forced to

prioritize who is best to be sent to school (Long, 2000). Traditionally, since male children are more valued, parents resorted more to making their choices in favour of educating the male child impoverished. Keelson and Mansory (2007) added that when the family is faced with the stark reality of poverty, it is the daughter who has to make the sacrifice. Even when parents want to treat both sons and daughters equally, the bias or the preference for sons over daughters becomes obvious when it comes to allowing children to benefit in economically hard situations.

c. Hawking practices and house help duties

In Ghana especially in urban and peri-urban towns and cities, girls, much more than boys, are mostly found in these practices. In this case, the male child's education is much more valued than that of the girl-child hence, the girl goes on to generate income to supplement the efforts of the parents (Boakye, 2007). This robs the girl either of access and participation in school or continuing retention in school. To make matters worse, in the process of hawking, the girl-child can become a victim of unwanted pregnancy which, if care is not taken, may leave her suffering for a lifetime.

Furthermore, information from some studies such as the Department of Community Development in Ghana indicates that rural young girls are sent to urban areas to become domestic servants for people. Such displacement often occurs in their primary school years. The parents received payments for their service, but the girls have little or no opportunity to return to school or have any form of schooling (Asomaning, 2004).

d. Societal attitude towards girl-child education

Females are often considered as the weaker vessels, and in Africa, the belief is rife that their place is in the kitchen. Traditional African society believes that a female

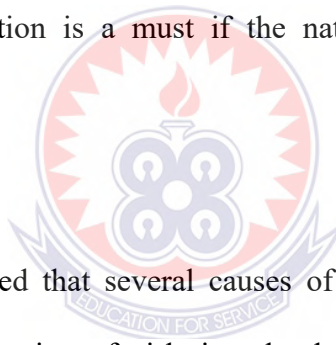
will rely on her husband's education to benefit herself. According to UNESCO (2003), societal attitude towards the girl-child is not in support of her education and so this makes her education to be described as dwindling as and less than equal to that of their male counterparts. Today, in Ghana, the situation is changing gradually. The government is doing its best to expand educational opportunities for girls.

e. Low self-concept

Another hindering factor is the low self-concept for the girl-child. Many girls see themselves as not being able to cope with the challenges of modern learning, so they begin to find excuses. For example, Sekyere (2006) notes that many will say there is no work after school, so why school? Regarding these, solutions must be found because girl-child education is a must if the nation is to make any appreciable progress.

f. Parental neglect

Researchers have indicated that several causes of parental neglect also led to low retention and non-participation of girls in school. Elson (2001) argues that gender discrimination by family members, family responsibility, lack of sponsorship or mentors in the family are considered causes of discrimination by family members, family responsibility, lack of sponsorship or mentors in the family are considered causes of disparity regarding female education. Even now, most communities still have to come to terms with the stereotype-role problem. Household demands for child labour, community disagreement over the values taught derived from educating the male child are all subject to parental considerations as it relates to educating the girl-child in school; and regarding many of these variables, she is very much neglected.



Bridgewater (2006) using a sample of 2000 participants conducted a survey covering the 10 erstwhile administrative regions of Ghana on the state of girl-child education. The study which was a survey revealed that less premium has been placed on boys attending school than girls, especially in the Northern part of Ghana and in the middle belt regions. He concluded in the research that unless greater effort was applied in equally educating all facets of the Ghanaian population, the gains in education would be lost.

Braimah (2007) conducted research in the Central Region of Ghana. He used the mix-method design to collect data on socio-economic challenges confronting girl-child education in three selected districts, Gomoa East, Gomoa West and Awutu Senya Districts. In all, 300 participants provided answers to the questionnaire and 30 participants were interviewed. In all the sample size was 330 participants. The study which covered a period of three months revealed that the most socio-economic factors that affected female education were cultural in nature and dwelt largely on the attitude and cultural beliefs of the indigenes towards the education of the girl-child. At the end of the study, the belief held by the participants was that the girl-child was actually an 'economic commodity' whose value lies in serving her husband and generating income for the family. This could be the reason why many parents of the region engaged their girl children and wards into petit trading and early marriage. The study revealed high-rate school drop-out and teenage pregnancy among the youthful population of the area is rife. The study recommended sensitization seminars to induce more parents to send their children to school.

In another related study, FAWE-Ghana (1996) conducted a survey titled "comparative analysis of problems affecting girls education in Ghana". The key focus of the study was a parental contribution towards female education in Ghana. The research covered 20 districts, 2 from each of the administrative regions in the country. The sample size was 2000. In the study, it was revealed that as compared to Latin America and Asia, parents' involvement in the education of their children in Ghana was slightly lesser. The study recommended more adult education programmes in African countries to drive home the significance of parental contribution to the education of children.

2.10 Summary of Literature Review

Girl-child education has been the focus of national and international development for the past several decades, and there has been the formulation of policies and implementation of various interventions to enhance girls' education. The review of literature in this research touched on some of these policies and interventions with a specific focus on girl-child education intervention and retention in Ghana. Specifically, the review dwelt on the seven thematic areas in the literature namely, the nature and scope of girl-child intervention in education in Ghana, benefits of education, socio-economic challenges facing girl-child education in Ghana, parental role in the girl-child intervention in education, expectations of the girl-child education intervention programmes, the contribution of the girl-child education intervention and maximizing girl-child education intervention programmes in schools. The literature contained both local (Ghanaian) and international related girl-child intervention discussions and was underpinned by the system theory espoused by Swanson and Houlton (2001). Essentially, the study conceived the education structure in Ghana as a system of many interdependent components of which the girl-child is an important component.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the literature review in which the researcher established cortical framework for the study. In order to help the reader understand how the researcher conducted fieldwork, this chapter describes the methodology employed, especially the interpretive philosophy which is the thrust of the methodology. Other portions of the chapter focused on the research approach, research design, the population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, data collection instruments, trustworthiness, data analysis methods, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Philosophical approach

Generally, researchers have different philosophies (beliefs and feelings) about the world and how it should be studied and understood (Creswell, 2009). These beliefs influence the way researchers conduct research, but certain rules guide researchers' beliefs. These rules are referred to as philosophy. Philosophies are defined as the basic set of beliefs that guide actions. This belief constitutes the philosophy or border of research. Taylor, Sinha and Ghoshal (2007), defined research philosophy as the broader view or perspective of research. Implicitly, it is a set of beliefs and practices that summarizes inquiry within a discipline by providing processes through which investigation is accomplished. These beliefs are influenced by the purpose and objectives of the research. This, as Creswell, (2009) puts it, leads to embracing the positivist (Quantitative), interpretivist (Qualitative) and pragmatist (mixed method) approaches. Considering the purpose and objectives of this research, the interpretivist research philosophy was adopted.

Proponents of interpretivist philosophy hold views of the social world that differ significantly from that of the positivist philosophers. According to the interpretivist, there is no objective social reality, but rather, there are varied or multiple realities, (Bailey, 2007). Interpretivists believe that social reality is not independent of the researcher and the social meaning or interpretation is given to research. In other words, social relationships define the processes through which research participants interact with the researcher.

The focus of data gathering and interpretation is understood within a particular situation and context which is characteristic of a natural setting. In this research, the investigator places emphasis on the process of exploring the girl-child intervention and retention programmes in the Agona West Municipality. Ideally, the interpretivist philosophy enabled the researcher to interpret the daily occurrence and social structures of girl-child intervention which influence retention of the girl-child in school. The study interpreted the meanings given to these interventions instead of quantifying them. Hence, in deriving meanings from these interventions, the researcher sought to find out the nature and scope of the interventions, the expectations of female students who are benefiting from these interventions, the contribution of the interventions toward retention of the girl-child in school and how these interventions can be maximized for the purpose of retaining the girl-child in school. In this vein, through interviews, focused group discussions, and documentary analysis, the researcher focused on the essence of participants' perspectives.

3.2 Research approach

The research approach adopted for this study is qualitative. Accordingly, the researcher used words (spoken) and contents (documented) as a means of understanding the social life/reality (girl-child intervention and retention) in the Agona West Municipality. In this context, emphasis was placed on the quality of the intervention and retention and not on the basis of the frequency of their occurrences. Emphasis was also placed on the processes and meanings of the interventions instead of experimentally measuring them. This research approach was guided by the research questions which described the processes of the intervention. Description of the processes was subjective and based on the world of the participants' perspective from an exploratory standpoint (Creswell, 2009).

This approach resonates with data collection tools such as interviews, focus group discussions, and documentary evidence. Essentially the approach helped the researcher and participants to explore and understand the meaning of various girl-child education intervention programmes instituted to promote girl-child education and the retention phenomenon.

3.3 Research design

The research design for the study is a multi-method case study design. A case study, according to Bryman (2012), is commonly associated with a location such as community or organization. The emphasis tends to be upon an intensive examination of the setting and usually associated with qualitative research. Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh, (2002), on the other hand, describe case study as a qualitative examination of a single individual, group, event or institution. Seidu (2007) defines a case study as an in-depth inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life

context. It is an intensive, detailed description and analysis of a particular group or groups or events considered individually or collectively (Creswell, 2009). This dwells on the generation of deeper and detailed knowledge of a well-defined context (in this research girl- child intervention and retention). This design ensures the representation of the cases (three selected basic schools) that are the focus of the research.

In a case study, the researcher or investigator attempts to examine an individual or group or unit in depth. The researcher tries to discover all the variables that are important in the history or development of the subject. The emphasis is on understanding why the individual or group does what he / she or they do and how behaviour changes as they respond to the environment. Robson (2007), observes that case studies have advantages and disadvantages. First and foremost, Robson noted that case studies offer opportunities to conduct a study in depth which can capture complexities, relationships, and processes. Second, the boundaries of case studies are flexible and can often be tailored to the time and resources available to the researcher. Case studies can also be used for a wide variety of research purposes and for widely different types of cases. On the other hand, case studies have disadvantages in terms of the credibility of generalization because they depend on a different logic. Again, they seek to focus on situations as they occur naturally and hence, observer effect caused by the presence of the researcher which can be problematic. A third disadvantage of the case study is that they generate soft opinions and this can often lead them not to be acceptable in some course regulations (Robson, 2007).

There are different types of case studies. Among these are the critical case, the extreme or unique, the representative case, the revelatory case and longitudinal case (Bryman, 2012). With the critical case, the researcher has a well- developed theory

and a case is chosen on the grounds that it will allow a better understanding of the circumstances in which the hypothesis will and will not hold. The extreme or unique case usually focuses on clinical studies (Bryman, 2012). The typical or representative case is the kind of case which has the objective of capturing the circumstances or conditions of an everyday or common place situation. This case may be chosen because it exemplifies a broader category of which the participants are members. The revelatory case exists when an investigator has an opportunity to observe and analyze a phenomenon previously inaccessible to scientific investigation (Lincoln & Guba, 2008).

Lastly, the longitudinal case study, according to Bryman (2012), involves investigating two or more cases which the investigator deemed appropriate to the research questions formulated. With this research, the researcher adopted the multi-method case study design with emphasis on multi-site exploratory case study. The rationale for adoption was to obtain and provide an in-depth understanding from the explorative perspective of three selected basic schools (multi-site) in which girl-child education intervention programmes were carried out in order to influence retention in basic school in the Agona West Municipality. The schools involved in the study were 3 Junior High Schools (Swedru A. W. M. A 'E' JHS, T. I. Ahmadyya Islamic JHS and Methodist 'A' basic JHS). These schools were selected as they represented diverse interest in terms of religion and cultural practices and beliefs while A. W. M. A. 'E' is a typical community school located at Bebiaraniha (suburb of Agona Swedru), T. I Ahmadyya located at Nkubem in a Moslem community at Agona Swedru and Methodist 'A' found in Assissim among the typical Agona indigenes. The researcher saw it an advantage to investigate in order to have an in depth

understanding of the various groups and their attitudes towards girls' education with the existence of interventional programmes.

Implicitly, some scientist considers case studies to be imprecise conservative and an intervention into the lives of others. Many research scientists think it is characterized by selective reporting-ensuing dangers of distortion or misrepresentation of findings (Taylor, Sinha & Ghoshal, 2007). In order to overcome these disadvantages, the researcher in this study exerted efforts to suppress her biases by abiding by the processes of trustworthiness and rigorous ethical discipline. Specifically, as a multi-method case study, focus group, interview and documentary evidence were used.

3.4 Population of the study

Population is the complete set of individual cases or objects with some common observable characteristics (Creswell, 2005). According to Seidu (2012), a study population is the sum total of the phenomena which are of significance to a researcher. In the view of Avoke (2005), a population is a set of measurements that characterizes some phenomena of interest and a perhaps infinitely large collection of measurements. The target population for the study was all Head teachers, Teachers, Female Students in the Municipality and Personnel from the education office (Girls Education Unit) and officers at the Education Desk at Municipal Assembly. However, the accessible population comprised the head teachers of three selected schools (3), eighteen (18) teachers, 150 female students, one (1) Girl-Child Education Coordinator, one (1) front line officer on Girls Education at the Assembly and one hundred and fifty (150) parents.

3.5 Sample size and sampling technique

In this study, a sample size of 20 participants were used for data collection. This comprised three parents from the three communities; three teachers from the three selected schools; the three head teachers from the selected school and nine female students. Also involved in the sample were one Girl-Child Coordinator from the education office and one Gender Desk Coordinator from the Municipal Assembly. Purposive sampling technique was used to select three head teachers, two coordinators, nine students, three parents and three teachers. According to Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (2002), several variations on purposive sampling are used in qualitative research. With the study on girl-child, education intervention and retention at the junior high school level in the Agona West Municipality, the maximum variation model of purposive sampling was adopted in selecting the participants. The maximum variation sampling employed enabled the researcher to include units with maximize difference on specified characteristics who were considered typical of the phenomenon under study (Ary et al. 2002; Creswell, 2009).

Selection of this model was influenced by the fact that the units of study differ in location, factors such as interests of donor agencies. There were also differences among the participants which included students, teachers, parents, headteachers and officials from municipal assembly and the education office. Therefore, the participants were heterogeneous in nature and this was used to capture a wide range of perspectives relating to the phenomenon of the interest to the researcher.

In qualitative research, purposive sampling is not a 'normal' selection process such as randomization. It rather involves a deliberate selection of study participants based on the researchers' assessment of their ability to provide reliable answers to the research

questions (Flick, 2007). The researcher adopted the purposive sampling technique to serve a very specific need or purpose (investigate basic Schools), which have experience girl-child Education intervention activities for the purpose of enhancing enrolment. In this study, in accordance with the attributes of purposive sampling, the researcher decided what needs to be known and purposively set out to find the participants who could and were willing to provide information or knowledge or experiences (Bernard, 2002).

3.6 Site and sample characteristics

A study site can be referred to as an immersive environment, each of which can contain numerous settings for the researcher to manipulate (Creswell, 2009). Site and settings in this study are very important because the researcher sought to investigate how various girl-child education intervention was carried out in the various school sites and setting to influence retention. The study was conducted in three selected communities. The communities were Babianiha, Assissim and Nkubem where the schools under study were located. Babianiha community was basically acquired as a settlement for some Gomoa citizens who migrated to the place for farming purposes. As years went by other ethnic groups such as Gas, Ewes, Dagombas among others also settled there. The implication is that there is diverse cultural practices and beliefs that might influence the behaviour and thinking of the people in the community. Currently, facilities such as electricity, the government hospital, schools (both basic and secondary) can be located at Babianiha. It has made the place highly populated. It is within this community that A.W.M.A. “E” Basic school, one of the schools selected for the study is located.

Unlike Babianiha, Assisim is traditionally occupied by indigenous Agona citizens who have legitimate custody of the land. They are also farmers who produce cash crops such as cocoa, oil palm, coconut among others, as well as food crops such as cassava, plantain, cocoyam, to mention but few. For this reason, commercial activities flourished in the area. Cultural practices such as celebration of Aday festival and Akwambo festival for the Swedru Township are recognised. There are four (4) basic schools at Assisim, of which Swedru Methodist Basic “A” falls.

Nkubem, as the name implies has a lot of coconut trees (Nkubem-Coconut) abound. The people are mostly Ahmadiyya Muslims worshippers. The T.I Ahmadiyya Islamic basic J.H.S is located in the community of Nkubem.

The communities are all suburbs now of Agona Swedru Township in the Agona West Municipality in the Central Region of Ghana. The schools fall within the administrative prerogative of the Agona West Municipal Education Directorate and Agona West Municipal Assembly. Geographically, the school lies on both agricultural and commercial areas, focusing on socio – economic activities and diverse cultural practices and beliefs and as a result so many barriers exist that are likely to influence the education of the girl-child which the education unit bemoans the lack of attention relative to the girl-child.

Interventional programmes had been campaigning against issues that form barriers to Girls Education (MOE/GES Report, 2014). The schools have adequate physical infrastructure in terms of classroom, places of convenience that are gender-friendly, adequate furniture for both students and teachers and very conducive environment for learning and other educational activities. In all, the Agona Swedru Township prides itself with 25 public basic schools 58 private basic schools and 2 senior high schools.

Among these were the 3 schools selected for the study. The Municipal Education Directorate's Vision statement "focusing on measures that will give quality education to all school children, ensure punctuality and regularity, effective supervision and effective use of contact hours / instructional time" influence the activities of the school in the Municipality. Equally the mission statement: "To contribute to the systematic development of all children of school age in the Municipality through the creation of attractive, stimulating and challenging school environment, focusing on teacher self-motivation, total enrolment, high literacy and achievement levels and such values, knowledge and skills that will enable all children to play a meaningful and productive role in society, pose a great challenge to these schools. It is also worthy to note that all the three selected schools for the study have established structures such as the School Management Committee (SMC) and Parent –Teachers Association (PTA) to support the school administration at the community levels. The implication of this is that the schools connect with families and communities through these structures in terms of creating interest to improve the educational opportunities for the children, including the girl – child.

3.7 Data collection instruments

Various data collection instrument was used to collect data on information useful to understand the problem being investigated. Accurate and appropriate data collection instruments were used to ensure the reduction of the likelihood of bias occurring during the research process. Documentary evidence, interview and focused group discussion were the three data collection instruments used in the research. These were adopted for a different set of participants in obtaining information for each research question. For example, for research question one, documentary evidence, interview

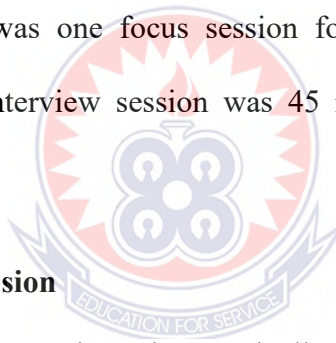
guide and focused group discussion were used to collect data on the nature and scope of girl-child education intervention programmes.

The participants that were the targets for this research question were Head Teachers, Gender Desk Coordinator, Municipal Girl-Child Coordinator, parents and teachers. Regarding research question three (3), which sought to investigate how the girl-child education intervention programmes contribute towards the retention of girls in schools, documentary evidence, interviews and focus group discussions were used to solicit information from students and parents and the Gender Desk coordinator. Relative to research question number two, it sought to find out the expectation of the female students (girl-child) regarding the education intervention programmes. Here, interviews were used and the target participants were female students. The final research question concentrated on how the girl-child education interventions were maximized to ensure optimal retention of the girl-child in school. Here, interview, documentary evidence and focused group discussion were used to obtain data from the Gender desk coordinator, Girl-Child coordinator and students, teachers and parents.

The type of interview adopted was the semi-structured interview. These are interviews that are in-depth and they are often described as conversations with a purpose, according to Mwetit and Van Wyk (2005), for obtaining information from a particular group of people. The advantage of using the semi-structured interview is that the participants have limited or no choice to select an answer because they are phrased to allow for individual responses. Even though they are open-ended, however, they are fairly specific in their intents. They allow the participants to provide answers at length and in their own words which the researcher probes (Creswell, 2009). The researcher

used the semi-structured interview because it was thought that this research instrument brought forth the participants' thoughts, beliefs, knowledge reasoning, motivation and feelings in a comprehensive way. The semi-structured interview also helped the researcher with the opportunity to engage with the headteachers and the coordinators in terms of their knowledge, feelings and experiences regarding the Girl-child education intervention programmes in the Agona West Municipality.

Codes were assigned to the participants as, participant #1, 2, 3, 4, 5.....20. There were interview sessions for the 3 head teachers, 3 focus group sessions for the teachers and parents, 3 interview sessions for the Girl-Child Coordinator at the school level, and one (1) interview session for the Gender Desk Coordinator at the Municipal Assembly level. There was one focus session for the parents and teachers. The average time for each interview session was 45 minutes for all categories of the participant.



3.7.1 Focus group discussion

Focus group, which is a group interview, typically centres on a particular issue; with this the trained interviewer elicits the views of the participants (group members) while noting interactions within the groups. The process of studying through focus group discussion is helpful because they bring several perspectives into contact. The researcher gains insight into how the participants are thinking and why they are thinking as they do. Focus groups, according to Bryman (2012), typically consist of ten to twelve people. However, the group should be small enough that everyone can take part in the discussion but large enough to provide diversity in perspective. Bryman (2012) has suggested that focus group discussion needs to last, at least, between one and two hours.

The researcher decided to use focus group discussion in the study for the following reasons. In the first place, focus group discussion has become a popular data-gathering tool in qualitative research since it has been identified to be more economical with regard to time and money than the use of individual interview. Secondly, the use of focus group discussion has been found to be useful since the topic and ideas expressed in the group can help the researcher to identify question and other aspects of the phenomenon. This made the outcome of the study more valid and reliable.

3.7.2 Interview

Interview is one of the most widely used method of obtaining qualitative data. It is a face-to-face interaction between the researcher and the participants (interviewees). It is sometimes described as a conversation with a purpose. Interviews could be structured, semi-structured or unstructured. Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (2002), opine that the structure of interview follows the extent to which the questions to be asked are developed prior to the interview. With the structured type, the questions are pre-determined and followed sequentially during the interview session. With the unstructured conversational type of interview, sometimes the questions arise from the situation. With this, the interview is planned ahead of time, the researcher asks questions as the opportunity arises and then listens closely and uses the subjects' responses to decide the next question. Despite the different types of interview, one characteristic that interviews share is that most of the questions are open and designed to reveal what is important to understand about the phenomenon under study (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994 cited in Ary et al., 2002). An interview has the advantage of providing insight on participants' perspective, the meaning of events for the people

involved, information about the site and sometimes information about unanticipated issues.

However, the major disadvantage of interview as a tool for gathering information may be participants' unwillingness to share information or may even offer false information. For interviews to be successful, there is the need to use a lot of tact and listening skills. The use of interview as a tool for data-gathering is justified for the fact that interviews are appropriate methods when there is the need to collect in-depth information of people's opinions, thoughts, experiences and feelings as in qualitative research. Again, with the interview, the researcher gains opportunity for immediate follow-up and clarifications on unanticipated responses which at times provide additional information to enrich the study. This confirms the flexibility aspect of interview which Amedehe and Asamoah-Gyimah (2016) stressed when they assert that interview can be adjusted to meet many diverse situations in the data-gathering process. Thus, the above, and the high response rate as compared to other tools, made the researcher to adopt the interview as most appropriate for the study.

3.7.3 Documentary evidence

Researchers use documentary evidence in gathering data for a study. These documents may be primary source or secondary source. Information obtained by researchers from individuals' personal diaries and letters are considered to be primary sourced information. Secondary source were from office files and records or official administrative documents, such as correspondence, reports, newsletters among others. Such documents provide evidence of activities and confirmation of issues for analysis. With regard to this work, the researcher focused on secondary source information from the Agona West Municipal Assembly's report and other records from the Agona

West Municipal Education Directorate. The main reason for using documentary evidence as data-collection tool was for triangulation purposes. In other words, the written documents assisted the researcher to gain an understanding of the phenomenon under study and also confirm aspects of narrations by participants involved to assist to corroborate the conclusions presented.

3.8 Trustworthiness of data

The first step in ensuring the trustworthiness of the instrument was to pretest the instrument. This idea is supported by Lincoln and Guba (1985) cited in Ary et al (2002) when they state that several human instruments working together are usually better than working alone. This is because pre-testing acts as peer reviewers or peer debriefers, keeping one another honest. The other processes of establishing the trustworthiness of the instruments such as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are described below.

3.8.1 Credibility

Credibility in the view of Brannen (2005) involves establishing that the results of the research are credible and believable, especially from the perspective of the participants. In this research, the researcher ensured credibility by making the participants comfortable and making findings and conclusions available to the participants. In other words, the emerging conclusion from the data was checked by the participants and the researcher. Furthermore, the credibility of the data took the form of triangulating the various responses.

3.8.2 Transferability

Trochim (2006) conceptualizes transferability as the process by which one assesses the degree to which a study's result can be generalised or transferred to another

context. Ary et al (2002), on the other hand, explained transferability as the degree to which the findings of a qualitative study can be applied to another context. As such study findings can be generalized to another people, settings and times to the extent that they are similar to the people, setting and times in the original study. This implies that transferability of a set of findings to another context depends on the similarity or the “goodness of fit” between the context of study and other context. It must be noted that although the qualitative researcher does not specify transferability it is his or her responsibility to provide sufficiently rich, detailed thick description of the context so that potential users can make the necessary comparison and judgements about similarity and hence transferability (Johnson & Christensen, 2002). For the purpose of transferability, I have provided a vigorous description of the research process, context and assumptions, the participants and the themes as well as the outcomes.

3.8.3 Dependability

Qualitative research such as the current one deals with dependability rather than reliability. Creswell (2009) describes dependability as a degree to which a study can be repeated with similar result. Creswell explains that reliability in quantitative research has to do with consistency of behaviour, or the extent to which data and findings would be similar if the study were replicated. However, unlike quantitative research, where tight controls enhance replicability, qualitative studies involve variability, because the context of studying changes. Consistency is looked at as the extent to which variation can be tracked or explained, which is referred to as dependability. One way to establish dependability is to use the audit trail. Audit trail provides a mechanism by which others can determine how decisions were made and the uniqueness of the situation. For the purpose of dependability, the researcher kept thorough notes and records of activities and well organised data in retrievable form.

The data relate to information on the sample of persons studied, the selection process, contextual description, method of data collection and tape recordings. With this, a complete presentation of procedures and results may enable other researchers or readers to make judgment about the replicability of the research within the limits of the natural context of study.

3.8.4 Confirmability

Trochim (2006) describes confirmability as the degree to which results in research can be confirmed or corroborated by others and how research findings are supported by data collected. It must be noted that confirmability or neutrality in qualitative research is the same as the quantitative researcher's concept of objectivity. In qualitative studies the focus of the researcher is on the confirmability of the data and interpretation. Through the use of audit trail, the researcher enables other researchers to arrive or not arrive at the same conclusions given the same data and context. In ensuring confirmability in this study, I documented the research procedures to check and recheck the data throughout the research process to avoid biases.

Justifying the assurance of consistency in this qualitative research, I support the idea of Mischler (1990) cited in Ary et al (2002), that the ultimate test of worth of a qualitative study is whether people believe the findings strongly enough to act on them. That is, do other researchers rely on the findings for their own work or do people outside of the research endeavour make decision based on the findings. Thus the consistency in the study to me, could help influence people's decision in support of girls' education in the Municipality which could be generalised in all parts of the country to enhance enrolment, retention and completion of girls in school.

3.9 Data collection procedure

In qualitative research, rapport building is an important as other parts of the research process. Rapport is defined as the relationship of mutual understanding between and among communication especially as it relates to teamwork and persuasion of participants. According to Creswell (2009), a good rapport is crucial in getting more information and insight from the participants because the participants need to feel more comfortable during interviews and other interactions. In this study, before the actual data collection, the researcher established rapport by visiting the schools and having verbal interactions with them. This was preceded by obtaining permission letter from authorities of the University of Education Winneba and the Municipal Director of Education in Agona West Municipality. The rapport building helped to reduce the participants' stress and allowed them to be more open to the researcher in responding to the questions in process of collecting data. Time was scheduled for the various groups for the interviews. With the interviews, dates were arranged with the participants and venues were selected.

In order to avoid interruptions and disturbances an enclosed setting was chosen for the discussion. Questions from pre-determined semi-structured interview guide were asked by the researcher personally. Participants were allowed to express their views on questions asked. In order not to miss any aspect of the responses, a colleague researcher was engaged to assist by recording the responses of the participants with a tape recorder, thus verbatim responses were obtained. However, prior to the interview sessions, participants were informed of the tape-recording of their responses and as a result they felt comfortable and came out freely with their views of questions asked. The questions were based on the sub-themes as relating to various groups, that is, headteachers, teachers, parents, students and coordinators. It must be stated here that

questions asked were similar in nature for the purpose of triangulations. In some instances, English language which was the main medium was translated into the local language where necessary to ensure understanding. The translator of the English language to local language (Fanti) was done with the help of expert in the language during the interview session. As semi-structured interview guide, questions were modified in some instances based upon the interviewer's perception of what seemed appropriate. In all, six (6) interview sessions were held with each lasting for one hour (60 minutes).

Focused group discussion followed the trend of interview in the collection of data for the study. The researcher listened carefully to the group members while interacting within the group; this helped the researcher to gain insight into how the participants were thinking and why they were thinking as they did. It also helped in getting further information that was not anticipated but important aspect of the situations to pursue in the study. It must be emphasised that the groups were smaller in number so as to make every member of the group take part in the discussion.

Each session of the discussion lasted for one and half hours (90 minutes) since individual members had opportunity to express their views in detail on the questions asked. Again, questions asked were based on the sub-themes of the broader topic. In both the interview and focussed group discussion session, the participants showered maturity as they were cooperative enough which served in getting additional information than anticipated. In the end, the recorded responses were played back to the respondents for accuracy and if they had anything to add, before transcribed in written form for analysis.

The group discussion was followed by examination of documentary evidence from reports and files at the Agona West Municipal Assembly (Gender Desk) and the Municipal Education Office (Girls Education Unit) respectively with the use of documentary schedule. The total period for the collection of data lasted for two (2) months, from August to September, 2021. The researcher visited the Gender Desk Officer at the Municipal Assembly where files on non-governmental and other donor agencies operating in the Municipality were presented. Data on various agencies were gathered in terms of types of activity each organization undertook whether long or short time that is time frame for implementation and beneficiaries. The same process was followed at the Municipal Education Office when the researcher reached out to the Girls Education Officer at the Girls Education Unit in the Directorate. In both cases, reports on girl-child education intervention programmes were verified as a way to ascertain records on the girls.

3.10 Data analysis procedure

The recorded interviews were transcribed and rechecked several times to ensure accuracy. Since the study adopted a qualitative approach, the analysis of data was essentially through content analysis. Creswell (2009) observes that content analysis is one of the procedures of analysing textual/verbal data by condensing the raw data into themes, which involves the determination of the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within some given qualitative data. One advantage of this data analysis method is that it helps to critically examine any piece of writing or occurrence of recorded conversation, and projects the central facts for researchers to use for their analysis (Lincoln, 2008). Under this framework, the data collected from the field was coded and then categorized into various themes by searching for patterns in the responses. The information gathered was described in a manner relevant to finding

answers to the research questions and the analysis was done using direct quotations from the interviews.

3.11 Positionality

I am Head Teacher of a girls JHS. I previewed some of the challenges that girls go through in the cause of their education. However, this did not influence my findings. I do not have direct relationship with any of my participants. I also do not teach in any of the studied schools where I would have had an encounter with the headteachers and the teachers. I did not involve any students, teachers or parents related to my school, therefore, my findings are purely objectives.

3.21 Ethical considerations

In educational research like social research, ethical issues arise at a variety of stages. Such ethical issues cannot be ignored as they relate directly to the integrity of a piece of research and of the disciplines that are involved. Ethics here is used to imply a set of widely accepted moral principles that offer rules for, and set behavioural expectations of a researcher's conduct (Strydom, 2002). These ethical issues may arise in relations between researchers and research participants in the course of investigation hence it is crucial to adhere to.

Writing on ethical issues, Diener and Crandall (1978) cited in Bryman (2012) outlined four main areas that need to be considered. These involve whether there is harm to participants, a lack of informed consent, and invasion of privacy or whether deception is involved. In the view of Diener and Crandall (1978) a research that is likely to harm participants is regarded as unacceptable. Such harm includes physical harm, harm to participants' development, loss of self-esteem, and stress among others. It is against this background that the British sociologist Association (BSA) Statement of Ethical

Practice enjoins researchers to anticipate and to guard against consequences for research participants which can be predicted to be harmful and to consider carefully the possibility that the research experience may be a disturbing one (Bryman, 2012). A further area of ethical consideration relates to the emotional harm through exposure to fieldwork setting. This deals mostly with the use of language or actions by researchers in seeking clearance on issues during interactions.

Creswell (2013) stressed that the issue of informed consent is very crucial in research. The issue is that, research participant should be given as much information as might be needed to make an informed decision about whether or not they wish to participate in the study. With this, participants need to be made to understand the purpose of the study, given opportunity to ask questions about the study involving the form the study will take including interviewed and audio recorded as well as confidentiality involved. These, among others, encourage participant or discourages them to get on- board.

The third area of ethical concern relates to the issue of privacy. The right to privacy is a tenet that many people hold dear and transgressions of that right in the name of research are not as acceptable (Ary, et al., 2002). This is much linked to the idea of informed consent because to the degree that informed consent is given on the basis of detailed understanding of what the research participants' involvement is likely to entail, he or she in a sense acknowledges that the right to privacy has been surrounded for that limited domain. Issues of privacy are closely linked to issues of anonymity and confidentiality (privacy) of those who participate in the research process need to be respected. In other words, personal information concerning research participants should be kept confidential. Anonymity, on the other hand deals with protecting the identity of an information on matters that come into public domain.

Deception as an aspect of ethical concern occurs when researchers represent their work as something other than what it is. Deception usually comes about when researchers want to limit participants' understanding of what the research is about so that they respond more naturally to questions or experimental treatment in research. Brotsky and Giles (2007) assert that ethical objection to deception is based on two reasons. Firstly, it is not desirable or not a nice thing to do. Secondly, there is the question of professional self-interest. In other words, if researchers become known as snoopers who deceive people for their professional course, it would adversely affect their future experiences making it difficult in gaining cooperation of prospective research participants.

From Ary, et al., (2002) point of view, reciprocation remains another issue about which a researcher should consider as far as ethics in research is concerned. It is just nice to note that people in the research setting have given of themselves to help the researcher and therefore the researcher is indebted. Qualitative researchers need to give participants something in return for their time, efforts, co-operation and just tolerating their extended presence (Ary et al., 2002). On the premise of gather creditable issues discussed, I did my best in order gather creditable data for the research. In the first place, I collected an introductory letter from the office of School of Graduate Studies, University of Education to seek permission to the schools. Equally, the Agona West Municipal Assembly was duly informed about the purpose and objectives of the research.

Moreover, the consent of Head teachers and all other participants was sought. The purpose of the research was made known to them and they were assured of anonymity and confidentiality as far as their involvement and responses were concerned. The fact

that the study hinges on cultural practices, beliefs, behaviour and attitudes of people the researcher was very careful to avoid any action that might cause any form of harm to participants. For instance, I showed much respect to all participants in terms of language used, mannerism, body language, and also tried not to inconvenience any participant with responses given. In other words, participants were protected not only from physical harm but also from emotionally, psychologically or socially adverse effects. As a way of reciprocation, as suggested by Ary et al (2002), I promised to provide a written report which findings will be presented at school PTA meetings, give advice and help mobilize girls in the communities towards school education and the development of assertive skills. All these were done to ensure ethical integrity in terms of quality.



CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results gathered from the five categories of participants sampled for the study. It comprises the demography data from the interviewees and analysis of their responses. The presentation was structured in relation to the research questions. They covered the nature and scope of girl-child education intervention programmes in the Agona West Municipal Assembly, expectations of girl-child intervention programmes, the contributions of girl-child education intervention programmes, and how to maximise girl-child education intervention programmes in the effort to enhance opportunities towards education for the girl-child in the municipality, especially at the JHS level.

4.1 Demographic information of the participants

To put the study into proper perspective, the study considered five (5) demography information of the participants; age, sex, professional qualification, the highest level of education, and duration in the municipality. In turn, these demographic characteristics are expounded in accordance with the 5 sets of participants sampled for the study: teachers, head teachers, parents, students, and girl-child coordinators in the Agona West Municipal Assembly.

4.1.1 Teachers

Table 4.1: Demographic information of the teacher participants

Status	Age	Sex	Prof. Qualification	Level of education	Duration in municipality
Tr.1	35	F	B.Ed. (Basic)	Tertiary	10yrs
Tr.2	40	M	B.Ed. (Basic)	Tertiary	17yrs
Tr.3	52	F	M.Phil. (Psy)	Tertiary	25yrs

Source: Fieldwork data (2021).

Information of the teachers (as summarized in Table 4.1) shows that all the tutors who partook in the study had an average age of forty-two (42) years and have spent at least ten (10) years in the Municipality as teachers. Further, they have all pursued education to the tertiary level and one of them holds a Master of Philosophy degree. The demographic information of the teachers implies that they have in-depth knowledge and experiences on issues relating to education in the municipal assembly and can therefore provide reliable information on girl-child education interventions in the municipality.

4.1.2 Head teachers

Table 4.2: Demographic information of head teachers

Status	Age	Sex	Prof. Qualification	Level of Education	No. of years municipality
Hdtr 1	54	F	M.Ed.	Tertiary	22
Hdtr 2	50	F	B.Ed.(Basic)	Tertiary	24
Hdtr 3	58	M	Post Dip (Basic)	Tertiary	30

Source: Fieldwork data (2021).

The researcher interviewed two (2) female head teachers and a male head teacher. The head teachers were between the ages of 50 and 58 years, and each had spent over twenty (20) years in the Agona West Municipality. In terms of education, they were all university degree holders. The findings suggest that the headmasters have a considerable level of experience and familiarity with the educational affairs of the Municipality. The relevance of this to the study is the rich information that can be garnered from the head teachers to provide valid answers to the research questions.

4.1.3 Parents

Table 4.3: Demographic information of parents (Pt)

Status	Age	Sex	No. of years lived in community	Level of education	Occupation
Pt 1	50	F	50	Basic	Farming
Pt 2	47	F	25	Secondary	Trading
Pt 3	52	M	30	Tertiary	Educationist (rtd.)

Source: Fieldwork data (2021).

Table 4.3 provides the summary of the demographic information of the parents interviewed as part of the study. From the table, the parents had an average age of approximately 50 years and had stayed in their respective communities for 25 years and above. They had all attained some level of education with the highest being tertiary. Their level of experience in the municipality is suggestive of the fact that they are aware of the socio-cultural practices, particularly the education of children in the communities. This, the researcher found as useful to the study.

4.1.4 Students

Table 4.4: Demographic information of students (St) interviewed

Status	Age	Sex	Form/Class	No. of years in community	Lived With
St 1	12	F	JHS 1	12	Both Parents
St 2	13	F	JHS 2	13	Both Parents
St 3	15	F	JHS 3	10	Grandmother
St 4	15	F	JHS 2	15	Mother
St 5	14	F	JHS 3	14	Both Parents
St 6	17	F	JHS 2	10	Step-Mother
St 7	14	F	JHS 1	14	Both Parents
St 8	17	F	JHS 3	10	Auntie
St 9	16	F	JHS 3	12	Guardian

Source: Fieldwork data (2021).

The researcher interviewed nine female students who were between the ages of 11 and 18. Most of the students were in JHS 3, closely followed by those in JHS 2 and JHS 1 respectively (as shown in Table 4). The Table further shows that while five (5) of the girls have stayed in the Agona West Municipality since birth, four (4) had stayed in other areas before moving to their current communities. Information from the Table further indicates that the students live with different relatives. The students' maturity and experience in the municipality were useful in providing relevant and reliable answers to some of the research questions guiding the study.

4.1.5 Girl-child coordinator

Table 4.5: Profile of girl-child co-ordinators (Officers)

Status	Unit	Age	Sex	Qualification	No. of years at post	Level of education
Girl-Child Co.	MEO	40	F	B.Ed. (Basic)	10	Tertiary
Gender Desk	AWMA	32	F	B. A	5	Tertiary

Source: Fieldwork data (2021).

The study was also keen on recording the views of Girl-Child Coordinators in the Municipal Assembly. These participants were crucial to the study as they hold important information regarding the municipal/national policies regarding female education in the municipality. As summarized in Table 5, both officers had tertiary education background. They had spent 10 years and 5 years respectively at their present positions which suggest that they possess some level of experiences as far as girl-child education intervention programmes in the municipality is concerned since all agencies involved in the intervention usually collaborate with them. Their contributions and records were found useful to the researcher in answering the research questions.

4.2 The nature and scope of girl-child education interventions

The first objective of the study was to examine the nature and scope of girl-child education interventions in the Agona-West Municipality. Specifically, this objective sought to ascertain the various policies and programmes instituted in the municipality to spur enrolment and active participation of females in basic schools. The major participants for this research question were the headteachers and the Girl-Child Coordinators with a little coming from the teachers, students, and parents in the Agona-West Municipal Assembly.

In furtherance to providing answers for this research question, almost all the 5 heads and 2 coordinators touched on the major impediments to girl-child education in the municipality (as summarised in Table 4.1). One of the impeding factors that appear to be a major bane to the municipality's quest to promote girl-child education (as noted by the participants) is society's misconceptions about female education. All the participants stated that society has been lured to the belief that since men are the heads of the family, women need not bother themselves about education since it has no impact on their economic and social life. This, they claimed is embedded in the Akan adage: "*Obaa to tuo a etweri obarima dan mu*" (which literally means that 'it is the man that keeps the gun even if it was bought by the wife'). This societal misconception, coupled with other challenges like poverty, early marriage, broken homes, and child labour has vitiated the value of female education in the Agona-West Municipality.

As a counter-response to the above challenges, the municipality has rolled out several policies and programmes intended at promoting girl-child education in the area through a solitary and collaborative effort by the Ghana Education Service (GES), the

schools in the assembly, the municipal assembly, as well as external actors (key among them being international donors and Civil Society Organisations [CSO]). The subsequent paragraphs provide the nature and scope of the interventions rolled out by these actors towards enhancing girl-child education in the Agona-West Municipality.

Table 4.1: Participants' view on factors impeding girl-child education

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Poverty (which make girls enter into economic activities such as hawking and prostitution) – Early marriage – Low value of female education and absence of female role models in some communities – Traditional practices and entrenched beliefs – Child labour – Broken homes – Gender discrimination – Low-self esteem

Source: Fieldwork data (2021).



4.2.1 Interventions by the schools

At the school level, the main intervention instituted to promote girl-child education is the Girl-Child Education Programme (GCEP), which was mentioned by all the head teachers interviewed. According to the head teachers, the GCEP was instigated by GES some years ago and involves the placement of a Girl-Child Coordinator in all basic schools in the municipality. These coordinators are usually female teachers from each school, who were made to undergo intense training to understand girl-child development and education. Although the GCEP has an overarching goal and plan that must be followed, coordinators, together with their head teachers, are given the flexibility to roll out their distinctive girl-child policy-oriented programmes in their

respective schools towards spurring female education and achieving the goals of the GCEP. Below are some of the responses from the head teachers on the nature and scope of the GCEP in their schools.

We have the GCEP in the school and have a female teacher who coordinates and organises programmes for the girls. Every Wednesday, the girls meet and are given talks on topical issues such as the need for female education, personal hygiene, sex education, adolescence, and challenges of adolescence, assertive skill development, among others (Interview Data, participant #1)

The second headteacher remarked:

For the girl-child programme, we have a girl-child coordinator responsible for organising programmes to help female students in terms of their health issues and how they can improve their academic performances at school and even out of school. Before any term begins, I meet up with the coordinator and other teachers to draw a plan towards the GCEP, where we focus on critical areas such as sexual productivity education, sexual abuse, etc. (Interview Data, participant #2).

In a similar fashion, the third headteacher explicated how the GCEP is effective in his school. According to him, the programme comprises a meeting with all the female students by the coordinator once or twice a week. He stated:

The GCEP is very important and it is seriously working in my school.... once or twice a week, the coordinator gathers the girls and gives them education on how they can secure their future through education. The students are also taken through female-development programmes, such as sexual and reproductive health (Interview Data, participant #3)

Information gathered from the rest of the participants (i.e., the teachers, students, and parents) confirmed the assertion made by the head teachers. The teachers and students confirmed that Girl Clubs have been formed in their respective schools, talks are given by teachers and invited personalities on Girl-Club meeting days, and quizzes

and interesting games were sometimes organised by the club. One of the students, for instance, expressed how the Girl-Club invigorates her to go to school on Wednesdays:

I like going to school on Wednesdays because I do not want to miss Girl Club meetings. There, I meet a lot of girls and we learn so many things about female development and how we can keep ourselves neat always (Interview Data, participant #4).

It is also worth noting that some of the teachers, in the quest to promoting female education, have adopted some of the female students while some of them have drawn the female children to themselves, educating them on the dangers of sexual relationships and reproductive health. It was also found that some of the teachers have supported the female students financially and provided them with basic school materials like uniforms that will spur them to go to school.

The effort put in by GES toward instituting the GCEP is laudable. Importantly, the level of commitment shown by the headteachers, teachers, and programme coordinators is also commendable. As discussed above, the GCEP has been very effective in basic schools in the Agona West Municipality and is considered a catalyst to enhancing girl-child education in the municipality. This reinforces the point that girl-child education is of the top-most priority to Ghana's Ministry of Education, and such importance has been passed on to the schools, attracting tremendous support of headteachers and teachers.

4.2.2 Interventions by the Municipal Assembly

At the municipal level, the major actors responsible for initiating programmes intended at enhancing girl-child education is the Girl-Child Coordinator and the Co-ordinator in charge of Gender Desk in the assembly. Their roles include organising training programmes (workshops) for school-based facilitators, visiting communities

for public education on girl-child education, supervising and monitoring the implementation of intervention programmes initiated by the government and donor agencies, visiting schools to interact with students, giving talks to girls at girl-child meetings, monitoring the performance of girls, writing reports on girls' education programmes, making follow-up visits to access intervention programmes, monitoring students' attendance, retention and completion (collect data), and performing other activities assigned by the director of education.

At the municipal level, we have educational programmes for the various schools. These programmes are tailored at developing the girl-child and exposing them to the opportunities they have. We also collaborate with the Ministry of Education and other governmental bodies and international partners to organise programmes for girl-child education in the various schools in the municipal assembly (Interview Data, participant #5).

One of the major achievements by the Municipal Assembly towards this goal was the construction of a JHS at Agona Swedru in 2018 purposely to provide access and quality education for girls, specifically those from deprived communities. Referred to as the Swedru Girl's Model JHS, the school uses gender-sensitive teaching methods to boost girl-child education. The intention is to provide the needed psychological and social environment to tap the potentials of the girls as well as enhance their competitiveness and confidence. Moreover, the school is meant to develop the leadership skills of the ladies and make them change agents in their communities. According to the girl-child coordinators, plans are underway to construct a boarding facility to accommodate the students, especially those from far communities.

In addition, the municipal assembly was a major advocator of the '*send your girl-child to school*' campaign. The participants averred that during the campaign period, they undertook several community programmes to sensitize parents on the importance

of female education to national development. During the same period, they embarked on several school visitations to have interactions with female students, taking record of their status, needs, challenges, expectations, as well as academic performances. These activities (as will be discussed in the subsequent paragraphs) have been instrumental in enhancing female enrolment in basic schools in the municipality. Such interventions portray the premium that the Agona Municipal Assembly places on female education.

4.2.3 Interventions by the international donors

Apart from the interventions from GES and the municipal assembly, the study found that some international donors have contributed immensely to promoting girl-child education in the Agona-West Municipal assembly (Table 6 provides the names of some of the donors and their major interventions in the municipality). They included agencies, such as Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED), International Development Association (IDA), and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). The interventions by these agencies revolved around supporting government flagship programmes aimed at promoting girl-child education (e.g., the Capitation Grant & Ghana School Feeding Programme), financial support to parents struggling to cater for their children (especially females), public education programmes, and scholarships and provisions of other incentives to brilliant but needy female students.

These agencies usually execute their interventions through strong partnership with their Ghanaian counterparts. At the national level, these agencies (key among them being UNICEF and IDA) collaborate with governmental agencies like the Ministry of Gender and Children and Social Protection (MGCSP), and MOE to develop policy

options to advance female education in the country. They also support the government financially to implement its female-oriented programmes. At the municipal level, these agencies collaborate with the municipal assembly (predominantly through the Girl-Child Coordinators and Gender Desk Co-ordinator) to support girl-child education. The Co-ordinator of the Gender-Desk of the municipality described the activities of these external agencies in the municipality. She stated:

Interventions by these international donors often benefit parents, the schools, and the municipal assembly. Apart from their own programmes, they also support the municipality in planning and implementing interventional programmes intended at improving girl-child education (Focus Group Data, participant #6).

In the same manner, one of the headteachers spoke about how these international donors have contributed immensely to the enhancement of girl-child education in the municipality.

I know that the IDA and UNICEF have rolled out so many programmes for our schools, as well as other donors who have contributed to the development of education, for that matter female education in the forms of scholarships and interactions with the girls. They have contributed immensely to female education in this school. (Focus Group Data, participant #7.).

Occasionally, these donor agencies do an impact analysis of their programmes to assess their effectiveness. This is done through intense data collection either by their representatives or municipal directors in the municipality. They also monitor the academic results and school attendance of female students under their programmes. This impact assessment helps the donor agencies to track the results of their interventions and also formulate enhanced or improved programmes for the future.

Table 4.6: Key interventions by some international donors

Agencies	Major Interventions
Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Formation of education clubs in schools. ✓ Advocacy for girl-friendly learning environment. ✓ Organising workshop training to educate community parents. ✓ Developing peer educators. ✓ Providing guidance and counselling services.
Guraba Hands Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Presentation of items and gifts (e.g., mathematical sets, drawing board, pens and pencils, school uniforms, pair of shoes, school bags, supplementary readers among other things.) to brilliant but needy students. ✓ Donation of ICT equipment to deserving pupils (among them being female students).
International Development Association (IDA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Financial support to parents. ✓ Public education programmes. ✓ Visitations to schools to interact with the female students.
United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Supporting government flagship programmes like the Capitation Grant & Ghana School Feeding Programme. ✓ Community mobilisation and sensitisation programmes. ✓ Scholarships and provisions of other incentives. ✓ Formation of the Science Teaching Math Education Clinics for Girls.
United States Agency for International Development (USAID).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Supporting government flagship programmes. ✓ Public education programmes. ✓ Visitations to schools to interact with the female students. ✓ Providing guidance and counselling services.
Department for Intervention Development (DFID).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Financial support to parents. ✓ Presentation of items and gifts.
Agona West Municipal Assembly/GES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Establishment of Girls' Model JHS

Source: Agona West Municipal Assembly Gender Desk.

The above findings on the scope and nature of the interventions carried out at the Agona-West Municipal Assembly to enhance girl-child education shows a preponderance of interventional programmes. More importantly, there was a depiction

of solidarity and collaborative actions by key stakeholders (like the GES, the government of Ghana, the Agona-West Municipal Assembly, and International Donors) towards designing and implementing robust programmes towards achieving ‘the girl-child education’ agenda. The collaborative actions of these actors re-echo the assertions by most educational researchers (such as Amoako-Gyimah 2007; EMIS, 2012) that the quest for enhanced girl-child education must take a multi-participatory and decision-making approach, incorporating all necessary stakeholders. Ensuring equal access and opportunity for females in all levels of education can have a significant impact on the development of nations. In the 2012 World Development Report, which was dedicated to *Gender Equality and Development*, it was emphasised that eliminating all barriers that inhibit the effective participation of females in all areas (including education) is critical to enhancing productivity, making institutions more representative, and improving development outcomes for the next generation (World Bank, 2012). By committing to enhancing female education, these actors have shown that girl-child education is of priority in the Agona-West Municipal Assembly.

4.3 Expectations of female students regarding girl-child intervention programmes

The second objective of this study was to examine the expectations of female students concerning girl-child intervention programmes. This objective was very crucial to the study since it provided the perspectives of female students (the main protagonists of the study) on the key areas that government intervention programmes should be targeted at in order to enhance girl-child education in the municipality. The major participants for this question were the female students that partook in the study. The interviews carried out revealed three major expectations of female students regarding girl-child intervention programmes: provision of incentive packages; empowerment of

parents through financial support; and the institution of laws to check some counterproductive practices. The specific responses from the participants on the three themes are discussed in turn.

4.3.1 Provision of incentive packages

The first major expectation of the female students about girl-child intervention programmes is the provision of incentive packages to female children in the form of scholarships and sponsorships. Most of the female students bemoaned that the lack of incentive packages has been a bane to attracting and retaining female children in basic schools in the municipality. In this regard, the girls expect that any intervention programme must first and foremost aim at providing young girls sponsorships in order to encourage them to come to school. One of the students, for instance, stated:

We expect that such programmes will provide female students with scholarships and other support. There must be awards and scholarships so that when the girls at home see that their friends have completed school and realise that they were able to complete the school through scholarships, it will encourage them to come to school and learn. Even if they don't get to a higher level of education, they can at least complete their basic education (Focus Group Data, participant #9).

In the same manner, another student emphasized that if the provision of incentive packages (financially and materially) is made a fulcrum of intervention programmes, it would benefit girls from poor homes, some of whom do not even take breakfast due to financial constraints.

She stated:

I think giving female students incentive packages is good because when some of the girls from poor homes are coming to school, they don't give them any money and some of them do not even take breakfast. But when they are given incentive packages, they would be encouraged to come to school always. Not food alone, but they can also be able to buy school materials like books. This would certainly

encourage them to be regular in school. (Focus Group Data, participant # 10.).

From the above narratives, it can be said that the expectation of the female students is underpinned by the high rate of poverty in the municipality that has made it difficult for some female children to be regular in school. Going to school without school materials like pens, books, and drawing boards can certainly be frustrating to children of those ages, who may not have the mental capacity to withstand the mockery of their friends. Some of them may think that their parents do not value their education, and may thus succumb to staying at home. As succinctly explained by one of the girls;

Most of the girls are coming from a poor background hence they need to be motivated with incentives so that they know that there are people who think about their future, that they want them to become somebody in the future. When this is done, the girls would not want to disappoint those who supported them. This will motivate them to come to school always (Focus Group Data, participant #11.).

Stating the importance of incentive packages, another female student remarked:

Even for adults, incentive packages are motivational tools. Likewise, when girls are given such packages, it would encourage and motivate them to learn for they would see that people are interested in supporting them in whatever they are doing and they would want to show their appreciation, so, physically, it will change their behaviour toward learning. (Focus Group Data, participant #12.).

The use of incentive packages in intervention programmes has long been emphasised by scholars. Lloyd et al. (2003), for instance, noted that anecdotal evidence indicates that a major problem for girls' school attendance is the lack of financial assistance and school materials. The scholars, therefore, emphasised that intervention programmes should prioritise the provision of such assistance to female students to promote girl-child education. In a similar vein, among the key interventions enumerated by FAWE (2000) to curb challenges girls face in their education journey is the provision of

educational packages, such as financial incentives and advocacy programmes. Such packages can cushion the girls while serving as an assurance that while they work hard, their efforts would not go to waste, and it is a good source of motivation for the girls to stay in school. The expectations of the participants (i.e., the female students) in this regard corroborates the findings of the survey by the Agona Municipal Education Directorate in 2018 on the expectations of girls regarding what will help them attend school and be retained in school, where the girls, among other things, cited incentive packages like scholarships and capitation grants.

4.3.2 Empowerment of parents through financial support

Closely related to the provision of incentive packages is the expectation of the female students those interventions should consider empowering parents financially to support their female children in school. Most of the students averred that some parents in the municipality seem not to have the financial capacity to cater for their female students in school. This financial constraint often leads some of the teenage girls to seek shelter from other sources, which sometimes forces them to go into prostitution.

As noted by one of the students:

When parents do not have money, the girls often get sacked from school and they seek refuge from other students when that happens. This even leads some of them into teenage pregnancy while some of them are forced into prostitution. But when parents are empowered, all these problems can reduce. We, therefore, expect that intervention programmes should cover parents (Focus Group Data, participant #13).

The focus-group interview with the female students revealed that parents' lack of finances has been interposed with religious and cultural misconceptions which place the girl-child in a disadvantageous position as far as their education is concerned. According to the girls, societal and religious misconceptions have resulted in poor parents treating their young girls as commodities to enrich their families. This,

therefore, makes it difficult for female children from poor homes to attend school.

Below are the responses of two female participants explicating this rather sad phenomenon.

Sometimes these poor parents think that the only means through which they can liberate themselves from poverty is to sacrifice the girl-child because they are seen as a commodity. These girls are often given out in marriage in exchange for money or capital properties. They are forced into relationships they are not ready for but just because the family will benefit from the so-called 'man', the girls are sacrificed. (Focus Group Data, participant #14)

In the same vein, the second female student rehashed:

Let me add that normally in our culture, we see women as more advantageous economically because the works girls can do to bring money cannot be done by boys: men cannot do hawking or engage in petty trading and so on. Usually, boys do not engage in such activities so they see that the girl would be more supporting economically than the boys that is why they are sacrificed. So, they send the boy to school while the girls support them [the parents]. (Focus Group Data, participant #15).

The above accounts by the young girls, which were justified by some of the parents and teachers involved in the study, seem to suggest that intervention programmes aimed at supporting female education cannot be effective without providing a safety net for parents whose low-income status makes it difficult for them to support the education of their female children. Impliedly, intervention programmes ought to take into consideration the societal and religious misconceptions about the value of women, and how the weak financial status of parents can exacerbate such misconceptions. It is therefore prudent that intervention programmes support low-income earning parents financially to prevent them from treating their girls as a commodity that can enrich the family, as noted by one of the girls:

We expect interventions that will provide these parents with some seed capital to start a business. Because some of them are willing to work but are constrained by the lack of money. But if they are supported financially, they can start a small business and will be able to take care of their children, especially the females (Focus Group Data, participant # 16).

The findings of the study are in line with Brew (2002) who noted that a difficult and less supportive home environment is the prime reason why young women or girls do not go to school and even if they go, end up dropping out of school. The researcher, therefore, advocated that intervention programmes should support the economic development of parents by giving out loans to help give the girl-child the freedom to enjoy their childhood and complete their education without exploitation. This will largely contribute to the elimination of child labour in any form and make family units economically viable. Mankoe (2007) also argues that formal education often clashes with child labour. Accordingly, it is the expectation of parents and students that government interventions will curb this menace. In this view, Boakye (2004) proposed interventions such as a conditional cash transfer scheme, which would encourage poor parents to send their female children to school and therefore lessen their dependency burden.

4.3.3 Interventions backed by law

A considerable number of the participants also noted that they expect intervention programmes to be backed by law. According to the girls, if the interventions are supported by legal frameworks, it will ensure their adherence and enforcement. Below are two of the responses in this regard:

In my opinion, some cultural practices like child-farming and early marriages should be abolished and be supported by law. If they are supported by law, most female students will come to school. It will

further deter parents from engaging their female children in such cultural practices. (Focus Group Data, participant #17)

Another student remarked:

I expect that the interventions will be supported by strong laws that will control the situation. For instance, if laws are established to abolish the practices that turn young girls into housemaids, many girls will come to school and would no longer face such difficulties (Focus Group Data, participant #18).

The expectations by the students that intervention programmes should be backed by legal frameworks have partially been taken care of by extant legislation in Ghana. For instance, section 2 of the Ghana Education Act 2008 requires that a child who has attained school going age shall, at the basic level, be made to attend school accordingly, and where a child does not attend school, the parent shall, in the first instance, appear before the social welfare committee of the District Assembly for appropriate action. Other legislative frameworks in the country, such as the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, The Children's Act, 1998, as well as other international laws to which Ghana subscribed (such as those from the UNICEF and the United Nations) demands compulsory and free education of children, including females. However, in the face of financial hardships, which have made it difficult for parents to sufficiently support their children financially, the enforcement of such laws is seen as inconsiderate. More is required by the government of the day to provide policy options that can help alleviate parents from abject poverty; then would the enforcement of the above-mentioned laws be viable.

4.4 The contributions of girl-child education intervention programmes

The third objective of the study was to examine the contributions of the girl-child education intervention programmes at the Agona-West Municipality. Specifically, the objective sought to assess the effectiveness or not of the intervention programmes from the perspectives of the headteachers, students, parents, teachers, and the municipal assembly. The findings reveal four (4) key points that were emphasized by most of the participants as the contributions of the girl-child intervention programmes in the municipality: improved enrolment and retention of female children, lessening of the financial burden on parents, society rethink on the value of female education, and improved health of female children.

4.4.1 Improved enrolment and retention of female children

The responses gathered from the field indicate that the rolling out of girl-child intervention programmes in the Agona-West municipality has resulted in an increase in female enrolment and retention in the community. For instance, speaking on how donor interventions have increased female enrolment in the municipality, one of the participants stated:

It is worth mentioning the significant roles played by international donors. Some of these agencies started supporting girl-child education even before the government's interventions. I was witness to this on one occasion when they came down to present some materials and some of our girls were beneficiaries. They donated items like school uniforms, learning materials, and even organise training programmes for teachers. All these interventions have increased the enrolment of female children in the school (Interview Data, participant #5).

Also, speaking on the effect of incentive packages from donors, the municipal Girl-Child Coordinator stated that such incentives have served as tools of motivation to the girls, and has, therefore, encouraged both the female children and their parents to place more value on girl-child education. She stated:

Incentive packages have served as a good source of motivation for the girls to stay in school. Seeing donations like drawing boards, bags, sanitary pads, and Math Sets, has assured them that indeed someone cares for their well-being and development. It has encouraged most parents to send their female children to school (Interview Data, participant #4).

Interestingly, it was also found that in some of the schools, the female enrolment has exceeded those of the males, and in some schools, the girls were performing well in courses that used to have male dominance. This is revealed in the two responses below:

The programmes have ensured that more girls are enrolling in the school, retained, and complete. Currently, the girls are overshadowing the boys and are even performing on equal terms if even not better. The girl-child coordinators have been effective in educating society on girl-child education. This shows that the government has attached more importance to girls' education (Interview Data, participant #3).

Another participant remarked:

I think that since the establishment of the Girls Education Unit, there has been an improvement in girls' enrolment compared to before the establishment. This is because a lot of sensitization programmes have gone on. Again, it has encouraged many girls to do well in courses like Science, ICT, and Maths, which were formally dominated by males. (Interview Data, participant #2).

These perspectives are illustrated in Tables 4.6 and 4.7 obtained from the documentary data.

Table 4.6: Female enrolment in the municipality

Year	Enrolment	Completion
2017/2018	22,262	22,230
2019/2020	22,310	22,140

Source: Agona West Education Office annual report (2021)

Table 4.7: Girls' performance in BECE

Year	Total Registered Stu.	No. of Students that Passed (%)
2017/2018	1245	73
2019/2020	1396	66
2020	1458	59

Source: Agona West Education Office annual report (2021)

A review of the Agona West Education Office 2021 annual report also shows some evidence of the contribution of girl-child intervention programmes. The statistics on Female Enrolment in the Municipality (Table 4.7) indicate a 0.2% increase in female enrolment from the 2017/2018 academic year to the 2019/2020 academic year. The completion rate of the girls for the same period was below 1% (i.e., 0.14% & 0.8% respectively), indicating the high rate of female students that enrol and subsequently complete their education in the municipality. In the same regard, the data on the performances of the girls in the BECE indicates that for three consecutive years, an average of 66% of female students that sat for the exams passed successfully. This, to some extent, shows the improvement in female education in the municipality, which can partially be attributed to the various girl-child intervention programmes rolled out in the municipality.

The above narratives imply that girl-child intervention programmes, particularly those targeted at providing incentive packages like scholarships and school materials, can enhance female enrolment and retention in basic schools. Since the lack of these packages was a major impediment to female education in the municipality (as emphasised in 4.3), the provision of incentive packages by donors has motivated parents to send their female children to school. The study confirms the findings of the Girl-Child Education Unit (2000) and UNESCO (2013) that girl-child programmes

can lead to a significant increase in female education enrolment particularly at the basic level.

4.4.2 Lessening of financial burden on parents

Another contribution of girl-child intervention programmes at the Agona-West municipality is the lessening of the financial burden on parents. As discussed in the previous section (i.e., 4.3), one of the challenges impeding girl-child education in the municipality is the low-income status of some parents. The study found that since some of the intervention programmes provided the girls with the necessary financial and material resources needed for their education, it took away the burden on parents to provide such resources, thus, encouraging them to send their female children to school. As rightly noted by one of the participants;

I think the girl-child interventions have helped especially in the rural areas. Particularly regarding scholarships and sponsorships, the interventions have taken a lot of financial burden from the parents, allowed female children to attend school without much worry. It would be prudent for the government to institute more of those policies to safeguard the future of our girls (Focus Group, participant #20).

In a similar fashion, one of the head teachers mentioned that most of the interventions were sufficient enough in providing everything the girl-child would need to complete her education. As such, it leaves low-income earning parents with little excuse for not sending their female children to school. She stated:

The interventions have helped a lot of parents to save money. For instance, parents do not have to be under any pressure to give their children feeding fees due to the government's capitation grant, which, among other things, is aimed at promoting female education. Also, donations in kind, such as uniforms, shoes, and bags, from our donors suggest that parents with low financial capability have no excuse for not sending their female children to school (Interview Data, participant #1).

Speaking in a similar fashion, a headteacher had this to say:

Interventions from our donor agencies, for instance, their numerous scholarships, have reduced the burden on parents in terms of providing some basic needs for the child to keep them in schools. In this sense, those parents who could not cater for their female children in school due to financial burden are now able to do so thanks to the interventions. (Focus Group, participant # 19)

One of the students remarked that as a result of sponsorship from CAMFED, she is able to have all her exercise books, school bag, sandals and even pocket money to school without depending on her parents. Apart from lessening the financial burden on the parents, there was also an indication that some of the interventions were directly beneficial to the businesses of some of the parents. The director at the Gender-Desk, for instance, gave an account of how a donation was made in support of the business of the mother of one of the brilliant but needy students in the municipality. She stated:

A white lady paid a visit to one of the schools recently and was impressed by the academic performance of a girl from a poor home. She donated cash of GH¢ 250 to her, which I took on her behalf and handed it over to her mother to add to her capital for trading. In effect, it benefitted the parents, the girl, and the school as the money was used to cater for the girl and the school also took its share of the glory. (Focus Group, participant # 9)

In a community such as the Agona-West municipality, where the cost of education is an impeding factor to girl-child education, providing intervention programmes that cushions parents against the harsh effects of their predicaments on the education of their female children, is a step in the right direction to promoting girl-child education. As rightly pointed out by the responses, the interventions provided the necessities needed by the students to complete their studies. This, in turn, has lessened the financial burden on the parents, thereby spurring them to send their female children to

school. The finding in this regard is in line with the joint study by Ibis, UNICEF, SNV, and WFP (2009) that found that key among the contributions of the girl-child intervention programmes in Ghana is the reduced financial burdens for parents. The finding further reaffirms Mankoe (2007) and Boakye (2004) who found that interventions targeted at reducing the financial burden of parents in terms of child education can encourage poor parents to send their female children to school and therefore lessen their dependence on their children in assisting in the family business.

4.4.3 Society rethink on the value of female education

Another important contribution of girl-child intervention programmes in the Agona-West Municipal Assembly is the value placed on female education by society. As discussed earlier, society (specifically in the African context) has long regarded female education as insubstantial compared to male education. This misconception, embedded in cultural practices and beliefs, has been a bane of girl-child education in Ghana as a whole, the Agona-West Municipality not an exception. To this effect, the intense public education programmes carried out in the municipality have aimed at dispelling these societal misconceptions and providing a basis for a rethink of the value of female education. The interventions have proved to be effective towards this end in the municipality, as noted by the Municipal Girl-Child Coordinator:

Parents are gradually getting to understand the importance of female children. Due to the high attention accorded to female education in the Municipality by various actors, both parents and society, in general, are getting to understand the Fante proverb that says “If you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a family (nation)”. I think this is one of the major contributions of the interventions (Focus Group participant #19).

The Gender Desk Coordinator at the Municipal Assembly also remarked that the intervention programmes, have, by and large, reduced the traditional practices that inhibited female education in the locality.

There has been a minimisation in the effect of traditional practices and entrenched beliefs that were barriers to girl-child education. Through sensitization programmes, practices like early marriage, child labour, family betrothal, over engaging the child in household chores among others, have reduced drastically (Focus Group, participant #20).

The participants averred that due to the intense public education, parents now see girl-child education as equally important as that of males. This has spurred most parents to send their female children to school even beyond the basic level to the tertiary level.

This was captured in the response of one of the teachers:

These programmes have enlightened society immensely. They have now come to understand that girl education is crucial to national development. This has encouraged them to send their female children to school, and some of them have gone as far as tertiary (Focus Group, participant #6)

In the same vein, an well-experienced teacher remarked:

Personally, I think the rate at which parents are now enrolling their female children in the schools indicates the depth of impact made by the various interventions. At least, girls are no longer regarded as commodities that can be exchanged in marriage. Society now understands that females can play important role in the community just as men through education. It is very important that we keep on emphasising this point to encourage more enrolment of female children (Focus Group, participant #7).

One of the female students involved in the focus-group discussion also stated that the nature of some of the scholarships, in terms of providing financial aid to students up till the tertiary level of education, has made it easy for most girls to pursue their education to the highest level, thereby changing societal perspectives about girls. For instance, CAMFED operates a holistic long-term programme of support to girls'

education including scholarship, complementary measures to tackle obstacles to girls' enrolment and academic progression. Action aid also focuses on promoting a safe learning environment for girls at all levels and playing an advocacy role at community and school levels aimed at encouraging girls to successfully transition from primary education towards completing their secondary education. According to a female student:

The interventions have helped a lot of girls to pursue education to the highest level. This is because when a girl is been sponsored by an agency and she obtains high grades in her BECE, they continue to support her till even University or Training Colleges. This has changed the way the community view girls. (Focus Group, participant #9).

As noted earlier, one of the key interventions rolled out in the Agona-West Municipal Assembly to aid girl-child education was intense public education by the various actors. The findings above show that the interventions have paid off by changing societal mindset about the roles of females in society. Notable scholars in the girl-child education discourse have long emphasised the critical role of culture in promoting girl-child education (see Amakuedi, 2006; Williams, 2001). By providing a ground for society to rethink the importance of female education, the finding of this study re-echoes that of development agencies, such as Ibis, UNICEF, SNV, and WFP (2009) that shows that community mobilisation and sensitisation programmes to create awareness of the importance of girl education are key to promoting female education. The finding also finds support in the work of Akunga (2008), who found that in Nigeria, advocacy and sensitisation programmes that focused on raising national awareness in girlchild education has largely changed society's (including parents, school authorities, and traditional and religious leaders) perception towards girls' education.

4.4.4 Improved health of female children

Another crucial contribution of the girl-child intervention programmes in the Agona-West Municipal Assembly is the reduction in health issues faced by female children. Specifically, those interventions targeted at sensitising female children on their reproductive health have helped reduce societal problems like teenage pregnancy and high child mortality rate. One of the headteachers, for instance, stated:

Since enrolling in these interventions, there has been a reduction in teenage pregnancy. Since the programmes were targeted at instructing the children on reproductive health, it has reduced the rate of teenage pregnancy in the municipality. Statistics available indicate a reduction in teenage pregnancy in the Agona West Municipality (Interview Data, participant #4).

One of the parents interviewed also added that attending school tends to increase the marriage age for females, which affords them the opportunity to gain a lot of knowledge in reproductive issues before marriage. She stated:

There has also been a significant reduction in the child mortality rate. This is because the increased sensitization programmes on reproductive health have made girls become aware of certain things, and as they go to school, their marriage ages increases and this will make them know the best way to care of pregnancy (Focus Group, participant #8).

Speaking in a similar manner, one of the female students testified that they have received a lot of education on sexual reproduction, which they have applied to their personal lives. One of the girls, for instance, stated that most of the things taught them at the Girls Club have given them a fair knowledge on how to prevent diseases like candidiasis.

Most of the things we learned at the Girl's Club have helped the girls to prevent certain diseases like candidiasis since they are taught measures to prevent those diseases. Even the Girls-Child coordinator in

our school have helped us to know the positive and negative effect of certain things on our personal health (Focus Group, participant #11).

Another female student spoke about how the programmes have thought them to abstain from deviant societal behaviours, such as pre-marital sex, peer pressure, and visiting boys' rooms alone. She remarked:

I think the GES Unit's intervention has been very beneficial. It has helped us to become aware of the consequences of acts such as pre-marital sex, peer pressure, visiting boys' rooms alone, and many more. Through their teachings, we have learned to abstain from these acts (Interview Data, participant #3).

The above findings show how intervention programmes can contribute to improving the health of females in society. Particularly, in a community such as Agona West, where the incidence of teenage pregnancy is on the rise, such interventions are seriously needed to curb the situation. For instance, the 2018 annual performance review of the Health Management Directorate of the Ghana Health Service (GHS) at Agona Swedru indicated that the Agona West Municipality recorded a total of 762 cases of teenage pregnancy in 2017, a 12% increase from the previous year's figure of 678. The victims were mostly school girls aged between 10 and 15 years. In this light, it is vital that sensitization programmes are organised on teenage pregnancy and other sexual-related issues to arouse the girls' awareness about the dangers they pose to their efforts to climb higher the intervention programmes to retain girls in the schools.

4.5 Expanding girl-child intervention programmes to retain girls in schools

The last objective of the study was to examine how the interventions can be expanded to retain girls in schools. This objective was crucial to the study given that most of the participants noted, during the interview, that more strategies need to be put in place to maximise the interventions programmes towards retaining female girls in schools.

The participants cited several strategies (as summarised in Figure 4.3). Nevertheless, a majority of the responses were concentrated around four key themes: parental intervention, mentorships, and intensification of existing strategies, and mothers' education.

4.5.1 Parental intervention

Most of the participants accentuated a strong need for parents to be involved in the effort of promoting girl-child education. According to the participants, since parents are closer to the students, they are positioned in a strategic spot to enhance female education. Particularly, mothers were cited as the best persons to spearhead this course. In this view, one of the headteachers stated that when mothers are involved, they can effectively check the school attendance and reproductive growth of their female children. She stated:

In my view, the parents, especially mothers, ought to be included in this project. They can monitor their regular attendance at school and even if unfortunately, someone gets pregnant, the parents can inform the school and plans can be made to ensure that the pregnant girl gets education for some time before delivery, and later after birth, come back to continue the schooling (Focus Group, participant #14).

In a similar vein, one of the teachers noted that while the school plays its role in sensitising the female students on proper behaviours for enhanced participation of female students, they expect that parents also play their part. The teacher stated:

Parents have to be involved because they are closer to the students than us. While we are doing our best to support them here in school, we expect that parents assist in keeping a watch over the students when they are home. It would help ensure that the interventions are effective (Focus Group, participant #18).

And another argues thus:

If parents are directly involved in the intervention, it will make them more open to their children, which will make it also possible for the

children to share their problems with them. The student noted: “When parents are directly involved in the interventions, it will make them open to their children, which will help them to know the challenges facing the female children and help provide solutions before the situations get out of hand.” (Focus Group, participant #12).

The above views by the participants re-echo Asare’s (2009) assertion that effective girl-child intervention programmes ought to be a collaborative initiative by all relevant stakeholders. Here, parents are projected as key stakeholders that can play an important role in promoting girl-child education. Since they play an important role in child development, integrating them in the interventions is a sure way to maximising girl-child programmes in the municipality. It is worth noting that since the intervention concerns female students, mothers may be more efficient in this role than fathers.

Table 4.7: Participants' view on expanding the girl-child education intervention programmes

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conducting enrolment drives in homes, churches/mosques. ▪ Organising/celebrating Girls’ Education Week with activities that may arouse and sustain the interest of girls in school education. ▪ Formation of more Girls Club and organising camps for girls. ▪ Enhanced Community sensitization – home visits and at community gathering/forums. ▪ Radio (FM) programmes. ▪ More training for Girl-Child coordinators. ▪ More scholarship and provision of an incentive package for needy students (girls). ▪ Making the school environment safe and appealing to all students, especially the girl child. ▪ Making classrooms interesting and meaningful to the needs of the students. ▪ Assigning girls to responsible positions in the school. ▪ Making and enforcement of bye-laws on child – labor and hawking by children during instructional time of the child. ▪ Assign role models to students. |
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Source: Fieldwork data (2021).

4.5.2 Mentorships

Most of the participants were also of the view that the intervention programmes must be augmented with mentorship programmes for female students. Most of them called for the visitation of prominent female personalities, which they claimed can inspire the female students to aspire for such positions in the future. One of the female students, for instance, stated:

I suggest there should be mentorship programmes, where females in higher positions, such as regional ministers, come and educate the girls on why they must take their education serious and stay away from actions that can distort their future goals. It can motivate the girls to also study to reach such positions in the future (Focus Group, participant #15).

In support of her friend's statement, another female student remarked:

As my sister said about the mentorship, the Minister of Communication is a female and when such a person is invited to talk to the girls in the schools, it will encourage them to study so that they can also gain such respectable positions in the future (Focus Group, participant #6)

One of the headteachers also corroborated the views of the female students on the need for female mentors to maximise the girl-child interventions. According to her, female students ought to be given the opportunity to interact with female personalities in respected national positions. She stated:

Educated women in responsible national positions serve as role models for female children. Therefore, if the female students are given the opportunity to interact with such people, they will be encouraged to aspire to similar levels or beyond. I think the municipal assembly has to provide such forums for the girls (Focus Group, participant #7).

Undisputedly, providing forums that give female children the opportunity to have extensive discussions with prominent female personalities (from both the private and public sector) can boost the confidence of the girls and give them an assurance of what beholds them in future, should they take their studies serious and abstain from incidences that might jeopardise their future. As rightly noted by Elson (2001), the paucity of female mentors is a contributory factor to the inability of nations to enhance girl-child education. In this view, augmenting the various intentions with mentorship programmes can make the interventions more impactful.

4.5.3 Intensification of existing programmes

An appreciable number of the participants were also of the view that in order to fully maximise the intervention programmes, there is the need for the intensification of the existing programmes. One of the major areas of intensification, as noted by most of the participants, is the provision of financial resources. During the interviews, the participants lamented about how the lack of finances has affected the effectiveness of girl-child programmes. For instance, one of the headteachers remarked that sometimes teachers had to use their personal resources to support the girls due to the fact that support from donors was not forthcoming. Commenting on the same issue the Municipal Girl-Child Coordinator at the MEO accepted the fact that monitoring of activities at the school level leaves much to be desired. According to her, due to financial constraints, she was not able to visit the schools as often as it ought to be. Another problem identified by the coordinators which buttressed a point raised by the headteachers on inadequate finances was on low training programmes for school-based girl-child facilitators. According to the Municipal Coordinator, training programmes were organised only when funds were provided by the GES or donors for international programmes. The above ascertains confirm the findings of donor

agencies such as DFID, UNICEF, IBIS, SNV and WFP (2009) in their joint report which stated in part that lack of funding and under-resourcing continued to be problematic as they impeded on the quality of work and that there were too few officers in charge of girls' education. This could be related to the finding made by the researcher in this study since the Education Office provides only one officer to serve as Girl-Child Officer (GCO) for the entire municipality. This limits their effectiveness in supervising the girls and constrains monitoring and follow-up visits which might lead to poor reporting.

Some of the participants also called for more financial support in aid of girls from poor families. The participants averred that supporting more girls financially will further decrease incidences like teenage pregnancy. One of the head teachers, for instance, stated that:

I think we need to support more girls financially, especially those who are from poor backgrounds. Because of their poor backgrounds, they are susceptible to teenage pregnancy: boys can easily lure them into a whole lot of things that makes them drop out of school. So, if there can be more monetary interventions that help those in such situations, I think things will improve further (Focus Group, participant #8).

Some of the participants also touched on the importance of follow-ups by the municipal assembly and donors. Conspicuously, follow-ups are crucial to maximising the interventions since it will afford the donors the opportunity to review their programmes and make the necessary changes if there is any. Moreover, it would ensure that the programme beneficiaries appreciate the importance of the intervention programmes.

I think the donors and the Municipal Assembly have done a lot, in terms of organising workshops, towards promoting girl-child education. But the problem is they need to follow up to see the progress of their interventions but that has been lacking. I think they

need to improve on their follow-up activities (Focus Group, participant #15).

One of the parents also called for the infusion of career seminars into the intervention programmes. According to the participants, some of the students have no clue on what they intend to be in the future. The participants averred that career seminars can give the girls a clear focus and motivation to secure a good future. She stated:

The interventions should include career seminars. This is because most of the girls do not know why they are going to school and what they intend to do in the future. They are always confused about what to choose as a career path. If they are able to identify their career paths at an early age, I think they will work towards securing that future (Focus group, participant #20).

The above narratives from the participants speak volumes on the state of current intervention programmes. Apart from financial constraints, there was also an indication of the lack of proper follow-up programmes (which can also be attributed to the lack of finances) and the paucity of career programmes. This suggests that the existing interventions ought to be augmented to maximise their effectiveness in the municipality. It also calls for more financial donations and stakeholder involvement. Some of the participants also called for the intensification in other areas such as early marriage, poverty levels of families, hawking practices and huge house chores for the girls, societal attitudes towards girls, and parental neglects, all of which finds support in existing works (such as Long, 2000; Yidana, 2001; Keelson & Mansory, 2007; Boakye, 2007).

4.5.4 Parental education (Adult Education)

Most of the participants mentioned adult education as other means to maximising the intervention programmes in the Agona-West municipal assembly. The Municipal Girl-Child Coordinator, for instance, was of the view that adult education or education

in general, particularly for mothers, can promote girl-child education because the mothers will consequently appreciate the importance of education and may even become role models to their female children. She averred:

If the woman is educated, she will know the essence of education. Even if the father is not ready to take the child to school, the woman can make every effort to get the child in school and ensure that she completes. In sum, when a woman is educated, she becomes a role model to her daughter (s) and society as a whole (Interview Data, participant #2).

One of the headteachers also provided new insight into what adult education actually refers to. According to her, adult education should not only be seen as “reading and writing” but must teach parents home management, child care, proper nutrition of children, and other female-related issues. When this is done, according to her, there would be effective maximisation of the interventions. She stated:

Sometimes we see adult education as just helping the adults to read and write but I see it as extending to learning how to manage your house, taking care of the health needs of the house, and many more. If we educate them on topics like proper nutrition/feeding, proper dressing, and other female-related issues, they will be very useful in training the children. (Interview Data, participant #1).

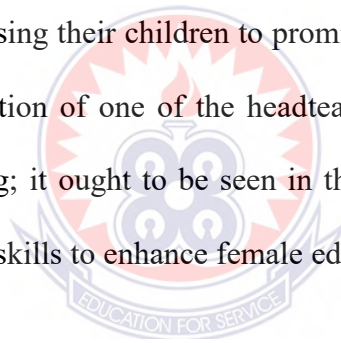
One of the female students was also of the view that if parents are educated, it would acknowledge the necessity of education and influence their parental behaviours at home. She noted:

If parents are educated, they will know the importance of education for their children more than if they are not educated. This can go a long way in reducing situations where children are made to do a lot of house chores with little time for their academic work (Interview Data, participant #5).

Some of the participants also revealed that when parents are educated, it impacts positively on the education of the children generally but specifically on the girl child. This is because educated women are far better equipped than uneducated women to

improve opportunities for themselves by obtaining better-paid and higher-status jobs. A parent mentioned that when they are educated, they are able to improve their earnings through decent job creation and by so doing they are able to support their children in schools. Again, such parents stand a better chance to monitor the girl-child's school activities towards better results and achievements.

Numerous studies have shown that the higher the educational level of parents, the greater the participation of the child in school (Kelly & Elliot, 2002). As found by Dall (2009), female students who have mothers with some levels of education are themselves able to reach higher levels of education. This does not suggest that parents with no formal education cannot raise their children since there are a lot of examples of uneducated parents raising their children to prominent positions through education. But to reiterate the assertion of one of the headteachers, adult education is not just about reading and writing; it ought to be seen in the light of providing parents with basic home management skills to enhance female education.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The study investigated girl-child education interventions and retention in selected JHSs in the Agona West Municipality. The study was guided by the systems theory as espoused by Swanson (2001). Exploratory case study and qualitative research approach were adopted. The study relied on two major sources of data: primary and secondary. Primary data was collected through focused group discussions with three categories of participants: teachers, parents, female students and a face-to-face interview with head teachers, Girl –Child and Gender Desk Coordinators at the Municipal Assembly. In all, 20 participants were interviewed. The purpose of this chapter is to round off the study by providing summary of the major findings, conclusions made from the findings, recommendations for policy and further research. Research questions.

The research questions formulated based on the objectives were:

1. What is the nature of the girl-child education intervention programmes in the Agona West Municipality?
2. What are the expectations of the female students regarding girl-child education intervention programmes in the Agona West Municipality?
3. How have these girl-child education interventions contributed towards the retention of girls in the schools in the Agona West municipality?
4. How can the girl-child education intervention programmes be expanded to retain girls in the schools in the Agona West Municipality?

5.1 Summary of key findings

The study was guided by four objectives. Below are the summary of the key findings of the study.

5.1.1 The nature and scope of girl-child education interventions

On the nature and scope of the girl-child education intervention programmes in the municipality, the study found as a counter-response to the challenges hampering female education in the Agona West Municipal Assembly, the municipality has rolled out several policies and programmes intended at promoting girl-child education through solitary and collaboration with GES, the schools in the assembly, the municipal assembly, as well as external actors. The GES's major intervention is the GCEP that involves the placement of a Girl-Child Coordinator in all basic schools in the municipality. These coordinators are usually a female teacher from each school, who were made to undergo intense training to understand girl-child development and education. Their major function is to institute policy-oriented programmes in their respective schools towards spurring female education and achieving the goals of the GCEP. The interventions by the Municipal Assembly revolve around organising training programmes (workshops) for school-based facilitators, visiting communities for public education on girl-child education, and implementing intervention programmes initiated by the government and donor agencies. The external donors, on the other hand, provided interventions like supporting government flagship programmes such as Campaign for Female Education, aimed at promoting girl-child education, financial support to parents struggling to cater for their children, and public education programmes.

5.1.2 Expectations of female students regarding girl-child education intervention programmes

On the expectations of female students regarding the intervention programmes, three major themes were developed: provision of incentive packages; empowerment of parents through financial support, and interventions backed by law. Concerning the first theme, most of the female students lamented that the lack of incentive packages has been a bane to attracting and retaining female children in basic schools in the municipality. In this regard, the girls expect that any intervention programmes must first aim at providing young girls sponsorships in order to encourage them to go to school. On the second theme, the girls noted that some parents in the municipality seem not to have the financial capacity to cater for their female students in school. They, therefore, expect that interventions should be intended at supporting poor parents through financial injections into their businesses. On the final theme, the female students noted that they expect intervention programmes to be backed by law to ensure their adherence and enforcement.

5.1.3 The contributions of the girl-child education intervention programmes

The study revealed four major contributions of the girl-child education intervention programmes in the municipality. They included improved enrolment and retention of female children; lessening of financial burden on parents; society rethink on the value of female education; and improved health of female children. On the first theme, the study found that girl-child intervention programmes, particularly those targeted at providing incentive packages like scholarships and school materials, enhanced female enrolment and retention in basic schools. This was supported by secondary data on Female Enrolment in the Municipality (for the 2017/2018 & 2019/2020 academic year) and Girls' Performance in the BECE (from 2018-2020). On the second theme,

the study revealed that some of the interventions provided the basic materials needed by the students to complete their studies, which lessened the financial burden on the parents, thereby spurring them to send their female children to school. It was also revealed that some of the interventions supported the businesses of the parents to ensure that they have enough money to cater for the education of their female children. On the third theme, the study found that through intense public education, the municipality have had a change in mindset about the roles of females in society. Specifically, the programmes made them appreciate the importance of female education and its effect on national development. On the final theme, the study found that those interventions targeted at sensitising female children on their reproductive health have helped reduce health problems like complications through teenage pregnancy, high child mortality rate, and sexually transmitted diseases.

5.1.4 Expanding education intervention programmes to retain girls in the schools

With regards to maximising the intervention programmes to retain girls in schools, most of the participants advocated for parental intervention, mentorship programmes, intensification of existing programmes, and parental education. Concerning parental intervention, the participants noted that since parents are closer to the students, they are positioned in a strategic spot to enhance female education. Particularly, mothers were mentioned as the best persons to spearhead this course. On mentorship programmes, most of the girls called for the visitation of prominent female personalities, which they claimed can inspire the female students to aspire for such positions in the future. With regard to the intensification of existing programmes, the participants advocated for more efforts in the areas of provision of financial resources, follow-up programmes, and career seminars. Other areas emphasised included early marriage, poverty levels of families, hawking practices, and societal attitudes towards

girls. Concerning parental education, the participants were of the view that adult education or education in general, particularly for mothers, can promote girl-child education because the mothers will consequently appreciate the importance of education, which may influence their parental behaviours and practices.

5.2 Conclusion

Education is a fundamental human right, and ensuring that girls receive quality education is not just their human right but a global development priority. Girls' education transcends getting girls into schools. It also requires the setting up of an enabling environment that will ensure that girls feel safe in schools, have the opportunity to reach the highest possible level of education, obtain relevant knowledge and skills to successfully compete in the labour market, make their own decisions, and contribute to the development of their communities and the world at large. Better educated women are more informed about healthcare and nutrition, marry at a later age, have fewer children, and tend to raise healthier children. It is therefore crucial that interventions are instituted at both national and local levels to help girls overcome the barriers inhibiting them from benefiting from nations' investment in education. This study has examined the girl-child education intervention programmes and their contribution to enrolment and retention in selected JHSs in the Agona West Municipality. The study highlighted several interventions that have been instituted by key actors to spur girl-child education. The study further revealed how the interventions have contributed to girl-child enrolment and retention in schools. The study also projected key areas that need more effort in order to fully expand the intervention programmes.

The study concludes that the Agona West Municipality prioritizes girl-child education, and has instituted several interventions to achieve this end. Nevertheless, key stakeholders ought to intensify the interventions to ensure their optimum impact. Evaluation of findings based on the objectives and research questions formulated, it could be stated that girl-child education intervention programmes have impacted positively on the education of female students in the Agona West Municipality. This was evidenced in the numerous programmes and interventions put in place through collaborative effort of the Ghana Education Service (Municipal Education Office), Municipal Assembly, Donor Agencies, such as NGOs and Bilateral and Multilateral funding agencies. This implies that the interventions are instituted and implemented by both local and national levels to help girls overcome the barriers inhibiting girls' education.

Girls' education intervention programmes, though have contributed to increased enrolment and retention in schools, much needs to be done in terms of improvement in academic performance. Social and economic support occupied the attention of donor agencies. Nonetheless, academic performance of girls needs to be emphasized. This was evidenced in the 2020 BECE results where only 59% of girls registered passed. Another implication is that, the interventions targeted only Junior High School girl-child students which called for expansion to include their parents so as to help them play more meaningful role in caring for the girl – child in schools. On the whole, in my view, the research outcomes have thrown more light on girl – child education intervention programmes, all stakeholders involvement could contribute more effectively and efficiently to improve the situation.

In the final analysis before drawing conclusion, it was appropriate to emphasize that the system theory which underpinned the research conducted, was justified according to the findings as far as the objectives and research questions were concerned. Formal education in Ghana, as seen everywhere, remains a system comprising various stakeholders, students, teachers, the government, local and international donors and the entire society. All the components work by the principle of interdependence to get the system working; the implication is that if one component of the entire system breaks down, it affects the entire system. In assessing the outcomes of the study, the researcher could conclude that the instruments used in gathering data were adequate enough for measuring the variables involved in and answered the research questions formulated and confirmed the practicality of the system theory.

However, the sample was too small and so was unrepresentative that, results cannot be validly generalised to a meaningful target population. This is because in Ghana, the administrative division consist of four (4) geographical terrestrial plains and sixteen (16) regions. For local government, there are a total of two hundred and sixteen (216) districts including one hundred and forty-five (145) ordinary districts and one hundred and nine (109) municipal districts and six (6) metropolitan districts, with 6,418 JHs schools (Ministry of Local Government, 2019).

Despite all these, the issues raised in this report give an indication of the general trend in girl-child education intervention programmes in Ghana. In the process of presenting all these, the researcher areas of interest of girl-child education was illuminated and this will facilitate linkage with the other researcher who may wish to collaborate or replicate the findings. In conclusion therefore, the researcher could conveniently state that all questions have been answered and the objective stated

achieved. That fact that the sample size was too small for generalisation, the finding or outcome possesses high validity.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations were made to girl-child education intervention programmes which consequently may create access and ensure equality and quality education for girls in the municipality and the country in general.

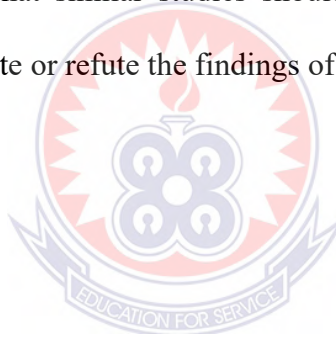
- a. Most of the girl-child education intervention programmes are implemented and supervised through Girl-Child Education Officer with assistance from the school-based Girl-child Facilitators. However, their activities are carried out based on availability of funds either from the GES or donor agencies. This implies that the programmes become dysfunctional when funds are not available. Based on this, it is recommended that the Municipal Education Directorate and the Municipal Assembly must endeavour to resource the Girls Education Unit to effectively implement their programmes both at the district level and school levels. This would help to make the facilitators or coordinators active rather than wait till they get sponsors before they organise activities
- b. From the findings, there is one Girls Education Officer at the municipal education office whose major roles include visiting schools and communities, collection data on areas such as girls' enrolment, attendance to school, performance in examinations, dropout rate, retention and completion, disseminate of report among others. The co-ordinator organizes training programmes for school-based facilitators as well as spearheading the intervention programmes initiated by donor agencies in the municipality. This makes the workload too heavy for the co-ordinators. The appointment of additional Girls Education Officer would contribute positively towards the improvement of current situation in supervising

the activities of school-based facilitators as well as enhancing her roles in the communities.

- c. There is evidence from the findings that cultural practices, beliefs and other socio-economic factors influence girl-child education despite the interventions. There is therefore the need to intensify public education on cultural practices that hinder effectiveness and efficiency in the education of the girl child. Civil Society Organisations, Faith-Based organisations and educated citizens from the municipality occupying recognised positions should help educate the public against practices that do not encourage girls' education. Parents also need to be encouraged to live up to their responsibilities. This could be done through the assembly or the government resourcing them with credit facilities to improve their earnings, which can influence their ability to care for the needs of the girl child.
- d. On the issue of expanding intervention programmes to retain girls in school, the findings stressed on the need for adult education for mothers, mentorship through visitation to schools by educated women in responsible positions as well as inclusion of financial support for mothers to expand their business to make them more responsible. Based on this, it was recommended that interventional programmes should not only emphasise on academic performance, but go beyond the classroom. This would motivate girls to be more enthusiastic in all aspects of social, economic and educational life to ensure enrolment, retention and completion of basic education even inspire them to higher levels to make them contribute to the development of the nation.

5.4 Suggestion for future research

1. Based on the results of the study, the researcher wishes to suggest research on effective Career Counselling at the basic school level for the girl child.
2. The study further makes a suggestion for studies into how girl-child intervention programmes impact female students' academic performances. This would provide a new perspective on the impact of girl-child interventions, apart from the social and economic effects revealed by this study.
3. The study further suggests scholarly exploration of how girl-child education programmes target specific household to ensure fair and equitable distribution of benefits.
4. It is also suggested that similar studies should be conducted in other parts of Ghana to either validate or refute the findings of this study.



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APPENDIX A: Introductory Letter

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

UEW/EAM/MPH/6

Date: 09th June, 2021

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

We write to introduce **LUCY LARTEY** a student on the M.Phil. Educational Administration and Management programme of the Department of Educational Administration and Management.

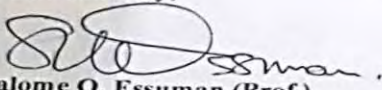
Lucy Larthey is currently working on a research project titled:

GIRL CHILD EDUCATION INTERVENTIONS AND RETENTION IN SELECTED JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN THE AGONA WEST MUNICIPALITY.


Please, give her the necessary assistance and co-operation.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,


Salome O. Essuman (Prof.)
Head of Department

cc: Dean, School of Graduate Studies

 www.uew.edu.gh

APPENDIX B: Interview Guide for Focus Group Discussions

A. Nature And Scope Of Girl-Child Intervention In Education

Programmeme

FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSION

- What are your thoughts on investing in girl-child education?
- What are your views about women's participation in education in relation to transmitting societal values?
- What step can GES take in achieving effective implementing of educational policies and girl-child education?
- What can be done to attract girls' enrolment and retention at the school level?
- What other intervention programmes can be put in place to curb the challenges girls face in their education?
- To what do you think are some of the interventions that are necessary to help solve such challenges?
- How do you see the attainment of gender equality as hope of the girl child's future?
- What is your view about training parent in girl-child intervention programmes?
- It is said that girl of school going age are recruited to work as domestic servants elsewhere. What are the sources of obtaining the girls recruited?
- Can you please identify social-economic factors which serve as challenges to intervention programmes to female education?
- How do social-economic factors identified inhibit girls' education?
- What effect do high-cost of education have on education especially the girl child?
- Generally, what are the thoughts of society about education?

- To what extent can parent-teacher intervention contribute to advocate for better educational opportunities for the girl-child?

B. Expectation of the girl-child education intervention programmes focused group discussion.

- what are your thoughts about the institution of Incentive packages to retain girls in school?
- What reason can you assign for girls not going to school or drop out of school even if they go?
- What impact can educate women in responsible positions have if they are given opportunity to interact with girls at school and in community function?
- What factors do you know about that can influence girls' education?
- What factors will help the girl-child attend and be retained in school?

C. The contribution of girl-child intervention education programme focused group discussion.

- What significant achievement have been made since the establishment of the Girl Education Unit of the GES?
- At which level do education are the achievements identified associated?
- Is there any collaboration between IDA and local parents to promote interventions in support of girls' education?
- How are the impact of intervention programmes assessed by donor agencies?

D. Maximizing Girl-Child Education Intervention Programmes To Retain The Girl-Child In School

FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSION

- What are your views on parental level of education as a contributory factor towards retention of girls (female) in education?
- What cultural practices readily come to mind as a hindrance to girls' education
- How should the issue of poverty experienced by parent be tackled in order to enhance the chances of the girl-child in school?
- Why should a girl be sacrificed when the family is faced with the stark of poverty.
- Share your thoughts on the idea that rural young girls are sent to urban areas to become domestic servants or house help for people?
- How do you agree to idea that one cause of disqualification by family members regarding female education is gender discrimination? How far is this true?
- How truthful is the notion that the girl-child was/is an economic commodity whose value lies in service to her husband and generating income for the family?
- How can adult education programmes contribute to parental involvement in educating the child?
- How is adult education relevant to education intervention programmes as a way of maximizing parent involvement in children's education?

APPENDIX C: Interview Guide for Headteachers

A. Section ii: nature and scope of girl-child intervention in education interview guide.

- Please describe the way the girl-child education programmes works in your school.
- Do you perceive any problems with the Girl-Child intervention programmes?
- What steps can the Ghana Education Service (GES) take in achieving effective implementation of education policies and girl-child education?
- What do u think are the responsibilities of Girls Education Officers at the education office?
- What can be to attract girls' enrolment and retention at the school level?
- What do you think about establishing a unit as a girl-child policy-oriented institution?
- In your opinion what other intervention programmes can be put in place to curb the challenges girls face in their education?
- How do you view the collaboration effort between government and civil society organisation in safeguarding general interest in education?
- Can you please identify socio-economic factors which serve as challenges to intervention programmes to female education?
- How do the socio-economic factors identified inhibit girls' education?
- What effect do high cost of education have on education especially the girl-child?
- To what extent do parental intervention impact positively on girls' education and achievement?

- Do parent-teacher intention contribute to advocacy towards better educational opportunity for girl-child?

B. Expectation Of The Girl-Child Education Intervention Programme Interview

Guide

- What are your thoughts about the institution of incentive packages as a measure to retain girls in school?
- What reason can you assign for girls not going to school drop out of school even if they go?
- What impact can educate women in responsible position have if they are given opportunity to interact with girls at school and in community functions?
- How will female teachers posted to teach in schools have effect on girl-child education?
- What factors do you know about that influence girl's education?
- What factors will help the girl-child attend and be retained in school?
- What activities organized by the school can help ensure enrolment, retention and completion of girls in school?
- Can you please enumerate some expectations of girls as intention that can contribute to high rate of their retention in schools?
- To what extent do poor school infrastructures and conditions encourage or discourage girls from attendance?
- Are you aware of a scheme known as the conditional Cash Transfer Scheme?

C. The contribution of girl-child intervention education programme interview guide.

- How will you agree to the idea that for effective implementation of intervention programmes, there should be enactment of laws by government that will provide sanctions for parents who keep the girl-child out of school?
- What sanctions do you suggest?
- T achievement have been made since the establishment of the Girl Education Unit of the GES?
- At what level of education are the achievement identified associated?
- To what extent have International Development Agencies (IDA) contributed to the development of girl's education in terms of intervention programmes?
- Is there any collaboration between IDA and local parents to promote intervention in support of girls' education?
- What specific area do IDA support provide for enhancement of girl-child education?
- What form of support do UNICEF provide for enhancement of girls' education?
- What other bilateral organisations support the development of girls education?
- How do interventions by donor agencies benefit parents, he schools and the girl-child in school?
- How are the impact of intervention programmes assessed by donor agencies?
- For what purposes are the assessment result used?
- What conclusion will you make as far as girl-child intervention education programmes are concerned?

C. Maximizing Girl-Child Education Intervention Programmes To Retain The Girl-Child In School

INTERVIEW GUIDE

- What cultural practices readily come to mind as a hindrance to girls' education?
- How does poverty impact on girls' education?
- Which class of girls are more likely to enroll and remain in the school?
- How would you agree that girls engaged in hawking come across unwanted pregnancy and have devastating effect on life of the girl child?
- What are your thoughts and view that rural young girls are sent to urban areas to become domestic servants or house helps for people?
- What societal misconceptions influence the attitude of society towards girls education?
- How does low self-concept be a hindrance to girl-child education?
- What factors lead to low retention and non-participation of girls in school?
- How truthful is the notion that the girl-child was/is an economic commodity whose value lies in service to her husband and generating income for the family?
- How can adult education programmes in African countries contribution to parent involvement in educating the child?
- How is adult education relevant to education intervention programmes as a way of maximizing parent involvement in children's education?

APPENDIX D: Interview Guide for Girl-Child Education Officer

A. Nature and scope of girl-child intervention in education documentary evidence.

- What step can the GES take in achieving effective implementation of educational policies and girl-child education
- Girl-child policy document
- Minutes of meetings at the Municipal Education Office
- Minutes of the Girl-Child Co-ordinator's meeting.

B. The contribution of girl-child intervention education programme.

- The Extent of international Development Agencies Contribution to Girl-Child Education.
- Perception of the girl-child intervention education programmes.

